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Indigenous National/Ethnic Minorities in the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian Region, 1921–1938

The article deals with the problems of indigenous national/ethnic minorities in Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region, which came into being as result of drawing of new state frontiers after World War I and dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy. Characteristically for the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region are ethnically mixed areas settled by indigenous minorities. Some of them have their specific minority rights guaranteed on the basis of international agreements. This article intends to prove that these minorities had to cope with similar incomprehensible problems in the states where they lived as the minorities even today have to cope with. The states very often treated minorities as a disturbing factor, which needed to be eliminated as soon as possible. To achieve this, the states on the one hand neglected economic development in the regions, which were settled by minorities; and on the other hand, they tried to assimilate the ethnic/national minorities through administrative-political reforms and by not supporting the activities of specific minority organizations. Therefore, the minority population began to emigrate from the regions of their indigenous settlement. It is interesting to note that all of the above mentioned facts are also valid for today's era of a united Europe.

Keywords: Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region, indigenous national/ethnic minorities, ethnic conflicts, ethnicity, nationalism

Avtohtone narodne/etnične manjšine v alpsko-jadransko-panonskem prostoru, 1921–1938

Prispevek obravnava problematiko avtohtonih narodnih/etničnih manjšin v alpsko-jadransko-panonskem prostoru, ki so nastale kot posledica oblikovanja novih državnih meja po prvi svetovni vojni in razpadu Avstro-Ogrske. Za alpsko-jadransko-panonski prostor je tudi danes značilna etnična pomešanost, poseljenost z avtohtonimi manjšinami, večina katerih ima specifične manjšinske pravice zagotovljene na podlagi mednarodnih pogodb. V nadaljevanju prispevka bo dokazano, da so se te manjšine spopadale s podobnimi problemi nerazumevanja njihovih potreb s strani držav, v katerih so živele, kot je to značilno tudi za današnje obdobje. Države so manjšine pogosto imele za moteč dejavnik, ki ga je potrebno čim prej in na takšen ali drugačen način odpraviti. S tem ciljem so na eni strani načrtno zapostavljale gospodarski razvoj z manjšinami poseljenih območij, na drugi pa so poskušale manjšine čim prej asimilirati tudi na podlagi upravno-političnih reform in neustreznega podpiranja specifičnih manjšinskih organizacij. Manjšinsko prebivalstvo se je zato začelo v vse večjem številu izseljevati z območij svoje avtohtone poselitve. Vse navedena dejstva veljajo tudi za današnje obdobje združene Evrope.

Ključne besede: alpsko-jadransko-panonski prostor, avtohtone narodne/etnične manjšine, mednacionalni konflikti, etničnost, nacionalizem

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1. Introduction

The article deals with the problems of indigenous national/ethnic minorities in Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region. These groups of population became national/ethnic minorities after the new state frontiers were drawn after World War I.

The term national minority describes parts of national/ethnic groups, which live outside the territory of their own indigenously settled state or peoples without their own state. As the term itself implies, minorities have certain characteristics:

- their size is smaller than the number of the majority ethno-nation of the state where they are citizens;
- they differ from the majority population of the state by ethnic, cultural, linguistic and some times even religious characteristics;
- they try to retain those characteristics which represent the identity of the group and/or their culture, tradition, religion or language;
- they keep long term and close relations and contacts with their mother country (Heckmann 1992, 62; Pan & Pfeil 2000, 263–275).

Many specialists who deal with ethnic minorities describe as autochthonous/indigenous national minorities those minorities who already lived in their regions of settlement (ethnic territory) before the industrial revolution and who became minorities as a result of changes of political boundaries. They differ from so-called alochthonous minorities or immigrant communities (new minorities), which are the result of migrations after the industrial revolution. They are the result of movements from the countryside into cities and/or the movement of population from economically less developed regions into more developed regions (Koter 1993; Klemenčič M. & Harris 2009, XI–XII).

In the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region there are ethnically mixed areas settled by indigenous minorities. Most of them had their specific minority rights guaranteed on the basis of international agreements. This article intends to prove that these minorities had to cope with similar incomprehensible problems in the states where they lived as the minorities have to cope with even today. The states very often treated minorities as a disturbing factor, which needed to be eliminated as soon as possible. To achieve this, the states on the one hand neglected economic development in the regions, which were settled by minorities; and on the other hand, they tried to assimilate the ethnic/national minorities through administrative-political reforms and by not supporting the activities of specific minority organizations. Therefore, the minority population began to emigrate

from the regions of their indigenous settlement. The emigration went in two directions: on the one hand to regions of their "mother" countries, and on the other, overseas (Klemenčič V. 1994). It is interesting to note that all of the above mentioned facts are also valid for today's era of a united Europe.

The available literature on the subject of the problems of ethnic/national minorities in the period from 1918 till 1938 is quite rich and comprehensible. The authors who dealt with the subject dealt with it in great details for the most numerous ethnic/national minorities in the region (German-speaking minority in South Tyrol, Germans in Slovenia, and in Hungary, Slovenes and Croats in Italy, Slovenes in Carinthia); there is, however, lack of literature for smaller minorities (Ladins, Friulians, other minorities in Hungary and in Yugoslavia).

We have to mention also that the official census data on the size of minority populations are not reliable. Author deals with these problems in article itself.

The article does not deal with Jews in this region, because majority of them lived only in certain larger cities and did not demand classical minority rights. It does not deal also with Roma population most of whom at the time did not settle permanently yet.

2. Geographical Description of the Term Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian Region

The term Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region was gradually introduced in the beginning of the 1960s when cross-border cooperation among Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Carinthia, and Slovenia first began to intensify in the fields of economy, environment and spatial planning, transportation, culture, tourism and sports. The result of this cooperation was the establishment of the Working Group of East Alpine Lands [*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der östlichen Alpenländer*], which soon was renamed the Working Group Alps-Adriatic [*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alpen-Adria*]. At the same time the term Alps-Adriatic region was also introduced as a geographic description of the territory. After the Austrian province of Burgenland and some western Hungarian counties, which were part of the Pannonian region, joined the group in the 1980s (Jurič-Pahor 2010, 189–191), the geographic term Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region was introduced as a descriptor for the area of this Working Group.

Although the membership of the Working Group changed constantly,[1] the term

Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region was firmly established for the region, which today encompasses the republics of Slovenia and Croatia; the Austrian provinces of Burgenland, Carinthia, Upper Austria, and Styria; the Italian regions of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lombardy, Veneto, and Trentino-Alto Adige (South Tyrol); and the Hungarian counties of Baranya, Győr-Moson-Sopron, Somogy, Vas, and Zala. It encompasses ca. 204,000 km^2 of southeastern Central Europe. In the beginning of the 21st century 27.5 million people (Statistik Austria 2002, 40; KSH, 2002; SURS 2003, 23; DZS 2002; ISTAT 2001) lived in this territory, while in the beginning of the 1930s there were only some 20.4 million people (ICS 1933; KSH 1932; Publikationsstelle 1943; ÖSZ 1934).

It is important to know that the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region encompasses a number of European physical geographical units. The southern part of this territory lies in Mediterranean Europe (the eastern and northern Adriatic coast) and Sub-Mediterranean Europe (the Friulian Plain and the northern part of the Po Plain. Its middle lies in the high mountain Alpine region of the central and Eastern Alps and the Dinaric Ranges. Its northern portion is part of the southwestern Pannonian Plains and the Danube Valley. Many important Trans-European transportation lines run through this territory, for example, the Brenner and Thörl Maglern Passes connect the Mediterranean with Northern Europe and the Postojna Pass connects the western Mediterranean with Central and Eastern Europe (Klemenčič V. 1993, 19–20; Moritsch 2001). Due to these favorable lines of transport with other parts of Europe many mass population movements have taken place here throughout history. The consequence of these movements is the very picturesque ethnic structure of the region. Peoples which are members of the Germanic (Germans, Austrians), the Romanic (Friulians, Italians, Ladins), the Slavic (Czechs, Croatians, Poles, Slovaks, Slovenes, Serbs, Ukrainians) and the Finno-Ugrian (Hungarians) linguistic groups settled in this territory. Also Roma live dispersed in this territory, especially in the Pannonian and Sub-Pannonian parts; in the past numerous Jewish populations inhabited some cities as well.

