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THE ISSUE OF BORDER REVISIONS BY THE KINGDOM OF HUNGARY IN THE 1920S AND 1930S: DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY CONTEXT

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Abstract. The article analyzes key aspects of the domestic and foreign policy of the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1920s and 1930s in the context of territorial revisionism. It is noted that the harsh conditions of the Treaty of Trianon of June 4, 1920, under which the country lost two-thirds of its territory and population mainly to its neighbors—Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia—played a key role in bringing the issue of land return to the motherland. This sharp weakening led to the development of an internal theory of the desired territorial integrity of the country within the framework of the medieval concept of the «State of St. Stephen» – a multi-ethnic country, dominant in the Carpathian basin. At the same time, due to the lack of economic and military capabilities to implement this idea, the country was forced to rely on Germany as another party interested in revising the Versailles-Washington system. Hungary's attempts to raise the issue of the need to revise borders were noted among other influential countries in Europe and North America. However, these efforts had little significant result: France, Great Britain, and the United States generally perceived Hungarian revisionism as counteracting the development of economic relations in Eastern Europe, while Poland and Italy, which themselves sought territorial revision, did not have sufficient geopolitical weight as alternatives to the Third Reich. This leads to the conclusion that for Hungarian politicians, there was no alternative to a pro-German vector in the context of border revision, which allowed the leaders of the Third Reich to gradually draw the country into the orbit of the Axis powers and force it to participate in World War II. Defeat in the war only confirmed the terms of the Treaty of Trianon.

Key words: Hungary, Germany, Little Entente, Subcarpathian Rus, Treaty of Trianon, Eastern Europe, revisionism, border revision.

Introduction. The issue of revisionism in the geopolitics of states continues to be relevant both for studying human history and for analyzing the current principles of domestic and foreign policy in a number of countries. Closely intertwined with the related term “revanchism,” it implies a change in the existing status quo by a party that considers itself to have lost in a past conflict, using both peaceful and military means to achieve its goals. The territorial aspect of revisionism, which involves the return of lands lost in previous wars, became a key reason for a number of military conflicts in the first half of the 20th century, caused by the dissatisfaction of a number of states with the terms of the Versailles-Washington system. One of these countries was the Kingdom of Hungary, for which the territorial issue became decisive in shaping domestic and foreign policy after the conclusion of the unfavorable Treaty of Trianon in 1920. As a result, during the 1920s and 1930s, the state sought opportunities to raise the issue of revision among other European countries, which ultimately led to an alliance with the Axis powers, participation in World War II, and the renewal of the unfavorable peace terms in 1945. An analysis of the reasons for this policy and the impact of revisionism on both Hungarian society and foreign policy relations is important for studying the history of Hungary and Eastern Europe in the first half of the 20th century.

Research status. The issue of border revisions by the Kingdom of Hungary in interbellum has been studied to one degree or another in the works of various scientists, among whom it is first of all appropriate to highlight the following: M. Ádám, N. Bardi, A. Czettler, M. Derzhaliuk, D. Dombrovskyi,

T. Kuprii, O. Lajos, M. Loewer, C. Matthew, É. Mathey, L. Ronai, A. Orde, L. Orosz, G. Péteri, A. Piahanau, R. Pomichal, P. Pritz, A. Purcsi, G. Réti and G. Tarján. However, a comprehensive comparative analysis of all aspects of the issue has not been carried out, which determines the novelty of scientific research.

