

Maciej Górny

Historical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences



## “Futuristic geography”. The role of geographers in shaping the borders of East Central and South-Eastern Europe, 1914-19201

**Summary:** this article represents an attempt to analyse the political desiderata underlying the activities of East Central European geographers during the First World War and in its immediate aftermath. These scholars, drawing on the achievements of German and French geographical studies, and who were frequently graduates from western European universities, employed sophisticated research tools and arguments in the service of legitimising national interests. The apogee of the political impact of their intellectual concepts came during the peace negotiations in Paris, but indirect evidence of the efficacy of this generation of geographers in the region can also be seen in the fact that they were to become points of reference and arsenals of knowledge utilised by the interwar revisionist propaganda of Germany and Hungary.

**Keywords:** Geography, Anthropogeography, Border, First World War, Versailles, Ethnopsychology

At the beginning of the 20th century geography was a new discipline to the extent that the debate on its actual remit rumbles on until today. The process of institutionalisation of this new discipline began in Germany in the 1880s and was supported by the state in overcoming the the initial opposition of conservative universities<sup>2</sup>. To begin with political geography predominated and but slowly ceded primacy of place to physical and human geography<sup>3</sup>. Surveying techniques in the way this art

1 This article was written within the framework of the research project of the National Centre of Learning (project ref. 2011/01/D/HS3/03702): *Idee rasowe, charakterologia narodowa i etnopsychologia w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w kontekście I wojny światowej.* (*Racial ideas, national characterology and ethnopsychology in East Central Europe in the context of World War I*).

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

3 H.-D. Schmitz, *Die deutschsprachige Geographie von 1800 bis 1970. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte ihrer Methodologie*, Berlin 1980 [= *Abhandlungen des Geographischen Instituts, Anthropogeographie*,

was practiced and presented were continuously fine-tuned, but progress in its professionalization was somewhat less visible. Continuity could be observed for example in the description of various groups of people. The related ethnopsychological tradition of the characterological description of “others” still held sway. This way of thinking was also dominant outside Germany. Modern geography, inbreaking off from the tradition of foreign countries, succumbed to nationalisation. By proxy of two outstanding geographers – Paul Vidal de la Blache and Friedrich Ratzel – geographical space became even more closely associated with the idea of a nation state<sup>4</sup>.

The relationship between human psychology and the territory that informed it was very clearly perceived by Friedrich Ratzel, the father of anthropogeography. In his opinion, influences were mutual, and he regarded it as a mistake to keep apart reflection on the nation from the territory it inhabited. Geographical knowledge gained in importance in juxtaposition with history. Ratzel believed that the cause of civilizational development was served both by populations of appropriately high density and the appropriate natural environmental conditions that surrounded them. In his view, for example, the Scandinavians served as evidence that the balance in their conditions was none too propitious to the correct development of culture. The mutual influence of territory and people determined the picture of the world and, further to that, the hierarchy of nations and races<sup>5</sup>. The linkage between a territory and its inhabitants was also extant in the work of French geographers, above all Paul Vidal de la Blache. The difference was that the French laid even greater emphasis on the proactive role of *man* in creating a geographic whole. As Paul Claval observed, social groups became the focus of their studies, while German geographers had a greater appreciation of the culture-inspiring function of the landscape<sup>6</sup>.

Overseas expansionist designs were typical of geographers from Germany, France and other colonial empires or, for example, Italy, which aspired to that status<sup>7</sup>. At the same time, they played a key role in defining their own national territory, as exemplified by Vidal de la Blache’s description of the provinces of France. It was precisely in this guise that the geographers of the new states of East Central Europe took their bow. In Bulgaria, which did not evince colonial aspirations, the dynamic development of this new science was associated with the organisation of education in what was initially an autonomous and then an independent state. It was symptomatic that Bulgarian geography textbooks not only predominated over history textbooks

29], pp. 120-121.

4 I. Schroder, *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-New York 2002, pp. 207-234, here: p. 207.

5 F. Ratzel, *Anthropogeographie*, vol. II: *Diegeographische Verbreitung der Menschen*, Darmstadt 1975 [reprint of IV edition of 1899], p. 294.

6 P. Claval, *From Michelet to Braudel: Personality, Identity and Organization of France*, in: *Geography and National Identity...*, pp. 39-57, here: p. 51.

7 This problem is described on the example of the final decade before war broke out by L. Gambi, *Geography and Imperialism in Italy: From the Unity of the Nation to the, New’Roman Empire*, in: *Geography and National Identity...*, pp. 74-91, here: pp. 81-84.

in terms of quantity, but also, that they actually started to appear almost a decade earlier. Desislava Lilova associates this fact directly with the first flush of youth of geography<sup>8</sup>. Bereft of any long-term tradition, it seemed to be a field in which the effects of civilizational underdevelopment could be more readily remedied. It seems that the close relationship of this approach with reflections on the national character were not without influence on its popularity. This element of the geographical narrative was not in the least questioned in the process of this discipline's institutionalisation, while Ratzel's concepts, exerting their influence on numerous European researchers, were conducive to its perpetuation, because they linked territory and landscape with the psychology of its inhabitants. Towards the end of the 19th century, this German geographer pleaded the case for uniting anthropogeography with the geography of plants into one all-embracing discipline of biogeography<sup>9</sup>. The basic category in a science so understood was to be the nation state<sup>10</sup>.

All these ideological geographical implications played an utterly marginal role during the First World War. The first task standing before the professionals was to supply maps and indexes which could be used by the military. For example, the British Expeditionary Force needed support in the unfamiliar terrain of Belgium and northern France, which teemed with "terrifyingly unpronounceable" place names<sup>11</sup>. Geographers, meteorologists and geologists then went on to prove themselves exceptionally useful during the trench warfare of the western front<sup>12</sup>. For the Central Powers, denied access to foreign raw materials, the expeditions organised under the auspices of civilian geographical societies, aimed at searching for natural resources in conquered territories, above all in the Balkans, were of inordinate importance<sup>13</sup>. Bulgarian scholars took part in two expeditions aimed at the scientific description (primarily ethnographical) of their newly acquired territories – Macedonia and Dobruja<sup>14</sup>. The activities of the German Makedonische Landeskommission (Malako) were guided by a similar light<sup>15</sup>.

8 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, here: pp. 182-184.

9 F. Ratzel, *Anthropogeographie*, vol. II, pp. VII-VIII.

10 F. Ratzel, *Politische Geographie* (1897), quoted after: *Geographie*, vol. 1: *Antworten vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, H.-D. Schultz ed., Berlin 2003 [= *Arbeitsberichte des Geographischen Instituts*, 88], p. 159.

11 M. Heffernan, *Geography, Cartography and Military Intelligence: The Royal Geographical Society and the First World War*, "Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers", NS 21 (1996), 3, pp. 504-533, here: p. 508.

12 R. MacLeod, 'Kriegsgeologen and Practical Men': *Military Geology and Modern Memory, 1914-18*, „British Journal for the History of Science” 28/1995, pp. 427-450, here: pp. 438-450.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 432.

14 *Научна експедиция в Македония и поморавиет о 1916.* П. Хр.Петров ed., София 1993; *Научна експедиция в Добруджа 1917, idem*, София 1994.

15 S. Troebst, *Das Makedonische Jahrhundert. Von den Anfängen der nationalrevolutionären Bewegung zum Abkommen von Ohrid 1893-2001*, München 2007, pp. 10-12.

