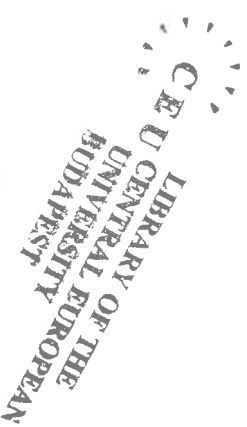


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Science embattled

Eastern European Intellectuals and the Great War

Translated by Antoni Górný,
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as the most noble of struggles. Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer accurately characterised this attitude when he wrote that "war became the womb from which Poland as we know it today sprang out."⁴²¹ At the same time, the way intellectual struggles that coincided with military clashes at the front have been situated in the context of political history has led to a certain 'rationalisation' of the texts in question. Focussing on their state-making potential (the existence of which I do not doubt), scholars often lost sight of the intellectuals' own stated beliefs about their nations' enemies. Here, the approach of Western European historiography differs markedly from that in the East. Western scholars of the 'war of the spirits' are most concerned with the image of the enemy produced by the most prominent intellectuals.⁴²² This, in turn, leads to a far more critical evaluation of their involvement in the war. The two mutually opposed approaches to this issue in the East have consisted, on the one hand, in the unreflected inclusion of products of the 'war of the spirits' in the heroic narrative of the struggle for independence, and, on the other hand, in critiques as scathing as the following comment by Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, an intellectual who predicted the war and considered it a failure of humanity: "Such scholars are prostituting themselves – a prostitution far more reprehensible than the regular kind. There, one often sells one's body out of hunger or is forced to do so. Here, one sells one's beliefs and brokers one's own soul. And this is done by sated people of their own free will."⁴²³ Neither of these approaches seems to capture fully the nature of the problem. Hatred toward others is inherent in this kind of writing. At the same time, the patriotic intentions of the authors cannot be denied. One is bound up with, entangled the other, creating what an outsider would perceive as a deeply contradictory whole – and yet, it no doubt appeared perfectly coherent to those who took part in the 'war of the spirits.'

421 K. Przerwa-Tetmajer, *Tradycja żołnierza polskiego*, Warszawa 1920, p. 6.

422 See e.g.: M. Jelsmann, *Das Vaterland der Feinde. Studien zum nationalen Feindbegriff und Selbstverständnis in Deutschland und Frankreich 1792–1918*, Stuttgart 1992, passim; E. Koester, op. cit.; H. Fries, op. cit.

423 J. Baudouin de Courtenay, "Upaństwowienie folblutyzmu rasowego," *Mysł Polska* 1, 1915, no. 2, p. 260. For a similar, though more mildly phrased conclusion, see: N. Cybulski, *Nauka wobec wojny*, Kraków 1918, p. 29–30.

Space (Geography)

In early twentieth century, modern geography was still such a young discipline that debates over its proper domain continued. The process of institutionalising the new field was launched in the 1880s in the German Reich, where the state was actively involved in challenging resistance to it from the conservative universities.¹ Initially, the discipline was focussed on political geography, only very slowly opening up to physical and cultural geography.² While measurement and presentation techniques improved, professionalisation was less evident in other respects. Continuities persisted, for example, in the description of different ethnic groups. The related ethnopsychological tradition of characterological descriptions of 'the other' found new life here. The popular concept of geography dating from the mid-nineteenth century was bound up with descriptions of the 'character' of world populations, in accordance with the idea that humans were shaped by natural conditions.³ The same attitude prevailed outside Germany as well. In Anglo-Saxon countries, descriptions of the world were commonly inscribed onto a moral hierarchy, relating human personality to climate.⁴ The professionalisation of geography did little to alter this situation. Instead of abandoning the traditional ways of describing distant lands, fin-de-siècle geography became increasingly orientated to the nation. As a result of the efforts of two outstanding geographers, Paul Vidal de la Blache and Friedrich Ratzel, the connection between geographical space and the nation state became even more pronounced.⁵ In an extensive study published in 1917, American scholar Leon Dominian went so far as to ascribe the formation

1 D. Hooson, Introduction, in: D. Hooson (ed.), *Geography and National Identity*, Oxford 1994, pp. 1–11, 3; G. Saudner, M. Rössler, *Geography and Empire in Germany 1871–1945*, A. Godlewskaja, N. Smith (eds.), *Geography and Empire*, Oxford 1994, pp. 115–127, 116.

2 H.-D. Schmitz, *Die deutschsprachige Geographie von 1800 bis 1970. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte ihrer Methodologie*, Berlin 1980 (Abhandlungen des Geographischen Instituts, Anthropogeographie, 29), pp. 120–121.

3 Cf. A.W. Grube, *Geographische Charakterbilder*, vol. 1: Arktis – Europa – Afrika, Hans Stübner (ed.), Leipzig 1913, pp. 1–3.

4 D.N. Livingstone, *Climate's Moral Economy. Science, Race and Place in Post-Darwinian British and American Geography*, in: Saudner, Rössler, *Geography and Empire*, pp. 132–154, 138.

5 I. Schröder, *Die Nation an der Grenze. Deutsche und französische Nationalgeographien und der Grenzfall Elsaß-Lothringen*, in: R. Jessen, J. Vogel (eds.), *Wissenschaft und Nation in der europäischen Geschichte*, Frankfurt am Main 2002, pp. 207–234, 207.

of nations to geographical conditions. Common origins and language were of secondary importance.⁶

Connections between a people's psyche and the territory it inhabited figured very prominently in the works of Friedrich Ratzel, the creator of anthropogeography. In his view, the two elements mutually influenced each other, and it was a mistake to study the nation independently of analyses of the land. Geographical knowledge gained significance when combined with history. Ratzel believed that civilisations thrived due to both high population density and favourable natural conditions (in his view, Scandinavia was proof that a culture could only develop properly if these conditions were not too favourable). The mutual influence of terrain and population defined the contours of the world, establishing hierarchies of nations and races: "The influence of this continent is so deeply ingrained that it is possible to list countries of the world according to the impact and influence Europe has had on their development. We will see directly that the more exposed they are to European influences, the more culturally developed they become."⁷ The connection between territories and their inhabitants also figured in the works of French geographers, most prominently Paul Vidal de la Blache. However, French authors differed from Ratzel in their estimation of the impact of man on the formation of geographical entities. As Paul Claval notes, they focused primarily on social groups, whereas German geographers had far more appreciation for the culture-forming aspect of the landscape.⁸

Both French and German geographers, as well as their counterparts from other colonial states – or as in the case of Italy, states aspiring to that status – were equally implicated in the projects for overseas expansion.⁹ At the same time, they played a crucial role in defining the contours of national territories, a fact exemplified in Vidal de la Blache's description of rural France. In Bulgaria, an autonomous state on the cusp of independence with no colonial ambitions, the dynamic development of the new science went hand in hand with efforts to organise a new education system. Accordingly, Bulgarian geography textbooks not only outnumbered those for history, but their publication began nearly a decade earlier. Desislava Lilova attributes this fact precisely to the 'youth' of

6 I. Dominian, *The Frontiers of Language and Nationality in Europe*, New York 1917, p. 315.
 7 F. Ratzel, *Anthropogeographie*, vol. 2: *Die geographische Verbreitung der Menschen*. Darmstadt 1975 (facsimile of the 4th edition from 1899), p. 294.
 8 P. Claval, *From Micheler to Braudel. Personality, Identity and Organization of France*, in: Hooson (ed.), *Geography and National Identity*, pp. 39–57, 51.
 9 The problem is described in relation to the last decade before the war in: I. Gambi, *Geography and Imperialism in Italy*, *From the Unity of the Nation to the 'New' Roman Empire*, in: D. Hooson (ed.), *Geography and National Identity*, pp. 74–91, 81–84.

geography¹⁰ Lacking any established tradition, the discipline appeared to offer an easy way for catching up with the developed states. Its popularity seems also to have derived from its close kinship to national characterology. Not only did institutionalisation fail to put this aspect of geographical description to task – Ratzel's ideas, which affected countless European scholars, served to entrench it due to the supposed ties between the territory, the landscape and the psychology of its inhabitants. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the German geographer suggested that anthropogeography combine with geography of plants and animals to form a single, all-encompassing biogeography.¹¹ The basic category of this newly-formed branch of knowledge was to be the nation state: "We do not see the state as an organism because it is a combination of a living nation and the hard earth, but because mutual influences make this combination so strong that the two come to form a single entity which cannot be set apart without putting it to death."¹²

The War

Such ideological entanglements of geography initially played a thoroughly marginal part in the war. The first task for professional geographers was to deliver maps and indices of town names for military use. For instance, the British Expeditionary Force required their aid in the unfamiliar terrain of Belgium and northern France, which was riddled with locations bearing terrifically unutterable names.¹³ Geographers, meteorologists and geologists came to provide crucial services with the advent of the war of position on the Western Front. Their professional expertise facilitated the digging of trenches that would not overflow with water. Later they took on the task of predicting which shell holes would fill with water when it rained and should thus be avoided by the newly deployed tanks.¹⁴ For the Central Powers, which did not enjoy access to

10 D. Lilova, *Barbarians, Civilized People and Bulgarians. Definition of Identity in Textbooks and the Press (1830–1878)*, in: D. Mishkova (ed.), *We, the People. Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*. Budapest–New York 2009, pp. 181–206, 182–184.
 11 Ratzel, *Anthropogeographie...*, vol. 2, pp. VII–VIII.

12 Ratzel, *Politische Geographie (1897)*, quote from: H.-D. Schultz (ed.), *Geographie?*, vol. 1: *Antworten vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, Berlin 2003 (*Arbeitshefte des Geographischen Instituts der HU*, 88), p. 159.

13 M. Heffernan, *Geography, Cartography and Military Intelligence. The Royal Geographical Society and the First World War*, in: *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers (New Series)* 21:3 (1996), pp. 504–533, here p. 508.

14 R. MacLeod, "Kriegsgeologen and Practical Men. Military Geology and Modern Memory," 1914–18, in: *British Journal for the History of Science* 28 (1995), pp. 427–450, here 438–450.

overseas resources, expeditions conducted under the auspices of civilian geographical societies for the purpose of locating natural resources in conquered territories were of great importance.¹⁵ Representatives of related sciences also joined these scientific crusades. The Austrian Balkan expedition, for instance, set out to develop an ethnographic map of the region. Similar undertakings offered an opportunity to articulate beliefs in the colonising mission of the state: "The Austrian state's eminently proper and noble understanding of its cultural mission, which was exhibited in its deep investment in scientific studies of the conquered territories, was everywhere a source of pride and satisfaction."¹⁶ Bulgarian scientists took part in two expeditions aimed at producing a scientific (primarily ethnographic) description of the newly-acquired territories of Macedonia and Dobruja.¹⁷ The German Makedonische Landeskommission (Malako) was created for a similar purpose.¹⁸

The extent of geographers' involvement in the war effort is illustrated by the content of professional journals. *Geographical Journal* and *Geographical Review* vigorously debated the question of the ethnic diversity of the Habsburg empire, concluding that the state had to be dismantled.¹⁹ French geographers joined the 'war of the spirits' too, but they did not assume primary roles. Articles that brought the stereotype of the Teutonic barbarian back to life appeared only sporadically in *La Géographie*. Much more room was devoted to the landscapes and population of allied Belgium.²⁰ The editorial boards of the *Geographische Zeitschrift*, *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin* or *Dr. A. Petermanns Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes' Geographischer Anstalt* considered it their duty to introduce their readers to the theatre of war and the territories that had become the object of fighting.²¹

¹⁵ Ibidem, 432.

¹⁶ "Österreichische Balkanexpedition," in: *Zeitschrift für österreichische Volkskunde* 21–22 (1915–1916), p. 201; cf. also: Ch. Marchetti, "Austro-Hungarian Volkskunde at War: Scientists on Ethnographic Mission in World War I," in: *Doing Anthropology in Wartime and War Zones*, World War I and the Cultural Sciences in Europe, eds. R. Jöhler, Ch. Marchetti, M. Scheer, Bielefeld 2010, pp. 207–232; Marchetti, "Scientists with Guns. On the Ethnographic Exploitation of the Balkans by Austro-Hungarian Scientists before and during World War I," in: *Ab Imperio* 1 (2007), pp. 165–190.

¹⁷ П.Хр. Петров, *Научна експедиция в Македония и поморавието 1916*, София 1993; П.Хр. Петров, *Научна експедиция в Добруджа 1917*, София 1994.

¹⁸ S. Troebst, *Das Makedonische Jahrhundert. Von den Anfängen der nationalenrevolutionären Bewegung zum Abkommen von Ochrid 1893–2001*, München 2007, pp. 10–12.

¹⁹ Helfferan, *Geographie*, p. 51.

²⁰ Cf. G. Ahlbrecht, *Preußenbäume und Bagdadbahn. Deutschland im Blick der französischen Geo-Disziplinen (1821–2004)*, Passau 2006, pp. 118–122.

²¹ Cf. A. Hettner, "Unsere Aufgabe im Kriege," in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 2011 (1914), pp. 601–603.

Aside from providing geographers with new responsibilities, the war hastened their professional careers. Territorial gains enabled the study of thus far uncharted lands. Such was the experience of German scholars accompanying the eastbound armies and that of their Austro-Hungarian colleagues in the Balkans. Their skills proved useful to forming plans for a new European order, which began to take shape during the war. German geographers generally considered annexation a key component of change. Austrian geographer Georg A. Lukas identified principal territorial demands, including: the Territory of Belfort; a part of the French Lorraine; a fragment of the French and Belgian coastline that would secure Germany from any future North Sea blockades by the British; an "advantageous conclusion of the Vistula question"; and the completion of the Berlin-Baghdad railway and expansion of the African colonies. "First of all, though, our nation should embrace its desires and shrug off pernicious modesty; where there is not enough will, there can be no way for the fatherland to achieve greatness."²²

As Woodruff D. Smith observes, there were two sides to this German imperialism: on the one hand there was the liberal program of expansion, which found its most perfect embodiment in Friedrich Naumann's concept of Mitteleuropa, and on the other the pursuit of a European *Lebensraum* for the Germans, which would then be settled by colonists – a concept inspired by Ratzel.²³ Differences between the two programmes manifested themselves primarily in internal policies. They found expression in the conservative critique of Naumann's plan of economic and political integration.²⁴ In the eyes of Ernst Hunkel, an economist and Volkist political activist, Naumann's "Middle European" provided unnecessary competition for Germans conscious of their blood heritage.²⁵ In spite of Naumann's belief in the dominant position of German culture in the region, many of his enemies saw the idea of a federation of nations bound together by common economic interests as a veiled attempt to liberalise political relations in the Reich. Besides, for the rising numbers of German chauvinists, even this broad expansionist framework seemed not radical enough. For them, annexation of land, rather than people, was a primary goal. The memorandum presented in June 1915 to the Chancellor by Friedrich

²² G.A. Lukas, "Der Weltkrieg und die Schulgeographie," in: *Kartographische und schulgeographische Zeitschrift* 4 (1915), pp. 41–44, here 43, quot. from: Schultz, *Geographie?*, vol. 1, pp. 202–203.

