

Ethnic Maps in the Workers Atlas by Alexander Radó

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Abstract. Alexander Radó (Hungarian: Radó Sándor), the author of the Atlas für Politiken Wirtschaft Arbeiterbewegung was born in Budapest in 1899. He joined the Communist Party of Hungary in 1918. In 1919, during the 133 day long communist regime in Hungary, he joined the Hungarian Red Army. After the fall of the communist government on 1 August 1919, he fled to Vienna. In 1922 he moved to Germany. In 1923 he joined the illegal German Communist movement in Leipzig and became the commander of the Saxonian Proletarian Self-defense Force. After the crushing of the Hamburg uprising in 1924, he fled to Moscow, where he was accepted as an expert of geography. He later returned to Germany. It is assumed that at this time he became a Soviet agent. In 1929 he published the Workers Atlas, which appeared in German, English and Japanese. In this atlas many maps concerning human geography appeared, amongst others maps of the distribution of ethnic groups in the different countries of Europe. The atlas included ethnic maps, including those of Germany, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania and Czechoslovakia. Since the atlas was printed in black and white, the representation of the different ethnic groups was possible only by using different hatching methods. Radó used a black surface as one category while all the other categories were surfaces using various types of hatching. Unfortunately the black surface suppresses the other surfaces, as it is much darker than hatched surfaces. The maps have very small scales and low resolutions. They provide a very inexact picture of the ethnic structure of a given region, since those areas with very heterogeneous ethnic structures appear as homogeneous surfaces, therefore the map user obtains an incorrect picture, seeing it as an area where only one ethnic group lives. A further problem is that small hatched surfaces on black surfaces are often confus-

ing, as it is hard to decide what type of hatching was used. All place names on the maps used the German exonyms where these were available, otherwise the official place names were used.

It is very hard to compare the maps in this Atlas to other maps, as the scale in this atlas is much smaller than that commonly used on other ethnic maps. In spite of this, the picture communicated to the user in such a comparison can be very useful. If the maps in this atlas are compared with the ethnic map made by Károly Kogutowicz in 1929 which is clearly more detailed, it can be seen that the ethnic structure of the Banat, as well as parts of western and southern Transylvania have a much more heterogeneous ethnic structure than that which can be seen on the ethnic map of Romania on page 125 of the Imperialism part Workers Movement atlas. On the map made by Károly Kogutowicz it can clearly be seen that the area between Oradea (German: Großwardein, Hungarian: Nagyvárad) and Cluj-Napoca (Romanian until 1974: Cluj, German: Klausenburg, Hungarian: Kolozsvár) has a much more heterogeneous ethnic structure than the picture given to us by the ethnic maps in the atlas made by Alexander Radó. Similarly in the region of Braşov (German: Kronstadt, Hungarian: Brassó) by looking at the map in the atlas of Radó we get the impression that it is inhabited only by Germans. On the map made by Kogutowicz we see that Germans, Hungarians and Romanians live in that region. The area of Timişoara (German: Temeswar, Hungarian: Temesvár) has an even more colourful picture. According to the map made by Kogutowicz Hungarians, Germans, Romanians and Serbs live around the town, while north of the town there are Hungarians and Germans. The map in the Atlas made by Radó implies that only Romanians live in the town, while to the north of the town it is only inhabited by Germans.

The other areas of this map, as well as the other maps in the Atlas have similar differences in the picture of the ethnic structure when compared to other more detailed maps.

Keywords: Alexander Radó, Workers Atlas, Ethnic maps

Introduction

Alexander Radó (born Radó Sándor) was a Hungarian cartographer, geographer and Soviet agent. He was born in Újpest in 1899 to wealthy parents. He was a good student, and after finishing school he joined the army, and at the same time studied law in Budapest.

The involvement of Alexander Radó in the communist movement

1.1. Communist involvement in Hungary

In 1918 he joined the communist movement, where he met amongst others Ferenc Münnich all of whom held high ranking positions in the communist government of Hungary after the Second World War. When the Communist Party of Hungary was first formed in 1918, he became one of the first members. During the Hungarian Republic of Councils he became one of the commissars of Ferenc Münnich.