Presenting main material. Post-war Hungary suffered almost the greatest economic, territorial, resource and human losses among all members of the Central Powers. This was due not only to the country's participation in the war as a member of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but also to other factors: the multi-ethnicity of the Kingdom of Hungary, which was home to significant Slovak, Romanian, German, Croatian and Rusyn minorities, many of whom were dissatisfied with the Magyarisation policy introduced in 1867–1918; the aspirations of neighbouring states – Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia – to strengthen their geopolitical influence in the region by dividing the kingdom's territories; and the fears of key members of the Entente – Great Britain and France – the creation of a potential German-Hungarian alliance that could weaken the influence of these countries in Eastern Europe; and the unstable situation in Hungary itself, where a Soviet republic was established in March 1919, which gave the Entente countries a cause to increase pressure on the country as part of the fight against communist ideas.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Trianon, signed on 4 June 1920, Hungary ceded many territories to other countries such as Slovakia and Transcarpathia to Czechoslovakia, Transylvania, Maramures and Bukovina to Romania, Croatia and Bačka to Yugoslavia, and Burgenland to Austria. The country's territory reduced from 327,750 square kilometres to 93,000 square kilometres. Also Hungary lost almost 13.4 million of its population, 3 million of whom were Hungarians. In addition to territorial and human losses, Hungary suffered severe economic damage. In economic terms the country lost 88% of forest resources, 43% of arable land, 83% of iron ore, and 38% of industry. And besides all that – Hungary's military potential was also limited to 35,000 troops without possibility to have armoured vehicles, tanks and military aircraft (Derzhaliuk, 2020: 124–130).

Under these conditions, revanchist sentiments spread among Hungarian society, which were embodied in various installations, cultural events and publications. The central leadership, headed by the regent of the Hungarian Kingdom M. Horthy, also played an important role in increasing this process. For example, in state schools children had to recite the Hungarian national prayer every morning and evening, which linked faith in God and Hungarian Christian values with the restoration of the territorial integrity of historical Hungary. The unofficial slogan of the territorial revision – the phrase «*Nem Nem Soha*», which translates as «No, no, never» – was written on pencils and on the back of notebooks, which were given to schoolchildren along with a map of historical Hungary and a list of raw materials that Hungary lost during its dismemberment (Loewer, 2016: 11–12).

It is worth noting that key components of interwar Hungarian revisionism developed continuously throughout the 1920s and 1930s, changing under the influence of internal and external factors. Among them, the elements that underwent the least change were the integral concept of uniting the country and its argumentation. Integral revisionism, unlike ethnic revisionism, focused on the need to completely annul the territorial restrictions of the Treaty of Trianon instead of just returning territories inhabited mainly by Hungarians. This idea was embodied in the concept of the «State of St. Stephen» (*Hungarian: «Szent István-i állameszme»*). Its main significance is the historical multi-ethnicity of Hungary, which ensured the strength and power of the country, which is clearly reflected in King Stephen's instruction to his son: «a country with one language and one set of customs is fragile and weak» (Matthew, 2005: 60). Leading Hungarian scholars analysed and partially adapted certain elements of this medieval concept to the post-war realities. Among them it is worth highlighting the scholars D. Sekfyu and L. Ottlik, who insisted on supporting Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries and other indigenous peoples living in the annexed territories in their works. The latter, for example, saw an option for implementing this idea in granting autonomous rights to local ethnic

groups in Croatia, Transylvania and Transcarpathia, if they were to become part of Hungary again in the future (Purcsi, 2024: 194).

The key arguments of Hungarian propaganda for foreign policy purposes were developed in line with this concept. Given the country's economic and military weakness and its isolation by hostile states that had participated in the annexation of its territories, the Hungarian leadership sought support from other countries for the consideration of territorial revision. Hungarian researcher B. Nándor, analysing interwar Hungarian propaganda, highlighted its key arguments about the need to abolish the territorial restrictions of the Treaty of Trianon: the geographical and economic unity of the Carpathian Basin, based on the connection between the mountains and plains and the functions of Budapest as a key metropolis; a geopolitical deficit of powerful states in Eastern Europe that could counteract Germany and the Soviet Union, which could be filled by a territorially restored Hungary; the inability to resolve ethnic minority issues among neighbouring states that did not have many years of experience of coexistence with other ethnic groups; and the existence of «the historical virtues of Hungarian statehood and the cultural superiority of Hungarians», which were based on the thousand-year history of the Hungarian Kingdom (Bardi, 2008: 54–55).

Hungarian leaders placed a key role in restoring territorial integrity on Germany by a number of reasons. Both nations shared long common history because the Hungarian Kingdom was part of the Habsburg Empire for 400 years. Many educated Hungarians were acquainted with German culture; also both nations shared the recent military past. The economic factor was also important: the kingdom was interested in selling its agricultural products on the large German market. But the most important thing was the shared dissatisfaction with the terms of the peace treaties, which limited the influence of both states in Eastern Europe (Ronai, 2025: 254–255).