²³ W.D. Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism*, Oxford 1986, pp. 143–147.

²⁴ I used the expanded edition: F. Naumann, *Mitteleuropa. Volksausgabe mit Bulgarien und Mitteleuropa*, Berlin 1916.

²⁵ E. Hunkel, "Mitteleuropa und die Polenfrage," in: *Der Panther* 4:8 (1916), pp. 1002–1013, here 1006.

von Schwerin, the District President in Frankfurt (Oder), called for the annexation of Courland, a part of Lithuania, as well as the Suwalki district and a strip of land along the borders of the Kingdom of Poland. Of the population of those territories, only Latvians were to be spared resettlement to the east. Schwerin believed that the Baltic peoples could be fairly easily Germanised due to the strong German influence on their native culture.²⁶ In numerous projects, both secret and published, Baltic Germans – a group which drew the most interest in public debates on this topic – demanded support from the Reich for their Teutonic brethren, as well as an expansive settler effort. Methods of claiming land for the farmers which were expected to arrive from deep inside the Reich were discussed. Controversies focused not so much on the very idea of colonisation, but rather on the extent of the effort. The demands put forth by Max Sering, an agronomy professor from Berlin who advocated expelling the native populations of the entire territory between Suwalki and Finland – with the exception of the Latvians – and replacing them with two million Germans, were seen by many proponents of expansion as far too brazen.²⁷

In principle, the Mitteleuropa concept did not entail mass resettlement. Its basic premise was that Germany occupied a culturally hegemonic position in Central and Eastern Europe. Nations of the East (but also those of the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland) willingly entered into an economic and political bond with Germany precisely because of the attractiveness of German culture. The Breslau geographer Joseph Partsch went so far as to oppose any annexation plans: "Even the most brash of optimists ought not to dream of a bolder redrawing of Germany's eastern border ... We must not forget that attaching large territories inhabited by alien peoples will strengthen not the Reich, but rather ... the centrifugal forces in our homeland."²⁸ Friedrich Naumann himself doubted whether nations which boasted a long history, such as the Czechs or the Polish, could ever be Germanised. He also advocated legal guarantees of the linguistic and cultural autonomy of non-German minorities. In spring 1917, the creator of the Mitteleuropa concept travelled to the Kingdom of Poland, visiting Warsaw and Łódź together with Wilhelm Feldman, the Polish political activist, while collecting information about the situation of the Polish Jews.²⁹

While the plans taking shape in Germany were hardly devoid of panache, they were also clearly inconsistent. In May 1915, the Russian Front was breached near Gorlice. The July issue of a liberal journal published by proponents of expansion featured an article written by Paul Rohrbach, a Naumann sympathiser and an activist for the self-sufficiency of non-Russian nations of the Russian Empire. The piece serves as a formidable example of the intermingling of the two dominant visions of a new order in Central and Eastern Europe. Rohrbach expected that the new situation would yield annexations and a territorial expansion of the Reich by some 30%. Latvians and Lithuanians, he believed, would soon succumb to a swift and willful Germanisation. The Poles would be granted an independent state stretching as far east as possible. Any doubts regarding the efficacy of Germanisation in the annexed territories were dispelled with a historical argument: "Where else did our Eastern Prussians come from if not from a mixture of German and Lithuanian blood – and yet, how stout a German breed they have become!"³⁰ Rohrbach's generosity toward Poland waned with the conclusion of the Treaty of Brest in February 1918, which gifted the Chełm area to the Ukrainian People's Republic. Before the Reichstag ratified the treaty, Albrecht Penck, geographical advisor to the General Staff, explained it to the parliamentarians.³¹ Naumann greeted the treaty with enthusiasm. From the Reichstag podium, he announced: "The historian of culture Viktor von Hahn once said that the Elbe was a boundary between Europe and Asia. The act that we see before our eyes now marks an attempt to shift Hahn's border eastward, up to the line connecting the White Sea to the Black Sea."³² In these new circumstances, Poland ceased to play the role of a bastion safeguarding Germany from Russia. As a result, many hoped that the young state would be annexed.

This sort of fluid transition from the idea of economic cooperation to that of territorial aggression hardly generated optimism among observers whose countries stood to be affected. Staking one's political hopes on such transitory, and at times quite ominous, contingencies did not seem a viable option. From this point of view, Woodruff D. Smith's distinction between a liberal *Weltpolitik* and the annexationist, conservative idea of *Lebensraum*, appears rather impractical. Not coincidentally, both in studies published in the West, and in those produced in Central and Eastern Europe, German imperialism is treated

26 L. Kiewisz, *Sprawy lotewskie w polityce Niemiec w latach 1914–1919*, Poznań 1970, p. 25.

27 Ibidem, pp. 64–65.

28 J. Partsch, "Deutschlands Ostgrenze," in: *Zeitschrift für Politik* 8 (1915), 14–27, quot. from: J. Pajewski, "Mitteleuropa," *Studia z dziejów imperializmu niemieckiego w dobie pierwszej wojny światowej*, Poznań 1959, p. 94.

29 Pajewski, "Mitteleuropa," pp. 121, 215.

30 P. Rohrbach, "Am Scheideweg der deutschen Zukunft," in: *Das Größere Deutschland* 28 (1915), pp. 905–916, here 916.

31 F. Goltzowski, *Deutsche und Ukrainer 1914–1939*, Paderborn 2010, p. 238.

32 Quot. from: Pajewski, "Mitteleuropa," p. 306.

as an intrinsically varied, but still singular phenomenon.³³ Janusz Pajewski justifies this approach by invoking the immensely colourful example of Georg Cleinow, the leading German expert on the Polish question, who “in February 1918, claimed that the creation of a ‘bulwark’ against Russia was in the best interest not only of Germans, but also of their neighbours; but in March said that Poles were an obstacle ... in relations between Germany and Russia; and then, in June, that is, after the annexation of Livonia and Courland had been announced, he advised that the Kingdom of Poland be treated as if it were still a Russian possession.”³⁴ All of Cleinow’s conceptions here were informed by Friedrich Ratzel’s thinking about space. Rudolf Kjellén, a disciple of Ratzel, interpreted war as a struggle for survival between states, which were conceived as living organisms. While Germany was exposed to potential aggression from almost any side due to its central location, the same fact also gave it hope for dynamic expansion that would inevitably lead to the relocation of local populations. Within this conceptual framework, Central and Eastern Europe played a pivotal role: it was here that, following successes on the front lines, German geographers ceased to distinguish between particular countries and nations, and started to observe instead vast expanses inhabited by amorphous peoples – essentially, a near-vacuum waiting to be occupied.³⁵

Natural Borders

This is the proper context of the unparalleled rise of interest in the geography of Central and Southeastern Europe in Germany and Austria-Hungary. The ongoing war furnished arguments for the financial and organisational support of German and Austrian scholars.³⁶ Real and potential allies were carefully scrutinised – a fact that contributed to a veritable deluge of publications devoted to Turkey and Bulgaria, and later also Ukraine and Finland. Territories occupied by the Central Powers became the setting for certain peculiar developments. In official publications, the presence of German and Austro-Hungarian occupiers was portrayed as a civilising mission performed for the

33 Cf. e.g. [J. Gabrys-Paršaitis], Ober-Ost. Le plan annexionniste allemand en Lithuanie.

C. Rivas (ed.), Lausanne 1917.

34 Pajewski, “Mitteleuropa,” p. 368.

35 V.G. Lulievicius, Kriegsgeländ im Osten. Eroberung, Kolonisierung und Militärherrschaft im Ersten Weltkrieg. Trans. J. Bauer, E. Norke, and F. Engemann, Hamburg 2002, pp. 212–216.

36 A typical example of the many publications devoted to this question is: Fritz Regel, Die deutsche Forschung in türkisch Vorderasien, Leipzig 1915 (Länder und Völker der Türkei, 7).

sake of the local populace. The negligence of Serbian and Russian rulers in particular lent credence to such statements.³⁷ The geography of Polish lands was grouped together with that of unused territories under Russian rule. In an attempt to bridge that gap, governor-general Hans von Beseler – who was, incidentally, chairman of the Geographical Society of Berlin – presided over the production of a multi-volume *Handbuch von Polen*. The first volume of this publication included a statement that captured the attitude of German scholars: “of a territory this close to our borders we know nothing beyond the distorted, faulty, and partial evaluations found in western European literature. In spite of the magnificent work of Polish scholars, Poland often figures as a *terra incognita*.”³⁸ In spite of the praise, none of those Polish authors was invited to cooperate with the Landeskundliche Kommission, which had been formed in 1916. In a highly positive review of the work, Joseph Partsch concluded: “Thus does this work, which is so rich in content, grant access to a splendidly well-spring of unmatched learning for an interested and industrious spirit; not only for the German nation, but doubtless also for the educated people of Poland, this is as important a gift as any nation saved from the gravest depths of oppression has ever owed its saviours.”³⁹

The reactions of Polish professional reviewers, however, were quite different from Partsch’s expectations. The yearbook of *L’viv’s Kosmos magazine* for 1917 – published after a 2-year delay – included extensive discussions of all chapters of the *Handbuch*, complete with German summaries. The response was scathing. The primary charge was that its authors lacked familiarity not only with Polish, but with any non-German-language works describing Poland: “Ignorant of the Polish language, German scholars will have first to put a hand to the plough before they can claim any real knowledge of the abundance – as the editors themselves put it – of pertinent writings by Poles.”⁴⁰ For a sense of the resonance of these reviews, one need only consider the following remarks

37 Cf. Zwei Jahre deutscher Arbeit im Generalgouvernement Warschau. Berlin 1917, pp. 22–24; Bericht über die Verwaltung des Kreises Belgrad-Land in der Zeit vom 1. November 1915 bis 31. Dezember 1916. Belgrad 1917, pp. 5–6; A. Penher, Bericht über die 1916 im Auftrage und auf Kosten der Kaiserl. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien ausgeführte zoologische Forschungsreise in Serbien und Montenegro, Wien 1916; E. Oberhummer, “Montenegro und Albanien unter österreichisch-ungarischer Verwaltung,” in: Mitteilungen der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Geographischen Gesellschaft in Wien 61:7 (1918), pp. 313–346.

38 F. Pax, Pflanzengeographie von Polen (Kongress-Polen), 2nd edition. Berlin 1918 (Beiträge zur polnischen Landeskunde, Reihe A, 1), Introduction.

39 J. Partsch, “Das Handbuch von Polen,” in: Geographische Zeitschrift 24:2–3 (1918), pp. 68–76, here 76.

40 “Ocena dzieła Handbuch von Polen,” in: Kosmos 42 (1917), p. 105.

by Jan Stanisław Bystroń, evaluating the ethnographic part of the German publication:

Forests are inhabited by wood nymphs, faeries, sprites, and werewolves, all governed by the forest spirit. How odd this nature is, which cannot conceive anything if not in a hierarchy, and an alien hierarchy at that, since the forest spirit is clearly of Russian origin ... I suspect that a homework assignment written by eight-year old Hans for his elementary school in 'Hohensalza', or any other primeval German town, on the subject of "Das Erntefest bei den Wasserpölen" would look quite similar.⁴¹

The vehement response of the Polish scholars served as a forceful declaration of their subjectivity. Not without reason, they perceived assertions about Polish lands and people put forth by others without consultation as expressions of scientific imperialism. The professional flaws of the *Handbuch* gave the reviewers an opportunity to conduct an especially spectacular assault on their competitors. Yet their reviews – or, polemics, rather – were not limited to ruthlessly vilifying the amateurish work of their German colleagues; they also picked up on several issues of particular import to the geographic "war of the spirits." One of the first vivid expressions of dissatisfaction with the resonance and quality of the works of German scholars can be found in Stanisław Pawłowski's review of Partsch's *Der östliche Kriegsschauplatz*: Pawłowski's general impression of the work is best captured in this cursory observation: "In essence, German science has little to say about Poland."⁴² In the review quoted earlier, Jan Stanisław Bystroń criticised what he called "regional gymnastics," by which he meant Arved Schultz's tendency to correlate ethnographic groups with currently valid political boundaries:

Much like the "westliche Gruppe," which was conceived for the purpose of distinguishing Poles under Prussian rule as a separate entity resistant to joining the Polish core in the Kingdom and exhibiting marked differences, so the division into a northern and southern group roughly reflects more or less the boundaries between the present-day German and Austrian occupation zones. Whether this division is also meant to justify certain 'facts accomplis', or whether it illustrates a sort of intellectual

41 J.S. Bystroń, review of: A. Schultze, *Volkskunde*, in: *Kosmos* 42 (1917), 145–149, 147–148, "Hohensalza" (Ger.) – Inowrocław; "Das Erntefest bei den Wasserpölen" (Ger.) – harvest feast among the Wasserpölsaks.

42 S. Pawłowski, review of: J. Partsch, *Der östliche Kriegsschauplatz* (Lipsk 1916), in: *Kosmos* 42 (1917), pp. 202–204.

inertia and inability to view ethnic relations through any other lens than that of state politics, is something that I cannot ascertain.⁴³

In this brief observation, Bystroń identified two problems: the drawing of borders in accordance with geographic and ethnographic reality on the one hand, and the national and regional identification of peoples living within these borders on the other. By its very nature, the concept of territoriality inscribed in these two problems generates conflict;⁴⁴ and this would only be exacerbated were the problems to be debated during wartime.

