

Peacekeeping after Paris: The Interallied Commission for the Delimitation of the Boundary between Austria and Hungary

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Between Show and Business

With a cast of thousands and an audience in the hundreds of millions, the Paris Peace Conference that began January 18, 1919, delivered an enormous spectacle. That spectacle included everything from the towering statesmen who presided – Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Orlando, Wilson – to the »councils« from which authority to conduct the business of the conference proceeded. On this stage, smaller states faded from the spotlight, as the Council of Ten shrunk to the Council of Five, followed by the Council of Four, and finally, the Big Three. But new roles also became available for some smaller states, most notably as petitioners standing before the leaders of the great powers.¹ Memorialized in newsreels, set down in print and distributed to audiences worldwide, and even a subject for painters, everything was a matter of great public interest at the Paris conference, an event too momentous to be overlooked, yet too complex to be grasped.²

That such a spectacle would sow the seeds of discontent was virtually guaranteed. In this spirit, volumes entitled »What Really Happened at Paris« appeared not long after the conference had concluded.³

Its theatrical dimension would also ensure that individual leaders themselves acquired what were seen as roles in a larger drama. Sigmund Freud believed that Woodrow Wilson was possessed of an unconscious identification with Jesus Christ as the »savior of the world.«⁴ And because the scale of the event was taken to have cast a veil over its meaning, new interpretations fell on fertile ground. In »The Economic Consequences of the Peace«, John Maynard Keynes famously called for a closer examination of what he reformulated as the »Carthaginian Peace« imposed by the conference. That call was based on the premise that the spectacle of the conference had obscured its future significance.⁵

This paper examines the Interallied Commission for the Delimitation of the Boundary between Austria and Hungary. By necessity, such an examination is aware of the spectacle of Paris 1919. After all, and despite declarations to the contrary, the conference was primarily about territory and geography. Allied leaders drew three thousand miles of new, geometrically precise, linear borders, in what was the largest such administrative endeavor in geography up to that

time.⁶ For their part, France, Great Britain, and the United States budgeted generously in advance for this undertaking, each creating their own research units to collect economic, linguistic, geographic, and other data on the territories for which new borders would be drawn.⁷ Meanwhile, at the conference itself, the territorial commissions, which were largely staffed by the research units themselves, exercised immense influence over the fate of peoples and lands.⁸ The Paris Peace Conference was a spectacle, a spectacle where boundaries were a main, if not *the* main attraction.

And yet, this paper is also an examination of what follows the Paris spectacle. For while Allied leaders provided for boundary commissions within the peace treaties themselves, the activities of the Interallied Boundary Commission for Austria and Hungary, like those of other boundary commissions, were conducted ›post-Paris‹. The difference, which is also recognized in international law, is the distinction between border delimitation and border demarcation. At Paris, Allied leaders delimited a new set of boundaries for Habsburg successor states. This delimitation received top billing, with articles concerning delimitation of frontiers placed at the beginning of the country-specific treaties of St. Germain and Trianon. Thus, Article 28(5) of the Treaty of St. Germain delimited the new boundary between Austria and Hungary by delivering fourteen instructions for the transfer of the ethnically mixed region ›West Hungary‹ from Hungary to Austria.⁹ The eighth instruction, for example, specified one section as ›a line to be fixed on the ground passing south-east of Liebing, Olmod and Locsmand, and northwest of Kőszeg and the road from Kőszeg to Salamonfa...‹. But this delimitation, which was the outcome of interstate agreement, was not demarcation. It was boundary commissions that were responsible for demarcation. Boundary commissions materialized the border, they made the ›line to be fixed in the ground‹.

The Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission operated in a postwar interval framed between the authoritative display of Paris and the final recognition of the boundary by the League of Nations in 1924. In Paris, Allied leaders had produced the general topographic coordinates for the new postwar frontiers. What remained, at least as had been envisioned, was the technical task of boundary demarcation. In what

follows, I turn to the acute crisis in West Hungary that confronted the Boundary Commission from the start of its work in July 1921. This crisis, I argue, decisively shaped the Commission's activities, which were attentive not only to demarcating boundaries, but increasingly to securing a peace in the region that would make such demarcation possible. In the first section, I show how the delayed launch of the Commission's work, along with some exceptional features of the Austria-Hungary boundary, compounded local resistance to demarcation in West Hungary. For its part, the Boundary Commission had been constituted as a military unit, a direct expression of its purpose to maintain order. Yet much of how the Commission conducted its work manifests the tenuous postwar certainty that future peace would be sealed not by martial attitudes but by citizen participation. In section two, I undertake a closer examination of the Commission's engagement with citizen constituencies to show how public participation figured as an intentional factor in peacekeeping. The Boundary Commission operated in the space between coercion and consensus: rituals of public participation offered constituencies of every kind to deliver their input. Shaped by the distinct challenges it encountered, the Commission acquired both expertise and autonomy. Drawing upon such experiences, in 1922, it challenged the delimitation of the Austria-Hungary boundary that had been set by the Paris treaties. In section three, I explore the limits of Commission expertise and autonomy via the ruling handed down in response to its challenge by the Council of the League of Nations. The Council largely rejected the boundary modifications recommended by the Commission. Nevertheless, the supplementary agreements that followed the Council ruling underscore the Commission's unabated authority in the region. These agreements not only constituted the legal basis for subsequent land transfer between Austria and Hungary but provided alternate remedies to the concerns that the Commission had intended to address in its boundary recommendations to the Council.

Defying Expectations in West Hungary

Allied leaders designed the Interallied Boundary Commission for the Delimitation of Austria and Hungary to carry out the boundary demarcation indicated in the Paris treaties. The enabling instructions for the boundary commissions issued by the Ambassadors Conference on 22 July 1920 promised consistency among the commissions.¹⁰ As Colonel Bellot, the French President of the Technical Commission for the Implementation of the Boundary Determination said following the Ambassadors Conference directive, deviation from the boundary setting practices was not desirable.¹¹ From this standpoint, in Austria, the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission was just one of four interallied territorial commissions assigned to fix the boundaries of post-Habsburg Austria. Such joint boundary commissions, moreover, were a tried-and-tested institution in Europe, reaching back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹² True, Allied leaders had recognized that not all boundaries between countries were ready to be fixed by commissions – most notably, between Germany and Poland in Upper Silesia, but also between Austria and the Serb-Croat-Slovene State in Carinthia. For these, the Paris treaties provided detailed specifications for the plebiscites that would settle territorial questions prior to the work of boundary commissions.¹³ At Paris, in any case, Allied leaders grouped West Hungary together with most of the other boundaries they addressed. It was a matter of conventional demarcation.

Despite that grouping, the circumstances faced by the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission were not those envisioned by the Paris Peace conference. Indeed, from the outset, and as the Ambassadors Conference never failed to mention, the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission was behind schedule.¹⁴ For whereas by late July 1921, as the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission held its constitutive meeting in Graz, the other boundary commissions in Austria had either completed, or were wrapping up their work.¹⁵ This late start was due primarily to the scheduling of the Paris conference. The Czechoslovak, Italian, and Serb-Croat-Slovene State boundary commissions had begun their work on 16 June 1920, based on the redrawn frontiers

specified in the Treaty of St. Germain of September 1919, whereas the frontiers of the new Hungarian state were not ratified until the Treaty of Trianon was signed on 4 June 1920. As time passed, the authority of Allied victory at Paris faded, and delays such as these mattered.