For Hungary, the significance of a potential alliance with Germany was further enhanced by the fact that in the 1920s, the state failed to convince the leading members of the former Entente – France, Great Britain and the United States – to revise the new borders in Eastern Europe. Initially, before the final adoption of the terms of the Treaty of Trianon, Hungarian political circles hoped for French support in limiting possible territorial losses. On the one hand, the Third Republic under the government of J. Clémenceau officially supported the harsh terms of the peace treaty, as it sought to create a single pro-French bloc in Eastern and Central Europe from Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia – states that considered Hungary an enemy (Loewer, 2016: 6–7). However, under the reign of O. Millier in 1920, the French leadership began to search an opportunity to gain a foothold in key sectors of the Hungarian economy.

A group of Hungarian businessmen led by S. Halmos, under the patronage of Hungarian Prime Minister I. Bethlen, tried to use these chance and began secret negotiations with the Secretary General of the French Foreign Ministry, M. Paléologue. The aim of these negotiations was to obtain official concessions from the Hungarian government for French businesses in the state railways, factories and port facilities in Budapest. In return, the French leadership, at the suggestion of the Hungarian side, was to facilitate the revision of borders or the holding of plebiscites in Southern Slovakia, Subcarpathian Rus, Transylvania, Bačka, Banat and Burgenland. However, the Miléran government ultimately agreed only to assist in a possible future border adjustment as part of the work of the demarcation commission. This document, known as the «Milléran Letter», became for Hungarian society the embodiment of the empty promises of Western European countries to take Hungarian territorial issues into account (Orde, 1980: pp. 476–479).

Hungary's proposal to the French government in July 1920 to provide potential assistance in countering the possible incursion of Soviet troops through the Carpathians did not help the revision issue either. During this period, the troops of the Second Polish Republic were retreating under pressure from Soviet forces, and Hungarian political circles proposed using their forces to protect Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus. Although the French government suspected that this proposal unofficially

envisioned the annexation of these territories. Nevertheless this possibility remained relevant until August, when after Poland's victory in the Battle of Warsaw the need for Hungarian assistance disappeared. In fact, this situation led to the opposite result – the formation of a military alliance between Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia called the «Little Entente», directed against Hungary (Piahanau, 2018: 119).

The governments of Great Britain and the United States also did not view Hungarian revisionism favourably. For these states, the kingdom was primarily one of the markets of Central and Eastern Europe that needed to be stabilised through credit and loans in order to restore economic relations in the region, which had been destroyed by the First World War and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Therefore, even unofficial manifestations of Hungarian revisionism, which provoked significant diplomatic opposition among the states of the Little Entente, were condemned by official politicians of both states. For example, in 1922–1924, Great Britain actively lobbied for a loan of £4 million to Hungary through the League of Nations, which was supposed to stabilise the country's economy, promote the restoration of local business and open the market to English capital (Péteri, 1984: 333–336). However, when on 21 June 1927 a member of the English House of Lords Harold Sidney Hemsworth, Viscount Rothermere published the propaganda manifest «Hungary's Place in the Sun», in which he openly called for the return to the Kingdom of Hungary of a number of territories belonging to neighbouring states populated by Hungarian minorities, the British government tried to downplay the impact of this scandal. In December of 1927 Foreign Minister Chamberlain had a meeting with Hungarian Prime Minister Bethlen, during which the latter tried to portray the incident as a personal matter for the Viscount, to which his government had no connection (Pomichal, 2007: 73–75).

