

Research Space

Journal article

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EDITORIAL

A Picture and an Argument: Mapping for Peace with a Cartography of Hope

This year marks the hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, which formally ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied Powers. Although fighting ceased with the Armistice of 11th November 1918, the terms of peace with the Central Powers were established at the Paris Peace Conference that began on 18th January 1919. It was not until 28th June that the Treaty of Versailles became the first of five treaties prepared at the Conference to be signed, the others being the Treaty of Saint-Germain (signed with Austria on 10th September), the Treaty of Neuilly (with Bulgaria on 27th November), the Treaty of Trianon (with Hungary on 4th June 1920), and the Treaty of Sèvres (with the Ottoman Empire on 10th August 1920 and revised by the Treaty of Lausanne on 24th July 1923).

More than any other war in history, the Great War focused the world's attention upon the map (Goode 1919: 179). Building on their use for supporting combat operations, particularly with the development of photogrammetry (see Chasseaud, 2013) and for educating the public via newspapers (see Heffernan, 2009), maps also played a central role during negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference. The Treaty of Versailles presented a milestone in the way maps were used in the reshaping of territory and in the forming of new states (Altic, 2016). If war is based on geography (George, 1907 quoted in Heffernan, 1996), the maps prepared for peace were based on people; a supreme example being the ethnographic mapping of the Balkans by Jovan Cvijić (Figure 1).

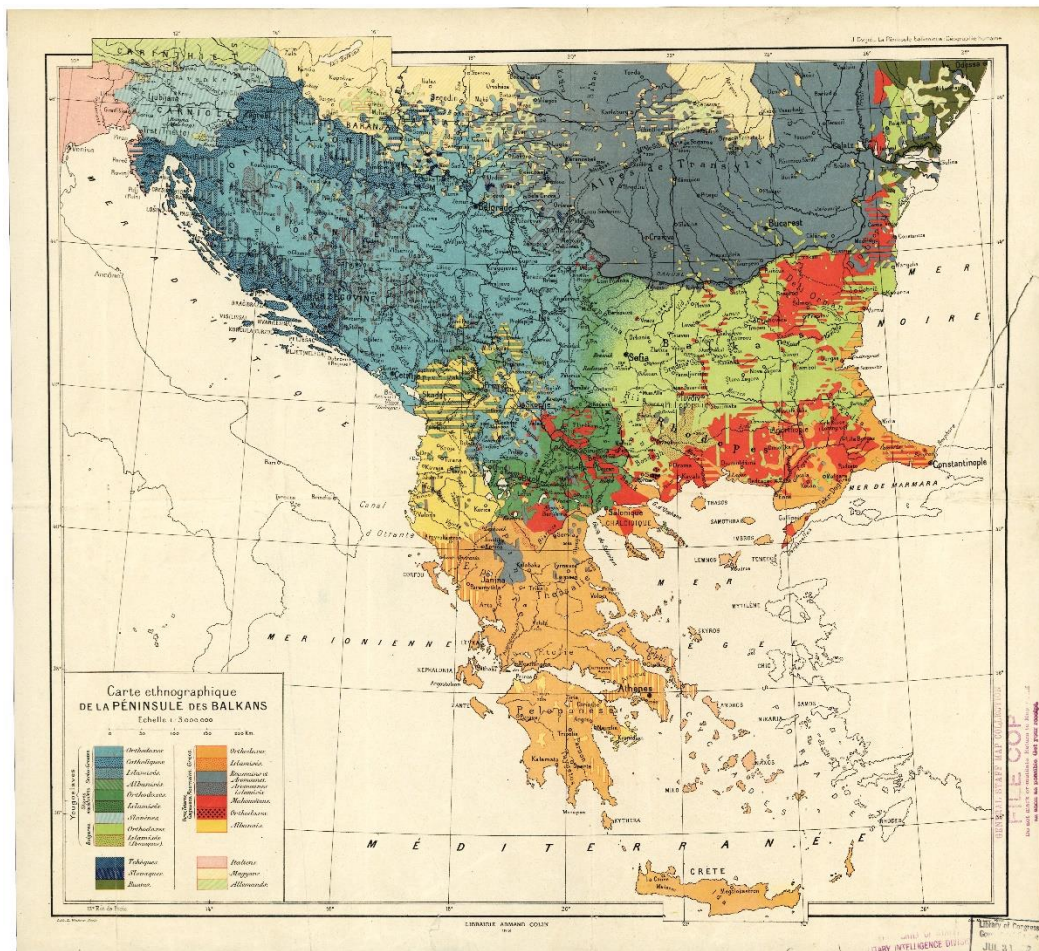


Figure 1 *Carte ethnographique de la Péninsule des Balkans* (1918) by Jovan Cvijić, published by Librairie Armand Colin, Paris (46 x 48 cm). Reproduced courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