1.2. Communist activity in Germany

Radó fled to Austria after the communist government collapsed in 1919. He later moved to Vienna, where he studied geography. The latter is probably correct, as records exist of the subjects he took in Vienna. He did not complete either degree for which he studied. According to an American source, in Germany he made contact with Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, both leaders of the German communist movement who were killed during the Spartacus Uprising in Berlin.

He visited Moscow for the first time in 1919 with the help of German and Hungarian communists, where he joined the Comintern, where he was appointed as the director of the Soviet propaganda office in Vienna. In 1922 he moved to Germany and started studying Geography in Jena, where he continued his studies until 1924. In 1923 he joined the communist movement in Leipzig, where he soon became the leader of the Saxon Proletarian Self-defense. After the crushing of the communist uprising in Hamburg, he was forced to leave Germany and returned to Moscow. He worked here for two years in different political organizations and finally joined the communist academy. In 1926 the Soviets assigned him to a spy network concerned with German poli-

tics, and later he moved to Berlin, where he published the Workers Atlas, a communist propaganda atlas published first in German. He made air charts for Aerotransport in Stockholm, as well as some for Lufthansa. According to a report in 1931 he flew briefly to Moscow, after which he returned to Berlin where he lived until 1933.

1.3. The move to France

When the Nazis came to power in that year, he left Germany and moved to Paris, where he founded a firm named Inpress. It specialized in making maps for the press. He made many maps of current events which were often published. The firm could not sustain itself and he had to be supported financially by Soviets. This firm was cover for his real work in France, which was espionage for the Soviet Union. Radó used couriers he met in different parts of France and Spain to send information to the Soviet Union. After the outbreak of the Spanish civil war he sent his information via Finland. When high level Soviet officials who passed through Paris are reported to have met Radó. In 1936 he was again briefly called to Moscow. It was decided that as Inpress was not a self sustaining entity, it was to be closed down. He returned to Paris to close it down.

1.4. The foundation of Geopress in Switzerland

He attempted to obtain a residence permit in Belgium, but this was denied.

According to an American report, Radó was approached by German officials when the Italians needed to have their cartographic problems solved. In Paris he posed as a German officer and remained there with his family for eight months after the closing of Impress. He sent his findings to the Italians, Germans and the Soviets.

In 1936 he founded Geopress in Geneva in Switzerland. He operated Geopress during the war which, as Inpress previously, specialised in maps for the press. He built up a spy network based on communists who lived in Switzerland since 1920. According to his book "Dóra jelenti" until Radó took over the network, it was led by a woman who is not named in the book. Swiss citizens were employed in his firm including Charles Burky, who amongst others produced an ethnic map of Central Europe that was based on other maps already available. Radó obtained most of his informa-

tion from Italy and Germany. Many government officials in these countries provided him with information through the normal mail service. This was possible, because Swiss authorities did not suspect anything undercover in mail from Germany. Much of the information relayed to the Soviet Union caused the German and Hungarian armies to suffer losses in various battles. In 1941 he was nominated for the Order of Lenin for his work as a Soviet agent, but never received this award.

1.5. The dissolution of Geopress

In 1943 the German authorities started to check mail sent to Switzerland much more thoroughly and caught Radó and his group. About 60 agents providing Radó with information were identified. After the Soviet army won the battle of Kursk, the Swiss authorities dissolved Geopress and revoked Radó's Swiss residence permit. Many spies were killed, the others arrested. Only Radó escaped. This caused great problems for the spy network. Radó needed to reside in Switzerland legally to be able to spy for the Soviet Union. Radó reorganized the spy network in Switzerland. He continued to receive secret information from the Germans. It is believed that he tried to forward this information through the British embassy to Moscow. This was not approved by Stalin. From this point on he was considered to be a western spy. According to an American source, Radó attempted to build a transmitter in Liechtenstein. He obtained a loan from a Swiss businessman who was promised repayment after the USSR won the war. The transmitter was never built. In 1946 when Soviet-Swiss diplomatic relations were established, the businessman tried to claim his money from the Soviets, but his claim was rejected because the transmitter was never built. At the end of the war Radó fled to Paris with his family.

