

## Research Note: Political Geography and the Production of Hungarian "Pocket Atlases," 1913–1919<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The Zsebatlasz ['Pocket Atlas'] series published in Hungary between 1909 and 1919 was a business venture of the Hungarian Geographical Institute [Magyar Földrajzi Intézet]. Intended primarily for the teaching of geography at the secondary school level in Hungary, the main aim was to broaden the worldview and expand the knowledge of secondary school pupils. Before and during World War I, the books were militarized, and promoted Hungarian national points of views. Short articles in each of the volumes provided analyses and reports of the war, focusing in particular on the geographical problems arising from ever-shifting territorial transformations. To aid in the transfer of this political-geographical knowledge, colored maps were published in a huge number in the volumes. This paper outlines the evolution of this "Pocket Atlas" series, and in so doing provides the basis for critical reflection on the relationship between political power, nationalist propaganda, and the production of geographical knowledge.

**Keywords:** Pocket Atlases 1913-1919, Hungary, School Geography, Spatial Policy, World War I, Territorial Transformation

**Biography:** Hajdú Zoltán was born in Végardó, Hungary in 1952. He graduated from the Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetem in Debrecen in 1976, and from 1977 worked for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He became a Doctor of the Hungarian Academy in 2002, and is currently a professor of geography and a scientific adviser at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' Centre for Economic and Regional Studies in Pécs.

### Some Context

In the early twentieth century, territorial issues became interesting for a circle of people broader than ever before, especially amongst regular citizens not professionally connected to politics. No sooner had the territorial division of the non-Western world between imperial powers been completed than the struggle for the re-division of Europe (and especially south-eastern Europe) had begun. The first step in the re-division of Europe was the rearrangement of the

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European territories of the Ottoman Empire in the context of the two Balkan Wars (between 1912 and 1913). During World War I, the issues of territorial rearrangement were widely discussed throughout Europe, partly behind closed doors and in secret negotiations, and partly in the public spotlight.

In Hungary itself there were fierce debates over the meaning and scope of territorial rearrangements in the Balkans, and over the role that Hungary should play in this process. These debates were waged primarily in geographical circles, with the study of economic and political geography becoming increasingly important and influential. In the lead up to WWI, and then again during the war itself, geographers were consumed with mapping out and explaining the impact of the war on the state, society, and the economy. Given the nationalist interests and war aims of the time, it comes as no surprise that Hungarian geographical science as a whole followed Hungarian national viewpoints when analysing not only the causes of the war, but also the evolution of the conflict after 1914, and the impact that the events of WWI were having on the nation.

The teaching of geography at the secondary school level was deeply influenced by events taking place on the national and international level between 1913 and 1919. Given the preoccupation with territorial rearrangement at the time, it is not surprising that topographical information was highly appreciated. This information, conveyed primarily by means of maps, was typically supplemented with comprehensive statistical data, and also with articles and text that helped outline the situation in Europe and the world, and which situated Hungary within a much broader continental and global context. As one might expect, immense significance was placed upon the transmission of patriotic feelings and love of the nation. Such nation-building sentiments were, in fact, directly prescribed by the curriculum, and were largely determined by the educational policy of the day.

Conceived in 1908 by the Hungarian Geographical Institute [Magyar Földrajzi Intézet], the Zsebatlasz ['Pocket Atlas'] series was a business venture that also served educational purposes. Though the series was designed primarily for secondary school students and teachers of geography, the Zsebatlasz also found a broad audience amongst the educated public. Published in tens of thousands of copies in some years, the Zsebatlasz series proved remarkably popular throughout the war, with new annual releases being advertised and announced in the major Budapest newspapers and in local periodicals around the country. Having devised the atlases with students and teachers in mind, the series nevertheless developed a wide readership looking to broaden their worldview and expand their knowledge. Published on a yearly basis, the Zsebatlasz was not a single-author monograph, but rather brought together an array of experts who could comment on the political, economic, and geographical significance of current events. Though each volume was built around a set of particular editorial objectives, individual authors took responsibility for their own opinions.

### **Geography In the Shadow of the Balkan Wars: The 1913 and 1914 Pocket Atlases**

In the foreword of the 1913 Zsebatlasz (Volume 3 of the new series) the editor Károly Kogutowicz noted that, in addition to the standard maps of the five continents, the reader would also be introduced to a series of new maps, ones that depicted not only agreements on borders between the European colonies in Africa, but also the possible territorial changes in the Balkans. Having been edited and published in 1912, the 1913 edition captured the changing situation in the Balkans (which had been rocked by the First Balkan War), as well as the topical events and processes of world politics. Noting with some enthusiasm that the Zsebatlasz had been "designed for life," the editor explained that one of the chief goals of the publication was to help readers

find their way in a rapidly changing world. However, the fact that the editor closed the foreword "with patriotic greetings" suggests that, in addition to providing the reader with useful information, the authors of the *Zsebtasz*, and the Hungarian Geographical Institute as the publisher, clearly wanted to reflect nationalist sentiments in the country, and to serve Hungarian national policy.

If we want to sum up the characteristics of the atlas of 1913, we cannot help but notice early signs of the "militarisation" of the publication, a fact which was in accordance with the general processes of the world itself at the time. Maps and analyses of war and military issues gradually became constant and central parts of the book. With its critical focus on current events that would be both of interest and concern to Hungarians, it is no surprise that the transformation of the Balkans as a result of the First and Second Balkan Wars (1912–1913) would come to dominate the focus of the 1913 and 1914 volumes (prepared in 1912 and 1913 respectively). For example, the "Map of the Balkans" edited by Lajos Bodola (see Kogutowicz 1912: 54–55) was accompanied by a very brief discussion of the issues surrounding the division of the European part of the Ottoman Empire, and the possible solutions thereof after the closing of the Balkan Wars. He was optimistic about the expected implementation of the territorial rearrangements, writing: "Thus the conquered territories are looking forward to an intensive development and we hope that the present solution of the Eastern issue, always so dangerous for Europe, will not cause complications any longer and we soon will see the blessed results of peaceful work" [*Így a meghódított területek erővel teljes fejlődésnek néznek elébe és reméljük, hogy Európára mindenkor oly veszélyes keleti kérdés illetén elintézése nem fog további bonyodalmakra okot adni, s nemsokára látni fogjuk a békés munka áldásos következményeit*] (55). This analysis was complemented in the cartographic appendices by a coloured map titled "Balkan Peninsula: Expected Transformations," in which he outlined the expected new state territories (Appendices, 27–28).<sup>2</sup> (It is worth noting that, though the actual territorial realignment to be created later was somewhat different, his assessment of the situation was basically correct.)