Apart from imposing new duties on these experts, the war brought a chance of accelerating one's professional career. Territorial conquests allowed researchers to incorporate in their studies what for them so far was *terra incognita*. Such experience was to be the part of German academics accompanying the army on its eastward progress or of Austro-Hungarian ones in the Balkans. Neither were their skills without significance for the nascent plans of a new order in Europe that began to germinate during the First World War. As noted by Woodruff D. Smith, German imperialism of that time had two faces: a liberal programme of expansion most fully expressed in the conception of Friedrich Naumann's *Mitteleuropa*, and the concepts referring back to Ratzel, of carving out living space – *Lebensraum* – for Germans by force of arms in Europe, which should then be settled in accordance with a systematic colonising process<sup>16</sup>. The differences between the two programmes emerged, above all, in home policy. They found expression in the conservative critique of the programme of economic and political integration proposed by Naumann<sup>17</sup>. The ideas of an association of nations united by common economic interest, even if Naumann did regard German culture as the dominant factor in the region, was, for many of his opponents, a camouflaged attempt at liberalising political relations inside the Reich. In any case, for German chauvinists who were growing in strength, even such a broad programme of expansion was insufficiently radical. Their aim was sooner to annex land, not people. The memorandum presented to the Chancellor in June 1915 by Friedrich von Schwerin, the chairman of the regency in Frankfurt on the Oder, called for the annexation of Courland, part of Lithuania, the Suwałki region of Poland and, indeed, a frontier belt running along the German border with the Kingdom of Poland. The Latvians were the only nationality inhabiting these territories who were to be spared eviction to the east. Schwerin believed that upon exposure to the strong influence of German culture, the Balts would succumb to Germanisation relatively the easiest<sup>18</sup>. In numerous projects, both confidential and those that were published, the group of Baltic Germans who came to dominate in this subject in the public domain, demanded the Reich's support for their brother-Germans on top of a broad scale settlement initiative. Methods of gaining land for farmers to be resettled from deep inside the Reich were discussed. Disputes concerned not so much the very point of such intentions but their dimensions<sup>19</sup>.

Such opinions percolating through to public opinion could not have infused observers from the target countries with optimism. It was difficult to base political hopes on such changeable and, at times, so inauspicious reports. From this point of view, the differentiation proposed by Woodruff D. Smith for a liberal *Weltpolitik* and the annexationist, conservative idea of *Lebensraum* seems somewhat academic. It was no coincidence that both in studies published in the West and in later ones

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

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

18 L. Kiewisz, *Sprawy łotewskie w bałtyckiej polityce Niemiec w latach 1914-1919*, Poznań 1970, p. 25.

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

appearing in East Central Europe, German imperialism was treated as a phenomenon which albeit internally differentiated was uniform in external effect<sup>20</sup>. A constant element in all these concepts was the way of thinking about space as postulated by Friedrich Ratzel. His student, Rudolf Kjellen, interpreted war as the struggle for survival conducted by states which were living organisms. To be sure, Germany, it was argued, was exposed to aggression from almost every side due to its central position. This same fact gave them hope of dynamic expansion which had to come hand-in-glove with the eviction and resettlement of the populations of East Central Europe which were allocated a specific role to play in this world picture. For here, together with successes on the front, German geographers ceased noticing concrete countries and nations, and saw only huge spaces inhabited by amorphous races – in principle a void waiting for someone to take possession and develop it<sup>21</sup>.

It is in this context that the amazing flowering of interest in the geography of East Central and South-Eastern Europe in Germany and Austro-Hungary should be seen. The war in progress there was an argument in favour of providing financial and organisational support for German and Austrian researchers<sup>22</sup>. The territories occupied by the Central Powers thereby found themselves in a most peculiar situation. The German and Austro-Hungarian presence there was interpreted in official publications as a civilising mission brought to benighted local populations. Especially the ineptitude of Russian governance in Poland was said to lend credence to such assumptions<sup>23</sup>. The geography of Polish lands was classified as belonging to such categories of incompetence under Russian rule. The enterprise that was to fill that hole was the multi-volume *Handbuch von Polen*, produced under the auspices of the governor-general of German-occupied Poland, Hans von Beseler, *nota bene* the chairman of a geographical society in Berlin. In a very positive appreciation of the first volumes that were published, Joseph Partsch postulated: "A work so replete in content thus opens up a rich source of priceless knowledge for those of inquisitive and enterprising spirit; not only for the German nation but also, surely, for the educated part of the Polish population, it is without doubt an important gift which no nation so far has owed to its liberators from the darkest of slavery"<sup>24</sup>.

The reactions of Polish professional readers were very far removed from Partsch's expectations. The publication of "Kosmos", a popular knowledge almanac, published in Lvov with a two year time lag in 1917, contained a broad-ranging dis-

20 Cf. e.g. [Juozas Gabrys] C. Rivas, *Ober-Ost. Le plan annexionniste allemand en Lithuanie*, Lausanne 1917.

21 V. G. Liulevicius, *Kriegsland im Osten. Eroberung, Kolonisierung und Militarherrschaft im Ersten Weltkrieg*, translated by J. Bauer, E. Nerke, F. Engemann, Hamburg 2002, pp. 212-216.

22 Fritz Regel's programme for Central Asia: *Die deutsche Forschung in türkisch Vorderasien*, Leipzig 1915 [= *Länder und Völker der Türkei*, 7] is typical of many publications dedicated to this problem

23 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*, Belgrade 1917, pp. 5-6.

24 [Joseph] Partsch, *Das Handbuch von Polen*, „Geographische Zeitschrift“ 24 (1918) 2-3, pp. 68-76, here: p. 76.

cussion of the chapters published in this publication to that point with summaries of those chapters in German. The assessments were crushing. The clinching allegation was the ignorance of the German authors not only of Polish authors but in general, of German ones who had written on Polish lands as well: “German academics not speaking Polish will have to trouble themselves a lot more before they acquaint themselves more precisely with the rich Polish subject literature” the Kosmos editors argued<sup>25</sup>. An idea as to the tone of these pronouncements can be gleaned from Jan Stanisław Bystron’s assessment of the ethnographical part of the German publication:

The forests are inhabited by elves, lady middays, minor goddesses, werewolves; they are all governed by the spirit of the forest. What strange natures that nothing can be imagined without hierarchy and alien to boot, because a forest spirit is verily a Russian by descent... I presume that the composition of an eight year old Hans in an elementary school in “Hohensalz” or some other pre-Germanic town on the topic of “Das Erntefest bei den Wasserpölen” is of similar timbre<sup>26</sup>.

The sharp reaction of Polish academics was a very clear statement of fact. Not without reason did they take those opinions, expressed over their heads, concerning the lands and population of Poland as a symptom of German ‘professorial imperialism’, but the professional inadequacies of German studies afforded them the opportunity of a spectacular reckoning with their opposition. Indeed, in their reviews, or rather polemics, not only did they mercilessly deal with the amateurishness of their German colleagues, but also they raised several issues which played a key role in the wartime reflections of European geographers. In Bystron’s above-quoted review, he subjected these “regional gymnastics” to criticism which he termed the tendency of Arved Schultz to correlate ethnographic groups with the actually existing political borders:

Just as the “westliche Gruppe” has the aim of separating out the Poles living under the Prussian sceptre as one whole which has no tendency to unite with the Polish Kingdom which evinces considerable differences, so too the division into the northern and southern groups corresponds more or less to the borders of the current German and Austrian occupation. Whether this division also has the aim of justifying certain *faits accomplis*, or is evidence of a certain mental deficiency and inability to look at ethnic relations in any way other than through the prism of state policy, I am unable to divine<sup>27</sup>.

25 *Ocena dzieła “Handbuch von Polen”, “Kosmos” XLII (1917), p. 105.*

26 Jan Stanisław Bystron, review in: A. Schultz, *Volkskunde*, “Kosmos” XLII (1917), pp. 145-149, here: pp. 147-148. “Hohensalza” (German.) – Inowrocław; „Das Erntefest bei den Wasserpölen” (German.) – harvest festival among Wasserpölanów.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 146.



In this short comment, Bystron identified two problems: determinations corresponding to the geographical and ethnographical reality of borders, and the national and regional identification of people living within those borders. The concept of territoriality inherent in both these issues already of itself generated conflict<sup>28</sup>. Opening a debate on them precisely in time of war made that dispute even more acute.