1.6. Return to the Soviet Union

In 1945 his entire group was recalled to Moscow. Everyone in the group except Radó was expecting awards. Radó was at first skeptical about leaving for Moscow, but eventually he went, leaving his family behind. As the war was still going on in Europe, the aircraft flew over north Africa and stopped in Egypt. Radó left the plane and applied for political asylum at the British embassy. The person receiving his application was a soviet agent, so the application was denied and he was escorted back to the aeroplane by Egyptian police. According to his own reports he tried to commit

suicide but was hospitalised and saved. After he recovered he was handed over to the Soviets and flown to Moscow. He was imprisoned in Lubyanka, charged with espionage for the West and sentenced to 15 years in prison. He was initially taken to Siberia, but was soon transferred near Moscow, where he worked on missile guidance charts. In 1949 the Soviets attempted to have his wife and two children brought to the Soviet Union, but his wife filed for divorce, hoping the Soviets would leave her alone.

1.7. Return to Hungary

In recognition for his work while in prison, he was released early in 1954 and lived for one year in the Soviet Union. At the time Ferenc Münnich was the Hungarian ambassador in Moscow. The Soviets wanted to keep Radó in the Soviet Union. It is assumed that it was thanks to Ferenc Münnich that he was able to return to Hungary. In 1955 he was already a member of the editorial board of the journal *Geodézia és Kartográfia*, the official journal of the Hungarian Society for Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing. After his return to Hungary, he worked for the State Survey and Cartographic Office. He was unaware that his wife filed a divorce and asked her to come to live with him in Hungary. She managed to transport some of the furniture, books and maps she saved from Switzerland back to Hungary. This was one of the best western sources Hungarian cartography had during the communist era. His wife died in 1958 of cancer in Budapest. His children never returned to Hungary but remained in Paris. In 1958 he was appointed professor at the Karl Marx University in Budapest. He was also the president of the Hungarian Geographical Society. It was thanks to him that the 1:25000000 scale world map, as well as the Hungarian National Atlas was made during the communist era. He was a member of many scientific societies around the world. His autobiography was published in 1971 and was later translated into many languages. In 1978 he went on pension. He died in Budapest.

The Workers Atlas

2.1 A general overview of the Atlas

The Workers Atlas published by Sándor Radó was published in Berlin in 1929 (reprinted in 1980), where he was at the time a So-

viet Agent. The Atlas had two goals: one was propaganda, while the other was to conceal his real reason for staying in Germany. He published many maps giving the adverse side of imperialism, while at the same time showing the communist system as the solution to these problems. He made ethnographic maps of certain areas to show that many countries had a populations of mixed ethnicities, and that certain ethnic groups were oppressed by these states. The atlas was printed in black and white and the ethnic maps had very small scales. This made them very difficult to read, therefore difficult to gain any real information to compare with other similar maps. In this paper the maps will be analysed based on their overall presentation. Another map made at much the same time by Károly Kogutowicz will also be presented to show the advantages of a map in full colour and on a larger scale. Both of these maps were made for certain political purposes. The Workers Atlas by Radó was a communist propaganda atlas, while the map by Kogutowicz was made to show how unjustly the Treaty of Trianon dealt with Hungary.

2.2 Ethnic maps in the Workers Atlas

On page 113 of the Radó atlas, a map of Hungary is shown indicating the areas handed over to the neighbouring countries in terms of the Treaty of Trianon. Radó shows Hungary excluding the ceded territories in black, while the areas outside of this region inhabited by Hungarians by a checked pattern and all other areas in white. On this map the small scale causes much of the information to be lost. The user does not get much information about the areas where ethnic Hungarians make up the majority, even though the map according the map legend is supposed to give this information. Most of the toponymy can be read easily, but in a few cases the black lines intersecting each other make the text difficult to read. The word Batschka written in the checked area is very hard to see. Even harder to read is the map of Romania on the bottom of page 125. The largest ethnic group in Romania are the Romanians. Radó chose to show the Romanians in black. This makes the spots of different patterns indicating other ethnicities very hard to discern. The small scale makes it impossible to see ethnic groups living in small areas. The Hungarian and German minorities are barely visible in southern and western Transylvania (only a few larger areas can be discerned), while the Slovak and Serb minorities in Romania are not shown at all.