The desire of readers to be better educated on what might accurately be called the "reality of life" at the time necessitated a detailed discussion of military issues in the atlas. The short analytical essay titled "Breakdown of the Military Power of the Central European Powers" by Lajos Bodola exemplifies this (56–58). The basic conclusion of the author is that "the European powers are standing at arms and are waiting for the division of Turkey and the end of the Balkan War" [*Törökország felosztását és a balkáni háború végét az európai nagyhatalmak állig felfegyverkezve várják*] (56). Readers of the atlas were also informed that, when it came to the situation in the Balkans, even the interests of formally allied powers came into conflict. England and France, for example, did not support Russian access to the Black Sea. Readers were, however, reassured that, despite whatever differences they may have had, the triple alliance was in a good position as far as maintaining the balance of power in the Balkans was concerned. The assessment of the alliance's military power in the region was as follows: "the enormous, excellently armed and trained triple alliance, combined with the military power of Romania, is a sure guarantee of the victory" [*a hatalmas kitűnően felfegyverzett és kiképzett hármas szövetség*

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<sup>2</sup> The pagination of the Appendices starts at p. 1, which explains why the page numbers of the map are lower than the article itself.

*és Románia hadereje már előre biztosítéka a győzelemnek*] (58). Maps like the "Military Map of Central Europe" (Appendices, 29–30), moreover, employed available data in order to clearly delineate the military-territorial administrative structure of the region, and to point out the positions of the large garrison cities. Articles like this quite clearly aimed at providing students and other interested readers with a detailed picture of the armed forces, and the military situation, in the region.

The 1914 volume of *Zsebatlasz* (published in 1913) is unique again in many respects. Besides the traditional astronomical and statistical data, the authors published what amounts to a comparative overview of the "national politics and national resources" of the individual countries of Europe on the eve of war. A key focus was put on enumerating and describing the demographic, infrastructural, and economic resources of European states. In many ways, it could be said in retrospect that the 1914 volume represents a geographical snapshot of the "old Europe" before it was ripped apart by the first truly modern war of the twentieth century. It is important to note in this context that a dominant purpose of the 1914 *Zsebatlasz* was not only to provide a summary of Hungary's bilateral economic agreements and trade relations, but also to provide a comparative overview of the economic and strategic positions of other European nations relative to Hungary.

Having begun with a detailed enumeration of European powers and resources, the *Zsebatlasz* continued with Alajos Paikert's delineation of a program dedicated to the "Scientific Research of the East" (Kogutowicz and Győző 1913: 140–142). Paikert was convinced that the huge transformations taking place in south-eastern Europe and Asia more generally would have a fundamental impact on Hungary. Hungarian Turanism—a theory of origins that linked Hungary to other eastern nations, and which tended to elevate the Hungarians culturally and historically—had an important role to play in the shaping of Paikert's thinking. As he wrote: "The time of dealing with minor issues is over; we are facing greater, more topical economic and cultural issues that are important for the nation. Hungarians have an important role to play in the resolution of these issues, a process that, if approached cautiously and wisely, may elevate us to a level that would see us amongst the decision-makers of peoples" [*Az apró ügyekkel való bibelődés ideje lejárt, nagyobb aktuálisabb, a nemzetre fontos gazdasági és kulturális kérdések állanak előttünk. Oly kérdések, melyek megoldásában nekünk magyaroknak nagy szerep jut, oly alakulatok, melyek előrelátó és bölcs felhasználása nemzetünket a népek döntői közé emelheti*] (140). The potential that Paikert saw in 1914 never did materialize, however. Hungary never did manage to join the circle of European decision-makers who ruled over the fate of nations. Quite the opposite happened. After the defeat of Austria-Hungary in 1918, in fact, it was others who decided the destiny of the country.

In addition to mapping out a grandiose vision for Hungarian geopolitics, the 1914 volume also supplemented earlier assessments of the transformations taking place in the Balkans. Providing more detailed analysis than ever before (for example on the fragmentation and eventual dissolution of the Ottoman Empire from 1683 to 1913, and on the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913), the 1914 *Zsebatlasz* also offered detailed diagrams of the "flows" (in particular of people) that resulted from the upheaval of war. Both the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of new territorial structures were born in violent processes during the First and Second Balkan Wars. The rich flow analyses and illustrations render the 1914 edition a comprehensive guide to the Balkans in the year leading up to the outbreak of WWI on July 28, 1914. Of particular interest in this respect are the articles written by Győző Hermann and Albert Pécsi.

One of the more important geographical issues highlighted in the 1914 Zsebatlasz was the Hungarian acquisition of the Danubian island Ada-Kaleh. The Austro-Hungarian Empire had originally taken possession of the island on May 21, 1878, though the Turkish administration remained in force. Based upon a decision made by the Hungarian government, the chief governor of Krassó-Szörény (now Caraş-Severin) county placed the small island under Hungarian administration on May 12, 1913, thereby increasing the population of Hungary by 637 new citizens. According to the chief governor of the county, it was a peaceful enlargement of the empire, one that the Turkish officers disliked but that the local population peacefully acknowledged.