To careful readers of geographical studies, the idea of natural borders could have seemed superseded. Arnold Toynbee wrote about them directly as "the most artificial that could be drawn, being simply a euphemistic description of brutal conquest"<sup>29</sup>. "War" wrote E. Schmidt in *Geographischer Anzeiger*, "is being waged for political space, and no state will limit its territorial appetite due to the naturalness or unnaturalness of its border line"<sup>30</sup>. Despite such voices, it was precisely the consonance of the postulated state borders with nature that was one of the dominating ideas in the works of European geographers during the war and in post-war conflicts. The fluctuating course of events on the front drew the focus of attention of geographers to ever new countries. Before we take a look at that war of geographical arguments, it is worth adumbrating the basic methodological standpoints which its protagonists invoked. Their summary is encapsulated in the post-war work inspired by Ratzel of Karl Haushofer and the whole German school of geopolitics. The condition of the geographical coherence of a region – in the opinion of German geographers – is economic self-sufficiency and coherence of the natural and cultural landscape<sup>31</sup>. Such a prospect predetermined the rejection of the idea of borders running along rivers or mountain ridges. For such lines were cut by naturally formed regions and disturbed the *Lebensraum* of their inhabitants. Bad borders therefore were the kernel of future wars – argued Haushofer. He looked on more positively at their linkage with animated nature: the climatic region or the area of incidence of given types of vegetation<sup>32</sup>. He constantly emphasised that a border is not merely a line on a map but an area of struggle between cultures and nationalities in which it is difficult to impose a clear division, if only due to the divergence in the language and culture of its residents<sup>33</sup>.

Natural phenomena were also invoked by Italian geographers who postulated the need to annex Dalmatia. In this instance however, the artillery of strategic and historical argument was wheeled out. The latter, of course, were supplied by the

---

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

29 A. Toynbee, *The New Europe: Some Essays in Reconstruction*, London-Toronto 1915, p. 39.

30 E. Schmidt, *Krieg und Geographie*, „Geographischer Anzeiger“ 16 (1915), pp. 2-3, quoted after: *Geographie*, vol. 1: *Antworten vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg...*, p. 204.

31 O. Maull, *Über politisch-geographische-geopolitische Karten*, in: K. Haushofer, E. Obst, H. Lautensach, O. Maull, *Bausteine zur Geopolitik*, Berlin-Grunewald 1928, pp. 325-342, here: p. 329.

32 K. Haushofer, *Grenzen in ihrer geographischen und politischen Bedeutung*, Berlin-Grunewald 1927, pp. 75-76 and 98.

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8.

Roman and Venetian past of the region<sup>34</sup>. The annexation of Dalmatia by Italy was also supported by the need to defend the coast because, it was argued, the eastern coast of the Apennine peninsula was practically defenceless against possible attacks from the seaward side. This same postulate, in a much more imaginative way, was justified by the geologist and geographer Giotto Dainelli:

“Dalmatia might be part of the Balkan peninsula... but...it constitutes an independent region whose natural character ties in closely with nearby Italy... The narrow strip of land that makes up Dalmatia and the steep mountain range that encloses it are a continuous geological – one could also say a morphological – formation without the smallest of gaps in the mountain range above Venice... Lying opposite Dalmatia, along the whole eastern coast of Italy are numerous rocks... which may be regarded as what remains of the Dalmatian foothills, submerged in significant part in the sea. In these regions, right up to Leuka in Apulia, we find this same type of landscape, those same geological features and structures, that same lack of surface waters, the same rivers appearing right by the sea coast”<sup>35</sup>.

Here, the arguments of Italian researchers could not be reconciled with the stance of Jovan Cvijic who regarded the entire Balkan peninsula together with Dalmatia as a homogenous “dinari” region. The conflict of two states standing, at least formally, on the same side, was smouldering under the surface in the opinion-forming press of Great Britain and France as well<sup>36</sup>. Soon after the cessation of hostilities, it came to an open clash between both positions in the pages of the American periodical the “Geographical Review” and the British “Geographical Journal”. Still back in May, it published Cvijic’s article arguing that every Balkan nation inhabits the natural environment appropriate to it<sup>37</sup>. Cvijic countered Italian pretensions by arguments based on nationality and by appealing to common sense: “It is absolutely clear, even to the layman, that that sea constitutes a natural border between the Balkan peninsula and Italy”<sup>38</sup>. Geology and physical geography constituted in this case the basis on which ethnic relations came into being<sup>39</sup>. The polemic was taken up by Giovanni Roncagli, accusing Cvijic of duplicating the operating meth-

34 P. Revelli, *Una questione di geografia: l'Adriatico e il dominio del Mediterraneo orientale*, “Rivista Geografica Italiana” 1916, pp. 91-112, quoted after: L. Gambi, *Geography and Imperialism in Italy: From the Unity of the Nation to the 'New' Roman Empire*, in: *Geography and Empire...*, pp. 74-91, here: p. 83.

35 G. Dainelli, *La Dalmazia*, in: M. Baratta et al., *Pagine geografiche della nostra guerra*, Roma: Società Geografica Italiana, 1917, pp. 123-145, quoted after: *ibid.*, p. 84; cf. S. Puccini, *Le immagini delle razze balcaniche nell'antropologia italiana tra le due guerre*, “La Ricerca Folklorica” 34 (1996), pp. 59-70, here: pp. 61-62.

36 H. Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary during the First World War: A Study in the Formation of Public Opinion*, London 1962, pp. 81-89.

37 J. Cvijic, *The Geographical Distribution of the Balkan Peoples*, “Geographical Review” V (1918), 5, pp. 345-361.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 359.

39 J. Cvijic, *Frontiere septentrionale des Yougoslaves*, Paris 1919, p. 30.



ods of German geographers. The blow was well aimed insofar as Cvijic really was a student of the Berlin anthropogeographer Albrecht Penck. The works of the latter supplied Roncagli with colourful illustrations of the new way of looking at the problem of frontier mapping. The Italian author called the position of Penck and his acolytes "futuristic geography". Cvijic, to his mind, completely ignored the geological unity of Dalmatia and eastern Italy and, like Penck – aimed at a scientific justification for taking from Italy the territories beyond the river Pad<sup>40</sup>. The Serb's polemic gave short shrift to all these allegations. In particular it did not allow for such comparisons: "It is not I but Roncagli who is acting in line with the methods of German geographers, resorting to geology and botany in his fruitless efforts to prove that the eastern coast of the Adriatic is an integral part of its western coast" wrote Cvijic. The debate rumbled on for some time longer, but with no new arguments being brought to bear<sup>41</sup>.

An exceptionally interesting document of similar reflection is the work of Penck's Ukrainian student, Stepan Rudnytsky. He had already published several books on the geography of Ukraine before the war, which were subsequently published in German translation, and translated into several other languages towards the end of the war<sup>42</sup>. An expert belonging to the group of Ukrainian deputies in the Viennese parliament, he was, among others, the author of wall maps adopted for use in Ukrainian schools in Galicia shortly before the fall of the Habsburg monarchy. His guiding light was the geographical unity of the postulated Ukrainian state (on a territory far greater than that of present-day Ukraine). His political wall map presented the political division of East-Central Europe, on which he demarcated the area of Ukrainian settlement. In his geographical works, Rudnytsky skilfully employed the concepts that had been elaborated by western European geographers: "In Eastern Europe, the natural regions and the anthropogeographical whole are not separated by seas or mountains, but by morphological shades, hydrographic and climatic borders, pedological relations and the geography of plants"<sup>43</sup>. He further argued that Ukraine's separateness from its neighbouring countries was even punctuated by tectonics. In Rudnytsky's opinion, this country lay on a separate and distinctive tectonic plane and had a completely separate geological history to that of its neighbours. Also in terms of hydrography, it was a homogenous and markedly distinct

40 G. Roncagli, *Physical and Strategic Geography of the Adriatic*, "Geographical Journal" LIII (1919), 4, pp. 209-223, here: pp. 211-214.