The ethnic structure of the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region is very complicated. In many instances regions which are settled by only one ethnic group, are intermingled with ethnically mixed territories where two or more peoples live. Due to such circumstances, the boundaries of the states which were formed in this region after the end of World War I very rarely coincided with ethnic boundaries. This was also true of later changes of the frontiers (after World War II and in the 1990s during the period of the dissolution of Yugoslavia). Such boundaries have often run through ethnically mixed regions or have divided ethnically homogeneous areas of individual peoples (Klemenčič V. 1993, 19–

20). Therefore, the establishment of every new state at the dissolution of Austria-Hungary after World War I also meant the formal establishment of new national minorities. Each newly established state in the region also included in its territory parts of the ethnic territory of at least one ethnic group of its neighboring countries. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (after 1929, Yugoslavia) was multinational.

Figure 1
Indigenous National/Ethnic Minorities in the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian Region at the Beginning of the 1930s

3. The Creation of State Boundaries in the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian Region after World War I

Until the end of World War I most of the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region was included in the multi-national Habsburg Empire. Only the southwestern part of the region, the Friulian Plain and the northern part of the Po Plain belonged to the Kingdom of Italy. After World War I the frontiers in the region changed completely, when Austria, Hungary and the Kingdom of SCS were established from the territory of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Determination of frontiers after World War I was very complicated, because compromises were needed among the interests of the Great Powers (France, Italy, Russia, and Great Britain). There were established and signed agreements which had already taken place during the war; there were demands of certain peoples and states; there was the declared principle of self-determination of nations or peoples. Here we have to mention also that U.S. President Woodrow Wilson in his famous 14 points wanted Austria-Hungary to be preserved after World War I. He wanted the peoples of Austria-Hungary to develop autonomously, but within Austria-Hungary. In most textbooks it is written that Wilson wanted to achieve borders in accordance with ethnic principles and that he was for self-determination of the peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[2] It took Wilson till summer of 1918 to change his views. He joined the views of Yugoslav Committee, the Czechs and others that there should be new states established on the ruins of the Habsburg Monarchy (Pirjevec 2007, 97–98; Lipušček 2003, 4, 139–142; Lynch 1999, 21).

Most of the state frontiers in the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region were determined by peace treaties approximately one year after the end of World War I. Statesmen tried to find solutions for some frontier problems for years after the end of World War I and some of them became sources of permanent struggle and misunderstandings between the states. We have to mention especially the frontier between Italy and Austria in the region of South Tyrol and the frontier between the Kingdom of SCS and Italy (the so-called Adriatic question). Italy, as member of the Entente, the wining side in World War I, wanted its allies to fulfill the London Agreement of 26 April 1915, (i.e. the agreement among France, Great Britain, Russia and Italy, on the basis of which Italy entered the war against Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Turkey). The Entente had promised in exchange that Italy would get South Tyrol, Gorizia, Gradiscia, Trieste, Kanal Valley, the southwestern part of Carniola, Istria, the Kvarner Islands and the major portion of Dalmatia. At the peace conference in Paris many discussions took place as far

as South Tyrol and the Adriatic question were concerned. In the end Italy got most of the territories, which were promised to her by the London Agreement. The border between Italy and Austria, which gave Italy the territory of South Tyrol, was determined on 10 September 1919 by a peace treaty which was signed in Saint-Germain-en-Laye; the border between Italy and the Kingdom of SCS was determined by the Treaty of Rapallo on 12 November 1920. No state was happy with the new borders. Especially the border determined by the Rapallo Treaty caused much discontent. The leaders of the Kingdom of SCS were unhappy with the fact that ca. 350,000, or almost one third of all indigenous Slovenes and ca. 150,000 Croats remained in Italy. Italy was unhappy because it did not get all of Dalmatia in accordance with London Agreement. According to Italian nationalists and fascists, it meant that the Italian victory in World War I was "crippled" (Kacin-Wohinz & Pirjevec 2000, 24–36). To pacify the tensions, the government of the Kingdom of SCS agreed in 1924 to the annexation of Rijeka to Italy, although in accordance with the Treaty of Rapallo, Rijeka was to have had the status of a neutral city-state (Pirjevec 1995, 28, 51–52).

There were also many unsolved problems with the demarcation of the borders of the newly established Austrian Republic. The destiny of the Yugoslav-Austrian border in Styria was determined by the military intervention of Rudolf Maister, who in the beginning of November 1918, occupied Maribor and the Drava Valley with his volunteer soldiers, and later also the region up to the Mura River in the north. At the end of November Maister negotiated a demarcation line with Rudolph Passy, who had the mandate of the Austrians. The line mostly coincided with the Slovene-German ethnic border in Styria. This demarcation line was later accepted as the frontier between Austria and the Kingdom of SCS (Ude 1977; Karner 2000, 130–134).

The situation in southern Carinthia, which the Slovenes demanded for themselves on the basis on ethnic and historical reasons, was more complicated. After the military battles which continued until the end of spring 1919, diplomats at the Paris Peace Conference decided that the "Carinthian Question" should be solved by a plebiscite. Austria won this plebiscite in the Klagenfurt area. In Zone A on 10 October 1920, 22,025 people voted in favor of the annexation of this territory to Austria, while 15,279 voted in favor of annexation to the Kingdom of SCS. 10,000 Slovenes also voted in favor of annexation to the Republic of Austria because Austrian authorities guaranteed them minority rights (Klemenčič M. & Klemenčič V. 2006, 29).

The people of the city of Sopron and its environs also decided on the border between Austria and Hungary. A plebiscite took place between 14 and 16

December 1921. The result was in favor of Hungary (Wambaugh 1933, 290–292).

Nobody in the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region was happy with the frontiers, which had been drawn in accordance with the interests of the Great Powers. Numerous national/ethnic minorities remained outside of their "mother" countries. The governments of the countries to which they belonged promised to protect their ethnic identities. Austria, as one of the losers of World War I, had an obligation to protect minorities and their ethnic identities in accordance with the Peace Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

In spite of promises of protection of minorities and their ethnic identities, the situation for national minorities in the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region started to worsen very quickly. Inadequate minority protection very often caused conflicts between minorities and majorities. It also caused temporary conflicts in relations among the states. Under these circumstances cooperation between minority and majority populations was very difficult. The state frontiers in the period between World War I and World War II represented real dividing lines. People and goods were really hindered in crossing them due to laws on crossing the state frontiers which were prescribed by each state. These regimes also hindered almost any cooperation between minorities and their mother countries.

4. The Situation of Indigenous Ethnic/National Minorities in Individual States of the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian Region, 1921–1938

4.1. Ethnic/National Minorities in Italy

Vast regions inhabited by minority populations were annexed to Italy after World War I. These included 270,000 Germans, 19,500 Ladins, 350,000 Slovenes, 150,000 Croats and ca. 5,000 people who were members of other nationalities (Klemenčič M. 1980, 37). Before 1922, when the fascists took power, Italy was ready to search for solutions to minority questions for some of its minorities. For example, Tommaso Tittoni, then Foreign Minister, who was the leader of Italian delegation at the Peace Conference in Paris (and later President of the Italian Senate during the reign of the Fascists), declared at the end of October 1919: "Peoples of foreign nationality who came under our jurisdiction should know that the thoughts on oppression and denationalization are completely strange to us; their languages and their cultural institutions will be respected,

they will also enjoy all the rights which are derived from our freedom-loving and democratic laws" (Tittoni in Schloch 1965, 298). This was also confirmed in the beginning of December 1919 in a special statement by Italian King Vittorio Emanuele III who also said: "Our liberal traditions will lead us in such a way that we are going to solve the problems of Non-Italian nationalities with the highest respect and also their traditions, local institutions and local self-managements" (Vittorio Emanuele III in Schloch 1965, 298). In spite of those promises, reality was completely different and Italy began to proceed with assimilatory pressures towards minorities soon after the treaties of Saint-Germain and Rapallo were signed.

4.1.1. The German Minority in South Tyrol

During the early period after the annexation of South Tyrol to Italy, part of the German speaking South Tyrolese tried to cooperate with the Italian majority. In 1921 when the first general parliamentary elections took place after World War I in Italy, the South Tyrolese social-democrats cooperated with the Italian socialists. This was a result of the fact that the Italian socialists were the only party, which in 1919 voted against the annexation of South Tyrol to Italy. On the other hand, already in autumn 1919, both of the most important German parties of South Tyrol, the Catholic People's Party and the German Liberal Party had united their political activities in the German Union. The German Union received enough votes for four deputies to be elected to the Italian parliament. They were recognized as the formal representation of the German speaking South Tyrolese during the period before the fascists took power in Italy. In spite of some attempts at cooperation the Italianization of South Tyrol had already started in this period. This was evidenced by the denial of the demand of the German South Tyrolese deputies in the Italian parliament to free German speaking South Tyrolese from serving in the Italian Army, and by the "lex Corbino" law, which required that children in Italy must get their education only in Italian schools. There were no Italian schools in South Tyrol yet (Schloch 1965, 301).