### **In the Time of the "Great War": The 1915, 1916, 1917, and 1918 Pocket Atlases**

The 1915 volume of Zsebatlasz, which was produced in the autumn of 1914, aimed to provide an overview of the "first year of the war," with the basic goal of painting a comprehensive picture of the events of the conflict. In the "Foreword" to the atlas, students and general readers alike were reminded of the underlying issues of the war:

"Only a year has passed since the Balkan war raging at our frontiers ended. The final distribution by the victorious states of the half Hungary-sized lands robbed by the Turks has not even finished, and Europe is fighting a new war that is by far bigger than the previous one. Ethnic, economic, and political power efforts, sleeping for decades and now awoken by satanic wickedness, have set the larger part of our continent afire. This giant showdown, grown to the size of a world war, aims at the breakdown of Central Europe, the elimination of the great power status of Germany, and of our Monarchy. It may well be that the destiny of Hungary will be determined for centuries on the eastern and western battlefields" (Kogutowicz and Bátky 1914: 3).

[Még alig egy éve, hogy elcsitult a határainkon túl dúló balkáni háború, még *be sem fejeződött a győztes államoknak félmagyarországnyi nagyságú rablott török területen való végleges osztozkodása, máris új, s az előbbinél sokszorosan nagyobb háború szakadt Európára. Évtizedek óta lappangó faji, gazdasági és politikai, pokoli gonoszsággal szított hatalmi törekvések, lángra lobbantották földrészünk nagyobb felét. Ez a világháború méreteire nőtt, óriási leszámoló mérkőzés Közép-Európa letörésére, Németország és a monarkiánk nagyhatalmi állásának tönkretételére irányul. Úgy lehet, századokra most dől el hazánk sorsa a keleti és nyugat hadszíntereken.]*

One of the main implications of the argument laid out in the "Foreword" was that the youth of Hungary must be armed with the intractable belief in victory.

Among the causes of war, the editors saw the problem of the economy, and in particular the economic competition between the great powers, as being of primary importance (15–22). A new economic restructuring caused by the spread of industrialisation had transformed the world and global relations in a very short period of time, creating not just a pronounced gap between developed and underdeveloped nations and regions, but also increased tensions amongst Europe's great powers. It is in this light that competition between the British Empire and the new German Empire became a dominant factor. According to the authors of the 1915 Zsebatlasz, the battle between the two imperial powers had been raging for decades on an economic level. With

the outbreak of the war in 1914, this pre-existing conflict merely took on a new form (20). From the point of view of the Zsebatlasz, the real objective of the war was to "break down Germany." They continue by noting that the strategic competition between the two countries had become fierce not only in Europe, but also in other regions around the world. India, Egypt, and the German colonies were seen, therefore, as playing a central role in the war itself.

Closely linked to the competition between Germany and Britain as a main cause of the war was the problem of Russian imperialism, in particular as this applied to the conflict in Central Europe. According to the Zsebatlasz, the Russian Empire had a voracious appetite for conquest in all directions, a fact that had been a defining aspect of the Russian character since the time of Peter the Great (43–46). In addition to its conquests in Asia and the Caucasus, the Russians had extended their power into Eastern Europe, integrating and ruling over vast territories as they did so. Given that this had brought the Russians into direct competition with the Prussians and later the German Empire, the war could also be seen as a product of a "Germanic-Slavic battle" that had been going on in Eastern Europe for centuries (47–50). The new war, one that was being fought by alliances, was actually just a new development in this much older process.

To this analysis of the geopolitical competition between Europe's great powers was added an analysis of Serbia's contribution to the origins of the war. In the article "Analysis of the Serbs and Their Geographical Distribution" (54–58), the authors point out that the expansionist desire of the Serbian state must also be recognized as an important cause of the war. Noting that the total number of Serbs in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and in the Balkans was approximately 6 million (see Fig. 1 in the Appendices for a cartographical representation of this), they write that it was important for Hungarians to know that:

"a considerable proportion of these Serbs are citizens of our Monarchy, and this fact is a constant inspiration for those unscrupulous politicians of our neighbour state who are dreaming of Greater Serbia. This was the source of our present conflict as well, which we hope will bring an end to the Great Serb ambitions for good" (58)

[jelentékeny százalékuk tartozik a monarkiánk államkötelékébe, s ez a körülmény állandóan hevíti Nagy-Szerbiáról ábrándozó szomszédunk lelkiismeretlen *politikusa*it. *Ebből támadt mostani összeütközésünk is, mely reméljük egyszer s mindenkorra végét veti a nagyszerb hetvenkedéseknek.*]

## 1916

In the foreword of the 1916 edition of the Zsebatlas (Bátky 1915), the publisher reminds readers of the sad experiences of the bloody war. Though the new edition was in many ways a continuation of the previous year's Zsebatlasz in that a key focus was on the representation and discussion of "war geography," the editor nevertheless found it important to examine and explain the broader impact of the war itself, and in this way help students, teachers, and the general public to better understand the significance of the times they were living through. After all, the war was having a profound impact on all fields of life, affecting even those areas that were not directly related to the war, and giving pause to reflect on the broader political ramifications of the events taking place. In his grandiose overview, the editor of the 1916 Zsebatlasz, Zsigmond Bátky, posed the following provocative question: "Thinking about the future of Hungary in these dramatic, fatal hours, certainly many of us are asking now whether the responsible politicians

who have managed the destiny of our nation for decades will take responsibility for the events now taking place and dare to be judged by posterity, and by history" [*Hazánk e súlyos, sorsdöntő óráiban Magyarország jövőjéről gondolkodva, bizonyára sokunkban fölmerült az a gondolat, vajjon felelős államférfiak úgy intézték-e évtizedeken át nemzetünk sorsát, hogy a bekövetkezett eseményekért vállalják-e a felelősséget az utókor, a történelem ítélő széke előtt*] (9)?