Following the horrific human and environmental tragedy of the First World War, the Paris Peace Conference offered the opportunity to redress the ‘combustible geography of Central and Eastern Europe’ (Smith, 2003: 143). The five main Allied Powers (Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the United States) each brought a national agenda, but more than any other delegation, that of the US (The House Inquiry) was characterized by a motivation to find scientific and rational solutions to geopolitical problems. This furthered President Woodrow Wilson’s view that the US could adjudicate on Europe’s geopolitical crises as an expert but neutral observer (Heffernan, 1998).

The approach placed enormous confidence in cartography. The goal was to use maps to understand human organization and then to design more logical, coherent, and natural divisions, and the US, in particular, turned to maps to provide a more harmonious, rational and democratic Europe (Schulten, 2012: 200). This went beyond the traditional topographic or political map in helping to establish an alternative political rule to sovereignty (rule by right or warfare), since, by 1919, cartography had a rich toolbox of techniques for mapping diverse populations that integrated race, politics and territory (Crampton, 2006: 732). The principles of ethno-linguistic boundary drawing had already been established by Leon Dominian (1917) and maps provided an ideal visualization for the re-territorialization of European space.

‘The Inquiry’ was established by President Wilson in 1917 and had begun to produce maps and reports while the First World War was still raging. Isaiah Bowman, President of the American Geographical Society, was appointed ‘Chief Territorial Specialist of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace’ at Paris. The Inquiry produced some 1,200 maps and 2,000 reports (Smith, 2003: 130) and also relied on maps supplied by external experts, including those of Jovan Cvijić in seeking to determine a new state of the ‘South Slavs’, which eventually became Yugoslavia (Figure 1). This was a particularly difficult area to map, which Bowman himself had termed an ‘ethnic storm center’ (Crampton, 2006: 733). It proved challenging for the latest cartographic techniques, for example, the sophisticated combination of area symbology with chromolithography to show the complexities of ethnic distribution on a static medium (Figure 2).

No map, however, can escape bias. To legitimize Yugoslavia’s claim to certain areas which the South Slavic population shared with other populations (e.g., Northern Albania, Macedonia, or the eastern Banat), Cvijić argued that in those areas, the South Slavs had left a ‘deeper impress than others’ – an expression which keenly influenced the US delegation (Altic, 2016: 187). As Wilkinson (1951) later demonstrated by consulting over 70 ethnographic maps of Macedonia, Cvijić had introduced a ‘Macedo-Slav’ group in order to gain more territory for the newly formed Yugoslavia, since most of Macedonia was linguistically Bulgarian and not Serbo-Croat.

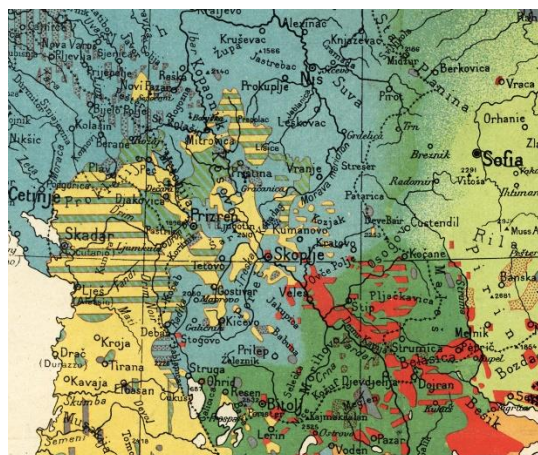


Figure 2 Detail from *Carte ethnographique de la Péninsule des Balkans* (1918) by Jovan Cvijić, published by Librairie Armand Colin, Paris (46 x 48 cm). Reproduced courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

Despite attempts to use maps as geopolitical problem-solving devices (Crampton, 2006: 747) and the corresponding division of various ethnic communities of central and eastern Europe into new states in order to separate Germany and Russia geographically (Dodds, 2000), a lasting peace was not achieved. When Marshal Ferdinand Foch of France read the draft of the Treaty of Versailles he famously complained, ‘This is not a peace. It is an armistice for twenty years’, which was one of the most accurate predictions of future developments by a public official in history (Keylor, 2014). Altic (2016: 197) has since argued that territorial claims based on imperial policies and secret pacts were often a much stronger argument than trying to respect the right to self-determination, or to apply the ethnic principle.