A similar situation existed in the United States, which after the First World War returned to the isolationist concept of the «Monroe Doctrine» and limited its intervention in European affairs to the economic sphere. A quite eloquently example of this approach was the unsuccessful attempts by the Hungarian Foreign Ministry to change the text of the country's separate peace treaty with the United States, signed in August 1921, so that it did not mention the terms of the Treaty of Trianon. The reasons for these actions were explained by the United States' plenipotentiary representative in Budapest from 1919 to 1922, Ulysses G. – S.: «The Hungarians want to formulate [the text] in such a way that the United States takes it for granted that the same restrictions and obligations regarding rights, privileges, compensation, reparations and benefits apply to them as to those who signed the Treaty of Trianon. Hoping to gain some advantage through our benevolent influence, the Hungarians clearly want to induce us to assume and fulfil the obligations in full» (Mathey 2014: 113).

Thus, for all Hungarian governments of the interwar period, attempts to establish strong contacts with their German counterparts were crucial for putting the issue of Hungarian revisionism on the European agenda. As D. Sekfyu noted, «We can only get out of our current predicament in the old way, by uniting with German Central Europe; this is one of the most striking lessons of our history» (Purcsi, 2024: 196–197). At the same time, German-Hungarian relations in the context of the kingdom's revisionist aspirations, in our opinion, remained somewhat inconsistent until 1939 in terms of the parties' plans regarding relations with other states, geopolitical concepts, and Hungary's subordinate status to Germany.

During the period 1923–1929, the issue of Hungarian revisionism played a predominantly negative role in relations between the countries. The Foreign Minister of the Weimar Republic at that time G. Stresemann sought to establish friendly relations mainly with Great Britain and France, striving to restore the country's prestige by supporting peace in Europe and easing the military and economic restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles. In this situation, South-Eastern Europe, where the Hungarian government offered support for German interests, played a secondary role until the early 1930s: during this period, the governments of both states were unable to counter French influence in the

region, which was supported by the Little Entente (Ronai, 2025: 259). Clearly understanding the weakened influence of both states on European affairs, Stresemann, although he supported official German-Hungarian relations, tried to distance himself from the issue of territorial revisions. In addition, the German diplomatic corps of the Weimar Republic at that time did not like Hungary's unofficial support for European figures and organisations interested in disrupting the post-war system. In particular, there were well-known meetings between Hungarian politicians who had contacts with the government and representatives of German Field Marshal E. Ludendorff, who in May 1920 proposed to unite military forces to seize power in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Prussia and support monarchist forces in the former Russian Empire in order to revoke the terms of the Versailles and Trianon peace treaties (Lajos, 2020: 97). Even more concern was caused by the fact that some members of the Kapp Putsch – an uprising by right-wing radicals and military circles against the Weimar Republic on 13–17 May 1920 – were hiding within the kingdom. In turn, the Hungarian government of I. Bethlen did not like German attempts to establish relations with the Little Entente: while for the Weimar Republic this alliance was a source of peace in Eastern Europe, for the kingdom it was a potential military and diplomatic threat. These problems led to a certain cooling of relations between the countries, which lasted until the death of H. Stresemann in 1929 (Orosz, 2019: 467–471).

The situation began to change gradually after the nationalists came to power in the Weimar Republic in 1929 – H. Brüning, who became Chancellor of the Republic, and J. Curtius, who took the post of Foreign Minister. In contrast to the previous leadership, the new government began to proclaim more open intentions to ease the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles. In these circumstances, Hungary's importance to German government circles changed somewhat. Although the country was still considered secondary due to economic and military restrictions, its territorial claims on its neighbours, together with gradual German economic penetration, ensured the gradual transformation of the kingdom into a pro-German satellite. The change in priorities was evidenced by the meeting between I. Bethlen, G. Brüning and J. Kurtsiy in November 1930, at which the latter openly stated that «the goals of the new foreign policy on the most important issues of border revision and disarmament are parallel to the goals of Hungarian foreign policy» (Orosz, 2019: 475–476).

The Nazis' rise to power in 1933 was a harbinger of the spread of German influence in Eastern Europe for the Hungarian leadership of M. Horthy. In June of that year, Hungarian Prime Minister D. Gombos was the first European politician to visit the newly elected government. During his meeting with A. Hitler, he raised, among other things, the issue of revising the terms of the Treaty of Trianon. In turn, the chancellor drew attention to the priority of the Anschluss of Austria, to which the prime minister was not opposed, and to the focus on the destruction of Czechoslovakia, for which Hungary had to remove from the agenda the demands for the revision of borders in Yugoslavia and Romania. «The Hungarians can only count on German help against Czechoslovakia. Germany wants to gradually draw Yugoslavia and Romania into the sphere of interest of German capital and at the same time isolate them from France and Czechoslovakia», said A. Hitler during the visit (Tarján, 2017: 24–25).