There were technical issues as well. Treaty boundaries to be demarcated by the other boundary commissions, for example, were often more straightforward. Thus, Article 27(6) of the Treaty of St. Germain stipulated that an extended section of the boundary between the new Czechoslovak Republic and Austria, would be »the old administrative boundary between Lower Austria and Bohemia«. By spelling out what was expected, such treaty language did not ensure a trouble-free boundary demarcation. But it often did pre-empt opportunities for interested states to intervene in the process. Where the Austria-Hungary boundary is concerned, less was spelled out. This lack of specificity would later give the Boundary Commission more scope in recommending changes to the demarcation of the boundary between Austria and Hungary. But in the short term it offered to others the hope that intervention could succeed. As Joseph Roth, who traveled to West Hungary in 1919 as a journalist for the Viennese daily, »Der Neue Tag«, wrote, »At the border, the motto is: no answer soon becomes an answer«.¹⁶

The metaphor of an (imperial) power vacuum, as is sometimes proposed, captures an essential aspect of the circumstances in which the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission was placed. The fundamental crisis in state legitimacy and the rule of law that had been initiated by the war, together with the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy, shattered the prevailing social and political stability in the region.¹⁷ But the metaphor of *vacuum*, in the sense of a void, or emptiness, is also misleading. For if anything, West Hungary was deeply saturated with political visionaries, aspiring rulers, armed prophets, generals, and publicists of every calling. Nor were these roles exclusionary. The Ambassadors Conference, for example, had initially appointed Colonel Artur Keresztes as the lead representative of the Hungarian delegation to the boundary commission, but replaced him shortly thereafter, on 4 November 1921, with Legation Councilor Baron Frigyes Villani, apparently due to the involvement of Keresztes in attempts to

restore the former Austrian Emperor Charles I to the throne in Hungary.¹⁸

Of course, as the response to Keresztes indicates, it was above all organized military violence that officials in Paris worried would upend the local balance of power. Still, if those officials were determined to affirm military authority, they seldom deployed interallied military forces themselves to West Hungary as they had done in the conflict in Upper Silesia.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the Austrian government, whose policy on the boundary was that international law as set forth in the Treaty of Germain should be enforced, did frequently call upon the Ambassadors Conference – and occasionally beyond – to intervene. When, in spring 1921, Austrian leaders sought Entente troops either from the Conference of Ambassadors or as mandataries of the League of Nations, in response to the growing presence of armed groups in West Hungary sympathetic to Charles I, for example, their request was quickly rejected.²⁰

The direct impact of the Ambassadors Conference's refusal to commit troops to West Hungary has not been overlooked by contemporary scholars, even as older, nationalist, German-language accounts judged the lack of military presence as proof that the new international order had failed.²¹ And it is true that elevated political pressure in the region exposed weaknesses in Paris peace planning.²² But what has been less recognized is that the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission, like other such commissions, was itself designed with a view toward acting as a stabilizing agent, both through its constitution and in its outward appearance as a military unit. As an institution, boundary commissions had historically been led by the military.²³ This disposition had a clear logic. First, the military had generally resolved the conflict that led to redrawing boundaries. They remained ready to act. Second, the military was well equipped to draw boundaries, with respect both to trained land-surveying staff and to strategic expertise in identifying physical features that would offer an advantage in a future conflict. Finally, and what is most pertinent here, by manifesting itself visibly, the military exercised a pacifying effect on the local population. Their presence kept dissent in check, it restrained the return of violence, and it served as a reminder that an armed force stood behind the new boundaries.

The instructions authorizing the boundary commissions issued by the Ambassadors Conference in July 1920 called for virtually all those who staffed these commissions to be members of the military. In addition, lead delegates were to be exclusively drawn from high-ranking military officials, as were the Austrian and Hungarian representatives to the Commission. Moreover, all commission members were required to wear a military uniform of a »notably marked character«.²⁴ Such instructions rendered visible the implicit understanding that the post-Paris boundary commissions were enforcement units and also intended as a peacekeeping force. In fact, recent boundary commissions in Europe had not been quite so fully identified with the military. The joint French-German boundary commission that demarcated the border between France and Germany after the war of 1871, for example, included diplomats and government officials, among others, with civilian status.²⁵ Meanwhile, instructions from the Ambassadors Commission applied from top to bottom of the boundary commissions; even members of survey departments had to hold the rank of officer. Only translators and topographers were exempted.²⁶

To be sure, the expectation that the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission would function as a *de facto* peacekeeping force did not entirely survive its confrontation with postwar realities. One problematic reality was the structure of the Boundary Commission itself. Joint boundary commissions were traditionally comprised of former adversaries, both of whom had a transparent interest in the outcome — and one of whom could count on having a more authoritative voice in addressing the local population and setting boundaries. The Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission was something different. It was chaired by Major André Jocard (France), accompanied by Arthur J. Craven (Great Britain), Major Enrico Calma (Italy), and General Staff Colonel Y. Yamagutschi (Japan).²⁷ These were representatives of four different Allied Powers, not all of whom had even been directly at war with Austria. Representing transparent interests and projecting a single, authoritative voice in boundary matters would always be a challenge for the Commission.²⁸

The »notably marked character« of the Boundary Commission as a military organization recalls that

maintaining order was both a prerequisite for the demarcation of the boundary and indispensable for its completion. At the same time, the war years between 1914 and 1918 had led to a peace settlement that directly questioned the use of military force by great powers to achieve foreign policy ends. That *interallied* boundary commissions had been established in Paris was one result of this questioning. In addition, Woodrow Wilson himself had famously repudiated the principle of military victory, declaring that future peace in Europe could only be guaranteed by new security arrangements among nations. Of equal importance here, however, is that the ›interested delegations‹ of Austria and Hungary did not necessarily welcome military staffing of the Commission. The Austrian Ministry for Home Affairs, for example, pushed back aggressively against the Ambassadors Conference instructions that required boundary commissions to be staffed by military personnel. Given public opinion on the recent war, ministry officials worried that Austrian officers lacked credibility among domestic populations, and they believed that such populations were primarily occupied with economic and other local political concerns.²⁹

In response to such concerns, the Ambassadors Conference relaxed its instructions. It agreed to let civilians serve, even as the commissions themselves were always led by high-ranking military officers. For its part, the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs vigorously protested, referring to the ›international practice‹ that only military personnel serve on boundary commissions. Should the boundary commission include non-officers, foreign ministry officials ominously warned, they absolved themselves of any consequences of that decision.³⁰ In the end, the arguments of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, together with the purposes of the Ambassadors Conference, prevailed over Ministry for Home Affairs objections. The Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission largely retained its military disposition, and this disposition acted as a form of coercion to secure the peaceful cooperation of the local population.

Nevertheless, as a symbol of international order in the region, the Commission also registered the limits of military presentation. For as the Austria-Boundary Commission finally launched demarcation work in January 1922, the month following the December

1921 Sopron/Ödenburg plebiscite, it had become clear that the Commission would need to mobilize public perception of it as an authoritative, yet unbiased and non-aligned institution. Wearing a uniform as part of a relatively small – by military standards – interallied organization of 250 people would not be enough. In his study of how events from the war into the postwar period unsettled large areas across the Baltics, Klaus Richter has shown how national elites, local activists, policymakers, and others harnessed the dynamics of territorial fragmentation to construct new states and new bearers of statehood.³¹ International actors in Paris and Geneva also sought to harness fragmentation. But to succeed, their emissaries in the Boundary Commission would need to secure participation, cooperation, and ultimately, assent from regional stakeholders.

