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Distribution of Nationalities in Hungary: Discussion

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If the war should do no more than save Serbians, Rumanians, Slovaks, and Ruthenians from a continuation of Magyar oppression, the efforts of the Allies would not be wasted.

After Mr. Wallis read the paper a discussion followed.

Prof. LYDE: The first thing that I would like to say is that, obviously to any one who does any even elementary work in that line there is an enormous amount of patience and ingenious work in these maps. I have known for years that Mr. Wallis is one of the most ingenious persons in London in this kind of statistical work. What I wish is that he would always use this gift he has to plot maps that really have geographical significance. He has two maps there which give information that is most valuable. They suggest the whole basis of the hostility of the Magyars to the Rumanians. The Magyars and the Rumanians are both essentially lowlanders. Directly you get above the 600 contour-line, west of the Raab, in the Bakony Forest, north of Fünfkirchen and elsewhere, there are no Magyars—they are lowlanders. So are the Rumanians. They only went up into the hills because they wanted refuge, and they have always been trying to come down from them. I saw only the other day an article by one of those people who are rather prejudiced against Magyars, telling how the Rumanians come up to the hills for their summer pasturage with their flocks. That is really “upside down.” They lived up there, and they came down on to the plain. They still have the old link, and it is because of that link they have any connection with the Rumanians on the other side of the mountains, for the people are distinctly different east and west of the Carpathians, even in religion. It is because these Transylvanian Rumanians are always trying to percolate down on to the lowland that there has been this essential hostility between them and the Magyars. I do not hold any brief for the Magyars except as to the Magyar peasant, who is a very fine type, as is the Bulgarian peasant; both of them are admirable types. The Slovak people, too, went up into the hills in the same way, for refuge, safety, and freedom, and they got it up there amongst these barren craters. But, because they were up there in those conditions, of course they were backward—so much so that they have never kept in touch with the Moravian plateau, although the people are of the same tongue and racial affinity: still less have they been tempted to come down on to the Magyar plain. The Magyar patch on the right-hand side of the 7a map is a strategical relic, planted down there as the Saxons are planted down farther south. I believed you could not draw a true frontier between the Magyars and the Rumanians, and I am most grateful to Mr. Wallis for letting me see this convincing line. If Mr. Wallis would use those maps to put down for us these populations on a physical map, then they would be illuminating. [Prof. Lyde did not know that these maps have been prepared for superposition on the 1/M. map, which shows the physical features.—ED. G./J.] You would have your Slovak population up there in the mountains, and you would have these Rumanians always trying to percolate down from this plateau on to the plain, and in consequence always having friction with the holders of the plain. It is most interesting that there is a very narrow belt like this. As to the south I do not agree with Mr. Wallis. Just as the Magyars will never go up to a highland, so they will never come down into swamp. Look at a physical map and then compare it with the Magyar population. I cannot tell you why, but directly the swamp appears, the Magyar disappears off the map, and in comes the Slav, *e.g.* the Serbians east of the Drave. You get German settlements there too, but mainly Slav. The essential thing is that these people are types associated

with types of country, and the Magyar is associated essentially with the fertile plain. He won't go up above 600 feet, and won't go into the swamp. I would draw the Magyar racial frontier right up to the Drave, and include in it all the land that is definitely swampy again to the north. On the other hand, I believe that a river is the right political frontier and that you should have the frontier on the river. I am very grateful to Mr. Wallis for these two maps because they have given a lot of information that is convincing.

Sir HENRY TROTTER: I should like to thank the lecturer for his most interesting lecture and the way in which he has shown how the varying densities of population ought to be shown on a map. It is new light to a great many of us; certainly it is to me, and I think we ought to be very grateful to him for taking the subject up and devoting to it so much trouble.

Mr. FAIRGRIEVE: The only thing I would like to say is that it is extremely interesting that Mr. Wallis has adopted the line method of showing the distributions of populations and that he has obtained such satisfactory results. It came to me rather with a shock that it had not been done previously in this way.

Miss S. NICHOLLS: I must say a word in defence of the application of statistics to Geography. If you compare mere descriptions of a region you will find that no two people entirely agree. But if the statistical facts are worked out carefully by the geographer you will get a result that is certainly true and which enables you to receive new impressions by a shifting of your point of view. For my part, to-night I have learned a great deal in regard to the distribution of nationalities in Hungary, as the result of the sifting of statistical data by our lecturer, who, as Prof. Lyde has truly said, has a genius for such painstaking work. I believe that I am right in saying that even Prof. Lyde confessed to having learned something on the distribution of nationalities on the west border of Transylvania.

Mr. MAUDSLAY: It is quite evident that Mr. Wallis has put the matter before you in an extremely clear-headed way, and it will, I am sure, be your wish to offer him a very hearty vote of thanks.

Mr. WALLIS: This is a sort of interim report. Some of these maps were shown to the British Association. We obtained one set of opinions there, and have gained another set here to-day; the result of it will be that Prof. Lyde will get what he wants. He will have the Budapest sheet as it has already been published, and we intend to give him a map with the population lines so that he can put the two maps side by side and draw his own conclusions; but until we had some definite ideas as to the utility of these methods and some support that we were on the right track we did not feel quite justified in starting the inquiry and publishing it as an original scheme. Mr. Fairgrieve said he was astonished the line method had not been used before. I believe the method has been suggested in Germany, but I do not know of its application. The swamp that Prof. Lyde talks of is quite clearly indicated on the statistical map; it is inhabited mainly by Serbs and Germans, and the Magyars hold aloof from it. The suggestion was made that we ought to show the population lines on a special edition of the 1/M. map for political purposes, and that was why I undertook to do it: it has been done as war work. The paper is an interim report—intended to stimulate suggestions. I hope to present the completed work at a future meeting.