Though Bátky does not answer the question directly, he was adamant that the entire education system, including geography, had failed the nation and its people in the years leading up to the war. Hungary's leaders had failed to create an education system capable of preparing the current generation of Hungarians for the challenges of the conflict that they were caught up in. In his opinion, the education system had committed a veritable crime against the nation, and especially against its youth. Simply put, the intensification of the world crisis and the outbreak of war had found Hungarians unprepared, and the education system was largely to blame (9). The teaching of geography had made grave mistakes as part of this process as well. Secondary school students, for example, had not been given up-to-date information on the processes unfolding around the world, nor were they encouraged to develop in-depth insights into the rapidly changing relations between states. Instead of critical thinking, Bátky argued, all that students were given was lessons on topography and out dated statistics.

In Bátky's opinion, the world war brought to the surface, more intensively than ever before, those forces that influence the lives of nations as living organisms. Reflecting on Hungary's place in international affairs, and also on the growing interconnectivity of the modern world, he argued that students needed to know more about Hungary's place not only in Europe, the Austro-Hungarian empire, and the Central European Alliance, but also in the world itself more generally. Pointing to a new phenomenon that has come to be known as globalization, he wrote: "... we have never before experienced as palpably as these days that our motherland is part of the Earth, and that we are connected by thousands of threads of the world economy to the most remote countries of our planet" [sohasem tapasztaltuk olyan kézzel foghatólag, mint napjainkban, hogy hazánk is részese a Földgömb életének, hogy a világgazdaság ezer meg ezer szálával vagyunk összenőve a Föld legtávolabbi országaival] (13). As noted above, the problem was that students and the general public more generally lacked the geographical tools and critical knowledge to navigate and understand this new world, and their place in it. "We know hardly more about Russia and the Balkans," he claimed, "than about the black countries of Africa" [Oroszországról és a Balkánról majd alig tudunk többet, mint az afrikai szerezsen országokról] (14). This failure, he argued, was to be blamed on the education system itself.

Despite his criticism, on the whole Bátky was an optimist, and implied that geography and geographers needed to play a more central role in the education of the nation. Pointing to what he perceived to be the positive nationalist impact of the war, he wrote: "What we can see is the birth of a new Hungary on the battlefields, a Hungary awakening to its national consciousness and having a bright future, a country with new goals and great tasks, and we have to raise new generations for this new Hungary, also by geography" [Mi azt látjuk, hogy egy új Magyarország, egy nemzeti öntudatra ébredt nagyjövőjű Magyarország születik meg most a harctereken, új célokkal, nagy feladatokkal s ennek az új Magyarországnak új nemzedéket kell nevelnünk a földrajz által is] (16).

Beyond outlining a critique of the education system, and in particular its failure to adequately prepare Hungarians conceptually for the national, regional, and global challenges of the war, the 1916 Zsebatlasz drew attention to Hungary's "mission" in the east. In his brief analysis "The Geographical Position of Hungary," for example, the renowned geographer Aurél

Hézser underscored Hungary's role in Central Europe's eastern ambitions. As he concluded: "Territorial integration is one of the basic pillars of the community of interests that links the members of the Central European alliance. And Hungary is one of the most important links in the economic efforts made for the conquest of the East" [A középeurópai szövetség tagjait összekötő érdekközösségnek, a területi összetartozás az egyik legfontosabb alapja. Magyarország pedig a Kelet meghódítására irányuló gazdasági törekvéseknek egyik legfontosabb láncszeme] (22). For Hézszer, the war presented Hungary with an opportunity for economic expansion. He was very clear, however, that this expansion would not be global in nature, but rather would be focused squarely on the "East".

In a separate article focusing on Hungary's southern borders and the Hungarian nation's interests in the Balkans, Bátky echoed Hézszer in his assessment of the major political, military, and economic interests at stake for Hungary during the war. Providing first a considered evaluation of the historical and geographical processes unleashed by the war, Bátky concluded:

"In the Balkans we have to be strong, as it stands as a natural passage for Hungary to the Black Sea. And this cannot be reached without the enlargement of our territory. This territorial enlargement can only be the annexation of the northern part of Serbia to Hungary, which can be expressed geographically as the extension of our [currently] artificial southern border to its natural boundaries" (38).

[A balkánon tehát, mint Magyarországnak a Földközi-tengerhez vezető természetes átvezető területén, erősnek kell lennünk. Ezt pedig területi megnagyobbítás nélkül el nem érhetjük. Ez a területi megnagyobbítás nem lehet más, mint Szerbia északi részének hozzánk csatolása, amit földrajzilag úgy fejezhetünk ki, hogy mai mesterséges déli határainknak a természetes határokig való kiterjesztése.]

One of the most striking aspects of the 1916 Zsebatlasz is that, in addition to exploring all that might be gained from the war (see above, and also Fig. 2a), the atlas also outlined all that stood to be lost if the Central Powers failed to persevere in the conflict (see Fig. 2b). A short section devoted to a discussion of "enemy plans" to divide Hungary should the nation find itself on the losing end of the war (163–167) discussed in some detail the possible rearrangement of Hungary in the event of its defeat. Already in 1916, Hungarian students and the general public were being made aware of the fact that, in the case of a lost war, Croatia and Transylvania would be "lost" to Hungary (though the possibility of the detachment of Upper Northern Hungary was not considered at that time). Following on the heels of earlier articles and maps, the discussion of what might be lost to Hungary reaffirmed the underlying theme in this atlas that much was at stake for Hungary, and that, win or lose, the maps of Europe, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and indeed the world would change dramatically in the wake of the global war being waged.