The Rites of Boundary Demarcation

Mobilization for war in fall 1914 made violence part of everyday life in the Austria-Hungary border region, where the Commission began its work in January 1922, and low-intensity conflicts persisted there before dramatically escalating violence in 1921. It has, of course, often been noted that following the war, many sources fueled such violence, and also, that bringing such violence to an end presented many challenges.³² Hence, in some respects, the situation encountered by the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission fulfilled expectations. After all, in its design, and by tradition, boundary commission work is an exercise in crisis management. Some degree of local unrest was inevitable. Moreover, where the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission is concerned, its instructions from the Ambassadors Conference were calm and straightforward, namely, to ›follow as closely the definitions given in the treaties‹ of St. Germain and Trianon.³³ Finally, matters on the ground seemed settled. In response to the activity of Hungarian paramilitary units in West Hungary, the ›Venice Protocol‹, signed by Austrian, Hungarian, and Italian leaders on 13 October 1921, traded a Hungarian government promise to clear these units, in exchange for modifying the boundary agreement fixed in the Paris treaties and authorizing the plebiscite in

Ödenburg/Sopron.³⁴ The Venice Protocol also formalized a new agreement. Henceforth, no further plebiscites would be held. Boundary disputes that could not be resolved by the Commission would be referred to the League of Nations.³⁵

The Boundary Commission «fixed a line in the ground» – principally, between Austria and Hungary, but also at one point, between Austria, Hungary, and present-day Slovakia, and at another between Austria, Hungary, and present-day Slovenia. Characterized this way, demarcation suggests the execution of a technical task. But much of what the Boundary Commission actually did was not technical at all. It was rather an attempt to develop the communication skills required to complete the job. In ways that were essential to its enterprise, the Commission rendered instructions from Paris comprehensible and acceptable to the interested Austrian and Hungarian delegations; it clarified those instructions to itself, consistent with its own evolving self-understanding; and it made local claims intelligible and admissible to its superiors at the Ambassadors Conference in Paris and, increasingly, at the League of Nations.

This was an ever-changing performance directed to varying constituencies in varied settings, though none more critical than the elected leaders, community representatives, and townspeople living in and along the proposed boundary area. To this audience, the Commission addressed itself sincerely, expressing both an invitation to participate and the promise that its views would be carefully considered. Indeed, already in his August 1921 draft text to announce the planned launch of Commission activities, President Jocard called upon the local population for input on the boundary demarcation. In December 1921, when that launch finally took place, the Commission ordered the distribution of 300 placards – in French, German, Hungarian, and Croatian – declaring the start of work. Signed by Jocard, together with the Austrian and Hungarian delegation leaders, these placards were widely posted along the not-yet-finalized boundary, though only in the municipalities that would be impacted.³⁶

Between 1 March and 14 March 1922, the Commission put into action its promised public outreach and engagement. Traveling the entire boundary line and adjacent areas, north to south, the Commission made

43 stops of roughly 30 minutes each. During these stops, the Commission interviewed local leaders, talked with community stakeholders, and gathered in-person impressions to supplement existing ethnic maps, official data, and other intelligence. A questionnaire with standardized questions, distributed in advance and collected on-site, also captured prevailing sentiments.³⁷ Peter Haslinger has described the «superficial and fleeting» character of a similar tour undertaken by the Hungarian-Czechoslovak Boundary Commission from 28 September to 3 October 1921. At their stops, the Commission declined to receive delegations of more than six people, mass assemblies were forbidden, and Allied representatives made clear that they would cancel their visit if a larger demonstration was observed.³⁸ Such protocols seem at odds with the intents of the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission. To avoid the impression that only some voices were being heard, for example, Commission President Jocard had requested that the first line of the questionnaire state that this document was distributed only in those municipalities where the Commission would demarcate a boundary.³⁹ Moreover, in a number of instances, the Commission added new, unannounced stops. On these occasions, as in Rábafüzes/Raabfidisch, Jacobháza/Jakobshof, and Felsőrönök/Oberradling, where no questionnaire had been distributed in advance, the Commission would simply pose questions to the hastily assembled citizens.⁴⁰ The purpose of the extended Commission trip was not to inform the local population where the boundary would be drawn. It was, rather, an exercise in listening and consensus-building, a trip of choice that was not required of the Commission in its instructions from the Ambassadors Conference.

Boundary Commission activities constituted a form of self-presentation on behalf of an internationally coordinated system, and as in all such demarcation, those who lived along the proposed boundary lines had meaningful agency in the process.⁴¹ But engaging these citizens also had practical benefits for boundary making. After all, resistance was common, and citizens did not need to join militias to cause problems. Indeed, like most such commissions, the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission frequently encountered their own survey markers that had been removed or destroyed.⁴² In addition, because each national government

acted aggressively to gain territorial advantage, the Commission neutralized local opposition to boundary demarcation by claiming to act as advocates for the inhabitants themselves. In a letter he sent to both the Austrian and the Hungarian delegations following his early March trip, for example, Jocard characterized himself as speaking as »an interpreter in the name of farmers« in the proposed boundary area who asked that they not be subject to any »petty administrative measures« (Sekkaturen) from either side that could impede the management of their fields.⁴³

At the 1919 Paris Peace conference, Allied leaders promised a bold transformation of great power politics, one that would mark an end to the era of secret agreements, backroom trading, and spheres of influence. Going forward, as they hoped, citizens themselves would be mobilized to create a postwar peace bolstered by their participation in shaping it.⁴⁴ Arno Mayer once summarized this »New Diplomacy« as a criticism of the practice, theory, and objectives of the »Old Diplomacy«, arguing that what was new stood out most clearly against the old.⁴⁵ But what a closer examination of the boundary demarcation process put into practice by the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission suggests is that much of this demarcation was routine work directed to securing buy-in from local constituencies. And little of it was new. In addition to soliciting feedback in person during its March tour, for example, the Commission urged individual citizens to express their views directly to the League of Nations. These letters, telegrams, and petitions have long been dismissed by scholars because of the similar phrasing used in their appeals.⁴⁶ But considered from the goal of the Commission to defuse local conflict by creating opportunities for public participation, these documents had a manifest purpose. Indeed, past boundary commissions had also created such opportunities. The commission that demarcated the boundary between France and Germany between 1871 and 1877, for example, solicited letters and petitions from local citizens.⁴⁷

In drawing the Austria-Hungary boundary, the Commission trumpeted the importance of popular participation. Of course, some voices did matter more than others. A particularly influential group of stakeholders in the demarcation process was large land landowners.⁴⁸ In fact, Commission documents

clearly record the privilege given to these landowners – Batthyány, Erdődy, Esterházy, Friedrich, Lónyay, among others. Unlike most individual citizens, or the localities canvassed during the March 1922 public tour, for example, such landowners were able to arrange private meetings before the Commission.⁴⁹ Moreover, minutes of Commission meetings during which boundaries were agreed upon indicate just how attentive Commission members were to fixing borderlines where, say, »Esterházy holdings ended and the fields of the farmers of Pamhagen began«.⁵⁰ But both the Austrian and the Hungarian delegations also sought to turn the influence of large landowners to their advantage. Thus, each argued, at some point, that entire estates should remain in their respective country. Disputes in these cases were frequently resolved by land exchanges.⁵¹ Here, as a parallel to postwar boundary-making outside Europe, it could be said that large landowners occupied the place of imperial powers. For as contemporary scholars working in geography have found, boundary commissions working beyond Europe »were less concerned with the will of local populations or pre-existing patterns on the ground, and more influenced by the interests of the engaged imperial powers«.⁵² To be sure, estate owners justified their property interests in the prevailing language of economic benefit. But in this, they also recall the boundary claims outside Europe of their postwar imperial counterparts.