41 Cvijic's and Roncagli's letters to the editor were published in "Geographical Journal" LIV (1919), 1, pp. 65-68.

42 I. Stebelsky, *Putting Ukraine on the Map: The Contribution of Stepan Rudnytsky to Ukrainian Nation-Building*, "Nationalities Papers" 39 (2011), 4, pp. 587-613, here: p. 596.

43 S. Rudnyčkyj (Rudnytsky), *Ukraina. Land und Volk. Eine gemeinfassliche Landeskunde*, Wien 1916, p. 5. Basic information on Rudnytsky's academic career is available in his biography: П.Штойко, *Степан Рудницький 1877-1937. Життя і творчість – бібліографічний нарис*, Львів 1993.

area, he argued<sup>44</sup>. Taking the long term perspective, Ukrainian distinctiveness was determined by the fact that it did not succumb to the effects of the final ice age<sup>45</sup>.

The Ukrainian geographer had to reckon with the resistance of professionals from other countries. His chief opponent proved to be Eugeniusz Romer. Shortly before the war, it had already come to a discussion between him and Waclaw Nałkowski, who regarded Polish lands as a transit area without clearly delineated borders<sup>46</sup>. Romer challenged this view with the counter-thesis that Polish lands were “a territory bearing the stamp of political necessity”<sup>47</sup>. This standpoint was at complete loggerheads with the visions of the East unfolded by German geographers during the First World War. Fritz Braun counterpoised Germany’s natural borders (“from the mountains to the sea”) against Poland’s lack of such borders. What is more, rivers in Poland were so unlike those in the West, deprived of both economic and culture-forming significance. Also the climate predetermined the transit character of the country, of this “bridge between the Germanic West and the Slavic-Finnish-Tartar East”<sup>48</sup>. Meanwhile, Romer placed Poland, in climatic terms, in Western Europe. He saw it in terms of one “inter-marum” system inter-connected by numerous waterways, clearly separated from the completely separate Russian system: “there is not one artificial waterway which would link any of the Russian rivers with any of the rivers of ancient Poland, because there is no place in nature through which such a route could be driven in a way that would serve a useful purpose... That is no accident!”<sup>49</sup>

In Romer’s opinion, it was the Polish Commonwealth of yore that corresponded best to the geographical realities. This standpoint tied in with the rejection of the longitudinal division and the resignation of applying the popular wartime concept of Central Europe<sup>50</sup>. In this perspective, there was no place for geomorphological divisions between Polish and Ukrainian lands. Even the conviction, as expressed not just by Rudnytsky, but also, among others, by the outstanding French geographer Emmanuel de Martonne, that Ukraine differs from Polish lands in terms of climate, in Romer’s view had not the slightest justification. He wrote that “Ukraine is climatically a transit land physically bound to Poland with so many knots, that the properties of its transit climate are in no position to sever those links... The territory and natural knots are so powerful that even despite the differences among nations (are they of any significance?) ... must *find* the means of harmonious co-existence of the nations!”<sup>51</sup>

44 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

45 Cf. G. Hausmann, *Das Territorium der Ukraine: Stepan Rudnyčkyjs Beitrag zur Geschichte raumlich-territorialen Denkens über die Ukraine*, in: A. Kappeler ed., *Die Ukraine. Prozesse der Nationsbildung*, Koln-Weimar-Wien 2011, pp. 145-158, here: p. 149.

46 J. Babicz, *Two Geopolitical Concepts of Poland*, in: *Geography and National Identity...*, pp. 212-220.

47 E. Romer, *Przyrodzone podstawy Polski historycznej*, Lwów 1912, p. 2.

48 F. Braun, *Die geographischen Bedingungen der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse Polens*, “Geographische Zeitschrift” 23 (1917), 12, pp. 561-573, here: pp. 561-567.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 44, quoted after: E. Romer, *Polska. Ziemia i państwo*, Kraków 1917, p. 29.

50 E. Romer, *Przyrodzone podstawy...*, p. 29.

51 E. Romer, *Polska. Ziemia i państwo...*, pp. 50 and 74.

A very significant argument in favour of Romer's standpoint was his *Geograficzno-statystyczny atlas Polski* (*Geographical-Statistical Atlas of Poland*) published in 1916. The descriptions were compiled in Polish, German and French, and Romer also attended to the popularisation of his work in the West<sup>52</sup>. The quality of the atlas and his professionalism as a geographer was appreciated even by his German reviewers who were ill-disposed towards him<sup>53</sup>. In his preface, Romer clearly articulated his view on the character of the lands of Poland: "The mutual relationship of all Polish lands with each other is accomplished by the great interesection of waterways and natural routes in the basin of the middle Vistula. This intersection not only holds the key to solving the riddle of Poland's territorial history, but also, nearly all of the phenomena belonging to the cultural history of Polish lands may be concentrated on this Vistula-land knot, which sustained and exerted influence"<sup>54</sup>. The work carried enormous political clout, and was noticed immediately by both supporters and opponents of the Polish national movement. The adoption by Romer of the Polish Commonwealth's borders of 1772 as the natural point of departure for his research, gave Max Friederichsen (who was the author of a positive review of the earlier mentioned work of Rudnytsky)<sup>55</sup> the opportunity to criticise the lack of political realism and Utopian imperialism of the Polish territorial programme. A similar posture was taken by Rudnytsky<sup>56</sup>. In fact, dated to the end of December 1915, the *Uwagi ogólne* (*General Remarks*) of the Polish geographer left no illusions as to the political purpose of the atlas: "Let this illustration of the language of figures on Poland teach our own kind and awaken the consideration and sympathy of those in whose hands rests the fate of the Polish question. For the figures indicate how to rule the world!"

In the polemics surrounding Romer's atlas, other motives characteristic of the "war of the spirit" waged by the geographers, found voice. The first of these motives linked up logically with Penck's thesis concerning the botanical basis for marking out borders. Since the political proprietorship of a given territory could be determined by its flora and its shape, there had to be a link between these phenomena and the psychology of its inhabitants. Ideas emanating from the German scientific discourse, were adopted in numerous places. Still during the war, the Czechoslovak publication *Národopisný vestník československý* published a work by Viktor Dvorský describing the linkage of the Czech populace to the land they inhabited<sup>57</sup>. The Czech

52 E. Romer, *Poland: The Land and the State*, „Geographical Review” 4 (1917), 1, pp. 6-25.

53 Cf. review by Max Friederichsen in „Geographische Zeitschrift” 24 (1918), 5-6, pp. 190-191, and Raimund Friedrich Kaindl in „Dr. A. Petermanns Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes' geographischer Anstalt”, 65 (1919), III-IV, p. 69.

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

55 M. Friederichsen, review of: S. Rudnyčkyj, *Ukraina. Land und Volk. Eine gemeinfassliche Landeskunde*, Vienna 1916, „Dr. A. Petermanns Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes' geographischer Anstalt”, 63 (1917), X, pp. 314-315.

56 Cf. I. Stebelsky, *op. cit.*, p. 599.

57 V. Dvorský, *Českdpuđa a lid*, „Národopisný vestník československý” XIII (1918), 1, pp. 31-35.

basin, in the ethnographer's opinion, constituted a closed territory inhabited by one nation. All German and Hungarian pockets of settlement crossing the mountain ridges were merely historical incidents. A certain geomorphological dualism could be observed only in Moravia, part of which belonged to the Carpathian mountain chain. Its characteristic hilly landscape had stamped its mark on the psychology of the Czech people living there. Dvorsky perceived the possibility of similarities between the Czech inhabitants of the Carpathians and those of the Alps. Unfortunately both groups had succumbed to the influences of their kinsmen from the plains<sup>58</sup>. At the dawning of Czechoslovakian independence, the Czech sociologist Emanuel Chalupny took up this thread of reasoning arguing that it was precisely the link with the mountainous terrain that was responsible for the characteristic similarity between the Czechs and Slovaks, and at the same time, for the differences between the Slovaks and the Hungarians<sup>59</sup>.