## 1917

In 1917, the publishers offered a yet another new edition of the Zsebatlasz (Bátky 1916). Though printed at a time when the popular enthusiasm for the war had begun to wane, the new edition was very much designed to serve the "still enthusiastic public mood." Despite being much less elegant than the previous editions (a consequence, perhaps, of material shortages on the home front), the 1917 Zsebatlasz nevertheless echoed the grandiose imperial vision of the 1916 Zsebatlasz, and even introduced a new element into this discussion, namely an evaluation

of the significance of the Danube River to Hungarian war aims. In his article on the topic, Bátky (7–17) suggested that the Danube had in fact been neglected in Hungary since the late nineteenth century as a tool of state building. The railway, he argued, had been "too much favored," and the only sea port of Hungary, Fiume (now Rijeka), was greatly prized, no doubt at the expense of the Danube itself (7). The events of the war, and the diminishment of long-haul sea trade, cast the Danube in a new light, and forced Hungarian leaders to reconsider its relative importance and usefulness to the state. Foregoing the typically narrow regional view that had shaped attitudes towards the river in the decades leading up to World War I, Bátky put the Danube into a macro-regional context, writing: "The Balkans, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and parts of Persia will show a strong economic resurgence after the war. We have to see them as our colonies, ones that produce food and industrial raw materials for us, and that are given other goods in return" [A Balkán, Kis-Ázsia, Mezopotámia és részben Perzsia a háború lezajlása után erős gazdasági fellendülésnek néznek elébe. Úgy kell tekintenünk őket, mint gyarmatainkat, melyek számunkra élelmi cikkeket és ipari nyersanyagokat termelnek s ezekért cserébe más árukat kapnak tőlünk dunai útvonalon] (16). These terms "colonial" and "colonization" appear several times in the book, but rarely so directly as in this article. Taken as a whole, however, it can be argued that the 1917 edition did not so much prepare students for territorial conquest as earlier editions had, but rather for "colonization". Never far from the surface of many of the articles in this edition was not only Hungary's "Balkans-oriented" project, but also the so-called "positive example" of the colonization politics of the Western countries, especially England.

Building on the imperial tone of Bátky's article, the 1917 Zsebatlasz also argued that repopulation must be seen as a key national strategic goal, pointing out that "[t]he sad experience of the Wallach [i.e., Romanian] invasion teaches us that we will only be safe in our homeland if our frontiers and goods are protected from our enemies by newly organized Hungarian border-guard settlers" [Az oláh betörés szomorú példája megtaníthat arra, hogy csak hazánkban csak akkor lehetünk biztonságban, ha újonnan szerveződő magyar határőr-telepesek fogják védeni ellenségektől körülvevett határainkat s javainkat] (24). A map published in conjunction with an article on issues of Romanian historical geography and ethnicity (see Fig. 3) reaffirmed the point that a sizeable and very dangerous non-Hungarian group posed a very real threat on the nation's eastern borders. Perhaps ironically, the map itself closely resembled maps that Romania would later use to prove its ethnic dominance in the region (editor's note: for more on this see also the article by Ferenc Gyuris in this issue).

In addition to publishing maps and texts intended to excite Hungary's colonial imagination, the 1917 edition also included a number of specialized essays dealing with topics ranging from Europe's transportation sector (101–104) to the relationship between war and meteorology (132–137). One of the lengthier pieces dealt with the delicate issue of production (especially given the large number of males who used to work in this sector but were now serving in the army in large numbers) and supply. Providing an analysis of Austro-Hungarian autarchy during the war (32–46), the article analyses in a very positive light the general issue of how an isolated territory caught up in a lengthy and very costly and destructive war was able to achieve self-sufficiency. The conclusion drawn from the analysis was as follows:

"The economic interdependence of the two parts of the Monarchy will necessarily promote autarchy, while the alliance with the German Empire, Bulgaria, and Turkey will strengthen and stabilize this condition, leading to the stabilization of our great power status and the peaceful upsurge of the Monarchy" (42).

[A gazdasági egymásrautaltság a monarchia két fele között az autarchia létrejöttét szükségképen előmozdítja, a Németbirodalommal, Bulgáriával és Törökországgal való szövetség ezen állapotot tartósabbá és szilárdabbá teheti, ami nagyhatalmi állásunk megszilárdulását s a monarchia békés felvirágzását vonja maga után.]

In another very interesting article, the geographer (and later prime minister) Count Pál Teleki provided a short but important geopolitical analysis of the situation in the Pacific Ocean (125–129). Teleki recognized that interest in the Pacific region would only intensify, as a number of regional and extra-regional powers were interested in it. Suggesting that the great powers had been playing a dangerous game with Japan (one that could easily backfire), Teleki noted quite astutely that Japan had taken advantage of the European conflicts of the early twentieth century (including World War I) to undertake an intensive modernization of their country. Reflecting on the fight for economic and political hegemony in the Pacific region that was already underway, Teleki also saw the coming years as a time of racial struggles. "A significant step was made," he claimed, "by the yellow people towards fighting, under the leadership of Japan, their battles with the white race for the rule over the Pacific Region" [*jelentős lépéssel közeledett ahhoz, hogy a sárga faj vezetése alatt vívja meg küzdelmét a Csendes-óceán hegemoniájáért a fehérrel*] (127). It was yet to be decided, however, who would support whom in the unavoidable racial fight that was to come, with the decision of Russians being an especially uncertain one.

## 1918

Assembled in autumn 1917, the 1918 Zsebatlasz contained more maps than any of the previous editions. Beyond the standard wartime maps dealing with the war itself, the 1918 edition tackled the problematic delineation between Western and Eastern Europe. In an article on the interconnected cultural and political struggles between west and east (Bátky 1917: 79–85) it is argued that Europe is occupied by three large language families (the west and the south by Latin-based languages, the north and Central Europe by German languages, and the east by Slavic languages). The three big religious groupings in Europe (Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox) are shown to overlap significantly with this structure. Whereas the Latin and German language families, and Protestant and Roman Catholic regions represented the West, the main representative of the East in Europe was Russia.

This generalized cultural situation in Europe was, of course, important for Hungarians to recognize and understand, especially given the very complicated sets of "cultural borders" that existed in the region. Hungary, and in particular Transylvania, was situated in a transitional zone between competing political, religious, and cultural groups. Though authors of the edition asserted that Hungary belonged to the West, it was clear from the maps that the country was in the middle of a very complex region (one that is often referred to as East Central Europe). As the Swedish geographer Rudolf Kjellén had already pointed out, the vast area stretching from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Black Sea and the Adriatic Sea in the south-east and south-west respectively, was extremely complicated, and thus a critical zone in Europe (Fig. 4).