To careful readers of geographical studies, the idea of natural borders might seem dated. Arnold Toynbee went so far as to refer to them as "the most artificial that can be drawn, and are simply a euphemism for the momentary conquests of brute force."⁴⁵ War – wrote F. Schmidt in the *Geographischer Anzeiger* – concerns political space, and no state will curb its territorial ambitions for the sake of a natural or unnatural border.⁴⁶ Austrian geographer Alexander Supan wrote (referring between the lines to Italian schemes of conquest):

From time to time, one hears here and there about 'natural borders.' We will call them theoretically [emphasis in the original – M.G.] natural borders, as they are rooted not in nature itself, but in certain ideologies. They are born in the immature heads of doctrinaires and dreamers who are disconnected from reality, or in the mature brains of unprincipled politicians in search of powerful and popular catchphrases. The birth of such cold political passion can release unusual force, as long as it can dress up a naked drive for conquest, a 'sacro egoismo' ... in the sanctimonious, but still impressive garb of scientificity. Meanwhile, the issue here is not the borders themselves, but what they contain and what is being claimed in the name of nature, nationality, or history.⁴⁷

Despite such sentiments, it was the correspondence between natural boundaries and postulated state borders that set the tone for debate in the

43 Pawłowski, review of Partsch, p. 146.

44 D.M. Smith, "Introduction. The Sharing and Dividing of Geographical Space," in: *Shared Space, Divided Space. Essays on Conflict and Territorial Organization*, eds. M. Chisholm, D.M. Smith, London 1990, pp. 1–21, here 3–9.

45 A.J. Toynbee, *The New Europe. Some Essays in Reconstruction*, London 1915, p. 39.

46 E. Schmidt, "Krieg und Geographie," in: *Geographischer Anzeiger* 16:1 (1915), pp. 2–3, cited in: Schultz, *Geographie?*, vol. 1, p. 204.

47 A. Supan, *Leitlinien der allgemeinen politischen Geographie*, Leipzig 1918, cited in: Schultz, *Geographie?*, vol. 1, p. 213.

work of European geographers during the war and subsequent conflicts. Characteristically – and unsurprisingly – the standing of the scholar was correlated with the political situation of his state of origin. Following the defeat of Romania by Mackensen's army, economist Arthur Dix observed on the pages of *Geographische Zeitung* that the country had lain within its natural borders even before the war, and that the drive to take over Transylvania contravened the laws of nature as well as the national interest.⁴⁸ Romanian authors invoked the same laws of nature, claiming that "just as the Egyptian is inseparable from the Nile, and the Italian from his peninsula and the Mediterranean Sea, so the Romanian race is inextricably tied to the mountainous ciadela of Carpathia and the plains – Wallachian and Pannonian – at the foot of these mountains."⁴⁹ German geographers predominantly subscribed to an offensive mind frame, expressed by questioning the natural character of French borders. Friedrich Gustav Hahn, professor of geography at Königsberg, engaged in a polemic with Vidal de la Blache's concept of France's geographical individuality.⁵⁰ Without disqualifying the Frenchman's thesis in its entirety, Hahn rejected his claims to France's exceptional nature, thus robbing the entire construct of all meaning. If there were more geographical individualities in the world – Hahn believed – French individuality could no longer be deemed exceptional. Of course, Germany, too, constituted a geographical individuality "unmatched anywhere in the world."⁵¹ Siegmund Günther, Ratzel's successor in the geography department at the Munich polytechnic, voiced his doubts about the naturalness of Belgium's borders much more emphatically. His position was typified by his persistent references to Belgium as a "state" in quotation marks. In Günther's view, the German-Belgian border was an outcome of the typically non-scientific attitude of European diplomacy during the Vienna Congress. This "state" owed its borders to misunderstandings, ignorance and the carelessness of dilettantes scribbling pencil lines on maps. "Geographical interests of a higher order were pushed to the periphery."⁵²

Paul Vidal de la Blache was similarly subject to 'defensive' scrutiny. In his geographical works, he referred to Lorraine as part of France even when it belonged to the Reich politically. This attitude was criticised in Germany on numerous occasions, also with reference to arguments from international

law.⁵³ Karl Sapper, a specialist in Mesopotamian geography and another of Ratzel's disciples, also questioned Vidal de la Blache's claim (which was prevalent in French popular opinion) that the Rhine constituted a natural boundary between the two countries. In Sapper's view, historical arguments based on evidence from antiquity had lost all validity. French ambitions found no support in the country's economical development or natural growth, since Germany boasted higher figures in that regard. Following regulation, the river itself no longer played the same role. A 'straightened' Rhine could never be deemed a 'natural' border. Furthermore, the lands on either side of the river had formed an economic, cultural, and linguistic unity.⁵⁴

The defence of Germany's claims to Alsace and Lorraine constituted an isolated example of German geographers' efforts to safeguard their state from foreign incursion. Compared to the much more numerous works on German territorial expansion, works devoted to this subject are often coloured by striking displays of insecurity. Such is the resonance of the postulates for a consistent Germanisation of town names in specific regions in order to "stress the political ... belonging of this German territory."⁵⁵ Anxiety over the fate of the fatherland is far more evident in works by Austro-Hungarian geographers. The ethnographic argument customarily invoked in other contexts was of no use here. On the other hand, the almost universally accepted interpretation of Austria-Hungary as an economic entity seemed less suitable for propaganda.⁵⁶ Attempts to locate the natural boundaries of the Habsburg monarchy typically involved identifying some parts of the state as being less significant politically, geographically, and economically – peripheral to the extent that to lose them would strengthen the whole instead of weakening it. Austrian geographer Robert Sieger considered the territories around the Middle Danube as the core of the country. Within his framework, Galicia figured as a foreign body: in case of a victory, it would become a separate province; in the case of Austria-Hungary's defeat, losing it would not represent a dramatic change.⁵⁷ Given the lack of any scientific legitimacy to the state's borders, Austrian scholars were forced to seek recourse in the spiritual values of Austria-Hungary's historical mission.

53 Cf. K. Strupp (ed.), *Unser Recht auf Elsaß-Lothringen*, München–Leipzig 1918.

54 K. Sapper, "Elsaß-Lothringen in französischer Beleuchtung," in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 24:5–6 (1918), pp. 154–168, here 165–168.

55 P. Paulin, "Die Ortsnamendeutschung in Elsaß-Lothringen," in: Dr. A. Petermanns Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes' Geographischer Anstalt 62:4 (1916), pp. 121–127, here 121.

56 Cf. e.g. A.J. Toynbee, *Nationality & the War*, London, Toronto 1915, pp. 102–103, here 108.

57 R. Sieger, "Die geographischen Grundlagen der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie und ihrer Außenpolitik," in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 21:1 (1915), pp. 1–22; 21:2 (1915), pp. 83–105.

48 A. Dix, "Rumänien," in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 24:10 (1918), pp. 310–324, here 311.

49 S. Mehedini, *Le pays et le peuple roumain. Considérations de géographie physique et de géographie humaine*, Bucarest 1937, p. 3.

50 F.G. Hahn, "Frankreichs Eigenart," in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 21:7 (1915), pp. 361–372.

51 *Ibidem*, 372.

52 S. Günther, "Belgiens Grenzen," in: Dr. A. Petermanns Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes' Geographischer Anstalt 61:3 (1915), pp. 169–171, here 171.

Erwin Hanslik's *Österreich: Erde und Geist* (1917) was one such enterprise. The author, whose pre-war interests were focused on the nationalist study of German settlements in Slavic areas, altered his views during the conflict.⁵⁸ He considered the "Austrian" a peculiar Eastern European psychological type. The role of the Austrian state was to implement political organisation in a region where fair borders between nations were impossible to draw.⁵⁹ "The spirit of Austria" was born "of the earth."⁶⁰ Another way of dealing with the border legitimisation crisis was to invoke the idea of Central and Eastern Europe – with or without reference to Naumann – as a major natural region with Austrian lands at the centre.⁶¹ Hanslik believed that the monarchy rested on a framework provided by two truly German nations – Austrian Germans in the West and Ukrainians in the East: "The former spread from the peaks of the Alps down to places where the mountains are merely silhouettes on the horizon; the latter inhabit the the area along the forests of Carpathia up to the steppes. Germans and Ukrainians will forever remain Austrian, and not just citizens of the same state."⁶² The Austrian geographer believed – not without a reason – that unity could only prevail if all peoples inhabiting the monarchy's territories abandoned the idea of forming an independent nation state with relatives beyond the borders of Austria-Hungary. As a result, he opposed not only the maximalist programs of Polish, Italian, and Ukrainian activists, but also those of many Austrian Germans who dreamed of unification with the Reich. The eventual dissolution of the monarchy was seen as geographically inevitable – in no way comparable to the territorial losses of the Reich. In 1920, Hans Simmer observed:

The states can only sustain a finite number of variegated landscapes. There remain regions that are not organically part of it in physical terms, but rather belong to adjacent landscapes; thus, as loose additions and fragmented entities, they weaken the state instead of contributing to its strength. Annexation is usually the work of politicians desirous of new conquests. Thus, in the case of Austria-Hungary, the state owned territories in the Po valley, Galicia, and Bukovina that were entirely disconnected from the heartland and constituted a burden to the state. A similar geographical aberration occurred before and is now occurring again in

58 Cf. E. Hanslik, *Biala, eine deutsche Stadt in Galizien*. Geographische Untersuchung des Stadtproblems, Wien-Teschchen-Leipzig 1909.

59 E. Hanslik, *Österreich. Erde und Geist*, Wien 1917, pp. 19–20.

60 E. Hanslik, *Österreich*, Wien [1918], p. 103.

61 Hanslik, *Österreich*, p. 11.

62 *Ibidem*, p. 26.

the French Alsace; France also lays claim to a similar territory in Flanders. These examples illustrate vividly the unnatural status of the borders that the French deem 'natural'.⁶³

The dynamic situation on the fronts led the geographers to shift their interests to ever new countries. The natural or unnatural character of borders consistently remained a crucial question. Before we look more closely into this battle of geographical arguments, it would be useful to outline the basic methodological positions invoked in the conflict. These are encapsulated in the works of Karl Haushofer, a scholar inspired by Ratzel, and of the entire German school of geopolitics. According to the German geographers, a region's geographical coherence depended on its economic self-sufficiency and the consistency of natural and cultural landscapes.⁶⁴ This perspective allowed no room for the idea of borders drawn along rivers or mountain peaks, since such lines crossed natural regions, disrupting the *Lebensraum* of the inhabitants. For Haushofer, badly drawn borders sowed the seeds of future conflicts. He offered a much more positive view of borders drawn with respect for organic nature – according to climatic regions or along the boundaries of incidence of a particular type of vegetation.⁶⁵ Haushofer consistently stressed that borders were not just lines on the map, but areas of friction between cultures and nationalities, which were difficult to distinguish clearly, if only because of discrepancies between the language and the culture of the inhabitants.⁶⁶

New Arguments

Post-war geopolitics also owed a lot to debates of the preceding decade – a fact amply illustrated in the examples Haushofer and others invoked in their theoretical considerations. For example, the pernicious impact of borders drawn along rivers was proved with a historical argument: ancient Teutons – like modern Germans – understood geographical space as a unity and eschewed

63 H. Simmer, *Weltpolitische Fragen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der geographischen Grundlagen und des Deutschturns*, Nürnberg 1920, p. 19, quot. from: H.-D. Schultz (ed.): *Geographie?*, Berlin 2004 (Arbeitshefte des Geographisches Institut der HU, 100), p. 97.

64 O. Maull, *Über politischgeographische-geopolitische Karten*, in: Bausteine zur Geopolitik, eds. K. Haushofer, E. Obst, H. Lautensach, O. Maull, Berlin–Grunewald 1928, pp. 325–342, here 329.

65 K. Haushofer, *Grenzen in ihrer geographischen und politischen Bedeutung*, Berlin–Grunewald 1927, pp. 75–76, here 98.

66 *Ibidem*, pp. 6–8.

divisions within it. Meanwhile, Latin peoples – like the modern French – stood by their “subtle” theories of waterways.⁶⁷ Even more such manifestations can be found in postwar works of German geographers concerned with territories ceded to Poland. But the practice of illustrating geographical theories with examples taken directly from the fronts of the Great War was a characteristic feature of scholarship throughout Europe. Albrecht Penck expressed views similar to those of Haushofer in his study of the Austro-Italian border in the Alps.⁶⁸ In his view, Tyrol constituted a typical transit region and it would be a mistake to divide it in two with the border running along the peaks of the mountains. These were easily accessible from the north and did not prevent settlers from moving southward, aided by the similarity of the environment on either side of the mountains. Penck’s conclusion drew practical consequences from the concept of biological borders: Austria ought to stretch as far south as Central European fauna and flora do. The ‘organic’ border in this case ran along the line dividing Alpine spruces and Italian olives. Penck’s position was well received among his German and Austrian colleagues. Karl Sapper stressed that mountains formed singular organisms and any divisions among them contravened the nature and culture of communities inhabiting such regions. Austro-Hungarian exploits at the Isonzo were offered as testimony to the power the state derived from indivisible mountainous territory.⁶⁹ Sapper’s logical conclusion pointed to the applicability of the same reasoning to the French-German border in the Vosges, which would then have to be moved to the mountains’ western slopes.⁷⁰

Natural phenomena were also invoked by Italian geographers in arguing for the annexation of Dalmatia. In this case, however, they initially yielded to strategic and historical considerations. The latter obviously derived from the Roman and Venetian past of the region. According to Paolo Revelli, the land rightly belonged to the only nation that had given it civilisation.⁷¹ Dalmatia was also deemed necessary to Italy for the protection it would provide to the eastern banks of the Apennine Peninsula, which supposedly lacked defences against assaults from the sea. Geologist and geographer Giotto Dainelli came up with a much more imaginative justification for this proposition:

67 Ibidem, p. 75.

68 A. Penck, *Die österreichische Alpengrenze*, Stuttgart 1916.

69 K. Sapper, “Über Gebirge und Gebirgsgrenzen. Eine anthropogeographische Skizze,” in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 24:4 (1918), pp. 115–129, here 128.

70 Sapper, *Die Vogesengrenze*, in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 24:7 (1918), pp. 220–222.

71 P. Revelli, “Una questione di geografia: l’Adriatico e il dominio del Mediterraneo orientale,” in: *Rivista Geografica Italiana* (1906), pp. 9–112, quot. from: Lucio Gambi, op. cit., p. 83.