An even more popular motive inherent in both the discussion on the work of Eugeniusz Romer, and in other international disputes of this period, was that of the appropriate approach to ethnic relations. This conflict predated the Great War of 1914; it was the issue of Macedonia which played a central role<sup>60</sup>. The necessity of joining it to Bulgaria was to have stemmed both from the ethnic identity of its inhabitants and for moral reasons. Sebia "oppressed purely Bulgarian Macedonia and rules it in a so far unheard of barbaric way"<sup>61</sup>. Bulgarian academics, popular commentators and people involved in the cultural sphere, supplied a sea of evidence for the ethnic, historical and cultural connections between Macedonia and Bulgaria. In that, they could find support in foreign authors of both the 19th century and contemporary ones. Dymitar Mishev invoked the earlier works of western European cartographers and ethnographers<sup>62</sup>. Still before 1917, the Bulgarian ambassador to Berlin Dymitar Ricov collected and supplemented with the appropriate commentary, scores of German, Russian, French and British geographers' maps invariably recognising the numerical superiority of the Bulgarian nationality both in Macedonia and in Dobruja<sup>63</sup>. On the nationality map of Macedonia compiled by Jordan Ivanov, a member of the Bulgarian Academy and professor of Sofia University, the Serbs had virtually no presence there at all<sup>64</sup>. Anastas Ishirkov (a student of Ratzel), like

58 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

59 P. Haslinger, *Hungarian Motifs in the Emergence and the Decline of a Czechoslovak National Narrative, 1890-1930*, in: N. M. Wingfield ed., *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, New York-Oxford 2003, pp. 169-182, here: p. 172.

60 Cf. S. Troebst, "Macedonia heroica". *Zum Makedonier-Bild der Weimarer Republik*, "Südost-Forschungen" 11 (1990), pp. 293-364, here: pp. 304-312.

61 *Warum Bulgarien mit uns geht. Eine bulgarische Denkschrift*, "Frankfurter Zeitung" of 8-9 October 1915, p. 16.

62 Dymitar Mischeff, *Die Wahrheit über Mazedonien*, Berlin 1918, pp. 4-6.

63 Dymitar Rizoff, *Die Bulgaren in ihren historischen, ethnographischen und politischen Grenzen. Atlas mit 40 Landkarten*, Berlin 1917.

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

German authors, as well as Romer and Rudnytsky, invoked the “powerful force of the laws of geography” which linked Dobruja with the motherland<sup>65</sup>. Similar arguments were addressed to both domestic readers and to the Central Powers, and after the cessation of hostilities, also to the victorious powers<sup>66</sup>. As in every East European “war of the spirit”, also in the question of Macedonia and Dobruja, foreign authors supporting the Bulgarian standpoint played an exceptionally important role. Among the latter, there was no shortage of representatives whom it would be difficult to accuse of pro-Bulgarian sympathies. These included the Czech Balkan expert Vladimir Sis, who deplored the Greek and Serbian falsifications and who argued, on the basis of linguistic arguments, that Macedonia was Bulgarian long before the establishment of the Bulgarian state<sup>67</sup>. The same standpoint was adopted by the American commentator Albert Jay Nock<sup>68</sup>. The Russian ethnographer Nicolai Dierzavin also regarded the Macedonians as Bulgarians<sup>69</sup>.

The oft-repeated arguments – both by Bulgarian and foreign authors – were, in their nature, exceptionally straightforward. The Macedonians were said to be Bulgarians pure and simple: they spoke a dialect of the same language, they shared the same history and culture with their kinsmen and they had the same ethnic origin. Credence to such theses was lent by the circumstance that no attempt was made to prove the ethnic homogeneity of these territories. It was admitted that Macedonia is “racially a tower of Babel”, but always clearly predominantly Bulgarian<sup>70</sup>. Bulgarian geographers accepted the existence in the region inhabited by the Pomaks (whom in any case they classified as ethnic Bulgarians), Turks and Albanians. On the other hand, they considered all Serbian territorial claims to be arrant nonsense because, in their opinion, there simply were no Serbians in Macedonia. Paradoxically, it was Serbian scholarship that posed the most serious challenge for them.

Jovan Cvijic mapped out the main lines of argument applied subsequently in Serbian studies at the beginning of the century. In his opinion too, Macedonia was a hotch-potch of nationalities. Historically speaking, the underlay to that mixture, however, was provided by the Serbs. Later changes came in effect of Turkish rule. Its population, which still in the 19th century spoke of itself as “Serb”, began to use

65 Anastas Ischirkoff, *Les Bulgares en Dobroudja, aperçu historique et ethnographique*, Berne 1919, p. 5.

66 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; Jordan Ivanoff, *La question macedonienne au point de vue historique...*; Anastas Ischirkoff, *Les Bulgares en Dobroudja...*

67 V. Sis, *Mazedonien. Eine Studie über Geographie, Geschichte, Volkskunde und die wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Zustände des Landes mit statistischen Ergänzungen*, Zurich 1918, pp. 40-53.

68 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.

69 Nikolaj S. Derschawin, *Über Makedonien. Wissenschaftliche und kritische Untersuchung*, Leipzig 1918, p. 15.

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

the designation “Bulgar”, without attributing any ethnic significance to that<sup>71</sup>. To be sure, the ethnographic maps compiled by Cvijic did not incorporate Macedonians directly into the Serbian community, but he recognised their distinctiveness (hence marked by a different colour on the map) from the Bulgarians. More importantly, this ethnogeographer classified them from the characterological vantage point as belonging to the “central type” which differed from the Bulgarian “eastern type”. In the latter respect, the “psychological” border between Serb and Bulgar ran through the vicinity of Sofia<sup>72</sup>. The Macedonians and the inhabitants of western Bulgaria were thus categorised as an “ethnographic mass” which, albeit frequently succumbed to Bulgarisation near the Bulgarian capital, but in more propitious conditions could pass for “pure Serbs”<sup>73</sup>. Cvijic’s idea proved sufficiently attractive, indeed, attractive to the point that it inspired the standpoint of the Serbian government<sup>74</sup>.

The reasoning style of the Serbian anthropogeographer without doubt exemplifies his exceptional intellectual flexibility. Despite the paucity of solid argument on which the calm, scientific tone of his arguments rested, it still exerts a better impression on the reader even now than the nervous reactions of the supporters of Macedonia’s ‘Bulgarity’. A full frontal attack on the Serbian anthropogeographer was launched by Vladimir Sis. He accused the “geologist” of spreading “a false view in the Macedonian question consisting of ignoring the “Bulgarity” of the Macedonians and in manufacturing a new nation of “Macedonian Slavs” which had no place either in scholarship or in reality. He describes this new Slavic race as a shapeless mass, capable of transforming itself into an arbitrarily chosen national form... I, in turn, aver: Macedonia is a country inhabited by true Bulgarians. Serbs here are merely alien colonisers! Macedonian Slavs are not a shapeless mass but Bulgarians who, since long ago, have already been ripe for being made nationally aware; for centuries they had been kept torn away from Bulgaria, fighting for their spiritual and political liberation”<sup>75</sup>.