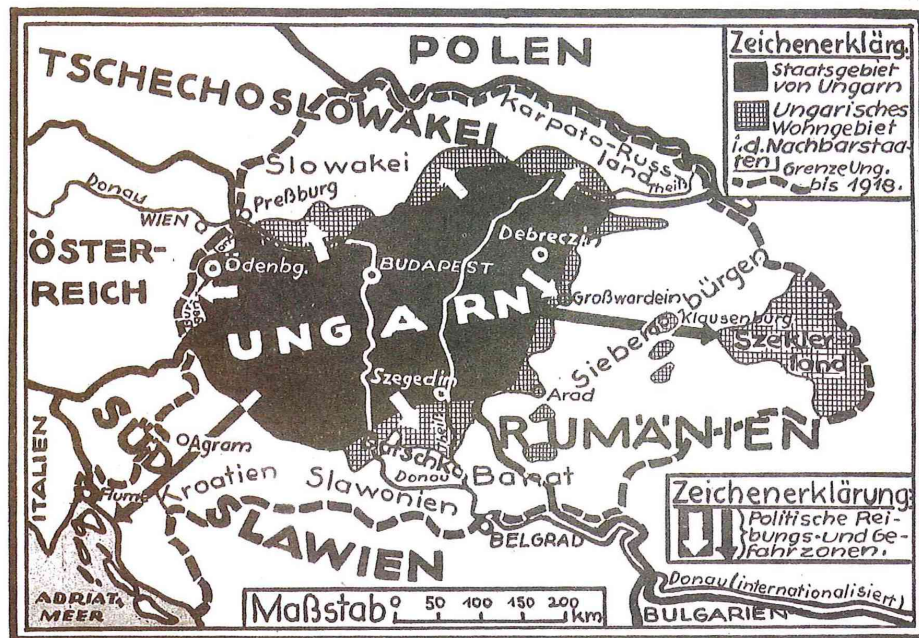


Figure 1. Ethnic map of Hungary and the surrounding countries on page 113 of the Workers Atlas (Central Geographical Library, Leipzig)

On the map by Kogutowicz published in 1927 these minorities can be clearly seen. This is due to the larger scale, the method of showing ethnic groups and the colours used to print the map. The Radó map of Yugoslavia shown on top of the page is somewhat better, as the largest area is not shown in black. The names are very hard to read especially in the area where a pattern was used for an area. The small scales makes it impossible on both maps to obtain accurate pictures of the ethnic structure of the region. The only picture one gets is that minorities do exist in the indicated area, but the extent of the minorities is impossible to determine. The ethnic heterogeneity of the Banat cannot be seen on this map. The ethnic map of Czechoslovakia on page 127 has similar problems. Again, the small scale makes the map very hard to read. The pattern used for the Germans blends in with the pattern used for the Slovaks.