Dalmatia may physically belong to the Balkan Peninsula ... but ... it constitutes an independent region, the natural character of which is tightly connected to nearby Italy. ... The narrow strip of land that forms Dalmatia and the steep mountain range enclosing it create an unbroken geological – one might even say morphological – continuation of the hills overlooking Venice ... Located on the opposite side of the sea, along the entire eastern coast of Italy, Dalmatia is a profusion of rocks ... which can be considered a remnant of the Dalmatian foothills, now buried under the sea. In these expanses, stretching as far as Leuca in Apulia, we find the same type of landscape, the same geological attributes and structures, the same absence of surface waters, and the same rivers appearing just beside the seashore.⁷²

In this instance, the arguments of Italian scholars stood in obvious opposition to the approach of Jovan Cvijić, who believed that the entire Balkan Peninsula formed a singular “Dinaric” region. The conflict between the two states, both at least formally party to the same alliance, smouldered quietly on the pages of opinion-making titles in Great Britain and France.⁷³ Briefly following the termination of military activities, the American *Geographical Review* and the British *Geographical Journal* became battlegrounds for the war between proponents of both theories. In May Cvijić had published an article claiming that each Balkan nation inhabited its own natural environment.⁷⁴ To the Italian claims he responded with nationalist arguments and invocations of common sense: “Even for a layman, it is entirely clear that the sea forms a natural boundary between the Balkan Peninsula and Italy.”⁷⁵ In this case, geology and physical geography formed the basis for the formation of ethnic relations.⁷⁶ Cvijić’s theses were disputed by Giovanni Roncagli, who accused the Serbian scholar of replicating the activity of German geographers. This was a well-measured punch, given that Cvijić was a disciple of Albrecht Penck. The latter’s works provided Roncagli with colourful illustrations of a new perspective on the problem of

72 G. Dainelli, “La Dalmazia,” in: *Pagine geografiche della nostra guerra*, Roma 1917, pp. 123–145, quot. from: Gambi, op. cit., 84; cf. S. Puccini, “Le immagini delle razze balcaniche nell’antropologia italiana tra le due guerre,” in: *La Ricerca Folklorica* 34 (1996), pp. 59–70, 61, 62.

73 H. Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary during the First World War. A Study in the Formation of Public Opinion*, London 1962, pp. 8–89.

74 J. Cvijić, “The Geographical Distribution of the Balkan Peoples,” in: *Geographical Review* 5:5 (1918), pp. 345–361.

75 Ibidem, p. 359.

76 J. Cvijić, *Frontière septentrionale des Yougoslaves*, Paris 1919, p. 30.

defining boundaries. The Italian scholar dubbed the approach of Penck and his disciples a “futurist geography.” In his view, Cvijić completely disregarded the geological unity of Dalmatia and eastern Italy, and – like Penck – sought after a scientific justification for the seizure of Italian territories beyond the river Po.⁷⁷ In his polemic, the Serb rejected all charges, protesting against such comparisons with particular vehemence: “It is not me, but Roncagli,” wrote Cvijić, “who follows the prescriptions of German geographers, looking to geology and botany in vain attempts to prove that the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea constitutes an integral part of its western coast.” The debate went on for a while still, but no new arguments were invoked.⁷⁸

Similar reflections took a particularly arresting shape in the works of Penck’s Ukrainian pupil, Stepan Rudnytskyi. Before the war, Rudnytskyi had published several works devoted to the geography of Ukraine, which soon saw print in German and, toward the end of the war, in several other languages as well.⁷⁹ An expert for the Ukrainian parliamentary representation in Vienna, he also authored wall maps for Ukrainian schools in Galicia shortly before the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy. Rudnytskyi’s guiding idea was the geographical unity of the postulated Ukrainian state (covering a territory extending well beyond the boundaries of contemporary Ukraine). A political wall map authored by him depicted the political borders of Central and Eastern Europe with the extent of Ukrainian settlement highlighted. In his geographical works, Rudnytskyi skillfully employed concepts devised by Western European geographers: “In Eastern Europe, natural regions and anthropogeographic entities are divided not by seas or mountains, but by morphological shadings, hydrogeographical and climatic boundaries, pedological relations and plant geography.”⁸⁰ Ukraine differed from its neighbours tectonically as well. According to Rudnytskyi, the country lay on a separate tectonic plate with an entirely different geological history from that of the rest of Europe. Even in terms of hydrography, the area was said to be unified and clearly outlined.⁸¹

77 G. Roncagli, “Physical and Strategic Geography of the Adriatic,” in: *Geographical Journal* 53:4 (1919), pp. 209–223, here 211–214.

78 Cvijić and Roncagli’s letters to the editor were published in: *Geographical Journal* 54:1 (1919), pp. 65–68.

79 I. Stebelsky, “Putting Ukraine on the Map. The Contribution of Stepan Rudnytskyi to Ukrainian Nation-Building,” in: *Nationalities Papers* 39:4 (2011), pp. 587–613, here 596.

80 S. Rudnytskyi, *Ukraina. Land und Volk. Eine gemeinliche Landeskunde, Wien* 1916, p. 5. Basic information on Rudnytskyi’s academic career are included in his biography: П. Штойко, *Степан Рудницький 1877–1937. Життєписно – бібліографічний нарис*, Львів 1993.

81 Rudnytskyi, *Ukraina*, p. 10.

From a broader perspective, Ukraine was distinguished from other European countries by having been spared the final ice age.⁸²

Rudnytskyi had to reckon with opposition from foreign professionals. It seems that the hardest blow against his ideas was delivered by Alfred Hettner, an esteemed German scientist whose monograph on Russia contained words of praise for Aleksander Brückner, but accused Rudnytskyi’s works of excessive politicisation. Perhaps more importantly, Hettner doubted that there existed any objective data allowing for a sensible differentiation between the nationalities of the Russian empire. In particular, he criticised the “attempt at justifying Ukraine’s political independence by means of claims to a unity of its internal structure.”⁸³ It seems likely that this dispute was coloured by personal views.⁸⁴

More significantly, Rudnytskyi’s theories clashed with those of his Lviv University colleague Eugeniusz Romer. Briefly before the war, the latter had entered into a dispute with Waclaw Natkowski, who saw Polish territories as a transit region with no definite boundaries.⁸⁵ Romer responded to this concept by proposing the thesis that Polish lands were a “territory branded by political necessity.”⁸⁶ This position completely contradicted the visions of the East cherished by German geographers during the Great War. Fritz Braun contrasted Germany, with its natural borders (“from the mountains to the sea”), to Poland, which lacked them. Furthermore, Polish rivers, unlike those in the West, seemed to have no economic or cultural value. Climate, too, made Poland a transit state as a “bridge between the Teutonic West and the Slavo-Finno-Tatar East.”⁸⁷ Meanwhile, Romer ascribed the lands of Poland to Western Europe because of their climate. He saw them as an ‘intermarium’ bound together by numerous waterways and set visibly apart from the entirely separate Russian system: “There is no artificial road that would bind any of the Russian rivers to those of ancient Poland because there is no space in this environment where such a road could be erected to anyone’s benefit ... This is no accident!”⁸⁸

82 Cf. G. Haustmann, “Das Territorium der Ukraine. Stepan Rudnytskyi’s Beitrag zur Geschichte der räumplich-territorialen Denkens über die Ukraine,” in: *Die Ukraine. Prozesse der Nationsbildung*, ed. A. Karpeler, Köln, Weimar Wien 2011, pp. 145–158, here 149.

83 A. Hettner, *Rußland. Eine geographische Betrachtung von Volk, Staat und Kultur*, 3rd ed., Berlin 1916, p. 304.

84 Cf. Hettner, review of S. Rudnytskyi, *Ukraina. Land und Volk. Eine gemeinliche Landeskunde* (Wien 1916), in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 22:4 (1916), p. 230.

85 J. Babicz, “Two Geopolitical Concepts of Poland,” in: *Geography and National Identity*, pp. 212–220.

86 E. Romer, *Przeglądzone podstawy Polski historycznej*, Lwów 1912, p. 2.

87 F. Braun, “Die geographischen Bedingungen der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse Polens,” in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 23:12 (1917), 561–573, 561–567.

88 *Ibidem*, p. 44, quoted in: E. Romer, *Poliska. Ziemia i państwo*, Kraków 1917, 29.

According to Romer, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth represented the most perfect adjustment to geographical realities. To make that claim, Romer had to eschew meridional divisions and reject the idea of Central Europe popular during wartime. “Meanwhile, in Europe, observed Romer, the internal structure of the crust, the shape of the surface, the waterway network and finally the climate can be said to demand an equatorial division. In Europe, it is not East against West, but North against South.”⁸⁹ From Romer’s perspective, the distinction between Polish and Ukrainian lands found no confirmation in geomorphology, and even the belief that Ukraine had a different climate than Poland, which was held not only by Rudnytskyi, but by Emmanuel de Martonne as well, was unjustified. Ukraine, he wrote, “is a transitory climatic region physically bound to Poland in so many ways that the attributes of its transitory climate cannot tear this bond apart ... Common territorial and natural circumstances are a force that in spite of all distinctions (if these are marked at all) ... requires that nations find the means to coexist peacefully!”⁹⁰

Romer’s *Geograficzno-statystyczny atlas Polski* (Geographico-Statistical Atlas of Poland), published in 1916, provided a crucial argument for his position. Besides including descriptions in Polish, German, and French, he also strove to promote the work in the West.⁹¹ The quality of the maps and the geographer’s professionalism won him praise even from German reviewers who elsewhere disapproved of him.⁹² In his preface, Romer firmly expressed his views on the character of the Polish lands: “The mutual interconnection of all Polish territories occurs by way of a great network of waters and natural roads in the watershed of the middle Vistula. Not only does this network hold the key to explaining the territorial history of Poland, but nearly all phenomena of the cultural history of the Polish lands can be reduced to this common bond with the Vistula, which both received and bestowed influence.”⁹³ Romer’s work had a massive political potential which attracted the attention of both the proponents and the detractors of the Polish national movement. The fact that he identified Poland’s 1772 borders as a natural point of departure for his geographical study gave Max Friedrichsen (who incidentally had authored a positive review

89 Romer, *Przyrodzone podstawy*, 29.

90 Romer, *Polska*, 59, 74.

91 Romer, Poland, *The Land and the State*, in: *Geographical Review* 4:1 (1917), 6–25.

92 Cf. M. Friederichsen’s review in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 24:5–6 (1918), pp. 190–191; cf. also R.F. Kaindl in: Dr. A. Petermanns *Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes’ Geographischer Anstalt* 65:3–4 (1919), p. 69.

93 E. Romer, *Geograficzno-statystyczny atlas Polski*, Warszawa–Kraków 1916.

of Rudnytskyi Ukraine book)⁹⁴ a reason to criticize both his lack of political realism and the utopian imperialism of Poland’s territorial agenda. Rudnytskyi expressed similar opinions.⁹⁵ Indeed, Romer’s *General Remarks*, dated late December 1915, left no room for doubt as to the political ambitions of the atlas: “May what the numbers show of Poland and the Poles instruct our people and awaken the prudence and kindness of those who would find answers to the Polish question. These numbers tell us how the world is ruled!”

What had raised doubts among German observers was welcomed with enthusiasm by Stanisław Pawłowski, reviewing the atlas for *Kosmos*. His article is an invaluable sample of the diction that geography came to employ in inter-war Central and Eastern Europe. Pawłowski focused on charts depicting relations between nationalities, writing about Polish “islands” and “peninsulas” within alien ethnographic environs, and about the national “state of ownership,” not only in relation to the adjacent nationalities, but also to Jews. Finally, he lauded the idea of including Lower Silesia and Oppeln Silesia among Polish territories since “we possess historic rights to Silesia in the same manner as ethnography, along with history, grants us significant prerogatives with regard to Lithuania and Rus.”⁹⁶ Pawłowski castigated the isolated Polish voices questioning the accuracy of this broad definition of the Polish lands: “Thus, we see no difficulty in drawing the proper borders of Poland and hold no doubts as to their shape. Such doubts belong only to those who cannot tell what Poland really is!”⁹⁷

Ethnopsychology, Race and Geography

In the debate over Romer’s atlas further concepts characteristic for the geographical ‘war of the spirits’ were voiced. The first of these tied in logically with Penck’s claims concerning the botanical bases of national borders. If the political affiliation of a given territory could be decided by the local flora and landscape, there had to exist a relationship between the natural phenomena and the psychology of the people inhabiting the lands. This idea, derived from German scientific discourse, was appropriated in multiple ways. Still during the war, *Národopisný věstník československý* published ethnographer Viktor

94 M. Friederichsen, review of S. Rudnyčkyi, *Ukraina. Land und Volk. Eine gemeinfaßliche Landeskunde* (Wien 1916), in: Dr. A. Petermanns *Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes’ Geographischer Anstalt* 63:10 (1917), pp. 314–315.

95 Cf. Siebelsky, *Putting Ukraine on the Map*, p. 599.

96 [S. Pawłowski], review in: *Kosmos* 41 (1916), pp. 205–210.

97 *Ibidem*, p. 207.

Dvorský's essay on the bonds between Czechs and the lands they inhabited.⁹⁸ According to the Dvorský, Bohemia formed an enclosed area inhabited by a single nation. All islands of foreign settlement – German and Hungarian – that went beyond the surrounding mountains were merely incidental. A geomorphological dualism could only be observed in Moravia, extending partially into the Carpathian Mountains. The characteristically hilly landscape left a mark on the psyche of Bohemia's inhabitants. Viktor Dvorský noted a possible psychological likeness between Bohemians and the inhabitants of the Carpathian Mountains and the Alps. Sadly, both groups succumbed to cultural influences of their brethren from the plains: "Having accepted the world-view of the northern Germans as their own, the Germans to the west and north of Bohemia in particular deviated from the spirit of the land they inhabited; hence the linguistic division transformed into a contradiction of irreconcilable social world-views."⁹⁹ At the dawn of Czechoslovak independence, Czech sociologist Emanuel Chalupný picked up on this strain of thought, claiming that the characterological proximity between Czechs and Slovaks boiled down precisely to their ties to mountainous areas, and naming the same cause as the cause of differences between Slovaks and Hungarians.¹⁰⁰

Geography and ethnopsychology were also combined in theories identifying European nations with the steppe landscape of Central Asia. During the war, the eminent politician and secretary of the Hungarian Geographical Association Pál Teleki played a part in animating the activities of the Turanian Society (Turáni Társaság).¹⁰¹ In the first issue of the *Turan* magazine, he published a manifesto describing the relationship between landscape and race:

Turán [bold in orig. – MG] is first of all a landscape. It is the steppes of Eurasia, whose climatic vacillation competes with that of the desert. The characteristic type of landscape requires a specific form of life. The steppe amalgamates the hordes and tribes inhabiting it; its boundless singularity prohibits the erection of borders between nations. Seldom does the will of the leader collect all or some of those tribes in massive, but unstable states. To seek a common origin or language in these parts

98 V. Dvorský, "Česká půda a lid," in: *Národopisný věstník československý* 13:1 (1918), pp. 31–35.

99 *Ibidem*, p. 34.

100 P. Hashinger, "Hungarian Motifs in the Emergence and the Decline of a Czechoslovak National Narrative, 1890–1930," in: *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, ed. N. Wingfield, New York 2003, pp. 169–182, here 172.