The German Union welcomed the victory of the fascists in Italy in October of 1922. Its leaders were convinced that with this victory the situation of the German speaking minority in South Tyrol would improve. In February 1923, representatives of the German Union even reached an agreement with the local leaders of the Fascist Party on ways to solve the South Tyrolese question. The agreement concluded that:

- there would be no nationalization of the property of South Tyrolese;
- the South Tyrolese question would be treated as an exclusively internal Italian

issue and that the German-speaking South Tyrolese would be loyal Italian citizens. In exchange for fulfillment of these demands, the leaders of the Fascist Party promised that they would treat the German speaking South Tyrolese as a special nationality group;

- Italian would be the official language in administration and offices; German minority members could use their own language;
- also, in schools where German was the language of education, Italian would be introduced as a special teaching subject;
- the German-speaking South Tyrolese would establish private schools with German as the language of education, while the Italian authorities would establish Italian public schools;
- the Italian authorities would not dismiss any German speaking official due to poor knowledge of the Italian language;
- the Italian authorities would take into account the right of the members of the German speaking minority to gather and to hold public meetings;
- they would annex the Judicial District Egna/Neumarkt to the Judicial District Bolzano/Bozen (Steurer 1977, 5; Gatterer 1968, 431).

This agreement was never confirmed by the Fascist Grand Council. It was clear that the fascist leaders wanted to hinder possible unrest during the period when they were in the early stages of taking complete power. This was also obvious from their plan of Italianization of South Tyrol which was proposed by Italian Senator, Ettore Tolomeo. This plan foresaw among other things the following:

- the unification of Trentino/Trient and South Tyrol into one province;
- the nomination of Italian secretaries for each of the communes;
- the revision of citizenship;
- restrictions in the regime of border-crossings and the sharpening of conditions for temporary residency of foreign Germans (foreign tourists) in the region of South Tyrol;
- the immigration of Germans to the region of South Tyrol was forbidden;
- the revision of the results of the 1921 Census of Population;
- the introduction of Italian as the exclusive official language;
- the dismissal of German speaking officials or their transfer to provinces in central Italy;
- the abolition of the German Union, "Alpenverein" and daily *Der Tiroler*;
- the Italianization of German locality signs, signs on public offices and the Italianization of "Germanized" family names;
- facilitating immigrant Italians in buying the land in the territory of South Tyrol;
- the abolition of German banks and the establishment of an Italian land-credit bank;

- the establishment of border customs offices in Vipiteno/Sterzing and Dobbiaco/Toblach;
- the means to support Italian language and culture;
- the establishment of Italian kindergartens, elementary schools and high schools;
- the establishment of an Italian Studies Institute for South Tyrol;
- adjustments in the territorial boundaries of Bressanone/Brixen Diocese;
- the introduction of Italian as the language of the courts, etc. (Schloch 1965, 303; Gatterer 1968, 436).

The program of Italianization of South Tyrol, as described above, began to be carried out by the fascist authorities already in the spring of 1923, when the authorities replaced German with Italian topographic signs and signs on public, administrative, judicial and other offices. In autumn 1923 Italian became the official language of the province. The authorities fired all the officials who were not of Italian nationality, who did not read and write the Italian language perfectly and they were replaced with officials of Italian nationality. The usage of the term "Südtirol" for the province or geographic region was forbidden and replaced by Tolomeo's name "Alto Adigge." On 1 October 1923 German was expulsed from the schools with the introduction of "Gentile's Reform" (Klemenčič M. 1980, 39).

The Italian policies succeeded in Italianizing only a few smaller regions near the urban centers by putting the program in place. On the other hand, they did not succeed in Italianizing the countryside or the cities with a majority of German population. This could be explained by the favorable conditions in land ownership for Germans and the relatively good economic situation of a large part of the German speaking population in the cities (Leidlmair 1965, 362–381). The planned establishment of new industrial enterprises did the most in the Italianization of South Tyrol. In March 1935 the highest representatives of Italy and Italian business management met in Bolzano/Bozen (Schloch 1965, 311). At this meeting Benito Mussolini acquainted the representatives of Italian business management with the plans of the Italian government to establish an industrial zone in Bolzano/Bozen. On the directive of the government, large industrial enterprises from Lombardy and Piedmont were to establish branches in the new industrial zone. The consequences of the realization of this plan were first shown by changes in the linguistic structure of the population in Bolzano/Bozen. In the new industrial zone 97% of those who found jobs were Italians and only 3% were Germans and Ladins. Due to the above mentioned employment policy almost 87% of all the members of the German speaking minority were still self-employed or employed in farming and trade. Therefore, Italians who

immigrated into South Tyrol could not buy land. Members of the German minority sold their farms very rarely. For that reason, in 1939 the percentage of Italians employed in farming in South Tyrol remained at only 6% (Gatterer 1968, 556–561; Klemenčič M. 1980, 40–41).

In spite of strong Italianization pressures, South Tyrolese Germans succeeded in keeping their identity and most of the region of their autochthonous settlement until the end of the 1930s. This was also due to the help of Germany which served as a protector of South Tyrolese Germans and helped them in their endeavors to keep their identity. It is interesting to note that the Nazis, before they took power in Germany, did not show any special interest in the question of South Tyrol. In 1931 Hitler emphasized that he would not demand the revision of the border at Brenner, if he were to come to power (Steurer 1977, 8) and Germany did not make such demands even after 1933 when the Nazis came to power. The German minority in South Tyrol received from the German government only substantial financial help for the need of its enterprises, schools and the financing of its political activities. This German policy did not change until after the *Anschluß* of Austria to the Third Reich (Steininger 1999).

4.1.2. The Situation of German Linguistic Islands in Northern Italy

The German speaking inhabitants in the linguistic islands in the northern parts of the Veneto region of that day resisted the pressures of Italianization even more strongly than did the South Tyrolese. Most of them lived in the valleys of Sauris/Zahre, Timau/Tischelwang, in Valcanale/Kanalska dolina/Kanaltal,[3] near Assiago and in the commune of Sappada/Pladen near Belluno. These were smaller groups which amounted to a few hundreds or at most a few thousands of German speakers. Most of them (ca. 6,400) lived in Valcanale/Kanalska dolina/Kanaltal, which had been a part of the Austrian province of Carinthia until the end of World War I. In addition to German speakers, 1,682 people who used Slovene as their language of communication and only 10 Italian speakers were counted in 1910 (Wurzer 1970b, 381–386).

After World War I Italian authorities in all the above mentioned regions carried out a policy of Italianization similar to that in South Tyrol. At first they settled Italian bureaucrats, policemen, financial guards and other public officials, and in 1925 introduced Italian as the official language. Because most of the population was not able to speak or write Italian, the authorities introduced translators. They also gradually introduced Italian in the schools and hired Italian teachers as part of "Gentile's" school reform. They gradually also changed all topographic signs and signs in public offices which became only Italian (Veiter 1960, 443–468).

Italians immigrated into all the regions where there were German linguistic islands and, as a result, the ethnic/linguistic structure of the population changed. The most significant were changes in Val Canale/Kanaltal/Kanalska dolina, where the number of Italians between 1921 and 1934 increased from 1,207 to 4,240. At the same time, the number of Germans increased by only 1,300 persons, from 4,158 in 1921 to 5,464 in 1934. The number of Slovenes increased by only 76 persons, i.e. from 1,109 in 1921 to 1,185 in 1934 (Klemenčič M. 1980, 41).

4.1.3. The Ladins

The Ladins represent one of the oldest ethnic groups in the regions of today's Italy. The region of their autochthonous settlement encompasses the mountainous valleys of the Italian Dolomites on the borders between the provinces of Belluno, Bolzano/Bozen and Trento/Trient. According to some estimates, there were ca. 20,000 members of the Ladin ethnic group during the interwar period. The Italian authorities treated them as Italians and did not recognize them as a minority due to the fact that the Ladinian language belongs to the Romanic group of languages (Palla 1997, 61–70).

The national and socio-economic question of the Ladins in the interwar period was very closely connected to the question of the German speaking South Tyrolese. The Ladins had also tried to remain under Austria. The representatives of some Ladin communes in October 1918 issued a special declaration to the German speaking South Tyrolese, in which they connected their destiny with the destiny of the South Tyrolese Germans. They wrote in a special declaration among other things: "We are not Italians; we did not count ourselves as Italians in the past, and also in the future would not like to be Italians / … / The destiny of the German Tyrolese is also our destiny! Their future ought to be our future!" (Wurzer 1970a, 195–196). The representatives of the same Ladin communes in February 1919, together with the South Tyrolese, prepared a special resolution which was addressed to the U.S. President, Woodrow Wilson (Palla 1997, 64).