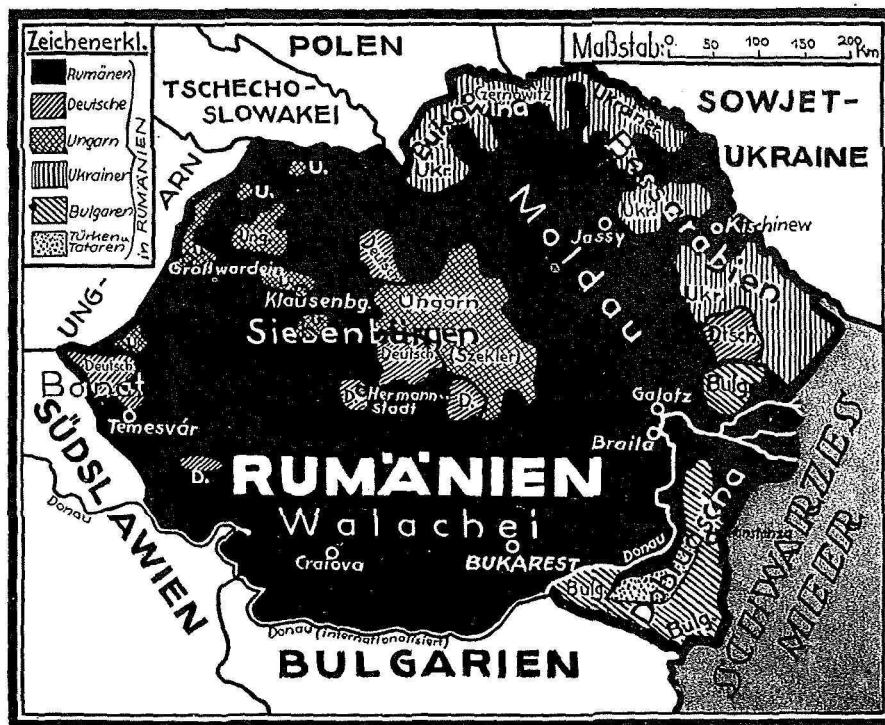


Figure 2. Ethnic map of Romania on page 125 in the Workers Atlas (Central Geographical Library, Leipzig)

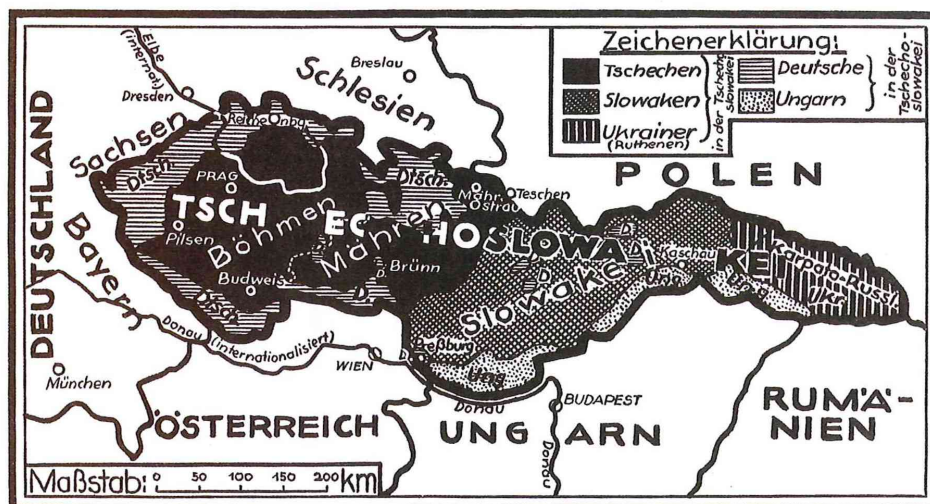


Figure 3. Ethnic map of Czechoslovakia on page 127 in the Worker Atlas (Central Geographical Library, Leipzig)