101 B. Ablonczy, Pál Teleki (1874–1941), *The Life of a Controversial Hungarian Politician*, Trans. Th. J. Dekornfeld, H.D. Dekornfeld, Wayne (NJ) 2006, pp. 22–34.

is pointless, but a community of existence is always present in the shape of a common life-style, whose strains persist even among those who have left these parts behind.¹⁰²

In Russian Eurasianism, this idea was expressed in the concept of *mestorazvitye* (the whole of human and natural activity within certain geographical space). The Eurasian steppe became a source for a specific 'Turanian' psychological type, the polar opposite of the western European. The life of such a 'Turanian' was permeated by harmony; indisposed to reflection, his nature agreed perfectly with his austere surroundings and the spirit of community. The union of peoples who represented such attributes was extremely desirable. This had once been achieved by Genghis Khan; and for a while contemporary Eurasians hoped that the Bolsheviks would bring about a final realisation of that program.¹⁰³ It is worth noting that in contrast to many similar characterological theories, Russian Eurasianism often invoked the natural sciences: botany, geology, and geography. Its proponents did not abstain from reflecting critically on the work of their Western colleagues, who trapped as they were in the spatial dimensions of a cramped continent were unable to comprehend the expansive thinking of modern Russian science.¹⁰⁴

An even more common motive recurring in the debates over the work of Eugeniusz Romer and in other international disputes of this period was that of defining the appropriate approach to ethnic relations. Even before 1914, the conflict over Macedonia set the stage for discussions on that issue.¹⁰⁵ Due to the ethnic identity of the country's inhabitants – and for moral reasons – it was thought that Macedonia should be incorporated into Bulgaria. Serbia¹⁰⁶ had subjugated Macedonia, which was purely Bulgarian, and is governing it in an inconceivably barbarous manner.¹⁰⁶ Bulgarian academics, journalists, and men of culture supplied innumerable evidence for the ethnic, historical, and cultural ties between Macedonia and Bulgaria. They also benefited from the support of foreign authors both during the nineteenth century and after.

102 P. Teleki, "Táj és faj (Landschaft und Rasse)," in: *Turan* 1:1 (1917), pp. 17–30, here 30.

103 R. Bäcker, *Międzywojenny eurazjatyzm. Od intelektualnej kontrakturacji do totalitaryzmu?*, Łódź 2000, pp. 75, 96.

104 S. Wiederkehr, *Die eurasische Bewegung. Wissenschaft und Politik in der russischen Emigration der Zwischenkriegszeit und in postsozialistischen Russland*, Köln 2007, pp. 76–77.

105 Cf. S. Troebst, "Macedonia heroica. Zum Makedonier-Bild der Weimarer Republik," in: *Südost-Forschungen* 49 (1990), pp. 293–364, here 304–312.

106 "Warum Bulgarien mit uns geht. Eine bulgarische Denkschrift," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 8–9.10.1915, 16.

Dymitar Mishev cited earlier works by western European cartographers and ethnographers.¹⁰⁷ Even before 1917, Dymitar Ricov, Bulgarian ambassador to Berlin, had collected – and commented upon – scores of maps by German, Russian, French, and British geographers, invariably recognising the numerical superiority of Bulgarians both in Macedonia and in Dobruja.¹⁰⁸ A map of nationalities of Macedonia compiled by Yordan Ivanov, a member of the Bulgarian Academy and professor of Sofia University, showed only a fractional Serbian presence.¹⁰⁹ Like the German authors, as well as Romer and Rudnytskyi, Anastas Ishirkov (a student of Ratzel) invoked the “powerful force of the laws of geography” binding Dobruja to the motherland.¹¹⁰ Similar arguments were addressed to both domestic readers and the Central Powers, and after the cessation of hostilities to the victorious powers as well.¹¹¹ As in every other East European “war of the spirit,” foreign authors siding with the Bulgarians played a key role in debates over the question of Macedonia and Dobruja. Many of these authors represented nations that could hardly be accused of pro-Bulgarian sympathies. Among them was the Czech Balkanologist Vladimír Šis, who condemned Greek and Serbian falsifications and argued, based on linguistic proofs, that Macedonia had been Bulgarian long before the establishment of the Bulgarian state.¹¹² The same standpoint was adopted by the American commentator Albert Jay Nock.¹¹³ The Russian ethnographer Nicolai Dierzhavin also considered Macedonians to be Bulgarians.¹¹⁴

The oft-repeated arguments – by both Bulgarian and foreign authors – were essentially very straightforward. Macedonians were simply declared to be Bulgarians: they spoke a dialect of the same language, shared the same history

¹⁰⁷ D. Mischef, *Die Wahrheit über Mazedonien*, Bern 1918, pp. 4–6.

¹⁰⁸ D. Rizoff, *Die Bulgaren in ihren historischen, ethnographischen und politischen Grenzen 679–1917*, Atlas mit 40 Landkarten, ed. M. Lozanova, Berlin 1917 (reprint Sofia 1992).

¹⁰⁹ J. Ivanoff, *La question macedonienne au point de vue historique, ethnographique et statistique*, Paris 1920.

¹¹⁰ A. Ischirkoff, *Les Bulgares en Dobroudja, aperçu historique et ethnographique*, Bern 1919, p. 5.

¹¹¹ Cf. e.g. A. Kiproff, *Die Wahrheit über Bulgarien. Eine Darstellung der bulgarisch-serbischen Beziehungen und der Grund Bulgariens an dem europäischen Krieg teilzunehmen*, Bern 1916; Ivanoff, *La question*; Ischirkoff, *Les Bulgares*.

¹¹² V. Šis, *Mazedonien. Eine Studie ueber Geographie, Geschichte, Volkskunde und die wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Zustände des Landes mit statistischen Ergänzungen*, Zürich 1918, pp. 40–53.

¹¹³ Historicus [Albert Jay Nock], *Bulgaria and her Neighbors: An Historic Presentation of the Background of the Balkan Problem, One of the Basic Issues of the World-War*, New York 1917.

¹¹⁴ N.S. Derschawin, *Über Makedonien. Wissenschaftliche und kritische Untersuchung*, Leipzig 1918, p. 15.

and culture with their kinsmen, and had the same ethnic origins. These claims appeared all the more credible given the absence of any effort to prove the ethnic homogeneity of these territories. It was accepted that Macedonia was “racially a tower of Babel” but with Bulgarians clearly in the majority.¹¹⁵ Bulgarian geographers conceded that parts of the region were inhabited by Pomaks (whom they classified in any case as ethnic Bulgarians), Turks, and Albanians. On the other hand, they disregarded all Serbian territorial claims because, in their opinion, there simply were no Serbs in Macedonia. Paradoxically, however, it was Serbian science that posed the most serious challenge for them.

Already at the turn of the century, Jovan Cvijić defined the main tendencies for future Serbian research. He accepted that Macedonia was a hodgepodge of nationalities; however, historically speaking, the basis for this mixture were the Serbians. Later alterations resulted from the Turkish rule. A population that identified itself as “Serbs” as late as the fourteenth century, came to use the designation “Bulgars,” but without any ethnic significance.¹¹⁶ To be sure, the ethnographic maps compiled by Cvijić did not incorporate Macedonians directly into the Serbian community, but they were marked as a distinct group (with a different colour on the map) from the Bulgarians. More importantly, the anthropogeographer classified them characterologically as representatives of the “central type,” which differed from the Bulgarian “eastern type.” The “psychological” border between Serbian and Bulgarian characterological types ran in the vicinity of Sofia.¹¹⁷ Macedonians and the inhabitants of western Bulgaria were thus categorised as an “ethnographic mass” which, though a frequent object of Bulgarianisation due to the proximity to the Bulgarian capital, in more advantageous conditions would pass for “pure Serbians.”¹¹⁸ Cvijić’s idea proved sufficiently attractive to inform the official position of the Serbian government.¹¹⁹

The reasoning of the Serbian anthropogeographer doubtless exemplifies his exceptional intellectual flexibility. Despite the feebleness of the arguments he invoked, the calm, scientific tone of his writing still finds more favour with the readers than the nervous reactions of the proponents of Macedonia’s

¹¹⁵ V. K. Sugareff, “The Bulgarian Nationality of the Macedonians,” in: *Journal of Race Development* 9:4 (1919), pp. 382–393, here 382.

¹¹⁶ Швиничъ, *Македонские Славяне. Эт нографическія изслѣдванія*, Петроградъ 1906, pp. 1, 30.

¹¹⁷ J. Cvijić, *La Peninsule Balkanique. Geographie humaine*, Paris 1918, p. 165, with unnumbered maps appended.

¹¹⁸ M. S. Stanoyevich, “The Ethnography of the Yugo-Slavs,” in: *Geographical Review* 7:2 (1919), pp. 91–97, here 95.

¹¹⁹ Cf. A. Mitrovic, *Serbia’s Great War 1914–1918*, London 2007, p. 99.

'Bulgarianness'. In an English-language publication devoted to the ethnography of Macedonian Slavs, he criticised both Bulgarian and Serbian 'chauvinists' seeking to control a population devoid of national consciousness or a common historical past, or even a literary tongue.¹²⁰ Vladimir Šiš engaged in a frontal assault on the Serbian anthropogeographer. He accused the presumed geologist of spreading "a false view on the Macedonian question, consisting in ignoring the Bulgarianness of the Macedonians and in manufacturing of a new nation of 'Macedonian Slavs' unknown to science or reality. He describes this new Slavic race as a shapeless mass, capable of transforming itself into an arbitrarily chosen national form ... I, in turn, avow: Macedonia is a country inhabited by true Bulgarians. Serbians are merely alien colonisers here! Macedonian Slavs are not a shapeless mass but a population which has long been fully prepared to manifest its national consciousness as Bulgarians, for an entire century torn apart from Bulgaria, struggling for spiritual and political liberation."¹²¹

The ethnic structure of Macedonia was sufficiently complex for the Bulgarian-Serbian dispute not to exhaust all possible interpretations of the issue. In his brief study addressed to the delegates at the peace conference, Albanian politician Midhat Frashëri criticised the position of both the Bulgarian geographers and Cvijić. In any case, he considered their dispute to be of secondary importance in face of the fact that the population of the western part of the disputed territory was mostly made up of Albanians who should be integrated with their newly-established home state. Economic arguments justified this solution as well.¹²² In particular, Frashëri rejected claims about an 'Albanisation' of an initially Serbian population. Accusing Cvijić of political manipulation, he emphasised that Albanians were actually the aboriginal population in the area.¹²³ Already during the First Balkan War, Ilie Bărbulescu, professor of the university in Iași, raised similar claims. He noted that both Bulgarians and Serbians (meaning Cvijić) claimed the authority to decide the fate of Macedonia, as if the country was not inhabited by people of other nationalities, such as Aromanians.¹²⁴ On the other hand, the Austrian geographer Norbert Krebs, who was not directly involved in the Balkan dispute, spoke highly of the lectures Cvijić gave at the Sorbonne during the war. In his opinion, Cvijić successfully attempted to fulfil the research program of "géographie sociale," even if the Serbian scholar, "despite his declared and often stressed pursuit

120 J. Cvijić, Remarks on the Ethnography of the Macedonian Slavs, London 1906.

121 Šiš, *Mazedonien*, pp. 93–94.

122 I. Skendo [Midhat Frashëri], *Albanais et Slaves*, Lausanne 1919, pp. 21–22.

123 *Ibidem*, p. 62.

124 I. Bărbulescu, *Relations des Roumains avec les Serbes, les Bulgares, les Grecs et la Croatie* (1912), ed. A. Ionescu, Pitești 1999, pp. 62–73.

of objectivity, does not refrain from embracing positions which would not be shared by Bulgarians or Albanians."¹²⁵ Eugen Oberthummer spoke similarly: although the reader was advised that Cvijić's discussion of questions pertinent to Serbian politics did not stand up for scrutiny, the scholar's exceptional quality was beyond question.¹²⁶ Cvijić's indubitable professionalism made it impossible to criticise his works as sharply as the Poles did the *Handbuch von Polen*. With the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine determining Bulgaria's territorial losses concluded, to continue debating the Yugoslav position would amount to engaging in revisionist propaganda. Bulgarian scholarly elites did not engage in it as extensively as did intellectuals in several other countries defeated in the Great War.

Despite the convictions of Stepan Rudnytskyi and Eugeniusz Romer that the geological and geophysical shape of their homelands alone defined the most natural political borders for their countries, maps and statistics of national allegiance came to play a significant role in the Polish-Ukrainian dispute, particularly in relation to the Chelm region. The dispute, dating back to the pre-war period, focused on figures. Both sides treated official Russian statistics with distrust, unanimously denouncing them as politically motivated falsification.¹²⁷ But the consensus ended when it came to drawing conclusions from that observation. In the works of Rudnytskyi and his followers, the guiding assumption was that all inhabitants of the disputed areas who were listed as Russians in the census were in reality Ukrainians. The decision seemed sensible, given that Russian official statistics did not include the category "Ukrainian" at all (Ukrainian was tolerated only as the so-called dialect of "Little Russian").¹²⁸ The justified distrust of the statistics convinced Ukrainian researchers additionally to increase the number of their compatriots. As a result of these manipulations, Stepan Rudnytskyi's ethnographic map showed an area of dense Ukrainian settlement not only in the Chelm region and contemporary Ukraine, but also in most of Belorussia. To the east, the settlements stretched beyond the Sea of Azov, nearly reaching the Caspian Sea, and to the west, they ranged up to the far outskirts of Warsaw, including Siedlce for instance.¹²⁹

125 N. Krebs, "Zur Anthropogeographie der Balkanhalbinsel," in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 27:5–6 (1921), pp. 120–126, here 121.

126 E. Oberthummer, review of J. Cvijić, *La Péninsule balcanique*, in: *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv* 15:4 (1920), pp. 533–537, here 537.