In spite of all attempts and endeavors, the geographic area of settlement of the Ladins and the South Tyrolese was given to Italy in accordance with the Peace Treaty on Saint-Germain-en–Laye. The Italian authorities treated the Ladins as Italians, because they defined the Ladin language as a dialect of Italian. In 1921, in spite of sharp protests from the Ladins, Italian was introduced as the language of education with the intention of the complete Italianization of the Ladins. Therefore, it was not surprising that in 1939 more than half of the Ladins opted for Germany (Wurzer 1970a, 196).

4.1.4. The Friulians

The historical area of settlement of the Friulians consists of the Friulian Plain from the river Livenza in the west to the river Isonzo in the east and from the Karnian and Julian Alps in the north to the Adriatic Sea on the south. Most of this region, with the exception of areas around the Isonzo River, already belonged to Italy before World War I (Pascolo 1970, 199–201). After World War II the region of settlement of Friulians was divided between the Italian regions of Venezia Giulia/Julijska krajina and Veneto.

Because the Friulian language like the Italian language belongs to the Romanic group of languages, the Italian authorities in the period between two world wars treated them as Italians and did not recognize them as a minority. They based this policy on the conclusion that the Friulian language was only an "informal people's language," which was spoken almost only in the countryside, and to the fact that all Friulians were bilingual or even trilingual. Therefore, the Friulians had always had a dual identity; they were Friulians; at the same time they considered themselves Italians. This dual identity was always present in their political activities as they never considered secession or independence. Their love for "their" country always combined "love towards the little homeland" [*Piccola patria*], i.e. Friuli, and "love towards the large homeland" [*Grande patria*], i.e. Italy and also Austria, previously, when their territory belong to the Habsburg Monarchy (Žabjek 1985, 6–8). Therefore, it was not surprising that the Italians considered the Friulians as a "frontier bulwark" against foreigners on the northern and eastern frontier, meaning the Germans and Slovenes (Stranj 1992, 88).

In spite of the fact that the Italian state did not acknowledge Friulians as a minority during the period between the world wars, they were included as a special linguistic group in the census of 1921 in the newly annexed region of Venezia Giulia. In all of Venezia Giulia at that time they counted 50,589 people with Friulian as their mother tongue. Most of them lived in the province of Gradiscia/Gradiška, where they comprised three quarters of all inhabitants, and in the province of Monfalcone/Tržič, where they comprised more than one quarter of all inhabitants (DGS 1926, 192–208).

Until the fascists came to power in Italy, the Friulians were allowed to use their own language in church. In accordance with the new orders of the fascist authorities aimed at the Italianization of Friuli, the Bishop of Udine/Videm forbade the usage of Friulian (and Slovene) language in the churches. During the same year the priests of Udine/Videm Diocese asked the Vatican Department of

State to help them in reintroducing the Friulian (and Slovene) language in the church. The answer was that they had lived under Italy for half a century and that they ought to have learned Italian by that time. On that occasion the Friulians lost the last possibility to express their national/ethnic identity; especially after the fascist authorities forbade the usage of Friulian language, even in bars, taverns and restaurants (Žabjek 1985, 13–17).

4.1.5. The Slovenes and Croats

During the interwar period the Italian authorities put the strongest pressure to Italianize on the Slovene and Croatian populations. Italian policy aimed towards the Balkans, especially centered on annexation of the eastern Adriatic coast. As part of this policy they aimed at Italianization of the autochthonous regions of settlement of Slovenes and Croats, which after World War I had been given to Italy. Therefore, soon after the annexation of the territories the Italian administration wanted to wipe out any expressions of Slovene or Croatian identity, although the Italian politicians had earlier promised to respect their traditions and culture and to provide more schools than they had under the Habsburg Monarchy. The authorities also knowingly allowed the violence of the fascists, such as, for example, setting the Slovene National Home in the center of Trieste/Trst on fire on 13 July 1920. To fulfill the aims of "reintegration policy" towards Slovenes and Croatians, fascism developed its so-called "frontier policy" [*politica di confine*], where "frontier fascism" [*fascismo di frontiera*] was put in place violently (Jeri 1961, 25).

The chief means of inculcating Italian culture into Slovenes and Croats were: forbidding all of their political, cultural and economic organizations; forbidding the usage of Slovene and Croatian languages in public life; the complete Italianization of education; and the Italianization of topographic names and individual names and surnames. By doing this they wished to extinguish all traces of Slovene and Croatian culture in Venezia Giulia. In this context the Italian authorities Italianized all topographic names and by 1933 even 56,000 family names. In 1928 the Italian authorities also put in place a special decree by which they forbade parents to give their new born children names of Slavic origin. By the beginning of the 1930s the Slovene language was retained only in the churches, where Slovene and Croatian languages were used in Slovene and Croatian ethnic territories as liturgical languages. The activities of all former cultural and educational societies also took place in the churches. The only exception was in the Rijeka/Fiume Diocese, where the bishop actively cooperated with the fascists. The bishops of Trieste/Trst and Gorizia/Gorica supported the cultural activities of Slovenes until 1930, when they were forced to resign. In October

1931 the only ethnic Slovene Archbishop, Frančišek Borgia Sedej of Gorizia/Gorica also had to resign (Kacin-Wohinz & Pirjevec 2000, 27–42).

Because the Italian state willfully destroyed Slovene and Croatian owned enterprises in Venezia Giulia by special laws and measures which rendered their operations difficult, more and more Slovenes and Croats decided to emigrate. Slovene and Croatian intellectuals, state officials and small entrepreneurs and artisans first decided to emigrate from Italy and they mostly immigrated to Yugoslavia. By the end of the 1920s also Slovene and Croatian industrial workers and small farmers decided to leave. The poorer groups of the population emigrated especially to Argentina and other South American states. From Venezia Giulia alone ca. 50,000–60,000 Slovenes emigrated during the twenty-five years of Italian control (Kalc 2001, 159–169). The Italian authorities supported the emigration of Slovenes and Croats and on the other hand, also the immigration of Italians into the region with the aim of changing the ethnic structure of the population of this region as quickly as possible.

All political parties, with the exception of the National Fascist Party [*Partito Nazionale Fascista*], were outlawed in November 1926 and thus the Slovenes and Croats started organize illegally. Catholic-oriented Slovenes organized a secret organization which took care of education and maintenance of Slovene national consciousness. The main activists were Slovene priests who were united in the Society of the Priests of St. Paul [*Zbor svečenikov sv. Pavla*]. The fascists considered Slovene priests as the principle enemy and the last hindrance to assimilating the Slovene population. Therefore, they controlled them very strictly; they also persecuted and imprisoned them. The situation of the priests worsened after the Concordat between Mussolini and the Pope was signed in 1929, when the Catholic Church began to cooperate loyally with the Italian state. New Catholic bishops in Venezia Giulia started to support Italianization in the Catholic Church and thus the Slovene priests were forced to disobey their own church leaders if they wanted to keep the Slovene language alive in the church (Ferenc et al 1974, 78–80).

When the foreign ministers of Italy, Galeazzo Ciano, and Yugoslavia, Milan Stojadinović, who was at the same time Yugoslav Prime Minister, signed an agreement on friendship and cooperation on 25 March 1937, the leaders of catholic and liberal oriented Slovenes in Italy put together a common delegation, which tried to give Mussolini a memorandum with the minimal wishes of the Slovene minority in Italy. It pertained especially to permission to retain Slovene societies and measures for keeping the Slovene language alive. Mussolini would not receive the delegation, because he could not acknowledge the representation

of a minority whose existence was denied by fascist policy (Kacin-Wohinz & Pirjevec 2000, 69–70).

Fascist led violence also caused more radical means of defending Slovene and Croatian national identity. The members of the younger generation working in secret in 1928 established their own underground educational and cultural organization, TIGR (Trst, Istra, Gorica, Reka). Its aim was to answer the violence and to try to bring the situation of the minority to the attention of the world and Yugoslav public opinion. The Italian police in autumn 1929 succeeded in finding some of the most important collaborators of TIGR. By the spring of 1930 they had arrested 60 of them. A Special Court for the Protection of the State condemned four of them to capital punishment and 28 of them to drastic jail sentences of up to 30 years (Ferenc et al 1974, 97–118).

Many Slovenes und Croats also demonstrated against fascism when the Italian state drafted Slovene and Croatian recruits for the war in Abyssinia in 1935 and during the military intervention of the Italian army in the Spanish Civil War in 1937 and 1938. Every opposition to fascism brought about new arrests and trials. By the beginning of World War II quite a few thousands of Slovenes and Croats had been sentenced to long prison terms (Ferenc et al 1974, 110–118).