Much of the scholarship devoted to the Boundary Commission has focused on efforts by individuals, local groups, and governments to sway the Commission toward a particular demarcation.⁵³ But what is clear is that the Boundary Commission had its own objectives. One not-always-recognized objective was to fix the boundary such that it would not become a source of conflict in the future. At the same time, as the Boundary Commission increasingly became engaged in the demarcation process, it also acquired a sense of its own identity and purpose. The 43-stop information-gathering tour, for example, certainly served to strengthen the Commission's belief in its own expertise and authority. To that, the fact that the Ambassadors Conference instructions acknowledged the prerogative of the Commission in decision-making added an imprimatur to independent action. Of course, the boundaries specified by the Treaty of St. Germain

remained the principal reference point. But as the 3 June 1921, »Supplemental Instructions for the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission« noted, »It may be that an investigation undertaken on the spot will show it to be necessary to reposition at certain places the boundary indicated by the treaty«.⁵⁴ Instructions of this type signaled to the Commission that administrative autonomy derived from being »on the spot«, even as the Commission would soon find that such autonomy had its limits.

The Limits of Autonomy

Charles Maier once observed that what needs to be explained in a time of upheaval is stability.⁵⁵ With the Paris Peace Conference, West Hungary had metamorphosed into a territory upon which leaders in Prague, Rome, and Belgrade projected their geopolitical fantasies. It had become the preferred theater of operations for irredentist Hungarian paramilitary and armed Karlist legitimist forces, the testing ground for at least two failed states (Heinzenland, Lajtabánság) and in December 1921, the site of a contentious plebiscite.⁵⁶ Still, by January 1922, the Boundary Commission had gone to work. It had announced the launch of its enterprise, scheduled a listening tour of its own devising, and conveyed to the Austrian and Hungarian delegations where it expected boundary compromises. In doing this, the Boundary Commission declared its authority. Indeed, the official launch announcement made no reference to the boundaries set in the treaties of Germain and Trianon, but rather simply proclaimed the Commission's task »to fix the border between Austria and Hungary«.⁵⁷ Following the dissolution of the Military Inter-Allied Commission of Control that had overseen the Ödenburg/Sopron referendum in January 1922, the Boundary Commission was the region's most visible manifestation of the postwar order. With its mission to restore stability in demarcating the boundary, and broad latitude in fulfilling that mission, the Commission charted its own path. The Commission pressed forward boundary resolutions based on information it had gathered, what it judged to be equitable, and what was expeditious.

In expanding public participation in the demarcation process, the Commission elevated its own role in the

final setting of the boundary. But increased Commission autonomy brought with it other consequences. One is that it effectively put Austrian boundary claims at a disadvantage. Austrian foreign policy had made adherence to the Paris peace settlement the centerpiece of its foreign policy. As a consequence of the Boundary Commission's decision to grant more weight to public input, Austria's repeated appeals to the treaty boundaries thus became increasingly irrelevant.⁵⁸ For its part, Hungary sought to push this advantage as far as possible. For example, the Hungarian delegation cited the new boundaries set by the December 1921 Ödenburg/Sopron plebiscite to argue that the Venice Protocol had created new realities and insisted that the plebiscite region should be demarcated, while the remaining areas should wait.⁵⁹ Propositions such as these were rejected by the Commission. The Commission configured its own work plan, and it adjusted this plan in response to local exigencies. But the Ambassadors Conference had set a completion deadline for the end of March 1922, and the Commission never entertained proposals to postpone demarcation.

Still, in looking ahead to how the boundaries were finally drawn in 1922, it might be said that the most enduring consequence of increased Commission autonomy was the undoing of its own work. For while the Commission's public performance may have helped to build trust and calm local discord, that performance could not resolve differing opinions within the Commission itself, nor could it suggest how to proceed where the boundary principles themselves seemed to justify two possible determinations. In anticipation of such extraordinary situations, the 3 June 1921, instructions from the Ambassadors Conference, as well as the Venice Protocol, had placed final authority for boundary disputes with the Council of the League of Nations.⁶⁰ For its part, the Ambassadors Conference would act as the first instance for boundary dispute referrals before forwarding them to the League. Here, as always, the Conference put local stability first. As its instructions noted, »with a view to upholding order«, boundary commissions were still required to draw a provisional boundary following the lines indicated in the Paris treaties and to inform the local authorities.⁶¹

Already by January 1922, President Jocard had made known that the Boundary Commission expected

to bring disputes concerning a section of the northern boundary before the League of Nations.⁶² To be sure, an appeal to the League was not the Commission's preferred outcome. Generally, the Commission desired to have both sides accept its determination, or at least to negotiate a compromise among themselves. And when it wished, the Commission could extract such compromises. It was not unusual, for example, for Jocard to suggest that if a certain agreement could not be reached, the Commission would either impose a much more unfavorable solution on the resistant party or simply overrule that party. In fact, according to the Austrian report of the Interallied Commission meeting held on 28 March 1922, the Commission had overruled most of the dispute cases put forward by the Hungarian delegation.⁶³

Nevertheless, the Commission planned to appeal sections of the Austria-Hungary boundary to the League of Nations, and in moving towards this decision, it pursued a path that it alone had created. That is, the Commission designed and carried out what today might be called »a stakeholder process«, and this process yielded a particular set of findings. To the Commission, these findings suggested that the boundaries set forth in the Paris treaties were flawed and needed to be rectified. On 15 June 1922, the Council of the League of Nations received the Boundary Commission's request, via the Conference of Ambassadors, to review and rule upon the boundary modification it had recommended. In response, Eric Drummond, the League's Secretary General, asked that the Austro-Hungarian frontier be put on the agenda of the next Council meeting. In approaching the League, the Commission had identified three boundary stretches that it proposed should remain in Hungary, or as the formal request carefully formulated it, three districts, in which the Commission asked the League to be »release[d] from the obligation of maintaining the frontier line«. These districts were: 1) Pamhagen »because it controls a system of irrigation and navigation canals affecting a wide area of Hungary«; 2) »a group of villages to the East and Southeast of Liebing, because they gravitate around Güns/Köszeg which remains in Hungary«; 3) »a narrow strip of territory some 20–25 kilometers in length to the East of Szombathely (Steinamanger) inhabited by a mixed Hungarian, German, and Croatian population, of

which the economic center is the said [Hungarian] town of Szombathely«.⁶⁴

A complete record of the internal deliberations that led the Council to its final ruling on the boundary modifications proposed by the Commission is not available.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the documents that have been preserved offer a clear picture of how the Council received and responded to the proposal. In the first phase, the Ambassadors Conference instructions guided actions. These instructions required the Boundary Commission to deliver a report that summarized its investigations and set forth its motives for suggesting rectification of the boundary. Each interested party also submitted its proposed demarcation. In the second phase, Council protocol provided guidance. Thus, on 19 July 1922, the dispute was brought before the Council by Paul Hymans, President of the League Assembly. The Council then heard statements from the Austrian and the Hungarian representatives, whereupon the Council requested that the League Secretariat, under the direction of Hymans, study the question and provide recommendations. The Council then placed it on the agenda of the next Council session.⁶⁶ The memorandum presented by Austria in connection with the July 19 meeting stated that the proposed boundary modification constituted almost one-third of the frontier between Austria and Hungary.⁶⁷ But the Boundary Commission, which had proposed these modifications, had no designated function at the League and did not appear.