This proposal did not satisfy the prime minister, as Hungary's official position was to maintain territorial claims against all three states as part of supporting the consensus on integral revision. These German demands continued to be made from time to time over the following years, sometimes in a humiliating manner. For example, H. Göring's speech at the funeral of Yugoslav King Alexander, who was killed in a terrorist attack, made a particularly negative impression. The Nazi official not only reiterated the Third Reich's lack of support for Hungarian territorial claims against Yugoslavia and Romania, but also condemned the situation of the German minority in the Kingdom of Hungary. This speech prompted Hungarian Foreign Minister K. Kányi to warn his German counterpart that if Germany clearly refused to support Hungary's position, there was a risk that the country would join the Danube Bloc promoted by Czechoslovakia, which would also include Austria. The latter could paralyse Germany's territorial expansion (Pritz, 1983: 35–41).

However, the Hungarian government was gradually forced to make concessions to its German counterpart. The reasons for this were not only economic and military dependence on the stronger Third Reich, but also the lack of equally powerful alternatives among other states interested in revising the geopolitical situation in Eastern Europe. This can be traced through an analysis of the country's relations with Italy and Poland, which also had territorial claims against their neighbours in Eastern Europe.

Political relations with the Kingdom of Italy were established by Hungary in 1927 after the signing of a peace treaty on mutual assistance. For the latter, this provided a number of potential advantages for supporting the revisionist programme. First of all, this alliance marked the country's effective exit from the diplomatic isolation created by the Little Entente and gave the government of I. Bethlen the opportunity to act as a mediator in Italian-German relations, strengthening the diplomatic status of his state (Ronai, 2025: 255). The next factor was that, at the time of signing the treaty, Italy had negative relations with Yugoslavia due to competition for influence in Albania. Accordingly, Hungary, which had territorial claims to the South Slavic country, appeared to be a reliable ally. Italy not only promised to provide support in the event of a potential war against a common enemy, but also secretly sent military weapons to Hungary, which contributed to the latter's remilitarisation. It should also be noted that in order to provide diplomatic support to its ally, Mussolini's government was engaged in spreading ideas among European states about the need to conclude a new treaty revising the post-war borders in Europe. This pact, the terms of which began to be discussed by representatives of Italy, Great Britain, France and Germany in March 1933, provided for the resolution of issues such as the elimination of the Polish Corridor, the preservation of Austria's independence, the resolution of disputes over influence in Albania and a potential correction of borders in favour of Hungary, mainly through the transfer of border areas of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus.

In practice, however, Italian-Hungarian relations did little to help Hungary's revisionist intentions. Because the new document sought to resolve a number of conflicts within the Versailles system, a number of states that benefited from the existing situation, including the countries of the Little Entente, Poland and even Germany, opposed its territorial provisions. In such circumstances, representatives of Great Britain and France also spoke out in favour of revising the planned conditions. Therefore, the terms of the document signed on 7 June, known as the «Four-Power Pact», amounted only to informal support for Austria's independence. It is characteristic that ten days after the agreement was initialled, D. Gembosz began his trip to Berlin for negotiations with A. Hitler (Piahanau, 2018: 271–276).