4.2. Ethnic/National Minorities in Austria

As already mentioned, Austria as one of the losers of World War I, was obliged by the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (Articles 62–69) to give national minorities in its territory all necessary protections and rights. During the period when the frontier had not yet been determined, Austria promised to give the Slovenes in southern Carinthia and southern Styria and members of the Croatian and Hungarian minorities in Burgenland all minority rights and to protect their ethnic/national identities.

4.2.1. The Slovenes in Southern Carinthia

Austrian politicians gave many promises to the Slovene minority in Carinthia. Austria was afraid of losing most of the territory of southern Carinthia, which was settled by Slovenes. So, for example, the provisional Carinthian Provincial Assembly, during the period of plebiscite propaganda, had promised the Slovenes that they would protect "/…/ their linguistic and ethnic particularities /…/ and that they would pay the same attention to Slovene spiritual and economic development as to that of the German-speaking population of the Land"

(Anderwald & Hellwig 1995, 92). How quickly Austria had forgotten most of its promises was shown on 25 November 1920, when at the meeting of the Carinthian Provincial Assembly, the administrator of the *Land* [*Landesverwesser*], Arthur Lemich, openly declared the fast Germanization of Carinthian Slovenes as the aim. He declared: "We have time only for the period of one human being's lifetime to bring those who were misled back to Carinthianhood; in the time of one generation we must finish the educational job" (Lemich in Haas & Stuhlpfarrer 1977, 34).

Soon after the plebiscite the Austrian authorities started to limit linguistic rights which had been assured the Slovenes of Carinthia already during the Habsburg Monarchy. German became the only official language, all bilingual topographic signs disappeared, and the Carinthian provincial Official Gazette, which had appeared during the Austro-Hungarian period in German and Slovene languages was from November 1918 on published only in the German language. German nationalists began putting pressure on Slovenes, especially those who at the time of the plebiscite had voted for the Kingdom of SCS (Klemenčič M. & Klemenčič V. 2006, 29–30).

The Kärntner Heimatdienst became the main source of anti-Slovene minority activities. This organization had been established before the plebiscite and in 1924 was renamed the Kärntner Heimatbund. The main aim of the Kärntner Heimatbund was to fight against the idea of solving the Slovene minority question by giving them cultural autonomy. It arrived at that idea due to the pressure of the representatives of the German minority in other states, especially the German minority in Yugoslavia. After almost two years of preparations and negotiations, the Carinthian branches of Austrian political parties, without consulting the Carinthian Slovenes, put before the Carinthian Provincial Assembly a draft of a provincial law on the special cultural autonomy of the Carinthian Slovenes. The draft was based on a model which the German government wanted to use to solve the problems of the Danish minority in Germany. It was soon obvious that the draft of the German parties of Austria was put into the provincial parliamentary procedure only to help the German minority in Yugoslavia. It was significant that soon after the Yugoslav elections of 1927 German Carinthian nationalists started to oppose autonomy as it was written in the draft. All political parties which were represented in the Carinthian Provincial Assembly, by a special statement of 17 May 1929, broke off any further negotiations with the Slovene minority and then blamed the Slovene minority for this, although the representatives of the Slovene minority accepted most of the provisions of the proposed provincial law. With this act the idea of cultural autonomy was dead once and for all (Zorn 1974). The period of discussions on cultural autonomy for Carinthian Slovenes also

coincided with a period of strengthened anti-Slovene activities of the Kärntner Heimatbund, which fought for the settlement of as many German families as possible in southern Carinthia. Austria never put any brakes on the activities of the ideologists of Greater Germany. This was evident in March 1938 after the *Anschluß*, when Austria became a part of the German Third Reich.

Pressures on the Slovene minority in Carinthia were also shown in the censuses of population in the First Austrian Republic which took place in 1923 and 1934. The determination of the number of Carinthian Slovenes became a method of pressure on Carinthian Slovenes. In 1923, on the basis of language of communication, which was defined as "the language that the person uses most and in which he/she customarily thinks" (BFS 1935, 1), the census counted only 39,292 or (10.1%) Slovenes. By 1934 their number fell to 26,796 (Grafenauer 1946, 202).

As far as the language of communication is concerned, the accuracy of both censuses is questionable. This can be said especially for the census of 1934, in which the census takers determined the language category "/ … /by the language of the cultural circle to which the individual belongs / … / i.e., exclusively according to the feelings of the individual and not / … / by the mother tongue, greater or lesser capabilities in the certain language usage, the language of usual communication, education or something similar" (Podgorc 1937, 66). Slovene historian Bogo Grafenauer (1946, 202), wrote that, by this way of census taking, Austria renounced "objectivity as the basis for language or ethnic/nationality statistics." It is interesting to note, that this subjective criterion could be used as a tool for assimilation of minorities and that that was also acknowledged by some German specialists as early as the 1930s. So, for example, the German theoretician on minorities, Wilhelm Greve (1938, 31) wrote the following about this subject: "The assimilative strength of Germans is so great that even individuals who were in reality not Germans acknowledged themselves as Germans. The determination of nationality on the basis of declaration, which does not take into account other objective criteria, supports assimilation."

The fact that the number of Slovenes in the official censuses of 1923 and 1934 was too low could also be substantiated by some other estimates. Church statistics estimate that there were 90,000 Slovenes living in southern Carinthia in 1923 (Grafenauer 1946, 216–217). Also, a private census in 1923 taken in 57 out of 77 communes in southern Carinthia shows more Slovenes in southern Carinthia than the official census. They counted 71,452 Slovenes or (88.62%) out of 80,614 inhabitants (Ammende 1931, 305–306, 316; Veiter 1936, 129; Grafenauer 1946, 217).

Similar differences between the results of official Austrian censuses, the estimates and the results of "private censuses" could also be found for the results of the census in 1934. Among the "private censuses" we have to mention the survey on the ethnic situation according to parishes prepared for most of the Slovene ethnic territory in Carinthia, which was prepared in 1934 by Carinthian Slovene students and intellectuals. They used criteria of family language or the language normally used at home. According to this census in Southern Carinthia there were 81,105 Slovenes or 81.02 % of the 100,108 people who lived in this territory. If one added the Slovenes who lived north of Klagenfurt/Celovec, especially in the region between Pörtschach/Poreče and Maria Saal/Gospa Sveta, who were not included in this private census, we could estimate that some 90,000 Slovenes lived in Austrian Carinthia. The same number of Slovenes also appeared in a publication of the Gurk/Krka Diocese, while the Slovene national cadastre, which was made in 1933/34, on the basis of mother or family tongue, showed 97,129 Slovenes in "Slovene Carinthia" (minus the commune of Villach/Beljak) (Grafenauer 1946, 220).

The estimates for the number of Slovenes in Carinthia in 1934 by individual researchers who dealt with ethnic/national struggles in Carinthia differ considerably. Veiter (1936, 116–123) estimated their number at about 55,000, while Fran Zwitter (1937, 13), on the basis of enrollment of children in elementary schools, estimated the number of Slovenes in Carinthia to be approximately 70,000. Grafenauer (1946, 220–222), after calculations, corrected this number to 81,592. Richard Randall (1955, 125) in his doctoral dissertation came to the highest estimate – 120,000 Slovenes. These differences between the official Austrian censuses of population, the "private censuses" and other estimates are not surprising because of the fact that most of the official census commissioners were nazi-oriented teachers. Criticism of the methodology of the 1934 census can be found in the organ of the Carinthian Slovenes, Koroški Slovenec (KS 1934, 1):

> The determination of language for this census was based only on consciousness and not on mother tongue. Whoever was not able to express this consciousness got help from the census commissioners with their 'consciousness.' So, the result of this census, as far as language of the population is concerned, will show only 'consciousness' of the different census commissioners and not that of the people counted.

Dr. Franc Petek, a deputy of the Carinthian Provincial Assembly at that time, also called attention to the suggestive questions which census commissioners asked in his complaint to the League of Nations on 29 September 1934 (Ude 1936, 107).

From the above mentioned examples it is clear that the censuses of 1923 and 1934 in the regions of autochthonous settlements of Slovene, Croatian, and Hungarian minorities in Austria were misused to put pressure on members of the above mentioned minorities. Not only did the gathered data not show the real ethnic situation in the ethnically mixed territories of Carinthia, Styria, and Burgenland; they were in a way part of a general plan for the gradual Germanization or for the systematic "statistical liquidation" of ethnic minorities in Austria.