127 Cf. e.g. Rudnyčkyj, *Ukraina*, pp. 131–132; E. Romer, *Polska i Polacy*, Kraków 1916, p. 22.

128 Cf. e.g. E. Lewickij, *Ukraine, Ukrainer und die Interessen Deutschlands*, Berlin 1915, pp. 8–9.

129 Map appended to: S. Rudnyčkyj, *Ukraina und die Ukrainer*, Vienna 1914.

This method of handling Russian statistics was not foreign to Polish scholars. They successfully used it to question detrimental conclusions about the national make-up of the Vilnius and Grodno (Hrodna) regions. Furthermore, their rough estimates found confirmation in the census of 1916, organised by the German occupation authorities (in the absence of thousands of, mostly Orthodox, evacuees to central Russia).¹³⁰ Nevertheless, Ukrainian territorial claims faced extremely critical reactions. Shortly after the Central Powers took the Chełm region, Stanisław Niedzielski entered into a debate with Rudnytskyi and Lonhin Tshehelskyi, decrying their treatment of Russian statistics. In a logical argument, he noted that the Tsarist authorities strove to inflate the number of "Russians" in these territories at the expense of the Poles, which meant that there were not even the slightest grounds for supplementing the figure. Commenting on one of the ethnographic maps presented in the *Ukrainische Nachrichten*, he caustically highlighted the inclusion of predominantly Jewish townships, such as Hrubieszów or Włodawa, in the ethnically Ukrainian territory, though the Russian census listed no more than 8% of Great Russian inhabitants in them.¹³¹

This rivalry over the national identity of the population of the Polish-Ukrainian borderlands played a highly significant role in the depictions of the homeland that Rudnytskyi and Romer offered their compatriots. The decisive question was succinctly expressed by the latter in the title of one of his brochures, *Ilu nas jest?* (How many of us are there?). According to the Polish geographer, the Polish population, which numbered a little over 26 million in 1910, increased to over 28 million in 1914. Rudnytskyi, at the same time, estimated the number of his fellow Ukrainians at over 34 million, thereby promoting them to the status of second largest Slavic nation.¹³² Romer concluded: "Thus, in the family of European nations, we are not a small nation, but a great one; and if today, in terms of our influence and role in history, at this moment of enormous struggle, we are smaller than almost the smallest of the nations of Europe, if we feel hard done and stifled, then the fault lies in our lack of complete independence, which is what allows nations to fully develop their creative powers for the benefit of themselves and humanity."¹³³

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Cf. J. Waskan, *Problem przynależności państwowej ziem byłego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w myśli politycznej obozu narodowego 1893–1921*, Bydgoszcz 2006, pp. 129–131.

131

S. Niedzielski, *Das erste Chełmland*, Lemberg 1915, pp. 20–23.

132

Rudnytskyi, *Ukraina*, p. 158.

133

E. Romer, *Ilu nas jest?*, Kraków 1917, p. 32. Cf. S. Kozicki, "Quanti sono i Polacchi," in: *Assegna Contemporanea VII (1914)*, p. 2.

The Polish-Ukrainian 'war of the spirits' saw a number of serious political shifts, which were not, however, accompanied by new directions in geographical publications. Both sides invoked similar arguments, not only when Ukrainians expressed their sense of betrayal as the Kingdom of Poland was established, but also when the Poles of Galicia angrily rebuked the prospect of handing disputed territories over to Ukraine in accordance with the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Geographical publications that accompanied this dispute suggest an analogy to parallel developments in the Balkans. Like Bulgarians in relation to Macedonia and Dobruja, Ukrainian authors concentrated their efforts on proving that a dominant majority of the inhabitants of the disputed areas were of Ukrainian nationality. Arguments by Polish scholars were somewhat more nuanced as well as cleverer. Romer, whose widely discussed atlas took the borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of 1772 as its point of reference, insisted that these borders did not reflect Polish demands. On the contrary, like Roman Dmowski, he accepted "concessions" to other nations of Central and Eastern Europe, vividly stressing that Poles were open to discussion and reasonable.¹³⁴

The obverse of this at least ostensibly scrupulous and professional posture was the patronising attitude toward those other nations. With regard to the future eastern provinces of Poland, this was expressed in the belief in Poland's civilising mission. In a memorandum presented to President Woodrow Wilson in October 1918, Dmowski argued that "Poles... represent a culture-bearing factor and are the main economic force throughout the territory of the eastern provinces."¹³⁵ The association of these territories with Poland was justified not so much by the proportion of the Polish population, but rather by political necessity: "The formation of independent Lithuanian and Ukrainian states would spell either anarchy or government by foreigners, Germans. Returning these lands to Russia would lead to no less to anarchy and to both intellectual and economic stagnation."¹³⁶ The failure of the attempts to create an independent

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Cf. B. Pastern, "Professor Eugeniusz Romer jako konsultant na rokowania pokojowe w Rydze," in: *Traktat ryski 1921 roku po 75 latach*, ed. M. Wojciechowski, Toruń 1998, pp. 89–109, 95; R. Dmowski, "Zagadnienia środkowo- i wschodnioeuropejskie (przez R. Dmowskiego) Londyn, lipiec 1917 roku," in: R. Dmowski: *Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa polskiego*, vol. 2, ed. T. Wituch, Warsaw 1988, pp. 225–286.

135

"Memoriał złożony przez R. Dmowskiego Prezydentowi USA W. Wilsonowi dnia 8 października 1918 r. w Waszyngtonie wraz z czterema mapami," in: *Akty i dokumenty dotyczące sprawy granic Polski na Konferencji Pokojowej w Paryżu 1918–1919 zebrane i wydane przez Sekretariat Generalny Delegacji Polskiej*, cz. I: *Program teytorjalny delegacji*, Paris 1920, pp. 64–65.

136

"Memoriał" pp. 66–67.

Ukraine served as an argument for this position and facilitated the achievement of a consensus across political lines of division. Leon Wasilewski, whose worldview differed markedly from the nationalistic views of Dmowski, observed that "the attempt to set up a 'Western Ukrainian Republic' on the ruins of Austria in Eastern Galicia revealed on the one hand the complete ill-preparedness of the sparse Ruthenian intelligentsia for the custodianship of this country; and on the other hand, the enormous strength of the Polish element, which with arms in hand prevented Ruthenians from taking over the country."¹³⁷

This "Polish element" in Eastern Galicia seemed to gain in strength as Polish statehood consolidated. Before the war, Eugeniusz Romer had tended to emphasise the common fate and interests of the nations bordering Russia. Nature itself condemned Poles and Ukrainians to cooperate with each other.¹³⁸ In 1916 he noted the necessity of a "Ruthenian" connection with Polish lands, stemming from geological and physiographical conditions: "This is why all the centres of Ruthenian culture are located either on drainage divides or on the outskirts of watersheds, connected to all spiritual and material wealth of the culture by roads staked at Vistula and ranging out to the peripheries."¹³⁹ Further data on the eastern areas found in Romer's atlas moved the *Kosmos* reviewer almost to elation. Eastern Galicia contained islands of Polish settlements, but their impact extended beyond the territory:

Even further east, an incredibly interesting phenomenon is taking place, with Poles being the owners of anywhere from 5% to over 40% of all the land and making up from 10% to 55% of voters in some districts of Lithuania and the Rus. So, some 180,000 sq km of land and nearly 40% of direct or indirect votes to local governments is a sizeable reason for persistent stressing of our rights to those lands.¹⁴⁰

In studies prepared by the Polish delegation at Versailles, Eugeniusz Romer, Wincenty Lutosławski and Jan Czekanowski emphasised that relations between nationalities in Eastern Galicia were so complicated that no delimitation was possible, although the Polish inhabitants of the region were undoubtedly characterised by a "superior social energy."¹⁴¹ Czekanowski wrote that only on the far eastern peripheries of Lithuania and Ruthenia did any national-religious

group constitute two thirds or more of the population.¹⁴² In 1919, as part of a series of geographical studies edited by him, Romer published a monograph by Stanisław Pawłowski on religious and national relations in Eastern Galicia.¹⁴³ The book belonged to a whole string of publications devoted to Poland's borderlands. The author criticised Stepan Rudnytsky's theses, which according to him "at times strayed from the truth," and contrasted them with the professionalism of the Polish atlas. Next, he analysed the relationship between religion and nationality to conclude that the entire Catholic population of Eastern Galicia, much like some members of the Greek Orthodox church, should be treated as Poles. "For history reveals ever more abundant evidence that the territory corresponding to the eastern part of Galicia was inhabited in the ninth century by a Lechite population, which subsequently succumbed to the Rus ... The Lechite population would have been ... the original foundation that was later covered by the mantle of the conquering Rus."¹⁴⁴ The Polish character of the region, however, did not disappear entirely in the early Middle Ages. Successive waves of settlers flowed in from Poland in later years, too, while "ever since Poland conquered Red Ruthenia, a broad, unending stream of Polish settlers, including representatives of all social strata, has flowed eastwards."¹⁴⁵ The only area in which Pawłowski was ultimately inclined to observe Ukrainian dominance was the Carpathian Mountains. For him, the lowlands were already of mixed national character; although the basis there, too, was Polish. This standpoint was shared by other Polish geographers in the inter-war period.¹⁴⁶

Paris Peace Conference and Beyond

The contribution that geographers made to the war effort, whether it was purely practical or undertaken for the sake of propaganda or ideology as well, thus outlived the conflict itself. Many currents of this scientific (and

¹⁴² J. Czekanowski, *Stosunki narodowościowo-wyznaniowe na Litwie i Rusi w świetle źródeł oficjalnych*, Lwów 1918, p. 44. Cf. also: *Les confins orientaux de la Pologne*, Paris 1919.

¹⁴³ S. Pawłowski, *Ludność rzymsko-katolicka w polsko-ruskiej części Galicji*, Lwów 1919 [Geographical works published by Eugeniusz Romer, 3].

¹⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 7–8.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. A. Dudziński, "Zmiany narodowościowe (wyznaniowe) na terenie trzech województw wschodnich Małopolski w świetle urzędowych spisów 1910–1920," in: *Pokłosie geograficzne. Zbiór prac poświęcony Eugeniuszowi Romerowi przez jego uczniów i przez Księgicę-Atlas*, Lwów, Warszawa 1925, pp. 15–28, here 23–26.

¹³⁷ L. Wasilewski, *Granice Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, Warszawa 1926, p. 8.

¹³⁸ Romer, *Przyrodzone podstawy*, p. 48.

¹³⁹ Romer, *Polska i Polacy*, p. 18.

¹⁴⁰ [S. Pawłowski], review, in: *Kosmos* 41 (1916), p. 210.

¹⁴¹ Cf. W. Lutosławski, E. Romer, *The Ruthenian Question in Galicia*, Paris 1919, p. 9.

pseudo-scientific) thinking developed throughout the inter-war period.¹⁴⁷ The apogee of this development, and the moment when geography took a central position both in politics on a major scale and in public discourse, occurred during the peace negotiations in Paris in 1918–1919. Geography suddenly became the depository of a knowledge that would determine the shape of the world. Years later, one of the participants in the negotiations recalled the following, almost symbolic picture:

One of the most picturesque scenes during the conference occurred in Wilson's drawing room in Paris. The President, kneeling on all fours, was poring over a great map spread out on the floor, with other statesmen in similar positions, Orlando crawling like a bear to get a better view during a terse and precise lecture on the economy and physiography of the Klagenfurt Basin. Maps were everywhere ... references to maps were a constant element of every discussion.¹⁴⁸

In Versailles, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Neuilly-sur-Seine, Trianon and Sévres, there was no shortage of geographers representing the victorious powers and the newly established states. The exception was Great Britain, whose delegation had almost no domestic specialists in this field. The French delegation, on the other hand, included the most eminent geographers, mostly disciples of Vidal de la Blache: Emmanuel de Martonne, Emmanuel de Margerie, Albert Demangeon, Lucien Gallois and Jean Brunhes. In the US, a preparatory commission for the future peace negotiations was set up as early as 1917 under the leadership of Edward Mandell House. The massive cartographic documentation collected by American geographers arrived in Europe together with Woodrow Wilson aboard the USS George Washington. Among the other delegations, two outstanding scholars – Jovan Cvijić and Eugeniusz Romer – stuck out.¹⁴⁹ Such experts played a key role in the preliminary work of the territorial commissions. The role of the Polish and Yugoslavian delegates almost immediately met with international recognition.¹⁵⁰ Meanwhile, some experts for the

147 A. Kirby, "What Did You Do in the War, Daddy?," in: *Geography and Empire*, pp. 300–315, 305.

148 Ch. Seymour, "Geography, Justice and Politics at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919," in: *The Versailles Settlement. Was it Foredoomed to Failure?*, ed. I. Lederer, Boston 1960, p. 108, quoted from: G. H. Herb, *Under the Map of Germany: Nationalism and Propaganda 1918–1945*, London, New York 1997, p. 17.

149 Heffernan, *Geography*, pp. 520–521.

150 Cf. "Geography at the Congress of Paris, 1919," in: *Geographical Journal* 55:4 (1920), pp. 309–312.

major powers proved so convincing in their endorsement of the national interest of countries in Central and Eastern Europe that they went on to receive the highest honours for their involvement in establishing the final, favourable shape of the borders. This opinion was expressed in gestures such as the granting of an *honoris causa* doctorate of the university in Cluj in Transylvania – along with honorary citizenship of the city, which had only recently been part of Hungary – to the "father of Greater Romania," Emmanuel de Martonne. Czechoslovak delegates also counted among the "privileged"; while the Finns, accused of overly strong ties to Germany, received little support from the victorious powers.¹⁵²

The resolutions of the peace conference were the fruit of the enormous labour of numerous delegations, which produced maps, gathered statistical material, and printed numerous brochures in order to influence the decision-makers. Among them, the front runners were the Poles, who entered territorial disputes with regard to almost every potential border, while internally they were preoccupied with the question of the Jewish population. The arguments they invoked, however, did not differ markedly from those of other delegations, combining at they did ethnographic data that clearly lent credence to the Polish cause (in Cieszyn Silesia for instance,¹⁵³ or in the plebiscite areas in East Prussia¹⁵⁴) with statistics about religious denominations¹⁵⁵, theses on the indigeneity of Poles in Eastern Galicia or in Gdańsk¹⁵⁶, cultural and historical arguments¹⁵⁷; geopolitical and climatic claims¹⁵⁸; as well as strains of ethnopsychology.¹⁵⁹ Though eclectic, the Polish position was not unprofessional, nor was it merely a testimony to political cynicism. As Glenda Sluga notes, it

151 T. Ter Minassian, "Les géographes français et la délimitation des frontières balkaniques à la conférence de la paix en 1919," in: *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 44:2 (1997), pp. 252–286, here 254.

152 J. Paasivirta, *The Victors in World War I and Finland. Finland's Relations with the British, French and United States Governments in 1918–1919*, Helsinki 1965, p. 40.

153 J. Buzek, *La question de la Silésie de Cieszyn*, Paris 1919.

154 W. Lutosławski, *East Prussia*, Paris 1919.

155 J. Buzek, *Les protestants polonais et la question des frontières occidentales de la Pologne*, Paris 1919.

156 W. Lutosławski, *Gdańsk (Danzig or Dantzick)*, Paris [1919]; Lutosławski, Romer, *The Ruthenian Question*.

157 *Les confins orientaux*.