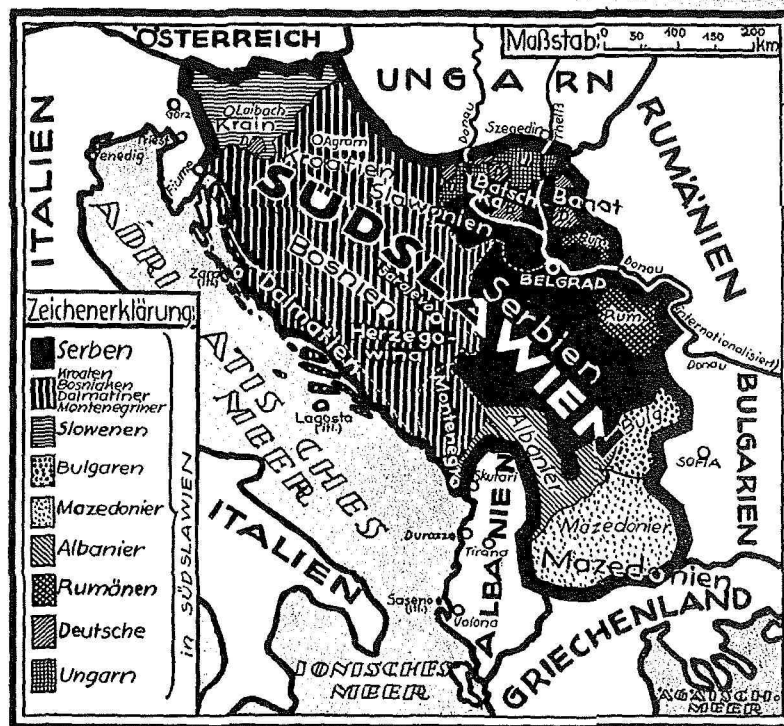


Figure 4. Ethnic map of Yugoslavia on page 125 in the Workers Atlas (Central Geographical Library, Leipzig)

The area inhabited by Ruthenians is at variance with the map by Kogutowicz. There is a large area in the North that is very narrow and long and at such a small scale details cannot be seen. Place names on these maps are in German.

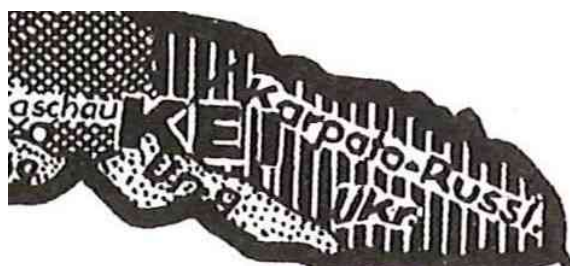


Figure 5. Transcarpathia on the ethnic map of Czechoslovakia in the Workers Atlas (Central Geographical Library, Leipzig)

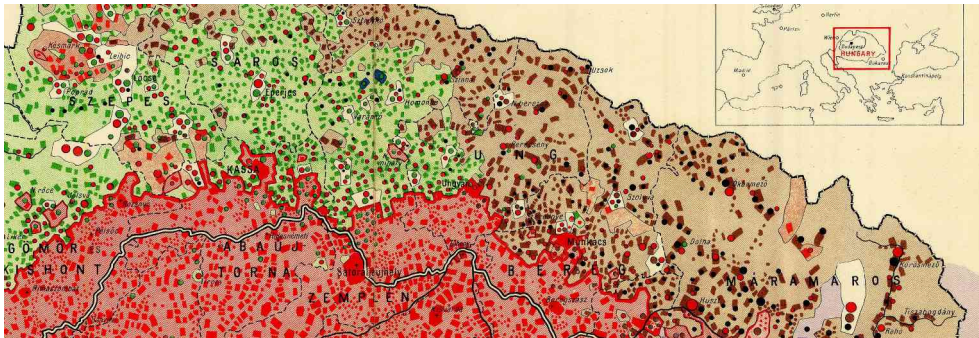


Figure 6. Transcarpathia on the Ethnographical Map of Hungary made by Charles Kogutowicz in 1927 (Institute for Military History, Budapest)

2.3 A detailed comparison of the Ethnic maps in the Workers Atlas to the Ethnographical Map of Hungary by Charles Kogutowicz

When one compares these maps to the map by Kogutowicz, one gets a completely different impression. Since the map by Kogutowicz has a larger scale, it gives the user a much better and more accurate picture of the extent of the minorities living in the area represented on the map. The heterogeneity of the Banat can be seen very well on this map, as can the areas inhabited by Ruthenian population. The Slovak minorities in western Transylvania are also visible. The areas where Hungarians and Germans live in Transylvania can also be clearly seen. The patterns used for Germans and Hungarians are very similar, so it is very hard to distinguish them from each other.