4.2.2. The Slovenes in Southern Styria

In September 1919, the newly formed border between the Kingdom of SCS and Austria in the Styrian sector also left some regions of Slovene autochthonous settlement in Austria. According to the 1934 Austrian census, there were 3,838 inhabitants in Styria with Slovene as their language of communication; of them only a little over a thousand were Austrian citizens. The rest were foreigners, immigrants from Yugoslavia, especially from Prekmurje, who had immigrated to this region mostly before World War I. (Klemenčič M. & Klemenčič V. 2006, 81).

The new border drawn in accordance with the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye was finally determined in 1922. It obstructed the flow of people and goods based on a century of tradition of personal and economic contacts. The commerce, which until then had been unhindered, was now a part of the exchange of goods between two countries and, as such, was part of the customs regime. Only smaller amounts of goods flowed uncontrolled through illegal smuggling (Weitlaner & Petrowitsch 2005, 6). Some of the localities on the Austrian as well as the Slovene side of the border lost their economic hinterlands, and therefore, their economic development was impaired. The situation worsened the most in Radkersburg/Radgona; the consequence of the worsening of the economic situation was emigration. It went in two directions, into the industrial regions of Austria or into Maribor and other Slovene cities.

The situation of the Slovene community in Styria differed from the situation in Carinthia. In Carinthia, at least on paper, the Slovenes were assured some minority rights, while the very existence of Slovenes in Styria was not recognized by Austrian politicians and because of that the Slovenes were not even able to organize. The only Slovene organization in the territory of autochthonous settlement of Styrian Slovenes, the Slovene Educational Society, established in 1910, was dissolved in 1919, when its president, a farmer named Matej Pintarič, was killed (Vratuša 1994, 268).

The German School Society Südmark [*Deutscher Schulverein Südmark*] played an important role in the Germanization of the people on both sides of the Yugoslav-Austrian border even after the border between the two newly established countries was drawn. In the period between 1923 and 1929 a teacher of Slovene language in the Radkersburg/Radgona elementary school was mentioned for the last time. The Slovene language was used only in the Evangelical parish; whereas it was mostly not used in the Catholic parish (Vratuša 1994, 270–271).

Slovenes in Austrian Styria during the period between the world wars did not get any help from their mother country or from civic organizations, either. The Yugoslav government demanded corrections of the border in favor of Yugoslavia also at the Styrian section at the peace conference after World War II. However, until 1980s Slovenes in the Republic of Slovenia and their civic societies did not pay to much attention to the problems of Styrian Slovenes in Austria.

4.2.3. The Burgenland Croats

When the border between Austria and Hungary was finally determined at the end of 1921, the larger part of formerly western Hungary was given to Austria. The new Austrian federal province of Burgenland was established. This border change did not favor the further development of the Croatian minority, which had lived in this territory for some centuries. The former "western Hungarian Croats" were divided by this new border between Austria and Hungary. About 20 Croatian villages remained under Hungary, while some 80 Croatian villages, with more than 44,500 Croatian speaking inhabitants, were annexed to Austria (Valentić 1977a, 55).

In spite Austria's obligations to protect its national minorities, as prescribed in the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the process of assimilation became more and more intensive. The question of education caused numerous conflicts, especially after the Austrian state replaced religious Croatian language schools with state funded schools. Conflicts took place between the majority Austrian German population and the Croatian minority, on the one hand, and also internally within the Croatian minority. One part of the Burgenland Croats defended the further existence of religious schools with Croatian language of instruction (Ivancsics 2004, 110). Due to the pressure of assimilation and worsened possibilities for employment in Burgenland, numerous Burgenland Croatians were forced to emigrate (Gassner 1980, 6). The pressures of assimilation in the interwar period caused the Germanization of selected regions of Burgenland. Already by 1934, the number of Burgenland Croats decreased to ca. 39,300 (Valentić 1977b, 136–137).

4.2.4. The Burgenland Hungarians

The 24,000 Hungarians whose areas of autochthonous settlement were given to Austria after World War I, faced a similar destiny. The Hungarian minority was also exposed to the pressures of assimilation. After German was introduced as the official language of the region, numerous public officials and teachers immigrated to Hungary (Kunnert 1970). Assimilation and the worsened possibilities for employment also forced members of the Hungarian minority into mass emigration. It took place in three directions: into Hungary, into economically more developed regions of Austria, especially to Vienna, and to overseas countries. According to the official results of the Austrian census of 1934 the number of Burgenland Hungarians decreased to 10,442 (Kocsis & Kocsis-Hodosi 1998, 194–204).

4.3. Ethnic/National Minorities in the Kingdom of SCS (after 1929, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia)

The Kingdom of SCS was founded after World War I and was a result of the post-Versailles system in Europe. It was created from regions which before World War I had belonged to culturally and economically different states. Therefore, the ethno-nations and ethnic/national minorities brought to the new state different sorts of political, cultural and economic heritage and different regional and religious characteristics. Due to many problems in the fields of economics and politics, the politicians of the newly established state did not succeed in regulating inter-ethnic relations. This was exacerbated by the fact that the state was multi-national, and that more than one quarter of its population belonged to various national/ethnic minorities. These minorities were all the peoples who did not belong to the Serbian, Croatian, or Slovene nationalities (Klemenčič M. & Žagar 2004, 99–103).

In the region of Yugoslav Slovenia (at that time more than one third of the Slovene ethnic territory remained outside the frontiers of the Yugoslav state) Germans and Hungarians lived as members of ethnic/national minorities. In Croatia there lived Germans, Hungarians, and Italians; as well as quite a few Czechs, Poles, Slovaks, and Ukrainians, who had settled in Croatia during the 17th and 18th centuries, when the borders of the Ottoman Empire were changing and Turkish rule was being replaced by the Habsburg Empire.

4.3.1. Germans in the Regions of Yugoslav Slovenia and Croatia

With the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy, the status of the Germans in the regions which became a part of the Kingdom of SCS changed from that of members of the ruling nation into the status of a national/ethnic minority. According to the census of 1921, in the territory of the Kingdom of SCS there lived almost half a million people with German as their mother tongue. In the area of Yugoslav Slovenia there lived ca. 41,000 Germans, mostly in the cities of Lower Styria, in the Kočevje/Gotschee region, in Apaško polje/Abßtaller Feld and in the northwestern part of Prekmurje. In Croatia there lived ca. 124,000 Germans, mostly in larger cities in the northern part of Croatia and in eastern Slavonia and Baranja (Ferenc 2005, 13; Biber 1966, 11–15).

The first months after World War I, were marked by a mass emigration of German officials and other Germans. Due to emigration and the processes of re-assimilation, the number of Germans in Yugoslav Slovenia, (i.e., that part of Slovene ethnic territory which after World War I belonged to the Kingdom of SCS), was reduced from 103,949 in 1910 (KKSZ 1917; KKSZ 1918a; KKSZ 1918b; KSH, 1913) to 41,514 in 1921 (DSU 1932), and in Croatia from 135,187 in 1910 to 123,892 in 1921 (Winkler 1931, 212–213).

Such a large statistical decrease of the number of Germans in Yugoslav Slovenia between 1910 and 1921 cannot be explained only by a mass emigration of Germans after the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy. It can also partly be explained by the differences in methodology of the censuses in the Austrian part of the Habsburg Monarchy and those in the Kingdom of SCS. In the Kingdom of SCS in 1921 the criterion was mother tongue, while in Austria, from 1880 on, the criterion was the language of communication (Klemenčič V. 1988, 241). The statistical decrease of the German population in Slovenia was also a result of the "re-assimilation" policy of the Slovene authorities. It was influenced especially by the closing of German private schools, by limiting the usage of the German language in public schools, by the administrative abolishment of most of the German cultural societies, by limitations placed on the usage of German in public life, and by legal limitations on the German ownership of property in the border areas.

Just like other ethnic/national minorities in Central Europe, the Germans in the Kingdom of SCS also enjoyed, at least on paper, basic minority rights in accordance with the decisions of the council of the Paris Peace Conference after World War I. In accordance with Article 51 of the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-

Laye, the Kingdom of SCS accepted and agreed "to embody in a Treaty with the Principal Allied and Associated Powers such provisions as may be deemed necessary by these Powers to protect the interests of inhabitants of that State who differ from the majority of the population in race, language or religion" (Israel 1967, 1157). The Kingdom of SCS did not put this or any similar provision into its first constitution, the so-called St. Vitus Day Constitution [*Vidovdanski ustav*]. The only article in this constitution which dealt with ethnic/national minorities was Article 16, which guaranteed "minorities of other tribe and language" in principle the right to education in their mother tongue in accordance with the regulations of the special law (Ustava kraljevine SHS 1921, 424). The Law on Public Schools was passed only in 1929, while in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia of 1931, minorities were not even mentioned (Ferenc 2005, 67).