158 W. Lutosławski, *Lithuania and White Ruthenia*, Paris 1919, p. 6.

159 "Memoriał," pp. 64–65; cf. A. Czubiński, "Problem obszaru i granic odrodzonego państwa polskiego w latach 1918–1922," in: *Problem granic i obszaru odrodzonego państwa polskiego (1918–1990)*, ed. A. Czubiński, Poznań 1992, pp. 49–70, and also the collection of publications of the Polish delegation: *Ekspertyzy i materiały delegacji polskiej na konferencję wersalską 1919 roku*, M. Przyłuska-Brzostek, Warszawa 2002.

convincingly reflected the manner of thinking of Western European experts. Demarcating borders was no longer the easy business of drawing lines along rivers or mountain chains. Strategic interests no longer sufficed as arguments. At the same time, ethnographic, sociological and psychological issues gained in importance, while decisions about the shape of particular states were informed by considerations of the nature and character of the nations inhabiting them.¹⁶⁰

One should not underestimate the informational role Polish, Czechoslovak, Romanian or Yugoslav specialists played during the conference. The scale of their involvement was enormous. As Ljubinka Trgovčević states, the Serbian commission employed by the delegation to Paris numbered around 200 members – roughly 80% of all Serbian intellectuals.¹⁶¹ In his memories of Paris, Romer exhibited great scepticism with regard to French experts' reports on Lithuania.¹⁶² But the problem ran much deeper than that. For instance, Ernest Denis held the view that both Ukraine's autonomy from Russia and the Bulgarian character of Macedonia were merely sentiments artificially produced among certain inhabitants of those regions by the heavy-handed propaganda of wartime. Another French expert on Russian affairs, Robert de Caix, wholeheartedly supported the beliefs of writers such as Aleksander Brückner or Stanisław Głąbiński, out of his conviction that Ukrainian identity was a form that lacked content, a project that a group of cynical intellectuals were attempting to impose on an amorphous peasant mass.¹⁶³ Such attitudes were doubtless affected by the fact that until recently leading Western European intellectuals had sought to resolve the Polish question – and if they accepted its existence, the Ukrainian one too – exclusively within the boundaries of the Russian Empire.¹⁶⁴ The temptation to present one's territorial claims in an advantageous form to the rather poorly informed representatives of the major powers often proved too strong. Vytautas Petronis perceptively noted that this phenomenon should not be treated as deception. The Lithuanian ethnographic maps he

160 G. Sluga, *The Nation, Psychology, and International Politics, 1870–1919*, Houndmills 2006, pp. 22–23.

161 L. Trgovčević, "Nauka o granicama: Jovan Cvijić na konferenciji mira u Parizu 1919–1920," in: *Zbornik Janka Pleterskega*, eds. O. Luthar, J. Perovšek, Ljubljana 2003, pp. 313–318.

162 E. Romer, *Pamiętnik paryski (1918–1919)*, ed. A. Garićki, R. Świątek, Wrocław 1989, pp. 170–171.

163 Sluga, *The Nation*, p. 29; cf. S. de Gasquet, "La France et les mouvements nationaux ukrainiens (1917–1919)," in: G. de Castelbajac, S. de Gasquet, G.-H. Soutou, *Recherches sur la France et le problème des nationalités pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale* (Pologne, Ukraine, Lituanie), Paris 1995, pp. 198–209.

164 Cf. e.g. Toynebee, *The New Europe*, pp. 54–56.

analysed were simply reflections, not of the current situation, but of the primeval state that according to the theories of local scholars antedated the Polishisation or Belarussianisation of some "Lithuanians."¹⁶⁵ However, given that the same temptation to create normative – rather than descriptive – maps affected everyone, differences of opinion, and even embarrassments, were bound to occur. Romer's diary includes a description of one such unpleasant moment. In April 1919, Robert Howard Lord, an American expert involved in the drawing of the Polish borders, met with Emmanuel de Martonne. Both had maps of Eastern Galicia delivered by the Polish and Ukrainian delegates. The comparison of the two documents showed that the contesting sides claimed rights to any territory in which more than 25% of the population was comprised of their compatriots. The Polish crimson overlapped with the Ukrainian blue, making the worst impression possible on outside observers.¹⁶⁶

In spite of these incidents, the representatives of the new states of East Central Europe coped unexpectedly well with the "game of colours." A revised edition of Romer's atlas published in the US in 1918 included an ethnographic map with the postulated border of Poland highlighted. All territories within that border were coloured red, even though, according to the legend, Poles constituted as little as 20% of the population of some regions.¹⁶⁷ The task facing Yugoslavian, Czechoslovakian and Polish delegations was certainly made easier by the fact that representatives of the defeated states were not invited to Paris. Even with this reservation, however, their savviness was uncontested. In any case, while the active participation of Germans, Bulgarians or Hungarians was out of the question, maps they produced were used during the congress. Paradoxically, the least-heard voice was that of a state that up to that point had set the tone for the professional development of geographical research.

The reasons for the hold-up of German geographers seem obvious. Before the First World War, their territorial interests focused on two lines of national and state expansion. Colonialism and the idea of *Lebensraum* developed at a time when the shape and existence of the German state seemed immutable. Only a small group of radical right geographers dealt with the question of the Germanic-Slavic borderlands, but even they felt no need to exaggerate German predominance in the region. On the contrary: these areas were already under control of the Reich. The point of their actions seems rather

165 V. Petronis, *Constructing Lithuania. Ethnic Mapping in Tsarist Russia*, ca. 1800–1914, Stockholm 2007, pp. 274–275.

166 Romer, *Pamiętnik paryski*, p. 293.

167 Herb, *Under the Map*, p. 21.

to have been to spark a reaction from the German public by highlighting a so-called Slavic threat. Hoping to drum up national and public support for colonising efforts, these scholars argued that with every passing decade, the eastern part of Prussia, Silesia, and the Lands of the Crown of Saint Wenceslas in Cisleithania were becoming more Slavic. In 1918 and 1919, such Volkist cartography provided arguments for Polish and Czechoslovak territorial claims.¹⁶⁸

The progress of the war, which long made the possibility of a defeat to Central Powers inconceivable, sustained this state of affairs. Only towards the end of 1918 did Albrecht Penck initiate a cartographic project to chart the ethnography of the Polish-German borderlands; but he was followed by a whole host of German geographers. Before their work yielded any results, it was too late to influence the decisions at Versailles. In any case, many such undertakings suffered from technical ineptitude. For example, excessively pale colours were used, making German territory less visible on the map than Polish lands. The manner in which the Masurian or Kashubian minorities were marked also went against the intention of the authors, with the territories they inhabited made all too similar to areas with Polish majorities.¹⁶⁹ On a map prepared by Herbert Heyde, professor of the University of Berlin, areas with a relative majority of German inhabitants were coloured in a particularly unfortunate manner. Not only did the white patches make it seem on first glance that these areas were uninhabited; they were also shaped like other areas that had a relative Polish majority.¹⁷⁰ There were suspicions of a Polish conspiracy behind the German-language cartographic publications. Such was the case with a 1918 map published by Jakob Spett in Austria, which showed Polish majorities in the Posen region, in West Prussia and in Upper Silesia.¹⁷¹ In some regions, particularly in Pomerania, German geographers faced a deeply problematic situation. The traditional ethnographic map of these parts, based on available statistical data, justified Polish claims to the so-called corridor. Districts with a Polish majority constituted an unbroken line to the sea. At the same time, the larger settlements were predominantly German. Albrecht Penck solved this problem by using circles in various colours, their size reflecting the number of inhabitants of a given ethnicity. A map fashioned according to this principle no longer

illustrated any continuity of Polish settlements in any region.¹⁷² While formally maintaining scientific reliability, it also responded to the political needs of the German state.

The initial reactions of German and Austrian geographers to the military defeat and territorial losses were characterised by poorly concealed frustration. It was commonly believed that the victorious powers had betrayed the principles of national self-determination they purportedly espoused, condemning Germans to a harsh fate under the rule of the newly created states. The latter were treated as transitory and immature creations, in accordance with the tradition of German thinking about the East. Fritz Braun, a geographer from Danzig, opened his article on "Neo-Poland" with a characteristic meditation: "Rapid mutation in the body's contours are typical of youthful and senile individuals, while entities at the peak of their development usually maintain more regular forms."¹⁷³ His Austrian colleague, Eugen Oberhummer, went to such great pains to adjust to the new situation that as late as 1920, he still considered it important to recall a map that the Austro-Hungarian forces had found in conquered Belgrade, depicting Serbian plans for a reconstruction of the continent at the expense of the Habsburg monarchy and Germany. In his view, the document served as final proof of Serbia's responsibility for the war.¹⁷⁴

Shaking off the shock did not take long. By early 1920s an institutional framework was created that fostered the dynamic development of a revisionist geography concentrated on Germans living beyond the new borders of the Reich. Activities replicating the work of Romer, Cvijić and other scholars received support from the German state.¹⁷⁵ These were precisely the conditions that gave rise to the geopolitical concept of borderlands as areas of unavoidable biological struggle for survival. According to a 1922 appeal by the Geographical Society, geography was to become a weapon for the German nation in the struggle for just borders in a situation in which all other means had been exhausted.¹⁷⁶ The struggle saw the use of all means heretofore applied to other fronts of "the war of the spirits." Thus, defences were mounted for the German

172 A. Penck, "Deutsch-polnische Sprachgrenze," in: *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin* 1-2 (1919), pp. 108-111.

173 F. Braun, "Von den Grenzen Neu-Polens," in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 28:1-2 (1922), pp. 1-5, here 1.

174 E. Oberhummer, "Die politische Karte Europas nach serbischen Plänen aus dem Anhang des Weltkrieges," in: Dr. A. Petermanns *Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes' Geographischer Anstalt* 66:9 (1920), pp. 190-192.

175 Rössler, "Wissenschaft und Lebensraum," pp. 54-56, 112.

176 P. Fischer, *Die deutsche Publizistik als Faktor der deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen 1919-1939*, Wiesbaden 1991, p. 72.

168 *Ibidem*, pp. 11-12.

169 *Ibidem*, pp. 37-39.

170 Cf. D. Häberle, "Der Anteil der Deutschen und Polen an der Bevölkerung von Westpreußen und Posen (nach A. Penck)," in: *Geographische Zeitschrift* 25:4 (1919), pp. 124-127.

171 M. Rössler, "Wissenschaft und Lebensraum," *Geographische Ostforschung im Nationalsozialismus. Ein Beitrag zur Disziplingeschichte der Geographie*, Berlin-Hamburg 1990 (Hamburger Beiträge zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte, 8), pp. 56-57.

minority in the form of prepared maps and statistics, while the role of German culture and history was stressed. Masurians, Kashubians, and Silesians were included in an expanded *Volksboden* (area of ethnic German settlement) on the basis of their purportedly belonging to the German *Kulturboden* (area of linguistic and cultural domination).¹⁷⁷ Meanwhile, the German *Schicksalsboden* (sphere of historical and economic impact) was extended far beyond the *Kulturboden*. These circles of German influence became the object of scientific interest for a new discipline linking anthropogeography with history, linguistics and ethnography – *Osforschung*. The refusal of the “dictate of Versailles” also found expression in German cartographers’ resistance to both the emergence and territorial shape of the new states. Kazimiera Jezowa, who studied the contents of German geographical journals and atlases in the early 1930s, pointed out not only the persistent adherence to an outdated eastern border of Germany, but also the retention of Russian place names in the territory of the former Congress Poland. Ironically, in her view, as late as 1918, Max Friedrichsen lauded the consistent use of traditionally Polish, pre-Russification place names by German geographers working in occupied Poland.¹⁷⁸ Ethnographic maps were also the source of bewilderment for the Polish scholar:

The map of the “Nations of Central Europe,” published by the Perthes Publishing House, uses the same colour for the Germans, Dutch, and Flemish, but distinguishes between Poles, Masurians, and Kashubians; as well as between the French and Walloons within France. Furthermore, despite the findings of German scientific research, the number of islands of German language was increased, while the number for Polish was reduced. Warsaw, a city with fewer than 1% German inhabitants, was listed as a German city in terms of nationality; Włocławek, which had a 1% German population, became Jewish-German.¹⁷⁹

On this front, too, the ‘war of the spirits’ raged on.

Revisionist propaganda developed somewhat more quickly in Hungary than in Germany. Already by October 1918 the idea of maintaining the unity of the lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen was being intensively propagated. A significant part in this process was played by Pál Teleki, who coordinated the work of statisticians and geographers. Criticisms of decentralising tendencies

invoked the civilisational maturity of the Hungarian nation, while promising a liberal solution for the minority question after the war.¹⁸⁰ As the conflict reached a conclusion, specialist publications addressed to foreign elites rather than the mass public came to the forefront. Maps and statistics prepared by leading Hungarian geographers argued that the national dynamic in the area required the maintenance of Hungary’s territorial integrity. To partition the country – it was claimed – would mean to damage both its culture (its elites being exclusively Hungarian) and economy. The Carpathian Basin was thought to be not only an economic area, but a territory with biologically defined “natural” borders. Hungarian documentation delivered to the Paris conference included studies that reiterated Hungary’s historical rights to its pre-war territories.¹⁸¹ The eventual decision of the major powers did nothing to curb Hungary’s information campaign: by winter 1920, a new wave of publications saw print.¹⁸²

Modern geography played a pivotal role in providing support for the Hungarian position – the more so since ethnographic arguments were of scant value there. Even official pre-war Hungarian statistics did not suggest that the country was nationally homogeneous; and despite some manipulations, post-war publications largely remained faithful to the truth.¹⁸³ Still, the low population growth of the Magyars was instrumentalised as proof of the exceptional tolerance characterising pre-Trianon Hungary. If the situation had been different – claimed János Mór Révai – then, considering the high reproductivity, low mortality, and the hygienic behaviour of the Magyars, they would have achieved absolute dominance ages ago.¹⁸⁴ Such claims were, at best, a double-edged sword. Assurances of the Magyars’ civilisational superiority over other nationalities and of their incomparably higher levels of education and property ownership exposed those who made them to the charge that this privilege

180 A. Kovács-Bertand, *Der ungarische Revisionismus nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Der politische Kampf gegen den Friedensvertrag von Trianon (1918–1931)*, München 1997 (Südosteuropäische Arbeiten, 99), pp. 45–49.