The ethnic structure of Macedonia was sufficiently complicated for the Bulgarian-Serbian dispute not to exhaust all the possibilities in its interpretation. In his brief study addressed to the delegates at the peace conference, the Albanian politician Mid’hat Frasherri criticised both the standpoint of the Bulgarian geographers and that of Cvijic. In any case, he regarded their dispute to be of secondary importance in face of the fact that in the western part of the disputed territory, the Albanian population was in the ascendant and ought to be integrated with the young

71 I.Цвиичъ, Македонские Славяне. Эт нографическiя изслъ дованiя, Петроградъ 1906, pp. 1 and 30.

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

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

74 Por. A. Mitrovic, *Serbia’s Great War 1914-1918*, London 2007, p. 99.

75 V Sis, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94.



state of Albania. Economic arguments spoke for this solution as well<sup>76</sup>. In particular, Frasherri rejected the thesis of the "Albanisation" of an initially Serbian population. Accusing Cvijic of political manipulation, he emphasised that it was actually the Albanians who represented the autochthonous population there<sup>77</sup>. In turn, the Austrian geographer Norbert Krebs, not being directly engaged in the Balkan dispute, held the pronouncements of Cvijic during the war at the Sorbonne in high regard. In his opinion it was a successful attempt to implement the postulates of "géographie sociale" researchers, even if its author, "despite a declared and often repeated striving for objectivity, is not free of appropriations which would not be shared by Bulgarians or Albanians"<sup>78</sup>. The unquestioned professionalism of Cvijic, simply made polemics of the same degree of acuity, as was the case with Polish reactions to the *Handbuch von Polen*, impossible.

Despite the convictions of Stepan Rudnytsky and Eugeniusz Romer that the geological and geographic shape of their homelands alone predetermined the most natural political borders, a significant role in the Polish-Ukrainian dispute was also to be played above all by those maps and statistics of nationalities which related to the Chelm region. The conflict, dating back to the pre-war period, was concentrated on the figures. Both sides approached official Russian statistics with distrust, rejecting them in total harmony as politically motivated falsifications<sup>79</sup>. But that's where the similarities ended; when it came to drawing conclusions, a yawning gap appeared. In Rudnytsky's works and those of the authors drawing upon him, it was assumed that all of the inhabitants of the areas in dispute who were registered as Russians were in reality Ukrainians. This assumption was not deprived of sense, because in the Russian official statistics the nationality category "Ukrainian" did not exist at all<sup>80</sup>. The justified distrust of those statistics inclined Ukrainian researchers to additionally increase the number of their compatriots. Further to such nifty footwork, Stepan Rudnytsky's ethnographic map showed the area of compact Ukrainian settlement to extend far beyond the Chelm region and the Ukrainian territory of today; according to this map, the area of compact Ukrainian settlement also incorporated the greater part of Belarusan lands to the north-west, then, going east of the Sea of Azov it nearly reached the Caspian Sea, and in the west it lapped the more outlying outskirts of Warsaw, and all other seemingly Polish places like Siedlce along the way<sup>81</sup>.

This method of handling Russian statistics was not foreign to Polish researchers. They employed it themselves, successfully questioning the figures that sought

76 L. Skendo [Mid'hat Frasherri], *Albanais et Slaves*, Lausanne 1919, pp. 21-22.

77 *Ibid.*, p. 62.

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

79 Cf. e.g. S. Rudnyćkyj, *Ukraina. Land und Volk...*, pp. 131-132; E. Romer, *Polska i Polacy*, Kraków 1916, p. 22.

80 Cf. e.g. E. Lewicky, *Ukraine, Ukrainer und die Interessen Deutschlands*, Berlin 1915, p. 8-9.

81 Map appended to: S. Rudnyćkyj, *Ukraina und die Ukrainer*, Vienna 1914.

to downplay the Polish population figures in the Wilno (Vilnius) and Grodno regions. What's more, their estimated figures found confirmation in the census of 1916 organised by the German occupation authorities<sup>82</sup>. Nevertheless, Ukrainian claims encountered extremely critical reactions. Shortly after the Chelm region was occupied by the Central Powers, Stanisław Niedzielski entered into polemics with Rudnytsky and Lonhin Cehel'sky, castigating their method of work based on Russian statistics. In line with logic, he observed that the tsarist authorities strove to inflate the number of "Russians" in these territories at the expense of the Poles, so there were not the slightest of grounds to add anything to those figures. Commenting on one of the ethnographic maps presented in the *Ukrainische Nachrichten*, he waspishly highlighted the inclusion in Ukrainian ethnic territory of mostly small Jewish towns like Hrubieszów or Włodawa, in which the Russian census managed to uncover no more than 8% of Great Russians<sup>83</sup>.

The rival claims regarding the national identity of the population of the Polish-Ukrainian borderlands played a very significant role in the pictures of their homelands that Rudnytsky and Romer sought to present to their compatriots. The question was, which the latter succinctly expressed in the title to one of his brochures: *Ilu nas jest? (How many of us are there?)*. According to the Polish geographer, the Polish population numbering a little over 26 million in 1910, increased to over 28 million in 1914. Rudnytsky, at the same time, estimated the number of his compatriots at over 34 million, thereby promoting them to the status of the second numerically biggest Slavic nation<sup>84</sup>. Romer averred: "Thus we are not a small nation in the family of European nations, but a great one; and if today, in terms of influence and role in history, at this moment of enormous struggle, we are smaller than almost the smallest of the nations of Europe, and feel bad about it and stifled, then the fault lies in our lack of complete independence in which nations can only develop their creative strengths to the full for the benefit of themselves and humanity"<sup>85</sup>.

In the Polish-Ukrainian "war of the spirit" there came to a number of fundamental political turns which were not accompanied however by new arguments in geographical publications. Both sides used similar arguments both when Ukrainians felt betrayed at the moment of the Kingdom of Poland being called into being, and when the Poles of Galicia reacted furiously to the prospect of the disputed territories being handed over to Ukraine after the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk. In the geographical publications that accompanied this dispute, an analogy to the situation that cropped up in parallel in the Balkans can be observed. Like the Bulgarians in relation to Macedonia and Dobruja, Ukrainian authors concentrated their efforts on the membership of the great majority of the disputed territories to the Ukrainian

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

83 S. Niedzielski, *Das erlöste Chełmland*, Lemberg 1915, pp. 20-23.

84 S. Rudny'ckij, *Ukraina. Land und Volk...*, p. 158.

85 Eugeniusz Romer, *Ilu nas jest?*, Kraków 1917, p. 32. Cf. S. Kozicki, *Quanti sono i Polacchi*, "Rassegna Contemporanea" VII (1914), 2.

nationality. The Polish arguments were somewhat more nuanced as well as more dexterous. Romer, whose widely commented upon atlas took as its point of reference the borders of the Polish Commonwealth of 1772, reassured his audience that this was not synonymous with Polish demands. On the contrary, like Roman Dmowski, he accepted "concessions" to other East Central European nations, clearly punctuating Polish openness to debate on the issue and their moderation<sup>86</sup>.

The obverse of this at least ostensibly straight and honest professional posture was the patronising posture towards those nationalities. In respect of the future eastern lands of Poland, it found expression in the conviction of Poland's civilising mission. In a memorandum submitted to President Woodrow Wilson in October 1918, Dmowski argued that "The Poles... represent a mainstay of culture and the main economic force of the whole territory of the eastern provinces"<sup>87</sup>. What spoke for their belonging to Poland was not so much the proportion of the Polish population but political necessity: "Setting up independent Lithuanian and Ukrainian states would spell either anarchy or government by foreigners, the Germans. The return of these lands to Russia would bring in train a lesser degree of anarchy and intellectual and economic stagnation"<sup>88</sup>. The defeat of the attempts to set up an independent Ukraine supplied this standpoint with arguments and made it easier to achieve supra-party consensus. Leon Wasilewski, who by and large was far removed 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 to assume the role of lord of this country, and, on the other hand, the enormous strength of the Polish element which, with arms in hand, did not allow the country to be mastered by the Ruthenians"<sup>89</sup>.

That "Polish element" in Eastern Galicia seemed to gain in strength together with the consolidation of Polish statehood. Before the war, Eugeniusz Romer laid stress more on the community of fate and interests of the nations bordering Russia. The natural environment itself condemned Poles and Ukrainians to cooperate<sup>90</sup>. In 1916 he took note of the links of Ruthenia with Polish lands, stemming from the geographical and physiographical conditions that prevailed there<sup>91</sup>.

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

87 *Memorjał, 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 Jeneralny Delegacji Polskiej*, cl. I: *Program terytorjalny delegacji*, Paris 1920, pp. 64-65.