Figure 7. The Banat on the Ethnic map of Yugoslavia in the Workers Atlas (Central Geographical Library, Leipzig)

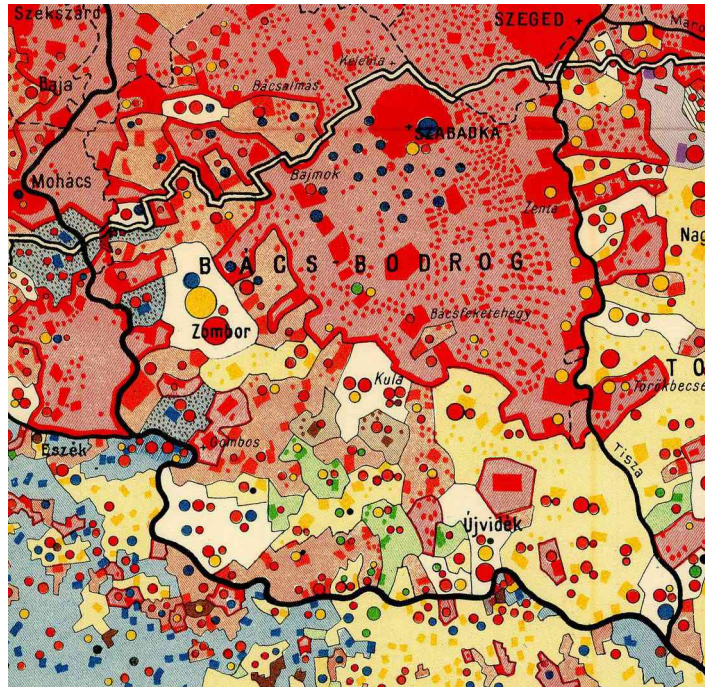


Figure 8. The Banat on the Ethnographical Map of Hungary made by Charles Kogutowitz in 1927 (Institute for Military History, Budapest)



Figure 9. Western Transylvania on the Ethnic map of Romania in the Workers Atlas (Central Geographical Library, Leipzig)

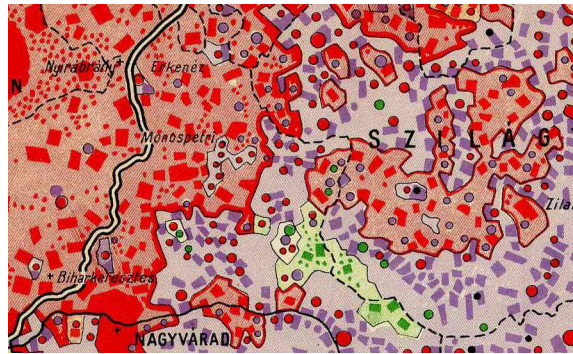


Figure 10. Western Transylvania on the Ethnographical Map of Hungary made by Charles Kogutowitz in 1927 (Institute for Military History, Budapest)

The map by Kogutowitz, as well as the Workers Atlas by Radó have much accompanying text. While on the former the text shows that the author considers the treaty of Trianon to be unjust towards Hungary and accuses the Romanians of forging the statistics, the latter emphasizes the fact that the imperialists suppressed the minorities, and according to the author the solution to the problem would be communism.

Conclusion

It can be concluded however that the political views of the authors were not the contributors to the large differences in the quality of the maps. The use or non-use of colours, the scale of the maps, and the details in the drawings contributed to these differences.

Biographical Note

János Jeney was born in Durban, South Africa. He obtained his degree in Cartography at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary. At present he is working on his PhD thesis at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary and the Technical University in Dresden, Germany. He is aiming to earn a PhD degree awarded jointly by both universities. The area of his research is the methods used on ethnographic maps of Austria-Hungary which were made in the second half of the nineteenth and the

first half of the twentieth centuries, with special attention to the multi-ethnic regions of lands formerly comprising Hungary. He teaches the History of Cartography at the Technical University of Dresden to English speaking students since October 2013. He is a member of the German Society for Cartography (Dgfk) and the Hungarian Society of Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing (MFTTT). He speaks fluent English, Hungarian and German.

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