181 M. Hronský, *Boj o Slovensko a Trianon 1918–1920*, Bratislava 1998, pp. 239–252.

182 *Ibidem*, pp. 255–257.

183 Cf. e.g. the pocket atlas: *Névmutató Magyarország 1:300.000 méretű néprajzi téképhez a magyar kultúrgyminisztérium megbízásából*, eds. Z. Bátky, K. Kogutowicz, Budapest 1919, map of nationalities in pre-Trianon Hungary, p. 5. See also: Kogutowicz *zsebatlasza az 1922 évre*, 3rd edition, eds. Z. Bátky, K. Kogutowicz Budapest 1924 (1st ed.: 1921).

184 J. Révai Mór, *Magyarország integrása és a Wilsoni elvek*, Budapest 1920, 40, quot. from: P. Haslinger, “Im Schatten von Trianon. Konstruktionsversuche eines nationalen Territoriums und einer nationalen Wir-Gruppe in der ungarischen politischen Publizistik 1919–1939,” in: *Bilder vom Eigenen und Fremden aus dem Donau – Balkan Raum. Analysen literarischen und anderer Texte*, eds. G. Schubert, W. Dahmen München 2003, p. 287.

177 W. Volz, “Zur Einführung,” in: *Der ostdeutsche Volksboden. Aufsätze zu den Fragen des Ostens*, ed. W. Volz, 2nd edition, Breslau 1926, pp. 5–6, here 6.

178 K. Jezowa, *Politische Propaganda in der deutschen Geographie*, Danzig 1933, p. 63.

179 *Ibidem*, p. 67.

only proved the deplorable living conditions of the non-Magyar nationals in pre-war Hungary.¹⁸⁵ Historico-juridical motifs thus abounded primarily in publications intended for the national market. For readers abroad, other arguments were typically invoked.¹⁸⁶ This trend was set in the Geographical Society manifesto of February 1919, which invoked hydrographic, climatic, and geomorphological relations as justification for maintaining the integrity of the state.¹⁸⁷ Using the same method as Penck, Hungarian geographers turned to maps representing both nationality and population density. A map prepared in late 1918/early 1919 under Teleki's guidance used a selected colour only for the squares (representing 1 sq km) with more than 100 inhabitants. According to this optic, Romanian territorial gains in the Transylvania in particular figured as white, uninhabited blots in an area that was otherwise predominantly Hungarian. This also contravened a geographical argument made by the opposing side, which claimed that Magyars were by nature a people of the lowlands, whereas the mountains were inhabited exclusively by Slovaks, Romanians, and Ruthenians.¹⁸⁸ When emphasis was put on population density, however, this argument became meaningless. Because of this dominant colour – which was selected according to the rules of the art as representative of the dominant nationality – the map came to be known as the “carte rouge.”¹⁸⁹

Like Stanisław Pawłowski with regard to Eastern Galicia, Pál Teleki maintained that the lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen lost their primal Magyar ethnic character relatively late. However, he based his argumentation on the assumption that Hungary constituted a geographical entity analogous to France as described in the oeuvre of Vidal de la Blache: “Since the entire country – as a well-balanced regional synthesis – is enclosed in borders of exceptional geographical weight and power, it cannot be divided into natural regions.”¹⁹⁰ Peter Treitz and Károly Papp assigned primacy to natural conditions over relations between nationalities. The formation of states hinged on the environment rather than the language or origin of the people. In the case of Hungary, “geographical unity ... nurtures a sense of unity among peoples living within the same borders. The fact that nearly all Slovaks and Ruthenians

185 M. Zeidler, *Ideas on Territorial Revision in Hungary 1920–1945*, trans. Th.J. DeKornfeld, H.D. DeKornfeld, Wayne (NJ) 2007, pp. 72–73.

186 Kovács-Bertrand, *Der ungarische Revisionismus*, pp. 58–59.

187 *Ibidem*, p. 61.

188 Dominian, *Frontiers of Language*, p. 339.

189 Kovács-Bertrand, *Der ungarische Revisionismus*, pp. 67–70.

190 P. Teleki, *Short Notes on the Economical and Political Geography of Hungary*, Budapest 1919, p. 4.

who live in the mountains desire to retain Hungarian nationality testifies to that.”¹⁹¹ For Serbs, Croats, and Romanians, to change allegiance would amount to rejecting Western civilisation and regressing into the Balkan wilderness.¹⁹² In time, Hungarian geographers adopted the posture of Cassandra, foretelling the ills that would befall the world as a result of the violation of the laws of science: “States are not rootless things, but are rooted in the surface of the earth.... The wise men of the Peace Conference did not reckon with these relations, and ignored them when drawing the Trianon frontiers.”¹⁹³

In one of his wartime publications, Eugeniusz Romer described the transformation he experienced as a result of recent events:

As a climatologist and glaciologist by profession, I suddenly turned to sociology. During wartime, based on all extant official sources, I created ... a cartographic oeuvre in which I expressed in visually ... all aspects of the national, denominational, cultural and economic life on the territories of old Poland. The purpose of this work was to provide qualitatively and quantitatively precise answers to two questions: first, what are ... the traces of the former unity of the Poles; and second, what influence ... do the various types of organisations and cultures of other states exert on a partitioned country and subjugated nation.¹⁹⁴

A similar description would apply to the activities of both Jovan Cvijić and Stepan Rudnytskyi during the Great War. After 1918, revisionist movements and ethnic conflicts kept European geographers on alert. Romer's goals were identical with those feverishly pursued by Albrecht Penck, Pál Teleki, and other German and Hungarian specialists after the war. The similarities between national geographical narratives obviously derived from the use of the same methodological sources. The influence the works of Paul Vidal de la Blache and Friedrich Ratzel had on the figures described in this chapter is obvious. However, it is difficult to overestimate the impact that experiences of the war had on this academic milieu.

191 P. Treitz, *Ch. de Papp, Geographical Unity of Hungary*, Budapest 1920, p. 4.

192 P. Haslinger, “Im Schatten von Trianon,” p. 293.

193 F. Fodor, *The Treaty of Trianon in the Light of Geography*, in: *Justice for Hungary, Review and Criticism of the Effect of the Treaty of Trianon*, London 1928, pp. 327–341, here 330.

194 Romer, *Polska i Polacy*, p. 21.

Such experiences accumulated on the eastern front to a greater degree than in other theatres of the Great War. The political verdicts were of course being meted out elsewhere, even if Romer, Cvijić, or Teleki had a say in the negotiations that took place outside of Paris. Having no influence on the Ukrainian delegation, Rudnytskyi was exceptionally critical of its relatively moderate territorial program.¹⁹⁵ In the field of science and scientific propaganda, however, it was not the representatives of the major powers, but precisely the scholars from Central and Eastern Europe who had the greatest success. They managed to alter the spatial imagination of the fair definition of their national borders. It is enough to compare the ethnographic maps of Poland produced in the West at the beginning of the war, which did not, as a rule, go beyond the old borders of the Congress Kingdom, with the cartographic work of Romer. A similar role was played by Cvijić, whose efforts led to the popularisation of the idea that the would-be state of Yugoslavia was bound to unite politically, as proven by arguments from geography, ethnography, and linguistics – a notion that had gained currency even during the war.¹⁹⁶

The political significance of the work of the geographers was so great that the possibility of their further international cooperation was called into question. As early as 1904, the atlas for schools compiled by Romer had been banned from distribution in the German Reich. When Romer's wartime atlas was printed in Vienna, Albrecht Penck reported him to the German General Staff for alleged treason. Indeed, due to German pressure, Romer had to stand in court, but he was cleared of the charges by judges who recognised his atlas as a strictly scientific work. Exporting the publication, however, was prohibited. As a result, the only copies that reached the US and the International Tribunal at the Hague were smuggled.¹⁹⁷ After the war, both Romer and his former teacher were involved in the Polish-German conflict. The *Polski Przegląd Kartograficzny* (Polish cartographic review), founded by the professor from Lviv, was devised precisely as a means of combatting German revisionism. In turn, the academic career of Stepan Rudnytskyi at the University of Lviv was ended in 1919, when Polish authorities decided to dismiss him. Although Romer had nothing to do with that decision, he had protested the idea of making the university a bilingual institution since before the war. The nationalisation and politicisation of geography, which had swept across Europe from the turn of the twentieth century, became acute during the war, leading to open

and frequently personal conflicts in academic circles. This was the flip side of the success indirectly testified to by the honours received by geographers in those countries to whose emergence they had made significant contributions; and they also enjoyed international recognition. Stepan Rudnytskyi, whose ambitious designs were not fulfilled, decided to move to Soviet Ukraine in 1926 to take charge of a newly created geographical institute there. Previously he had had to turn down an offer to chair the East European geography department at the Charles University in Prague, as well as similar offers from Vienna and Berlin.¹⁹⁸ Albrecht Penck, Eugeniusz Romer, and Emmanuel de Martonne suspended their political animosities for a moment in 1924 when they contributed to a volume dedicated to Cvijić.¹⁹⁹ An even more convincing proof of the success of geographers from Central and Eastern Europe were the similarities between works supporting revisionist movements and their wartime publications. The role played by Cvijić and Romer during the war and the peace negotiations was acknowledged and appreciated.

What was it that determined their success? Clearly, their professionalism and – regardless of their disputes and vitriol – the formal solidity of their work. But their German and Austrian colleagues exhibited comparable virtues. It is also worth remembering the role of the teachers of both Cvijić and Romer, as well as, among others, Stanisław Pawłowski and Stepan Rudnytskyi – all had been Penck's students during his tenure at the University of Vienna. And yet, in some ways, the pupils surpassed their master. It was they who, during the war, acquired the skills and worked out the arguments that their German and Hungarian colleagues would go on to apply during the inter-war period. I believe that a decisive role was also played by differences in the perception of national territory: German geographers concentrated almost to the last moment on territorial acquisitions in Europe and beyond, in areas that were to be pursued for German settlement, and in colonies that would expand Germany's "place under the sun." The Austrians, and later the Hungarians, sought arguments that would help them justify the continued existence of multi-national state entities. Their students from the Central and Eastern European countries, however, pursued different goals. They strove to define their own national territories in accordance with the concept of national self-determination. In effect, this also meant the territorial expansion and inclusion of territories inhabited by alien ethnic groups. It did not, however, imply either imperialism or the idea of a community that would eventually develop under the influence of geographic

195 Stebelsky, Putting Ukraine on the Map, p. 601.

196 Dominian, Frontiers of Language, p. 338.

197 S.M. Brzozowski, "Eugeniusz Mikołaj Romer," in: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 31, Kraków 1989, pp. 635–645, here 639.

198 Stebelsky, Putting Ukraine on the Map, p. 602.

199 Zbornik radova posvećen Jovanu Cvijiću, povodam tridesetpetogodišnice naučnog rada od prijatelja i saradnika, ed. P. Vujević, Beograd 1924.

conditions – an idea held by Erwin Hanslik (and, later, by Pál Teleki, among others). Rudnytskyi, Ishikov, Romer, and Cvijić all described the status quo, and although their claims seemed at times rather bold, they were still grounded in facts. Their limited, particular postulates were far more convincing than any geographical utopia.²⁰⁰

In spite of the similarities between the kinds of arguments invoked by these four geographers, certain differences manifested themselves as well. One could say that the Bulgarian, Ukrainian, or Albanian territorial claims were all based on a rather facile assumption. Even if Rudnytskyi included the geological argument for Ukrainian autonomy in his model, his primary claim was still that Ukrainians simply outnumbered other nationalities in the disputed areas, in the same way that Bulgarians did in Macedonia and Dobruđa, according to Bulgarian scholarship. The ethnographic argument enjoyed a marked precedence over all others. Romer's model, and particularly Cvijić's, were slightly more complex, less unambiguous, and – as it turned out – more effective. They also seemed better suited to the common Western belief that Central and Eastern Europe was an ethnic mosaic with no large single-nation areas. In the “war of the spirits,” in which Western European public opinion marvelled at the heroism of the Belgians and Serbs and professed solidarity with them, victory belonged to the “small nations.” As the examples of Poland and Romania prove, this also offered rich opportunities to those who, although not as small, did not throw their weight around.

The Body (Anthropology)

The scientific standing of racial anthropology was limited and its usefulness for the war effort questionable. Its institutionalisation, like that of geography, was a recent occurrence, and it was not completed everywhere. Anthropology was first introduced to universities in France and England, while it reached Germany only in 1879.¹ That same year, a department of anthropology was created at the university in Moscow,² while the University of Vienna took that step only in 1913.³ Opinions on the new science were not improved by its political involvement. In countries where most of its proponents favoured liberalism – e.g. in Russia – the state distrusted the new discipline, anticipating its oppositional potential.⁴ On the other hand, in countries where the notion of race became a tool for the radical right, anthropology faced resistance from liberals. During the 1910 congress of German sociologists in Frankfurt, Alfred Ploetz – the author of the concept of racial hygiene – was ruthlessly criticised by Max Weber.⁵ Such celebrity clashes threatened to cast doubt not only on the professional status of individual scholars, but also on that of the entire field.

Paradoxically, racial anthropology was weighed down by the same feature that made it so popular: Malleable and volatile concepts may have perfectly suited the requirements of bold theories, but they lacked stability and consistency. Many scientists followed Ploetz in his attempts at implementing racial theories in the other human sciences. However, their application to this pursuit was so random that it raised doubts as to the credibility of the branch of knowledge they represented. Even those anthropologists who remained faithful to their discipline risked falling into disrepute. One of the basic problems they faced was the reliability of the data and illustrations they were using.

1 P.J. Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870–1945*, Cambridge 1989, pp. 53–55.

2 M. Mogilner, “Russian Physical Anthropology in Search of ‘Imperial Race’”. Liberalism and Modern Scientific Imagination in the Imperial Situation,” in: *Ab Imperio* 1 (2007), pp. 191–223, here 196–197.

3 M. Berner, “From ‘Prisoner of War Studies’ to Proof of Paternity: Racial Anthropologists and the Measuring of ‘Others’ in Austria,” in: “Blood and Homeland”: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe 1900–1940, eds. M. Turda, P.J. Weindling, Budapest 2007, pp. 41–43.

4 Cf. Mogilner, “Russian Physical Anthropology” p. 195.

5 D. J. K. Peukert, *Max Webers Diagnose der Moderne*, Göttingen 1989, pp. 94–98.

200 Ljubinka Trgovčević related the dispute between Cvijić and the government, in which the geographer opposed overly ambitious territorial claims because they transgressed the natural boundaries of the future Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes: Trgovčević, *Nauka o granicama*, p. 316.