88 *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

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

90 E. Romer, *Przyrodzone podstawy...*, p. 48.

91 E. Romer, *Polska i Polacy...*, p. 18.

In the preparatory work of the Polish delegation at Versailles, Romer, Wincenty Lutosławski and Jan Czekanowski emphasised that inter-nationality relations in Eastern Galicia were so complicated that no delineation was possible, though, undoubtedly, the Polish inhabitants of the region were characterised by a “superior social energy”<sup>92</sup>. Czekanowski wrote that only in the eastern extremities of Lithuania and Ruthenia, did any nationality-religious faith group achieve 2/3 of the population<sup>93</sup>. In 1919, a monograph study by Stanisław Pawłowski on mutual religious and national relations in Eastern Galicia was published in a series of geographical studies edited by Romer<sup>94</sup>. It was one of a whole series of publications dedicated to Poland’s borderlands. The author criticised Stepan Rudnytsky’s theses which were “not always consonant with the truth”, as opposed to the professionalism of the Polish atlas. Next, he analysed the links between religion and nationality, which led him to the conclusion that the entire Catholic population of Eastern Galicia, like part of its Greek Orthodox believers, should be recognised as Poles. “For history reveals ever more abundant evidence that on the territory corresponding to the eastern part of Galicia there lived in the 9th century a ‘Lechite’ (i.e. Polish) population which subsequently succumbed to Rus... The Lechite population would have been... the initial substrata covered only later by the conquering mantle of Rus”<sup>95</sup>. The Polish character of the region, however, did not in the least disappear in the early Middle Ages. Successive waves of settlers flowed in from Poland later as well, and “Since the occupation of Red Ruthenia by Poland, a broad stream of Polish settlers embracing representatives of all social tiers flowed eastwards without respite”<sup>96</sup>. In the end, the only area in which Pawłowski was inclined to concede Ukrainian dominance was that of the Carpathians. The lowlands were already of mixed nationality in character, and in addition on a Polish substrata. This standpoint was adopted by Polish geographers in the interwar period<sup>97</sup>.

The contribution of geographers to the war effort, be it purely practical or through propaganda and ideology, thus far outlived the conflict itself. Numerous currents in this scientific (and pseudo-scientific) discipline developed throughout the interwar period<sup>98</sup>. Its culminating point, and at the same time the moment when geography took up a central position in politics writ large and in public debate, came in the

92 Cf. Wincenty Lutosławski, Eugeniusz Romer, *The Ruthenian Question in Galicia*, Paris 1919, p. 9.

93 J. Czekanowski, *Stosunki narodowościowo-wyznaniowe na Litwie i Rusi w świetle źródeł oficjalnych*, Lwów 1918, p. 41. Cf. also *Les confins orientaux de la Pologne*, Paris 1919.

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

95 *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

97 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 Książnicę-Atlas*, Lwów-Warszawa 1925, pp. 15-28, here: pp. 23-26.

98 A. Kirby, *What Did You Do in the War, Daddy?*, in: *Geography and Empire...*, pp. 300-315, here: p. 305.

period of peace negotiations in assorted Parisian suburbs in 1918-1919. Geography suddenly became the depository of knowledge which was to predetermine the shape of the world. Years later, one of the participants in the negotiations, reminisced about the following, verily 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 was crawling like a bear to get a better view during a succinct and precise lecture on the economy and physiography of the Klagenfurt Basin. There were maps everywhere... Reference to a map was a constant element in every discussion”<sup>99</sup>.

In Versailles, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Neuilly-sur-Seine, Trianon and Sevres, there too was no shortage of geographers of the victorious powers and of the newly-created states. Great Britain was the exception; its delegation dispensed almost entirely with their home-grown specialists in this field. The French representation however had the most eminent geographers, mostly the students of Vidal de la Blache: Emmanuel de Martonne, Emmanuel de Margerie, Albert Demangeon, Lucien Gallois and Jean Brunhes. In the USA, a preparatory commission was already set up in 1917 in anticipation of the peace negotiations, under the chairmanship of Edward Mandell House. The enormous cartographic documentation collected by American geographers flowed to Europe together with Woodrow Wilson aboard the USS George Washington. Among the other delegations, the figures of two outstanding scholars – Jovan Cvijic and Eugeniusz Romer – overshadowed all else<sup>100</sup>. These experts played a key role in the preliminary works of the territorial commissions. The role of the Polish and Yugoslavian delegates almost immediately met with international recognition<sup>101</sup>.

Behind the resolutions of the peace conference stood the huge effort of numerous delegations that were producing maps, gathering statistical materials and printing numerous brochures aimed at exerting advantageous influence on the decision-makers. The demarcation of borders ceased being a fairly straightforward pastime consisting of drawing lines along rivers and mountain chains. Strategic interests were no longer sufficient arguments. Ethnographic, sociological and psychological issues gained in importance and decisions on the shape of various states linked in with reflection on the nature and character of the nations inhabiting them<sup>102</sup>.

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

100 M. Heffernan, *op. at*, pp. 520-521.

101 Cf. *Geography at the Congress of Paris, 1919*, “Geographical Journal” 55 (1920), 4, pp. 309-312.

102 G. Sluga, *The Nation, Psychology, and International Politics, 1870-1919*, Houndsmills 2006, pp. 22-23.

Nearly every delegation in Paris succumbed to the temptation to produce normative maps rather than descriptive ones, hence differences in opinions and even embarrassing slip ups became unavoidable. Romer's diary describes one such unpleasant scene. In April 1919, the American expert Robert Howard Lord, who was one of the decision-makers regarding the course of the Polish borders, met with Martonne. Both had maps supplied by Polish and Ukrainian delegates. A comparison of the two sets of documents revealed that each side regarded as theirs those territories in which their nationality constituted more than 25% of the population. Polish red overlaid Ukrainian blue which made the worst possible impression on the outside observers<sup>103</sup>.

In spite of these incidents, in the game of map colours, the representatives of the new states of East Central Europe coped unexpectedly well for themselves. For certain, the task was made easier for the Yugoslavian, Czechoslovakian and Polish delegations by the circumstance that the representatives of the defeated states were not invited to Paris. However, even with this reservation, it is impossible to deny versatility in their performance. In any case, insofar as the personal participation of Germans, Bulgarians or Hungarians did not come into play, the maps they produced were utilised during the congress. It is a paradox that the weakest heard voice was that of the state that till then set the tone in the professional development of geographical research.

The reasons for the German geographers lagging behind seem to be obvious. Before the First World War, their territorial focus of interest went in two directions of national and imperial expansion. Colonialism and the idea of *Lebensraum* developed at a time when the shape and existence of the German state seemed not to be under threat. Only towards the end of 1918, did Albrecht Penck initiate a cartographic project to chart the ethnographic nature of the Polish-German borderlands, and behind him rushed in a whole host of German geographers. Before their activities bore fruit, it was already too late for them to influence the decisions taken at Versailles. Many of these enterprises, in any case, were marked by the sin of technical ineptitude. They operated, for example, with excessively pale colours which brought about situations in which German areas were less visible on the map than Polish ones. Contrary to the intentions of their authors, Masurian or Kashubian minorities were delineated in a way which made the territories they inhabited all too similar to those areas inhabited by Polish majorities<sup>104</sup>. In some cases, it was directly suspected that a Polish plot lurked behind the German language cartographic publications. Such was the case with the map published by Jakob Spett in Switzerland in 1918 which showed the Polish majorities in Posnania, West Prussia and Upper Silesia<sup>105</sup>.

---

103 E. Romer, *Pamiętnik paryski (1918-1919)*, edited by A. Garlicki, R. Świątek, Wrocław 1989, p. 293.

104 *Ibid.*, pp. 37-39.

105 M. Rössler, "Wissenschaft und Lebensraum". *Geographische Ostforschung im Nationalsozialismus. Ein Beitrag zur Disziplingeschichte des Geographie*, Berlin-Hamburg 1990, pp. 56-57.