Since the outbreak of the war in 1914, Hungary's already tenuous situation had been made all the more critical given Tsarist Russia's military and ultimately geopolitical aims in the region. Driven by an imperial agenda that looked to make significant gains in the Balkans and East Central Europe more generally, the Russian "push to the West" had posed a serious threat throughout the war, not only to Hungarian colonial ambitions in the east, but also to their very survival. The revolution in Russia in February 1917, however, marked a distinct turning point,

though not necessarily for the better. On the one hand, the February revolution led to a realignment of the Tsarist Empire, one which would see the single Russian state replaced by a structure consisting of 18 federal states. Not insignificantly, the empire would also lose territories in Europe (Poland and Finland), and in addition to becoming a little more homogeneous internally, it might also give itself a new task:

"It must see its future cultural mission in the colonization of Central Asia. By giving up the false and aimless caprice of pan-Slavism, Europe and especially the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy will get rid of a nightmare; the Russian Empire can devote the energy formerly spent on pan-Slavism to inner consolidation, and, with its continental colonies, it might become one of the greatest states of the Earth, competing economically with the independence of England" (77–78).

[*Belső-ázsiai gyarmatosításában kell látnia egyik jövőző kultúrfeladatát. A pánszlávizmus hazug és céltalan hóbortjának elejtésével Európa s elsősorban a magyar-osztrák monarchia lidércnyomástól szabadul meg, az erre szükséges energiáit belső konszolidációra fordíthatja s így a szárazföldi gyarmatai által gazdaságilag Anglia függetlenségével vetekedő birodalom Földünk egyik leghatalmasabb állama lehet.*]

On the other hand, however, Russia's potential abandonment of its colonial mission in the west simply opened up a new problem for Hungary, namely the liberation and nationalist aspirations of the would-be successor states in the region. Reflecting on this emerging situation Bátky wrote: "We cannot foretell what the destiny of the Russian Empire will be. Now we are only interested in the ethnic composition of the giant empire and on what grounds and on behalf of which nations Russia demanded the liberation of the so-called 'oppressed' countries" [Hogy mi lesz az orosz birodalom sorsa, megjósolni nem lehet. Ez alkalommal csak az érdekel bennünket, milyen a népi összetétele a roppant birodalomnak s mekkora joggal követelte Oroszország s nemzetiség nevében más országok u. n. „elnyomott” népeinek felszabadítását] (72).

Perhaps not surprisingly, the 1918 Zsebatlasz approached this question with some bravado, suggesting that "despite the slogans of the Entente about the right of sovereignty by peoples, purely 'national' states cannot be born here, in the absence of a historical past and culture; they are geographically impossible, and the destiny of small states among the three great powers would not be too promising, anyway" [népek önrendelkezési jogát hangoztató ántánt *jelszavak ellenére tisztán „nemzeti” államok, amihez történelmi múlt és kultúra kell, itt nem alakulhatnak ki, mert földrajzilag lehetetlenek, különben is a kis államok sorsa a három nagyhatalom között nem lenne valami kecsegtető*] (85). Admitting that the development of events in this critical European zone would remain a key issue for the Monarchy and especially for Hungary, Bátky wrote:

"To the fact that the ultimate station of the state ideal is the "national" state, as declared by our enemies, there is a living refusal: our millennium-old Hungary—the example of a perfect world state in small—whose historical *raison d'être* and political mission, under the leadership of the Hungarian nation, despite being a

non-national state, are acknowledged even by the majority of our enemies, to which of course our favourable geographical location also contributes" (85).

[*Hogy pedig az államideál utolsó állomása a „nemzeti” állam lenne, mint ellenségeink hirdetik, arra élő cáfolat, az ezeréves Magyarország—kicsiben az ideális világállam példája—melynek történelmi jogosultságát és politikai elhivatottságát a magyar faj vezetése mellett, nem nemzeti állam volta dacára is, ellenségeink javarésze is elismeri, amihez persze szerencsés földrajzi kikerekítetttségünk is hozzájárul.*]

### **The End of War: The 1919 Pocket Atlas**

Completed on September 1, 1918, the 1919 edition of the *Zsebatlasz* in some ways marks a departure from the earlier editions. In the editorial foreword, Bátky himself notes with obvious resignation that Hungarians, body and soul, had grown tired of the war, and that people were more interested in the end of it, and in the future (Bátky 1918: 3). Curiously, in spite of this assertion, he does not reveal any criticism in the foreword of the role he and the *Zsebatlasz* series might have played in fanning the flames of patriotism during the war, or of popularizing an imperialist agenda. If anything, Bátky saw the project as having a role to play in the peace to come.

Though still focused on the war itself, the 1919 atlas did devote room for a discussion of what Hungarians might expect in the future, and how best to prepare for it. Probably the most important essay of the book in this regard (at least for secondary school students) is Zoltán Tóth's "War Conclusions" (59–66), written in August 1918. Noting that the war had emerged primarily as a conflict between England and Germany, Toth reflected on the fundamental changes brought about as a result of the war, and lamented the fact that societies throughout Europe had been militarized in all respects, and that in some cases a major defeat could even lead to violent internal revolutions. As the paths of states and societies increasingly diverged, it was evident that the people themselves wanted nothing less than peace. Though he admitted that future was not yet visible, he nevertheless urged all states and individuals to consider whether all the blood and suffering was worth it. What was needed, he claimed, was: "[t]he creation of state structures and an international order which make the repeat of such a world crisis impossible. It is still uncertain whether this is possible, but it may not be as unimaginable as it was before the war, now that human kind is enriched with the dreary memories of war"[*Olyan állami és nemzetközi berendezkedés megteremtése, mely a maihoz hasonló világégés megismétlődését lehetetlenné teszi. Lehetséges-e ez, ma még bizonytalan, de a háború borzalmas emlékével gazdagodott emberi közösség számára talán nem lesz annyira kivihetetlen, mint a háború előtt volt*] (66). Running just beneath the surface of this otherwise hopeful and peaceful vision of the future, however, was a distinct sense of existential anxiety, one which was fueled primarily by the fact that the Russian question was by no means a thing of the past for Hungary.

