

## **DIVIDED NATIONS AND THE POLITICS OF BORDERS**

The ghost of Trianon continues to haunt Central Europe. The consequences of the unmaking of the Habsburg Kingdom of Hungary still confront diplomats, even more so now in the aftermath of communism and the demise of Soviet hegemony. The plight of Hungarian minorities in Hungary's neighboring states is a constant concern to diplomats as satisfactory accommodation of ethnic minorities fails throughout post-communist Eastern Europe. Specifically, a fear of destabilization on account of a crisis related to the several Hungarian minorities scattered in half a dozen adjacent states is never far from the surface.

But if a Hungarian nation divided by international borders not of its own making is an on-going problem, it is by no means alone. In Caucasia, a border dating back to Stalin's days cuts through the territory inhabited by Ossetians, with the southern autonomous segment in Georgia determined eventually to unite with its northern autonomous counterpart presently inside the Russian Federation. An international border separates Lezgins in Azerbaijan from their ethno-kin in Daghestan, Russia, to the north; attempts to merge over the last two years have grown from an irritant to a potentially serious problem for Azerbaijan's future as a viable state. Most dramatic is the sudden appearance of a Russian Diaspora as a result of the break-up of the Soviet Union. Each non-Russian successor state has to come to grips with its Russian minority, even as the Russian Federation's government expresses interest and concern for fellow Russians in the so-called "Near Abroad." The fact of a Russian nation divided may have international repercussions, depending what use Russian foreign policy makes of this condition.

Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, dozens of nations are divided by international borders, the products of nineteenth-century European imperialism. Though a principle of the Organization of African States is to consider these borders as sacrosanct, the fact that they capriciously cut through ethnic populations cannot but be a permanent potential source of conflict as ethno-consciousness and ethno-politics intensifies. Given the de facto precedent set by the Dayton Accord in favor of ethno-territoriality in Bosnia, there is no reason to believe that the politics of the ingathering of an ethnos will remain dormant for long and not explode, as it did in favor of a Greater Serbia and a Greater Croatia at Bosnia's expense.

*Nationalities Papers* is indebted for this Special Topic Issue to Professor Andrew Ludanyi. He has our heartfelt gratitude for seeing this project to completion by assuming the task of Guest Editor. The idea was hatched during a tranquil moment in a conference held in Maribor, Slovenia, in 1991. At the time, domestic politics in

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Romania, Serbia and Slovakia did not bode well for their Hungarian citizens. The situation has not improved today, thereby providing a half-dormant and half-quickenening problem of far-ranging significance to all of Europe.

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