Despite its absence, the Commission exercised an unmistakable influence upon the initial reception of the boundary modifications at the League. In its own evolution, the Commission had increasingly prioritized economic consequences as a factor in fixing the new borders.⁶⁸ The questionnaire distributed in advance of the March listening tour, for example, was primarily devoted to assessing economic impacts, posing questions of municipalities, such as »Is there a public utility (gas works, power station, drinking water reservoir...) whose retention is vital to the economic life of the municipality?«⁶⁹ If anything, the Commission report to the Council intensified this emphasis, such that economic considerations underpinned its rationale for boundary modification. Thus, the second of the four reasons presented to justify relocating the boundary around »a group of villages to the East and Southeast of

Liebing«, or case 2), was simply put as »to arrest to some extent the economic decay of the town of Közeg/Guns«.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, the Austrian and Hungarian representatives themselves indicated just how thoroughly each had internalized the Commission's standpoint that boundary modifications had become about economic consequences. On 19 July 1922, Emerich Pflügl, the Austrian representative, opened his brief statement to the Council with the familiar Austrian appeal to the confidence Austria had always placed in postwar international authorities and their treaties. But he now added,

the modifications of the frontier now proposed would seriously compromise her (Austria's) economic future. It was precisely this economic future of Austria which the Treaties of Peace were intended to safeguard.

Using similar language, though to justify the transfer of territory to Hungary, Frigyes Villani, the Hungarian representative, referenced the Commission itself. »Experts who had considered the matter«, he told the Council, »were of the opinion that the district in question should be attached to Hungary for economic reasons«.⁷¹

At the League of Nations, the authority of the Boundary Commission had been fully acknowledged, first, by the Ambassadors Conference, who had forwarded the Commission's request to the Council, and subsequently, by the Austrian and Hungarian delegations themselves. In addition, the report to the Council, prepared by Paul Hymans, placed at its center the Commission's findings and conclusions. Nevertheless, at the League of Nations, the authority of the Commission clashed with the verdict of a yet greater authority. On 22 September 1922, the Council publicly released the results of its arbitration, which largely rejected the Commission recommendations. In the first case of Pamhagen, the Council instructed the Commission to draw up a legal protocol that addressed the hydrotechnical issues of irrigation and navigation canals. In the second case, it only partially accepted the principal recommendation of the Commission that a »group of villages« around Liebing be assigned to Hungary. Finally, in the case of the narrow strip of territory near Szombathely, the Council again denied the Commission's territorial request, though it did provide

new boundary language, assigning the area north of Pornóapáti to Hungary, because of its proximity to a power station linked to the Hungarian network.⁷²

The Council recognized the hard-won practical expertise acquired by the Commission in its investigation. The Council yielded at certain points, for example, in the second case to the economic arguments of the Commission. Thus, as the formal decision put it,

*The Council takes into account the necessity of leaving the communal woods belonging to the town of Kőszeg in Hungarian territory, and also of the inconvenience which would result as regards the water supply of that town from the attribution of the village of Rattersdorf to the Austrian Republic.*⁷³

But for the most part, the Council did not see in the Commission's reasoning a compelling case to alter the treaty boundaries. With respect to the economic relationship between Lockenhaus/Léka, a village among the Liebing group, and Kőszeg, for example, the Council found that the economic »consideration did not appear to it to be sufficient to justify tracing a frontier line which would create a new and deep salient in Austrian territory«. Local dynamics and experiences, together with its own understanding of its mission, convinced the Commission to propose significant revisions to the treaty boundaries. Possessed of a different understanding, the Council simply overruled it.

Learning with the Boundary Commission

In early 1919, the Paris Peace Conference spectacle had long since reached West Hungary, as across the region, as local groups of every size and profile had spontaneously organized self-determination referenda.⁷⁴ And yet, for the commissions designated by the Conference to specialized tasks, the course of action was flexible. For the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission, the work plan was shaped by circumstances on the ground. In its activities the Boundary Commission explored its role as an agent of peace within the new international order. But what a closer examination of the Boundary Commission suggests is that its activities

also shaped local constituencies for an unfamiliar post-Habsburg reality in which these constituencies would be subjects of both the Austrian Republic and the new international order. Scholars of this region have often highlighted the ambiguity of local identities, including national indifference, along with the low degree of rural political mobilization before 1918.⁷⁵ What a closer examination of the Boundary Commission brings to such perspectives, however, is insight into the role of the Boundary Commission itself in educating citizens to state sovereignty and the concept of the boundary. Geographers have noted how modern efforts to draw new, geometrically precise, linear borders have functioned to reinforce the state's effective control over every corner of its territory.⁷⁶ Reflecting upon the activities of postwar boundary commissions, to what extent may the same be said of the international ambitions of the architects of the new order in Geneva, Paris, and London?

On 19 August 1924, after more than four years of service, the Interallied Commission for the Delimitation of the Boundary between Austria and Hungary convened for its final meeting. In its September 1922 decision, the Council had not »drawn a [new] line in the ground«, but rather ruled upon recommendations to adjust boundary delimitation set forth in the Paris treaties. The Commission still needed to complete much of the actual demarcation. Nor did the Allied Commission members, along with the Austrian and Hungarian delegations, consider the September 1922 Council decision to be the final word on the boundary. A December 1922 agreement, overseen by the Commission, led to a one-time package of land exchanges between Austria and Hungary.⁷⁷ Austria, for example, was permitted to acquire Rattersdorf / Rötfaiva and »some of the villages to the East and Southeast of Liebing« that the Council revision of the Paris treaties had recently assigned to Hungary. In this land exchange, Hungary was permitted to sidestep the third Council ruling regarding the »narrow strip of territory« near Szombathely and acquired, for example, Szentpéterfa / Prostrum, which the Council had said »it must leave to Austria«, as it was »essential for the purpose of ensuring communication« between villages.⁷⁸

Boundary Commission activities following the September 1922 Council decision merit attention, particularly in view of the self-assured voice in the

region that the Commission had acquired. Indeed, the land exchange agreements that emerged under Commission leadership, before these agreements were then approved by the Ambassadors Conference and forwarded to the League of Nations, raise important questions about why the Council would reject Commission boundary recommendations that would soon be reached bilaterally through the authority of the Commission. But in its later work, the Commission also addressed less consequential issues, including local concerns regarding access to resources and small border traffic. Thus, Commission members put their signature to a number of supplemental agreements, or »legal protocols« that formally authorized exceptional circumstances. Legal Protocol No. 3, for example, ensured that the lane situated on the boundary »near the house of the parish priest of Szent Imre Church« in Rönök / Radling remain open during operation and that »the persons employed there, together with their cattle and draft animals, [may have] the free passage of the frontier, without any formality«.⁷⁹

As the last of the nine provinces to join Austria, the integration of Burgenland during the 1920s constitutes a fascinating and unusual chapter in the study of state consolidation in the First Austrian Republic. Indeed, Hungarian restrictions in some fields, such as primary education, remained in force in Burgenland until 1937–1938.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the investigations undertaken by the Boundary Commission generated not only a unique expertise in public opinion, but an enormous body of technical knowledge. With research into hydrologic systems, electric power stations, timber receipts, transportation networks, and more, the Boundary Commission developed a comprehensive understanding of the area that surpassed any Austrian state agency. In what ways, this knowledge of regional interconnections, public attitudes, and economic networks fits into broader accounts of integration in the 1920s remains a topic for additional study.

Today, aside from the stone pillars bearing the year 1922 that mark the border between Austria and Hungary, few physical signs remain of the demarcation carried out by the Boundary Commission. And while in 2021, Austrian leaders celebrated the centennial of the »Burgenlandgesetz«, few recalled that the League of Nations backed both Austria and the Paris treaties in

rejecting the boundary modifications brought before it. Calling attention to advocacy by Paris and Geneva on behalf of post-Habsburg borders strikes a discordant note in what remains settled public opinion on the Paris Peace Conference and the League of Nations — at least in Austria.