The transition to the new South Slavic state did not worsen the economic situation of the Germans. The partial nationalization of enterprises and agrarian reform in the beginning of the 1920s affected only a small part of German wealth. In spite of the strong decrease in the number of Germans and the different measures of the state which interfered with the relations in the field of properties, Germans in Yugoslav Slovenia and Croatia preserved their economic well being. The German owners of great estates retained their properties. Germans also owned large industrial and commercial enterprises and many buildings. In comparison with other Germans in the Kingdom of SCS, the Germans in Yugoslav Slovenia were the wealthiest (Biber 1966, 27–28). They owned half of the vineyards in the vicinity of Maribor, Ormož, and Slovenska Bistrica, and more than half of them in the wine growing regions of Haloze, Gornja Radgona and Gornji Cmurek (today's Trate). In Maribor they owned 41% of the apartments and other buildings, in Celje 40% and in Ptuj almost 60% (Suppan 1988, 191).

In the years 1924-25, after the Yugoslav authorities put into effect some measures against the Germans, their representatives tried to convince authorities in Slovenia and Austria to solve their minority situation and the minority situation of the Slovene minority in Austrian Carinthia in accordance with the principle of reciprocity, giving cultural autonomy to both minorities. After it became clear in 1928, that it would not be possible to solve the situation of both minorities by giving them cultural autonomy, the political leadership of Germans in Slovenia itself started to move away from the principle of reciprocity. The leaders of the German minority in Slovenia tried to reach a solution to the German minority question in Slovenia in other ways, e.g. by writing a resolution for the situation of the Germans in Slovenia, or by petitioning the League of Nations as in the case of the closing of the German House in Celje in June 1930 (Cvirn 1998, 87–88).

The leadership of the German minority in Slovenia again tried to revive the idea of reciprocity in the solution of minority questions in Austria and Slovenia again in the mid-1930s. Such attempts were unsuccessful, however, due to the coming of the nazi-ideology and irredentist tendencies.

Most of the members of the German minority in Yugoslav Slovenia and Croatia were happy to see the rise of the Nazis in Germany, because they considered the border between Yugoslavia and Austria as it was drawn at the Paris Peace Conference to be unjust. Hitler's accession to power was welcomed in the newspapers published by the Germans in Slovenia already in the early spring of 1933. Due to their openly friendly attitudes towards the nazi ideology, the authorities in Slovenia gradually disbanded most of the local groups of the Kulturbund, and beginning in the autumn of 1935, they did not allow lecturers from Germany to lecture in Slovenia. In spite of all attempts, the Slovene authorities did not succeed in stopping the nazification of the German minority. It especially intensified after the *Anschluß* of Austria to the German Third Reich in March 1938.

4.3.2. Hungarians in Yugoslav Slovenia and Croatia

Similar to the Germans, the Hungarians who were included in the Kingdom of SCS also saw their status change from members of the ruling nation to that of a national/ethnic minority. According to the census of 1921, in the entire Kingdom of SCS there lived ca. 472,000 persons with Hungarian as their mother tongue; of that number 14,897 in the region of Yugoslav Slovenia and 70,555 in the region Croatia and Slavonia (without Baranja), while only 70 in the entire region of Dalmatia (Winkler 1931, 209).

In Slovenia they lived in the eastern part of Prekmurje; in Croatia mostly in the cities along Danube River and in eastern Podravina and western Slavonia. Among the Hungarians there were quite a few owners of large estates, who, due to agrarian reforms lost most of their estates in the Kingdom of SCS. Their land was given to colonists, who came mostly from other regions of Yugoslavia (Erić 1958; Janša-Zorn 1965). Many Slovenes who migrated from regions, which came under Italian rule, moved to Prekmurje. With these measures the authorities tried to change the ethnic structure of regions of autochthonous settlement. This was only one of the attempts to assimilate the Hungarian population as quickly as possible (Kovacs 2004, 149–352).

4.3.3. Italians in Yugoslav Croatia

In spite of the fact that Italy gained wide regions of autochthonous settlements of Slovenes and Croatians, an approximately 6,000 member Italian minority remained in Dalmatia which belonged to the Kingdom of SCS. The status and treatment of this minority was the object of continuous quarrels between Italy and the Kingdom of SCS. Italy enjoyed the status of a winning power, which could be ascertained by the Treaty of Rapallo. This treaty demanded that the Yugoslav authorities give members of their Italian minority all possible minority rights, while in the same treaty more than half million a Slovenes and Croats in Italy are not even mentioned (Kacin-Wohinz & Pirjevec 2000, 35).

To somehow mitigate political tensions, the governments of the two states, in addition to the Treaty of Rapallo, also signed the so-called Treaty of Rome and the Treaty of Nettuno. The Kingdom of SCS, in the Treaty of Rome of 27 January 1924, recognized the annexation of Rijeka/Fiume to Italy; and Italy promised the same minority status to the "Yugoslav minority" in Italy as was given to the Italian minority in Dalmatia. Italy, in the Treaty of Nettuno of 1925, also guaranteed some minority rights to those Yugoslavs who left for the Kingdom of SCS and to Italian citizens of Slovene and Croatian language. According to both treaties, the level of those minority rights was higher than was the level guaranteed by the Treaty of Rapallo. Although, at least on paper, both minorities, Italians in the Kingdom of SCS, and the Slovene and Croatian minorities in Italy, enjoyed the same level of rights, the reality was different. For example, a few thousand Italians in Dalmatia had almost the same number of schools and as many newspapers as almost half a million Slovenes and Croats in Venezia Giulia (Jeri 1961, 25).

4.3.4. Czechs, Poles, Slovaks, and Ukrainians in Croatia

The Czechs, Poles, Slovaks, and Ukrainians in Croatia were minorities, which had developed as a result of the movements of population in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the Ottoman Empire lost territories in Central Europe through wars and started to colonize the territories most in the southern part in Pannonian Plains and its surroundings. Most of them lived in Slavonia in the region between the Drava River on the north and the Sava on the south. After the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy and the creation of new states at the end of World War I, they mostly remained settled in the above mentioned territory. They lived geographically separated from the main areas of settlement of their respective ethnic groups. In the 1930s, according to the Yugoslav census of population, there lived ca. 36,600 Czechs, 7,100 Slovaks, 4,200 Ukrainians, and 3,800 Poles

in Yugoslavia. For them, at least on paper, the provisions on protection of ethnic/national minorities, which the Kingdom of SCS signed with the allied powers, were also valid (Ur.l. 1921, 597–599).

4.3.5. The Serb Population in Croatia

The Serb population in Croatia is mentioned in this contribution only as an exception because of their influence later in Yugoslav history. The Serbs were treated as a national/ethnic minority only in the period before 1919, between 1941 and 1945 (during the period of the existence of the Independent State of Croatia), and after 1991, following the dissolution of Yugoslavia. During the Yugoslav period they were one of the constituent ethno-nations and also the most numerous ethno-nation (Klemenčič M. 2003, 235–253). They came to the regions of today's Croatia during the period of the violent enlargement of the Turkish Empire in Europe between the 15th and 18th centuries. When the Kingdom of SCS was established, they constituted 17.6 % of the population of Yugoslav Croatia. Most of them lived in Lika, Kordun, the wide region of Knin (the so-called Krajina), Slavonia, and Baranja (Ilić 1995, 329).

We have to mention here, that the settlement of the Serbs in Croatian lands at first did not cause any interethnic conflicts. The first conflicts between Serbs and Croats came only after the Austro-Hungarian Treaty of 1867 and after the Croatian-Hungarian Treaty of 1868 were signed. The real conflicts between the Croats and Serbs erupted only after World War I, especially due to the question of the way the unification of the South Slavic peoples into a single state was realized. It was not surprising that after the establishment of the Kingdom of SCS on 1 December 1918 almost all Croatian Serbs supported the great Serbian policy of the regime of Aleksandar Karađorđević. Due to the almost complete domination of the Serb unitaristic circles in all fields of life in the Kingdom of SCS (after 1929 in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), the Croatian-Serb quarrels carried on throughout the whole inter-war period. They were the logical consequences of the unbalanced relations between the bearers of economic power (the Slovenes and Croatians) and bearers of political power (the Serbs from Serbia). The greatest unhappiness among Croatians was caused by the provisions of the so-called St. Vitus Day Constitution, which soon began to disturb even some Serbs in Croatia (Horvat, 1989; Klemenčič M. 2003, 239–244). The most respected leader of the Serbs in Croatia, Svetozar Pribićevič, was also disappointed by the policy of his compatriots in Serbia, who were not able to solve the country's nationality question. In 1927, Pribičević with his *Samostalna demokratska stranka* [Independent Democratic Party] joined forces with Stjepan Radić and

his *Hrvatska seljačka stranka* [Croatian peasant Party]. From then on, Pribičević advocated the most tolerant views towards the Croatian national question among all Serb bourgeoisie politicians (Roksandić 1991, 121–122). He completely turned away from the policy of centralism and became a stubborn defender of the search for democratic solutions to the differences in the state.