Hungary's attempts to maintain official claims against all members of the Little Entente continued until 1936. In the summer, preparations were still underway for a military invasion of Yugoslavia, which was to be carried out with Italy's support. However, after an appeal from the Hungarian side, Mussolini's regime offered only general support, emphasising the need to update its claims against Czechoslovakia. This situation reflected a change in the priorities of the Italian Kingdom. After the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian War in 1935 and its condemnation by the League of Nations, the state began to rely increasingly on the support of the Third Reich, as evidenced by the creation of the Rome-Berlin Axis in 1936 (Ádám, 1963: 89–91). The Italian government's gradual reassessment of its relations with the kingdom played an equally important role. The process of improving relations with Yugoslavia, which culminated in the signing of a neutrality treaty between the countries in 1937, removed from the agenda the key reason for signing the Hungarian-Italian mutual assistance treaty. In addition, representatives of the Italian fascist establishment were increasingly dissatisfied with Hungary's extensive territorial demands, given the inadequacy of its military potential to implement them. As the German spokesman in Rome, J. von Plessen, noted about the results of the Italian-Hungarian negotiations in July 1938: «When the Hungarian ministers summed up the results of their visit, they probably returned home with the feeling, which was noticeable at the time, that Italy's

interest in Hungary had diminished... For Italy, the Rome-Berlin axis is of primary importance, the Anti-Comintern Pact and Italian-Yugoslav friendship are in second place, while Hungarian-Italian friendship is only in third place» (Réti, 1987: 587–588). As a result, Italian policy towards Hungary and Eastern Europe became dependent on Germany.

Relations with Poland, which began to actively develop in this direction after D. Gembosz's visit to the Polish leadership in Warsaw on 20–22 October 1934, were potentially more promising in terms of supporting Hungarian revisionist aspirations. Unlike Italy, in the 1930s the foreign policy priorities of the Second Polish Republic's leadership still corresponded to Hungary's revisionist demands regarding Czechoslovakia. The key reasons for the tense Polish-Czech relations were the territorial dispute over the region of Cieszyn Silesia, captured by the Czechoslovak military in 1919, and the pro-Soviet policy of the Czech government of E. Beneš, embodied in the 1935 mutual assistance treaty between Czechoslovakia and the USSR. In addition, an important role in the Polish-Hungarian rapprochement was played by the concept of the head of the Polish Foreign Ministry, J. Beck, to create an East-Central European bloc of states called «Between-seas» (*Polish: «Międzymorze»*), which, in a potential alliance with Italy and two democratic Western states, would be strong enough to counter the influence of the Third Reich and the USSR in the region. A prerequisite for the creation of this bloc was the collapse of multi-ethnic Czechoslovakia, which envisaged the creation of a pro-Polish Slovak state and the annexation of Subcarpathian Rus to Hungary, which was to ensure the creation of a Polish-Hungarian border between the allies (Czettler, 1990: 131–133). The latter was important for both states also because, by the end of autumn 1938, some representatives of the Third Reich unofficially did not rule out its transformation into the centre of a future Ukrainian state, which posed a threat to Polish rule in Ukrainian-populated Galicia (Dombrovskyi, 2012: 115–116).

The main focus of Polish-Hungarian cooperation was Subcarpathian Rus, where sabotage units from both countries were active from October to December 1938. The key objectives of these operations were to support local pro-Hungarian political forces, which were to hold a referendum on the region's accession to the kingdom, to cause material damage to military infrastructure in the region, and to spread anti-Czech propaganda. Their actions coincided with the failure of the Hungarian-Czechoslovak negotiations on 9–13 October 1938 in Komarno, at which the Hungarian side put forward its territorial claims. The Hungarian side involved the sabotage and terrorist groups «Free Detachments» (*Hungarian «Sobot Chopotok»*) and «Guard of the Broken» (*Hungarian «Rongyos Garda»*), each of which numbered 300–500 people. These units were active in the south of the region, particularly in Borzhava, Mukachevo, Berehove, and Uzhhorod, destroying railway, telephone, and telegraph communications. (Kuprii, Tymish, Panasiuk, 2019: 78–79). Polish sabotage units, numbering 600 people, were divided into seven groups operating in the vicinity of the settlements of Svalyava, Perechyn, Maly Berezny, Olenyovo, Nyzhni Veretsky and Laturka (Dombrovskyi, 2012: 162–171).