In such a context, the single public marker in Austria, a plaque, commemorating the work of the Boundary Commission is a remarkable phenomenon. Dedicated in 1991, and situated near the entrance of the Lockenhaus castle, this plaque recounts the visit to the castle by the Commission on 15 March 1922. According to the plaque text, over 100 citizens attended this visit, which was largely held in Hungarian. The plaque attributes the use of Hungarian to »private and public reasons«, but what is likely meant is that the interests of the Esterházy family in impressing the Commission prevailed.⁸¹ The Boundary Commission listened to the audience, and following public discussion, assured those present that Lockenhaus would be assigned to Hungary. At this point, it is said that many of the citizens spoke up in German, declaring that they preferred to belong to Austria. The plaque, which is also one of the few detailed accounts whose source is not the Commission, correctly observes that the final boundary determination was made by the League of Nations.

And yet, the story rings false – it must be invented. After all, the Commission was neutral. It had no authority to announce boundary determinations, especially if they violated treaties signed in Paris. Then again, the Commission answered to its own judgment, and it bestowed upon itself its own authority. Forged in the crucible of early postwar West Hungary, this authority continued to shape the region to the end of the Commission in 1924. The story told by the plaque at Lockenhaus is probably true.

- 1 For the classic and compelling account of the petitioners not recognized at the conference and the emergence of an »anticolonial nationalism« see Erez Manela: *The Wilsonian Moment. Self-Determination and the International Origins of the Anticolonial Nationalism*, Oxford 2007, esp. pp. 55–135.
- 2 William Orpen, the British artist commissioned by Lloyd George to record the Paris Peace Conference, recounts the work of artists at the conference, in *William Orpen: An Onlooker in France, 1917–1919*, London 1921, pp. 116–120.
- 3 Edward Mandell (ed.): *What Really Happened at Paris. The Story of the Paris Peace Conference 1918–1919*, New York 1921.
- 4 Sigmund Freud / William C. Bullitt: *Woodrow Wilson. A Psychological Study*, New Brunswick, NJ 1999 [1966], p. 170 et passim.
- 5 John Maynard Keynes: *The Economic Consequences of Peace*, New York 1995 [1920], p. 36.
- 6 On the new international politics enabled by the formally linearized borders envisioned at the Paris Peace Conference, see Kerry Goettlich: *The Rise of Linear Borders in World Politics*, in: *European Journal of International Relations* 25/1 (2019), pp. 203–228.
- 7 For the substantial financial resources provided to the most ambitious of these research units, »The Inquiry«, see Lawrence Gelfand: *The Inquiry. American Preparations for Peace 1917–1919*, New Haven 1963, pp. 337–338.
- 8 This is the formulation of Clive Day, whose responsibilities at Paris Gelfand notes, »spread from the Balkans to Austria to Western Europe«. Clive Day: *The Atmosphere and Organization of the Peace Conference*, in: Edward M. House / Charles Seymour (eds.): *What Really Happened at Paris: The Story of the Peace Conference, 1918–1919*, by American Delegates, New York 1921, p. 26. More recently, Leonard Smith has described procedural changes after the signing of Treaty of Versailles, which »meant that sovereignty on territorial matters devolved to the territorial committees«. Leonard V. Smith: *Sovereignty at the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, Oxford 2018, p. 126.
- 9 Generally called »Western Hungary« by international decision-makers of the day, this article follows contemporary usage with the term »West Hungary«. Where I specifically address the geopolitical entity »Burgenland«, the Austrian federal state constituted through the Burgenlandgesetz of 15 January 1921, that designation is used.
- 10 Austrian States Archives, Archive of the Republic, Federal Chancellery (hereafter ÖSTA AdR, BKA), Grenzakten, 1918–1938, Box 14. »Instructions. Relatives aux Commissions de délimitation. (Approuvées par la Conférence des Ambassadeurs dans sa séance du 22 juillet 1920)«.
- 11 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, State Office and Federal Ministry for Home Affairs (hereafter SflU), Zentralgrenzkommision, 1920–1923, Box 8048. »Abschrift eines Berichtes des Bevollmächtigten der österr. Republik, Herrn Johann Eichhoff, betreffend Grenzkommission-Unterredung mit Oberst Bellot«, 25 July 1920.
- 12 On earlier joint boundary commissions and modern boundary-making, Jacobo García-Álvarez / Paloma Puente-Lozano (eds.): *Beneath the Lines, Borders and Boundary-Making from the 18th to the 20th Century*, Historical Geography and Geosciences, Cham 2022.
- 13 For extraordinarily detailed plebiscite instructions, see the Annex to Article 88 of the Treaty of Versailles regulating the vote to be administered in Upper Silesia.
- 14 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SflU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1921–1922, Box 8069. »Aufzeichnung zur Sitzung des österr. ung. Grenzregulierungsausschusses in Wien am 20. Jänner 1922«.
- 15 Graz likely served as the meeting site due to its easy travel distance for Major André Jocard, who had been appointed to lead the Interallied Boundary Commission for Austria and Hungary, and who still needed to finish his service with the Serb-Croat-Slovene State Boundary Commission. Indeed, Jocard had initially proposed Maribor – over Sopron/Ödenburg (!) – as the administrative headquarters of the Austria-Hungary Boundary Commission. The Commission constitutive meeting in Graz was held on 29 July 1921. ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SflU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1921–1922, 8069. »Niederschrift zur konstituierenden Sitzung des österreichisch-ungarischen Grenzregelungsausschusses«.
- 16 Joseph Roth: *Die Grenze*, in: *Der Neue Tag*, August 7 (1919); Joseph Roth: *Reise durchs Heanzenland*, in: Joseph Roth: *Joseph Roth Werke. Das Journalistische Werk 1915–1923*, vol. 1, ed. by Klaus Westermann, Köln 1989, p. 101.
- 17 On the imperial power vacuum, see Ibolya Murber: *Grenzziehung zwischen Ver- und Entflechtungen. Eine Entstehungsgeschichte Deutsch-Westungarns und des Burgenlandes*, Wiesbaden 2021, pp. 5–15.
- 18 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SflU, Zentralgrenzkommision. Österr.-Ungarn G.R.A. Grenzföhrung, Box 8048. Letter (Confidential), »Neugebauer an die Zentralgrenzkommision Wien«, 29.10.1921.
- 19 Bernard Linek, *Ein schlechtes Puzzelstück? Oberschlesische Abstimmung (20. März 1921) als Teil der Versailles Ordnung*, in: Claudia Fräss-Ehrfeld (ed.): *Volksabstimmungen und andere Grenzlösungen nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, Klagenfurt 2020, pp. 187–206. In late July 1921, the Ambassadors Conference did dispatch the »Interallied Generals Commission«, consisting of a trio of generals (French, British, Italian) and 30 Entente officers, and that received reinforcements in December 1921, during the leadup to the Ödenburg / Sopron plebiscite, after which the Commission was disbanded. On the related, but little-studied Interallied Military Mission of Control in Hungary; see Balázs Juhász: *The Interallied Military Commission of Control and the Military Control of Hungary between 1921 and 1927*, in: *Hadtudományi Szemle* 5/1 (2012), pp. 47–72.
- 20 Burgenland Landesarchiv, Anschlussbewegung, D/3-3/63 »Einschreiten beim Völkerbund«, 1 April 1921.
- 21 The standard regional history remains Gerald Schlag: *Aus Trümmern geboren... Burgenland 1918–1921, Eisenstadt 2021*. For an older nationalist account, see Viktor Miltschinsky: *Das Verbrechen von Ödenburg*, Vienna 1922, pp. 17–22, 50–60.
- 22 To this elevated political pressure in the region must be added the competing national interests that manifested themselves within the Ambassadors Conference. Jürgen Heideking: *Areopag der Diplomaten. Die Pariser Botschaften der alliierten Hauptmächte und die Probleme der europäischen Politik 1920–1931*, Husum 1979, pp. 159–182.
- 23 Paloma Puente-Lozano / Jacobo García-Álvarez: *Drawing the Lines, Knowing the Borders: An Overview of Recent Scholarship on Boundary-Making and Modern Regimes of Territorialization*, in: García-Álvarez / Puente-Lozano: *Beneath the Lines*, pp. 1–20.
- 24 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, Grenzakten, 1918–1938, Box 14. »Instructions. Relatives aux Commissions de délimitation. (Approuvées par la Conférence des Ambassadeurs dans sa séance du 22 juillet 1920)«. ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SflU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1920–1923, Box 8048. »Grenzregelungsausschüsse – Instruktion«, 17.6.1920.
- 25 Benoit Vaillot: *From Line on a Map to Realities on the Ground: The French-German Joint Boundary Commission at Work (1871–1877)*, in: García-Álvarez / Puente-Lozano: *Beneath the Lines*, pp. 59–73, at pp. 62f.
- 26 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SflU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1920–1923, Box 8048. »Grenzregelungsausschüsse – Instruktion«, 17 June 1920.