Though the immediate tactical threat had faded on Hungary's eastern border as a result of the inner chaos of Russia, the strategic threat would be expected to remain in the long run. Beyond this, Tóth (like Teleki before him), reflected on the sudden emergence of Japan, and the role they had started to play in global politics. A new challenge, he wrote, was now facing Europe from the Far East; the "yellow peril," fuelled by the emergent strength of Japan. The so-called "yellow race," he insisted, demanded increased attention on the part of world powers (61). Though the exact political consequences of this and other issues emerging in the wake of the war

were by no means clear at the time, Tóth was quite right to suggest that the regional and global processes then under way would definitely bring about fundamental changes to Hungary, Europe, and the rest of the world.

As an example, the editor and the authors of the book knew that the relationships after the war would be determined to a large extent by existing and emerging ethnic structures. Given Hungary's tenuous position in a very complex region (one made all the more complex by the situation in the Balkans and the revolutionary transformation of the Russian Empire), Hungarians needed to recognize the importance of negotiating a post-war world dictated by the politics of ethnic relations. Pointing to the situation in the Balkans, and in particular to competing ideas concerning the solution of the Yugoslav issue, the atlas emphasized that any decision that didn't in some way favor Hungary would be very detrimental to the nation, in part because "a solution...not favoring us would detach Hungary from the coast of the Adriatic Sea" (77). What was needed instead was a resolution of the Yugoslav question which "restores the balance in the Balkans, and creates a harmony between the geographical unity of the middle reaches of the Danube River, and the political efforts of the peoples living in the Danubian Basin" (81).

Beyond the potential threat emerging to the south, the communist revolution in Russia, coupled with the complete collapse of the Tsarist empire, represented a new host of challenges that Hungarians needed to be prepared to face. The essay titled "The Disintegrating Russian Empire" (82–92) was the first geographical essay in the entire series in which students were introduced to the assessment of Bolshevism. As the article states: "The state structure gradually lost all of its balance and no wonder that, in an empire so immature politically and so unstable socially, a minor anarchistic sect obsessed with a mission, named 'Bolsheviki', took over, making the wildest promises—political, clerical and social freedom, an even distribution of wealth, in one word: a socialist universal state"[Az államszerkezet lassanként teljesen elvesztette egyensúlyát s nem csoda, hogy politikailag annyira éretlen és társadalmilag annyira aláásott *birodalomban a „bolyseviki” név alatt ismert, kisebbségben lévő, világboldogító, anarchisztikus szekta kerekedett felül, eget-földet—állami, egyházi, és társadalmi szabadságot, teljes vagyonefosztást, egyszóval szociálista egyetemes államot – ígérve a hiszékeny s az ábrándozó apostolok által évek során alaposan „megnevelt” népnek] (82).*

### **Some Concluding Observations**

It is quite clear that the publication of the Zsebatlasz series was intended as a means of helping Hungarians to imagine themselves and their nation culturally, politically, militarily, and spatially between 1913 and 1919. A cursory evaluation of this educational series published before, during, and partly after the war reveals more than a few very important findings, ones that would be worth researching in further (especially in the context of other articles published in this issue). Below are some concluding observations about the texts:

1. In my opinion, despite its nationalist underpinnings, this series of pocket atlases—for the most part—did not contain an explicitly hateful or openly chauvinist essay. The authors, in other words, do not appear to be intentionally "poisoning" the souls of the students, nor is there any hint of an attempt to instigate violence against minority groups.
2. Though possessing a very patriotic tone, Hungarian interests were voiced with much less pathos than in other contemporary publications.

3. The various authors provided an introduction to the correlation between war and geography, and for the most part assumed what might be called a geographical deterministic attitude.
4. In their analyses of the origins and evolution of the war, the editors and authors were careful to emphasize that the course of the war was by no means predestined, and that there were always at least two possible outcomes.
5. The Zsebatlasz series arguably contributed more than conventional schoolbooks did to the political and geographical education of the students, and to the teachers and the general public.

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## Appendices

Figure 1: Spatial Distribution of the Serbs (source: Kogutowicz and Bátky 1914)



Figure 2a: Possible Changes to the European Borders in Case of Victory by the Entente  
(source: Bátky 1915)



Figure 2b: Possible Changes to the European Borders in Case of Victory by the Central Powers  
(source: Bátty 1915)