The initial reactions of German and Austrian geographers to the military defeat and territorial losses were characterised by weekly concealed frustration. It was commonly believed that the victorious powers had betrayed the apparently espoused principles of national self-determination, condemning Germans to a harsh fate under the government of the newly created states. The latter were treated as transitory and immature creations, in consonance with traditional German thinking about the East<sup>106</sup>. Shaking off the effects of the shock did not last long however. The institutional framework for revisionist geography concentrated on Germans living beyond the new borders of Germany was put in place in the early 1920s and was soon to flourish. The activities which were carried out several years earlier by Romer, Cvijic and other scholars, received state help in Germany<sup>107</sup>. These were precisely the conditions which spawned the geopolitical concepts of borderlands as areas of unavoidable biological struggle for survival. In line with the appeal of the geographical community of 1922, geography was to be the weapon of the German nation in the fight for equitable borders in a situation when all other weapons had been knocked out of its hands<sup>108</sup>. In that struggle, they resorted to every means available that had already earlier found application on other fronts of "the war of the spirit". Thus, they stood up in defence of the German minority publishing the appropriate maps and appropriate statistics, but at the same time they appealed to the role of German culture and history. The concentric ripple effects of German ethnic and cultural influence became the object of interest of the new discipline linking anthropogeography with history, linguistics and ethnography – Ostforschung.

The revisionist movements and ethnic conflicts that smouldered on after 1918, kept European geographers in a state of red alert. The febrile efforts of Albrecht Penck or Pal Teleki and other German and Hungarian specialists engaged in revisionist propaganda, were strikingly reminiscent of the wartime activities of East Central and South-Eastern European geographers. The similarities in national geographical narratives obviously stemmed from the same methodological sources. The inspirational effect of the works of Paul Vidal de la Blache and Friedrich Ratzel is obvious in relation to each of the persons discussed here. However it is difficult to underestimate the impact of war experiences on this academic milieu.

Those experiences were accumulated on the eastern front to a greater degree than in the remaining theatres of operations of the First World War. The political verdicts were of course delivered elsewhere, even if Romer, Cvijic or Teleki had this or that to say during the negotiations in this or that suburb of Paris. Rudnytsky, belonging to the Ukrainian delegation which had no influence in Paris, looked on its relatively

---

106 F. Braun, *Von den Grenzen Neu-Polens*, „Geographische Zeitschrift” 28 (1922), 1-2, pp. 1-5, here: p. 1.

107 M. Rössler, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-56 and 112.

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

moderate territorial programme with exceptional criticism<sup>109</sup>. In the field of science and scientific propaganda however, it was not the representatives of the great powers but precisely the researchers of East Central Europe who scored the greatest successes. They managed to alter spatial conceptions regarding the equitable shapes of their national territories. 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 Cvijic, due to which, the creation of Yugoslavia, a country simply condemned to political unity by force of geographical, ethnographical and linguistic argument, was already spoken of during the war<sup>110</sup>.

The political significance of the work of geographers was so great that a question mark hung over the possibility of further international cooperation. In 1904, the school geographical atlas compiled by Romer already had a distribution ban slapped on it in the German Reich. After the publication of his wartime atlas in Vienna, Albrecht Penck reported the apparent treason of state of the Polish geographer to the German General Staff. Indeed, due to German pressure, Romer had to stand in court which, however, cleared him of the charges recognising the atlas to be a strictly academic work. However, its export abroad was banned. Thus, the publication was smuggled over to the USA and the International Tribunal at the Hague<sup>111</sup>. After the war, both Romer and his former teacher engaged themselves in the Polish-German conflict. The *Polski Przegląd Kartograficzny* (*The Polish Cartographic Review*) initiated by Romer proved to be precisely the weapon that was needed in combating German revisionism. In turn, the academic career of Stepan Rudnytsky at Lvov university came to an end in 1919 when the Polish authorities decided to dismiss him. Though Romer had nothing to do with that decision, he had already taken up the cudgels in actively fighting against the idea of turning the university into a bi-lingual institution before the war. The nationalisation and politicisation of geography that was in progress throughout the whole of Europe from the beginning of the 20th century, assumed acute forms during the war, not infrequently leading to open personal conflicts in the academic world. That was the obverse side of the success whose indirect testimony were the distinctions accorded to geographers in countries to the existence of which they had contributed in no small measure. They also enjoyed international recognition. Stepan Rudnytsky, whose ambitious designs were not implemented, decided to move to Soviet Ukraine in 1926 to take charge of a newly set up geographical institute there. Before he did so, he rejected the offer of taking charge of the East European geography department at Charles University in Prague and similar offers from Vienna and Berlin<sup>112</sup>. Albrecht Penck, Eugeniusz Romer and Emmanuel de Martonne suspended their

---

109 I. Stebelsky, *op. cit.*, p. 601.

110 L. Dominian, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

111 S. M. Brzozowski, *Eugeniusz Mikołaj Romer*, PSB XXXI, pp. 635-645, here: p. 639.

112 I. Stebelsky, *op. cit.*, p. 602.

animosities for a moment in 1924, when they all contributed to a volume dedicated to Cvijic<sup>113</sup>. A smaller piece of evidence of the success of geographers from East Central Europe could be seen in the similarities between those supporting revisionist movements and their wartime publications. The role played by Cvijic and Romer during the war and subsequently at the peace negotiations, was noted and valued.

What was it that determined their success? For sure their professionalism and, despite all the disputes and mutual niggling, the formal probity of their work. But one might add that some of their German and Austrian colleagues were not bereft of those virtues either. It is also worth remembering the role of Cvijic's and Romer's teachers, and, among others, Stanisław Pawłowski and Stepan Rudnytsky who were also Penck's students when he worked at the University of Vienna. And yet, in some ways, the students outstripped their master. It was they who, during the war, acquired the skills and worked out the techniques in argument which their German and Hungarian colleagues were to draw upon in the interwar period. I believe that what was decisive in this was also the difference in the way of perceiving national territory. German geographers concentrated almost to the last moment on territorial conquests in Europe and beyond, the areas that were to be acquired for German settlement, and the colonies which were to expand Germany's "place under the sun". The Austrians, and later the Hungarians, in turn, sought arguments that would justify the continued existence of multi-national state organisms. Their colleagues from East Central European countries set themselves other aims. They strove to define their own national territories. *De facto* this also meant territorial expansion. It did not however tie in with either imperialism or the idea of community which was only to come into being under the influence of geographic conditions. Rudnytsky, Ishirkov, Romer or Cvijic described the status quo as it was and though at times they advanced fairly bold claims, they still remained grounded in the facts. That style of practicing the art of geography for long remained a synonym of academic solidity and modernity. It was precisely that that opened up the chance of establishing borders mapped out by patriotic academics.

*Translated by Antoni Bohdanowicz*

"Futuristic geography". The role of geographers in shaping the borders of East Central and South-Eastern Europe, 1914-1920.

The author discusses the role of geographers' scientific concepts in changing state borders in Europe during the First World War and immediately after its ending. Initially, East Central Europe was the object of the Reich's imperial policy which was accompanied by geographic works devoted to planned annexations and territories to be occupied by Germany. These designs triggered the critical reaction of Polish professional researchers who rallied in defence of both their scientific and political sovereignty. In its broader aspect, this article seeks to present the main strategies

<sup>113</sup> *Zbornik radova posvećen Jovanu Cvijicu povodom tridesetpetogodišnice naučnog rada od pri-jatelja i saradnika*, Beograd 1924.

employed in arguments and discussions on shaping this region's borders. Territorial demands based on ethnic statistics were a separate category. The debates of geographers were informed by reference to Polish-Ukrainian, Polish-German, Bulgarian-Serbian and Italian-Yugoslavian disputes. The professional albeit heavily politicized propensities of East Central European geographers found wide application during the peace negotiations in Versailles. Their work also proved to be a source of inspiration for the revisionist propagandists of Germany and Hungary that entered the scene in a later period.