- 27 As a decision-making body, the Commission also included Austria and Hungary, who were designated as »interested delegations«, and their voting privileges were diminished relative to the four standing Commission members. The Austrian delegation was led by Dr. Stefan Neugebauer, the Hungarian delegation by the aforementioned Colonel Artur von Keresztes, followed by Baron Frigyes Villani, and thereafter Dr. Ernst Träger.
- 28 Linek: Ein schlechtes Puzzlestück, pp. 187–206.
- 29 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1919–1924, Box 8047. »Vortrag für den Kabinettsrat, Einrichtung der Länderzentralbureaus in Innsbruck, Graz und Wien«.
- 30 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1920–1923, Box 8048. »Grenzregelungsausschüsse – Instruktion«, 17.6.1920.
- 31 Klaus Richter: Fragmentation in East Central Europe: Poland and the Baltics, 1915–1929, Oxford 2020.
- 32 Robert Gerwarth: The Vanquished. Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917–1923, London 2016. On the international commission created to manage financial compensation, especially to Austria, for damages linked to chaotic circumstances in 1921, see Felix Tobler: Die Kommission für Privatschäden im Burgenland – ihre Tätigkeit und ihr Schriftgut als Quelle zur Geschichte der Freischärlerperiode 1921, in: Wissenschaftliche Arbeiten aus dem Burgenland 95 (1996), pp. 65–75.
- 33 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1920–1923, Box 8048. »Grenzregelungsausschüsse – Instruktion«, 17.6.1920.
- 34 The circumstances surrounding the Venice Protocol are well documented. See, for example, Richard Lein: »Die Burgenlandnahme« 1919–1924, in: Maximilian Graf / Alexander Lass / Karlo Ruzic-Kessler (eds.): Das Burgenland als internationale Grenzregion im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert, Vienna 2012, pp. 1–43, at 31–42.
- 35 Eric Drummond, Secretary-General of the League of Nations, set forth the legal basis for arbitration by the League. »Memorandum by the Secretary-General. The Delimitation of the Frontiers between Hungary and the Adjoining States«. League of Nations Archive (LNA), »Délimitation des frontières austro-hongroise« (DFAH) / Box R600 / Class 11 / Dossier Number 19584 / Doc 21257.
- 36 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision. Österr.-Ungarn G.R.A. Grenzföhrung, Box 8115. »Aufruf betreffend den Beginn der Tätigkeit des ö. u. Grenzregelungsausschusses«, 5.1.1922.
- 37 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision. Österr.-Ungarn G.R.A. Grenzföhrung, Box 8115. »Aufzeichnung zur Sitzung des österr.-ung. Grenzregelungsausschusses in Wien am 20. Jänner 1922«.
- 38 Peter Haslinger: Dilemmas of Security. The State, Local Agency, and the Czechoslovak-Hungarian Boundary Commission, 1921–25, in: Austrian History Yearbook 49 (2018), pp. 187–206, at p. 193.
- 39 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision. Österr.-Ungarn G.R.A. Grenzföhrung, Box 8115. »Aufzeichnung zur Sitzung des österr.-ung. Grenzregelungsausschusses in Ödenburg am 17. Februar 1922«.
- 40 Burgenland Landesarchiv, Anschlussbewegung, J/I 35–36, »Letter from Burgenland State Administrator, Alfred Rausnitz«, 13.3.1922.
- 41 On citizen participation in boundary demarcation, also see: Journal of Historical Geography 34/3 (2008), pp. 393–552.
- 42 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision. Österr.-Ungarn G.R.A. Grenzföhrung, Box 8115. »Neuplatierung der Kundmachung des Grenzregelungsausschusses. Der österreichische Delegierte an den Präsidenten des ö.u. G.R.A.«, 26.5.1922.
- 43 Jocard commented that the original French was »Sekkaturen«, or roughly, »vexations«. ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision. Österr.-Ungarn G.R.A. Grenzföhrung, Box 8048. Letter, »Der Präsident an die interessierten Kommissären«, 26.3.1922.
- 44 Keith Hamilton / Richard Langhorne: The Practice of Diplomacy, London 1995, pp. 141–152.
- 45 Arno J. Mayer: Wilson vs. Lenin. Political Origins of the New Diplomacy 1917–1918, Cleveland 1967, p. 54.
- 46 Haslinger, Dilemmas of Security represents an exception. For the conventional view, check Jon Dale Berlin: The Burgenland Question 1918–1920: From the Collapse of Austria-Hungary to the Treaty of Trianon, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin 1974, p. 263. Béla Rásky: Vom Schärfen der Unschärfe. Die Grenze zwischen Österreich und Ungarn 1918 bis 1924, in: Helmut Konrad / Wolfgang Maderthaler (eds.): Das Werden der Ersten Republik ... der Rest ist Österreich, Bd. I, Wien 2008, pp. 139–158, at p. 140. For the appeals, see Burgenland Landesarchiv (BLA), Anschlussbewegung, H/3, »Bittschriften einzelner Gemeinden an den Völkerverbund. Registratur des Landesgrenzbüros (1–50)«. Administratively, local testimonials were organized by the Burgenland Provincial Administration in Bad Sauerbrunn, in coordination with the Central Boundary Commission in Vienna, which oversaw the activities of all four Austrian boundary commissions. Hungarian leaders also submitted petitions to the League of Nations, though far fewer in number. See League of Nations Archive (LNA) / »Délimitation des frontières austro-hongroise« (DFAH) / Box R599 / Class 11 / Dossier Number 22775 / 19637.
- 47 Vaillot: Line on a Map, p. 64.
- 48 See Johann Temmel: Ohne Szombathely können wir nicht leben! Der Anschluß des Burgenlandes an Österreich mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Grenzziehung im unteren Pinkathal. M.A. Thesis, University of Vienna, 1993, pp. 81–96. Also, Temmel: Zwei Nachbarn werden getrennt. Oberbildein / Felsöbely und Pernau / Pornóapáti, in: Traude Horvath / Eva Müllner (eds.): Hart an der Grenze: Burgenland und Westungarn, Wien 1992, pp. 55–64.
- 49 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision. Österr.-Ungarn G.R.A. Grenzföhrung, Box 8115. »Aufzeichnung zur Sitzung des österr.-ung. Grenzregelungsausschusses in Ödenburg am 3. Februar 1922«.
- 50 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision. Österr.-Ungarn G.R.A. Grenzföhrung, Box 8115. »Aufzeichnung zur Sitzung des österr.-ung. Grenzregelungsausschusses in Sopron am 15. November 1922«.
- 51 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1921–1922, Box 8069. »Vortrag für den Ministerrat«, n.d. ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision. Österr.-Ungarn G.R.A. Grenzföhrung, Box 8048. Letter, »Leopold Hennes to Franz Marek«, 22.2.1922.
- 52 John W. Donaldson: Politics and Scale in Boundary-making. The Work of Boundary Commissions, in: Journal of Historical Geography 34/3 (2008), pp. 393–396, at p. 396.
- 53 Ferdinand Mühlgassner: Die Grenzziehung 1921. Auswirkungen für die Ortschaften Schandorf und Nardo, in: Elisabeth Deinhofer / Traude Horvath (eds.): Grenzfall 1921–1991, Großwarasdorf 1991, pp. 57–60. See also the classic, Gerald Schlag: Die Grenzziehung Österreich-Ungarn 1922/23, in: Burgenland in seiner pannonischen Umwelt: Festgabe für August Ernst, Burgenländische Forschungen, Sonderband 7, Eisenstadt 1984, pp. 333–346.
- 54 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1921–1922, Box 8069. »Ergänzende Instruktionen für die ungarischen Grenzregelungsausschüsse. (Genehmigt durch die Botschafterkonferenz vom 3. Juni 1921)«.
- 55 Charles Maier: Recasting Bourgeois Europe in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade after World War I, Princeton, NJ 1975, p. 3. For