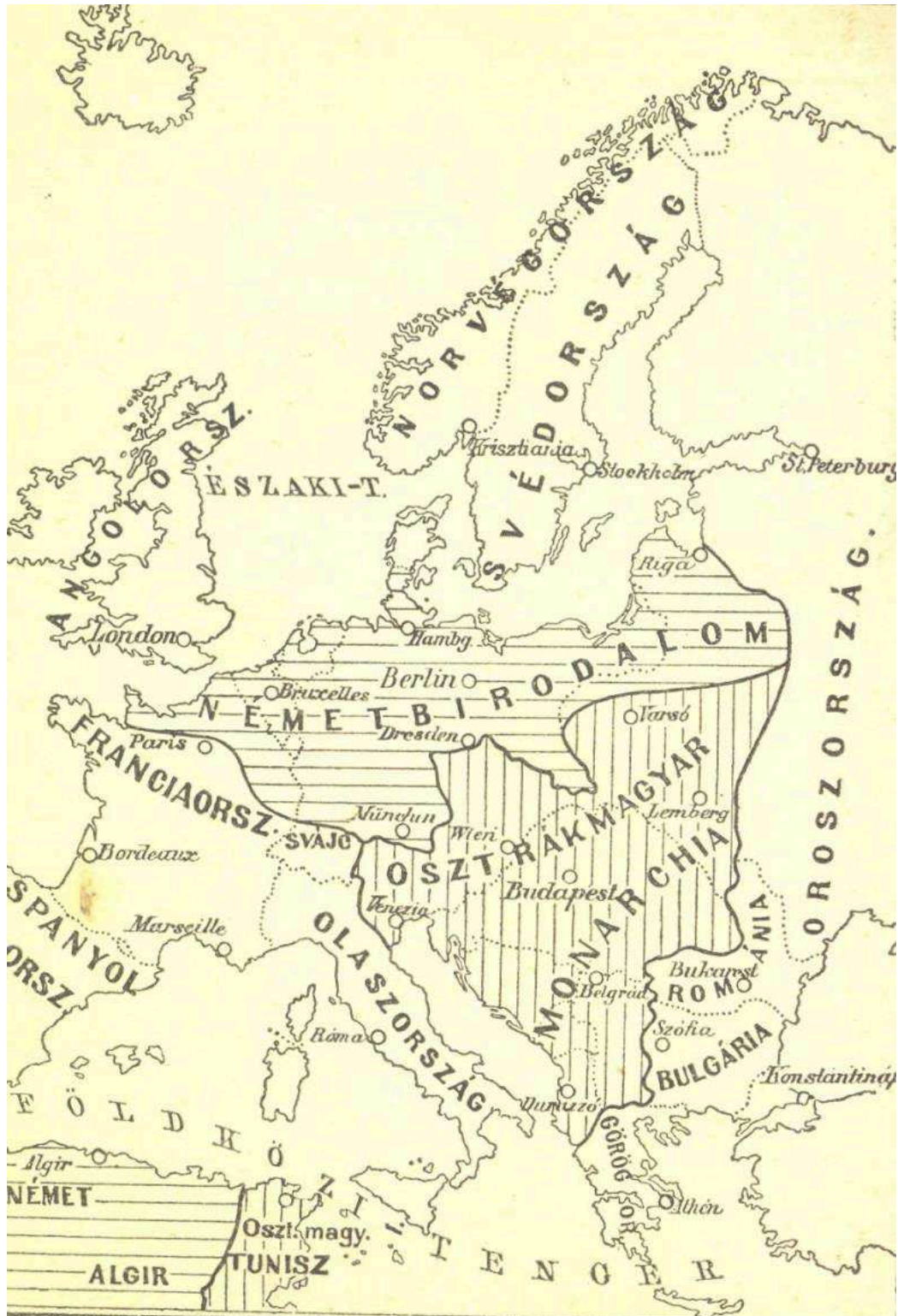
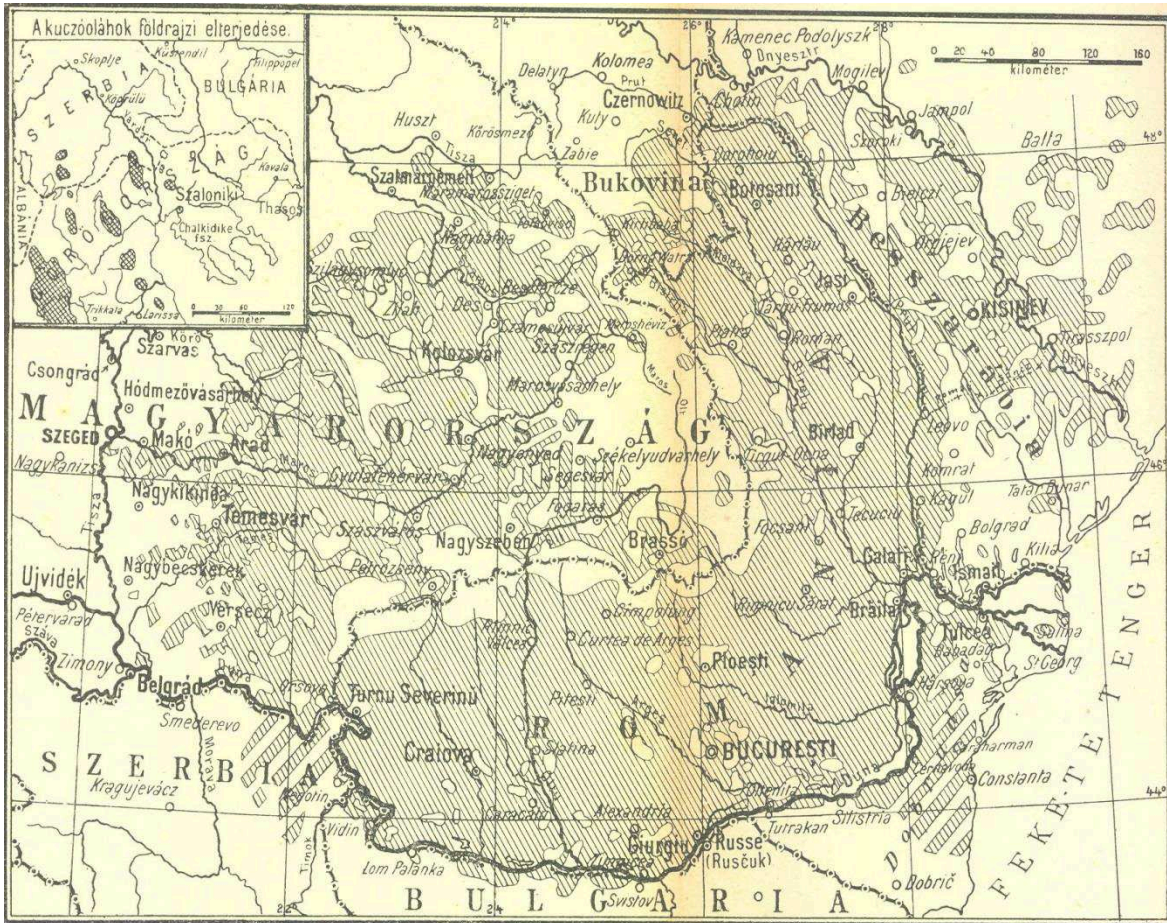


Figure 3: Spatial Distribution of the Romanians (source: Bátky 1916)



Note: The shaded areas illustrate the distribution of Romanians both inside and outside the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Figure 4: Europe's Critical Zone (source: Bátky 1917)