Some circles among the Croatian and Serb intelligentsias realized that the violent unitaristic policy of the Yugoslav government only deepened the mistrust among the citizens of different "tribes" shortly before the beginning of World War II in Europe. Together these members of the intelligentsia started to try to find a solution to the Croatian question. All the attempts at finding a just solution to the relations between Serbs and Croats were unsuccessful, because Serb politicians and military leaders in Serbia did not want to give up centralism. At the same time radical Croatian groups demanded an independent Croatian state. Compromise was reached only at the end of August 1939, by the signing of the so-called "Cvetković-Maček Agreement", which was named for the president of the Yugoslav government, Dragiša Cvetković, and after the leader the Croatian Peasant Party, Vladko Maček. In accordance with this agreement, the Croatian Banovina with its own *Sabor* and autonomous government was formed (Boban 1965; Klemenčič M. & Žagar 2004, 121). In spite of all, this agreement did not eliminate the mistrust, which was a result of twenty years of wrong policies in trying to solve the national question in Yugoslavia.

4.4. Ethnic/National Minorities in Hungary

After World War I the territories of Hungary were established as an independent state. Similar to Austria and parts of the Kingdom of SCS, it came into being on the ruins of the multi-national Habsburg Monarchy. Its borders, as determined by the Peace Treaty of Trianon of 4 June 1920, intersected the regions of settlement of quite a few nationalities. Members of some neighboring peoples remained within the Hungarian state as members of national/ethnic minorities, while many Hungarians became members of national minorities in neighboring states. In the Hungarian parts of the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region between the two world wars there lived members of Slovene, Croatian, and German ethnic/national minorities, as well as quite a few Roma and Jews. At that time this region was divided among Baranya, Győr-Mason, Sopron, Somogy, Vas, and Zala counties.

After the new borders were drawn, the situation of national minorities in Hungary worsened very quickly. The new borders cut through previously established

economic and cultural ties. They also cut off members of national minorities, especially those in the countryside, from schools and cultural establishments, which remained in their "mother" countries. To better life in the border regions, in the second half of the 1920s, Hungary signed a mutual agreement on border crossing of the population which lived near the boundaries. Such agreements also contributed to the betterment of the situation of national minorities.

4.4.1. The Slovenes

According to the census data of 1920, in the regions south of the Raba River (the so-called Rába-vidék; in Slovene: Porabje) in Hungary there lived ca. 6,000 people with Slovene as their mother tongue (KSH 1923, 48–49). The Hungarian authorities did not recognize them as a national minority and tried to Magyarize them. They changed Slovene topographic names into Hungarian. The Slovene language could not be used in public life. The Hungarian authorities for political reasons put restrictions on border crossings of people and all other sorts of cross border communications. The Hungarian Slovenes at that time did not have their own organizations, and their language was retained only with the help of the church. Between the two world wars Rába-vidék was still an economically backward region and people who lived there could not find work outside of farming. Therefore, many people from Rába-vidék decided to emigrate to Western Europe or overseas (Stipkovits 2004, 443–444).

4.4.2. The Croats

The Croatian population lived in the border region between Hungary and Yugoslavia in Baranya, Somogy, and Zala counties; and in the region near the Austrian-Hungarian border north of the city of Szombathely. There the border between Austria and Hungary cut through the region of autochthonous settlement of the Burgenland Croats (they were called also western Hungarian Croats). The Hungarian authorities treated the ca. 36,000 Croats similarly to the Slovenes of Rába-vidék or Porabje. They did not recognize them as a national minority. In these regions they forbade the use of Croatian language in schools, public offices and even in worship. Therefore, the Croatian language had disappeared as the language of communication in some villages by the beginning of World War II. Many Croats emigrated to Yugoslav Croatia or overseas (Horváth 2004, 435–437; Cseresnyés et al. 2004, 39–44; Takács 2004, 319–329).

4.4.3. The Germans

Germans represented the largest ethic/national minority in Hungary after World War I. In the whole of Hungary there lived ca. 551,000 Germans in 1920 (Winkler 1931, 115); according to some estimates their number was even larger, ca. 650,000 (Tafferner 1970, 408). In the regions of Hungary with which we are dealing in this article, after World War I Germans lived in the regions along the Austrian-Hungarian border; and also in the county of Baranya, north of the city of Pecs – ca. 93,000 in 1930s (Cseresnyés et al. 2004, 51). Although the Hungarian government had promised the Germans that it would protect their ethnic identity, in practice it did not work as promised. Due to the large number of Germans in Hungary and the valuable support of the German state, assimilation did not take its toll to the same extent as it did with other national/ethnic minorities. The economic strength of most of the members of the German minority also played a role, because Germans in the newly established Hungarian state retained their role in farming, as well as in industries and commerce.

5. Conclusion

The turmoil in international relations which took place in the entire Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region during the whole period between the two world wars also clearly showed that the outcome of World War I had not brought about the expected relaxation in political tensions in Europe. The new state borders which were drawn at the Paris Peace Conference were considered by many as unjust, due to the lack of respect for the principle of self-determination of nations. They became lines, which in many cases hindered or even made the cooperation of two neighboring states impossible, much less fostering cooperation of minorities with their "mother" nations.

After the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy and the creation of Austria, Hungary, and the Kingdom of SCS, in the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region numerous German, Hungarian, Slavic and other minorities remained outside their "mother" countries. Lack of respect for minority rights and endeavors to rush their assimilation caused permanent conflicts between majority and minority populations. Attempts of some states at bettering the situation of their minorities in neighboring countries often caused the worsening of international relations. Under such conditions cooperation between minority and majority populations was practically impossible.

The situation of minorities during the period 1921–1938 significantly influenced also the later developments of minorities, especially as far as the decrease of the number of their members is concerned. Important were especially very strong forceful assimilation of minorities and emigration of members of minority populations. Emigration was caused especially by political pressures on minorities and also by the planned hindrances of economic developments of the regions settled by minorities. Emigrants were members of minorities in so-called "fertile" period of their life (ages 18–45). It caused that fertility of minority population was in most cases lower than within majority. This worsened also their situation in the states where they lived.

Although during the period between the two world wars the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonian region remained an area of conflicts, after World War II, (i.e. from 1960s onwards) it became a region of intensive cooperation. And that was in spite of the fact that parts of this region then belonged to the blocs with different economic systems. Some of them belonged to a bloc with a capitalist system (Italy, Austria), while some of them belonged to a bloc where socialist/communist systems prevailed (Hungary, Yugoslavia). The states of the region also belonged to three different world-wide political groupings, which very rarely cooperated on a global level. Italy was member of NATO, Hungary was member of the Warsaw Pact, Yugoslavia was one of the leading countries of the non-aligned movement, and Austria was neutral. The result of the intensive cooperation was the establishment of the Alps-Adria Working group in November 1978 in Venice, which tried to eliminate hindrances to cross border cooperation of peoples, for whom the borders had been real walls in the past.

In spite of all the trends, the states' treatment of autochthonous/national minorities has remained almost unchanged from the period between the wars until today, and it still remains a hindrance for even more intensive cooperation among peoples and states in the region.

40 Notes

[1] The establishing document of the Working Group Alps-Adria was signed in 1978 by the Italian regions of Friuli-Venetia Giulia, and Veneto; the Austrian federal provinces of Carinthia, Styria, Upper Austria, and Salzburg; the former Yugoslav republics of Slovenia, and Croatia; and the German federal state of Bavaria. Between 1981 and 1988 the Italian regions of Trentino-Alto Adige (South Tyrol), Lombardy, and Emilia-Romagna; the Austrian federal province of Burgenland; the Swiss canton of Ticino; and the Hungarian counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas, Zala, Somogy, and Baranya also joined (Moritsch 2001, 12–13). Some of them later resigned from membership. In 1999 Salzburg and Emilia-Romagna; in 2005 Bavaria, Ticino, and Trentino-Alto Adige (South Tyrol); and in 2006 Győr-Moson-Sopron resigned from membership (Jurič-Pahor 2010, 191).

[2] President Woodrow Wilson (1918) in Point 10 declared: "The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development."

[3] Before World War I the Kanal Valley was a part of the Austrian crown land Carinthia. After it became part of Italy, it was at first annexed to newly established Venezia Giulia and in 1923 it became a part of Veneto.

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