- a more contemporary statement, see Stella Ghervas: *Conquering Peace: From Enlightenment to the European Union*, Cambridge, MA 2021, pp. 148–219.
- 56 The failed states, Heanzenland (German-Austria) and Lajtabánság (Hungary). On the wider struggle for control of the region, see Hellmut Andics: *Das Burgenland im Kräftespiel seiner Nachbarn nach 1918*, in: Stefan Karner (ed.): *Das Burgenland im Jahr 1945. Beiträge zur Landes-Sonderausstellung 1985*, Eisenstadt 1985, pp. 21–37.
 - 57 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1921–1922, Box 8069, »Avis! / Aufruf! / Felhivás! / Zaziv!«
 - 58 See Michael Burri: *The Interallied Commission for the Delimitation of the Boundary between Austria and Hungary, and the New International Order in Austria*, in: Hannes Grandits / Ibolya Murber / Katharina Tyran (eds.): *Enforcing a Post-Imperial Order. The Austro-Hungarian Border Land after WWI*, New York 2023, forthcoming.
 - 59 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision. Österr.-Ungarn G.R.A. Grenzföhrung, Box 8115. »Aufzeichnung zur Sitzung des österr.-ung Grenzregelungsausschusses in Wien am 20. Februar 1921«.
 - 60 Disputes between the interested parties could be referred to the four-power Interallied Commission. If the Commission ruled unanimously in favor of one side, that ruling would prevail – unless one of the interested parties still refused to accept it. In such a case, the Interallied Commission could overrule the refusal, or it could refer the dispute to the designated international authorities. Eric Drummond, Secretary-General of the League of Nations set forth the legal basis for arbitration by the League. »Memorandum by the Secretary-General. The Delimitation of the Frontiers between Hungary and the Adjoining States«. LNA, DFAH / Box R600 / Class 11 / Dossier Number 19584 / Doc 21257.
 - 61 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1921–1922, Box 8069. »Ergänzende Instruktionen für die ungarischen Grenzregelungsausschüsse. (Genehmigt durch die Botschafterkonferenz vom 3. Juni 1921)«.
 - 62 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision. Österr.-Ungarn G.R.A. Grenzföhrung, Box 8069. »Aufzeichnung zur Sitzung des österr.-ung. Grenzregelungsausschusses in Wien am 20. Januar 1922«.
 - 63 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1921–1922, Box 8069. »Burgenländisch-Ungarische Grenze«.
 - 64 The initial description of the boundary dispute in League publications refers to »a narrow strip of territory... East of Szombathely«, but the final League ruling addressed territory west of Szombathely. League documents provide no additional clarification on this issue. For the initial description see *The Austro-Hungarian Frontiers*: a) *The Burgenland Question*, in: *Monthly Summary of the League of Nations* 2/6 (June 1922), pp. 129–130, at p. 130.
 - 65 The Council remained less than forthcoming regarding its boundary deliberations. Assembly President Paul Hymans ended the 19 July 1922 meeting devoted to Austria and Hungary by declaring that »it has never been the intention of the Council to postpone our decision. The Council is simply asking for the time needed to study the matter«. The Council's next public action was to read its boundary decision at the 18.9.1922 meeting. Council deliberations taking place at the same time on the boundary between Austria and the Serb-Croat-Slovene State were similarly circumspect, with Hymans referencing a report delivered to the Council that would not be made public, as he had »certain scruples of conscience«. See *Compte rendu de la dix-neuvième session du conseil. Huitième séance (publique) tenue à St. James Palace - Londres, le mercredi 19 juillet 1922 à 4 hres, sous la Présidence de M. Quinones de Leon (Espagne)*. LNA, Sessions of the Council – Minutes (SOCM) / R1443 / 27 / 21994 / 2764 / Jacket 2. *Questions de la frontière entre l'Autriche et l'état Serbe-Croat-Slovène*, 22 Septembre 1922. LNA, SOCM / R1414 / 27 / 23040 / 2764 / Jacket 2.
 - 66 Sixth Meeting (Public), in: *League of Nations Official Journal* 3/8 - Part II (August 1922), pp. 803–806, at pp. 804–805.
 - 67 The Hungarian representative figured the affected area as one-sixth of the entire frontier. Annex 377. *Frontier between Austria and Hungary*. Memorandum by the Austrian Representative presented to the Council on 19 July 1922, in: *League of Nations Official Journal* 3/8 - Part II (August 1922), pp. 907–913, at p. 908.
 - 68 On economic consequences as a factor in boundary determinations, see Burri: *The Interallied Commission*.
 - 69 ÖSTA AdR, BKA, SfiU, Zentralgrenzkommision, 1921–1922, Box 8069. »Fragebogen«.
 - 70 »Proposals of the Delimitation Commission«, included in »Austro-Hungarian Frontier Question. Report by M. Hymans, page 7. August 28, 1922«. LNA, DFAH R600 / Class 11 / 19584 / 23023.
 - 71 Sixth Meeting (Public), in: *League of Nations Official Journal* 3/8 - Part II (August 1922), pp. 803–806, at pp. 804–805.
 - 72 »League of Nations, Frontier between Austria and Hungary. Decision recommended by the Council«, *Communiqué aux Membres du Conseil*, C. 659, 1922.
 - 73 »Frontiers between Austria and Hungary. Decision recommended by the Council«. *League of Nations*, C659, 1922, VII: pp. 1–6, at p. 4.
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Abstract

The Paris Peace Conference was largely about territory and geography, as Allied leaders drew three thousand miles of new borders in what was the largest such administrative endeavor in geography up to that time. This paper examines the Interallied Commission for the Delimitation of the Boundary between Austria and Hungary, a commission tasked by to demarcate the new post-Paris boundary between Austria and Hungary. It argues that Commission activities evolved as a response to local circumstances within the broader crisis created by the redrawing of boundaries. Constrained by instructions from the Ambassadors Conference, with its work subject to ratification by the League of Nations, the Commission attended not only to the technical operation of demarcating boundaries, but increasingly to securing a peace in the region that would make such demarcation possible in the present and sustainable in the future.

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