However, as in the case of Italian support, Polish support had little impact on Hungary's key goal – the complete annexation of Subcarpathian Rus. During the First Vienna Arbitration, Hungary received only the northern parts of this region and Slovakia, inhabited mainly by Hungarians. Under these circumstances, the Hungarian government of K. Kányi began preparing for a military invasion in mid-November 1938 to completely occupy this Czechoslovak autonomy, for which it requested support from Poland and Italy. However, the Second Polish Republic refused to provide military support with regular units in this action, as it did not want to officially oppose the Third Reich's position on preserving autonomy (Czettler, 1990: 152–153). Although Italy promised to provide support in the form of aircraft and ammunition, it also expressed dissatisfaction with Hungary's possible violation of the terms of the recently concluded treaty, as it was its official guarantor together with the Third Reich (Réti, 1987: 608). The military operation was scheduled for 18 November, when the German leadership officially opposed it. Given the lack of support from other allies, preparations for the invasion were cancelled.

All these events meant that Hungary had no geopolitical alternatives to the Third Reich, which was at that time the only power in Eastern Europe capable of ensuring the success of Hungary's revisionist aspirations. As a result, after November 1938, the Hungarian side took a number of steps to fully switch to pro-German positions. In December, a government headed by I. Csáky was elected, which met German demands in the form of joining the Anti-Comintern Pact, withdrawing from the League of Nations, and deepening economic relations (Czettler, 1990: 157). These actions helped to support Hungary's territorial claims, thanks to which, in March 1939, the Kingdom of Hungary annexed Subcarpathian Rus after the collapse of Czechoslovakia. In 1940, under the terms of the Second Vienna Arbitration, it received Northern Transylvania from Romania, and after the capture of Yugoslavia by the Axis countries, it received Bačka and Baranya. However, these territorial changes came at the price of aligning foreign and domestic policy with German interests. For example, at the request of the Third Reich, the Hungarian authorities were forced to release and refrain from extraditing to Poland detained members of the Carpathian Sich, a pro-Ukrainian paramilitary organisation in Subcarpathian Rus that fought against the Hungarian invasion of the region. In addition, the German authorities insisted on granting Ukrainians cultural and religious rights, and emigrants the opportunity to return to the region and find work there (Dombrovskyi, 2012: 349). One can agree with L. Orosz's statement that German policy on the issue of Hungarian revision boiled down to a game of «push and pull» where certain concessions on territorial issues were expected to be «compensated» by support for German expansion in Europe (Orosz, 2019: 477).

Conclusions. Thus, the issue of territorial revision became particularly important in Hungary due to the excessive terms of the Treaty of Trianon, which turned the country into a secondary power in Eastern Europe with a significant diaspora in neighboring hostile countries. As a result, ideas about the need to revise the new borders with the potential for a return to pre-war territorial boundaries spread throughout Hungarian society and politics. Hungarian regime of M. Horthy, understanding the weakness of the country, played the key role in addressing this issue to other states that had influence in Europe. In this situation, Germany played an important role in actualizing Hungarian territorial claims as a former ally in World War I and an aggrieved party under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Despite a number of negative factors in German-Hungarian relations, such as the German government's distancing itself from Stresemann's revision of the post-war borders in the 1920s, the Nazi government's desire to control the scope of Hungarian territorial claims, and the Hungarian leadership's fear of losing its territorial claims, Germany played a key role in the revision of the post-war borders in the 1920s. Stresemann's government from revising the post-war borders in the 1920s, the Nazi government's desire to control the scope of Hungarian territorial claims, and the Hungarian leadership's fears about Germany's growing role in its own foreign and domestic policy, there were no alternatives to these relations for the kingdom. Western European countries were not interested in raising the issue of territorial revision due to their desire to maintain their influence on the post-war peace system and resistance from members of the Little Entente, as can be seen from Hungary's relations with France, Great Britain, and the United States. Contacts with other revisionist countries—Italy and Poland—did yield some positive results in the form of diplomatic and partial military support, they did not become an alternative to Hungarian-German relations due to the unwillingness to contradict the position of the Third Reich, as seen in the case of the preparation of the attack on Carpathian Ruthenia in November 1938. Paradoxically, the policy of submission to German influence with the aim of restoring the borders of the “State of St. Stephen” subsequently repeated the results of World War I – forced involvement in an unnecessary military conflict, defeat by rivals, and the conclusion of a devastating peace treaty.

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