From today’s privileged perspective, it is easy to dismiss The Inquiry’s rational approach and its faith in cartography to establish peace. Although Bowman realized that a new cartographic language was emerging, he was also aware that maps had limitations; they could simplify and manipulate information and were simultaneously ‘a picture and an argument’ (Schulten, 2012: 200). The ideological and geostrategic aims led to the ‘overbounding’ of new states and the ‘underbounding’ of others, which sowed the seeds of an even more terrifying episode of global conflict (as echoed with painful dissonance in the visual collision of mapping on the cover image of this Issue). If it is intrinsic to the ideal of cartography that maps can only be statements of spatial fact (Edney, 2019: 4), perhaps this ideal reached its zenith at the Paris Peace Conference and its nadir shortly after. The underbounding of German territory, in particular, gave rise to the irredentism that is expressed so brutally in Figure 3. Perhaps there is no starker illustration of the state as an organism, suffering the amputation of its limbs, than this foreshadowing of propaganda mapping of the *Geopolitik* school.



Figure 3 *Verlorenes – doch nicht vergessenes Land* [Lost – but not forgotten Land]. Postcard published by the Verlag der Deutschnationalen Schriftenvertriebsstelle after the Treaty of Versailles (date unknown). Reproduced courtesy of the private collection of Jerry Kosanovich and Paul Hageman.

Reflecting on the geopolitical problems caused by the First World War, Bowman (1921) argued that the human qualities of selfish ambition and envy are deep-seated, and as long as they exist there will be war, with its revolutionary effects upon political, social, and economic life. One hundred years on, selfish ambition and envy are hardly strangers in this geopolitically volatile world. Maps force definition and certainty onto a real world that resists both of these impostors, and propaganda mapping is alive and well (Kent, 2016, 2017). Yet, the cartographic ideal endures in its hope that, through maps, the world will be a better place. This is echoed in the motto of Menno-Jan Kraak, former President of the International Cartographic Association (ICA), ‘Let’s make the world a better place with maps’ (ICA, 2019), and implemented in the ICA initiative to support the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Any technology can be wielded for good or malicious purposes, but the hope woven into the fabric of the cartographic ideal suggests that maps have come to both play and reflect a deeper, perhaps spiritual, role in the human journey.

In the past year, The Cartographic Journal has continued to climb, in terms of both the number of manuscripts submitted and the latest impact factor (which now stands at 1.276 for 2018). I encourage all readers of the Journal to join me in thanking its editorial board and our many reviewers, for their dedication towards maintaining the standards of academic rigour that are crucial to the Journal’s success. Our Associate Editors, Gwilym Eades and Peter Vujakovic, continue to make excellent contributions to advance the Journal, and our Editorial Assistant, Martin Davis, has regularly compiled the Reviews section with his uncompromising diligence. Alongside them, I should also like to thank Carolina Bergfors, Eilise Norris and Matthew Cannon from Taylor & Francis for their long-term support in the production and development of the Journal as they now move on to their new roles. Continuously improving the quality of The Cartographic Journal requires dedication and vigilance by those involved in its production, and I am immensely grateful to all who have supported the Journal in 2019.

Notes on the cover

Most of the topographic mapping for the Allied Forces during the Second World War was produced by the British Geographical Section of the General Staff (GSGS). The 1:100,000 topographic map series of the Balkans was derived from existing indigenous mapping (i.e. local originals). The cover image shows an extract from sheet 37 of the GSGS 1:100,000 series of Bulgaria, derived from Bulgarian topographic mapping at the scales of 1:40,000, 1:50,000 and 1:126,000. The area shown in this particular extract lies at the junction of two different generations of Bulgarian source mapping: the northern half of the sheet is based on the older 1:40,000 and 1:126,000 series (which did not include information concerning vegetation cover), while the southern half of the sheet is based on a newer 1:50,000 sheet (which did include this type of information).

Notes on the contributor

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