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Source: *Transactions and Papers (Institute of British Geographers)*, No. 20 (1954), pp. 15-39

Published by: Blackwell Publishing on behalf of The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/621131>

Accessed: 14/05/2010 16:22

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CENTRAL EUROPE – MITTELEUROPA – EUROPE CENTRALE

AN ANALYSIS OF A GEOGRAPHICAL TERM

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It is by no means the first time that the evasive term Central Europe or its equivalents in other languages has been made the basis of a discussion by a geographer. Looking at English writings alone the paper by Hilda Ormsby of almost twenty years ago and R. E. Dickinson's *The German Lebensraum* are well known. A similar theme was taken up by H. Cord Meyer in 1946.¹ Considering the attention this topic has already received, is it not unnecessary or futile to struggle again with this well-worn problem of clarifying the meaning of Central Europe or its synonyms? There appear to be two reasons, however, for making yet another attempt.

Firstly, the authors mentioned purposely based their respective treatments of the subject almost exclusively on German publications, since their aim was to explain to the 'English' reader what was understood by this term among German geographers and other German writers.² In the course of this paper I hope to contribute to that aim by adding some new points and correcting a few statements in the papers mentioned, but the major aim is different. By extending the literature considered beyond the German sphere, an attempt will be made to arrive at more general conclusions.

Secondly, in view of the great changes in the political boundaries and cultural landscape of Europe which have taken place during the recent past, we may need to modify our ideas as to the extent of Central Europe. But we can reach a decision only when we have re-examined the ways in which the term has been used previously.

It is unfortunate that many geographical terms either lack or come to lack precise meaning and consequently give rise to misunderstanding of geography or even to its ill repute among scholars of other subjects. One extreme case in this category is the term Central Europe (Middle Europe, *l'Europe centrale*, *Zentraleuropa*, *Mittleuropa*, *l'Europa centrale*, etc.).³ Perusing the literature either devoted to a discussion of the term or giving some attention to it one cannot help but be left with a feeling of absolute confusion. Since this is so

¹ For full bibliographical details of these and other publications, and those quoted several times, see the bibliography on pages 37-9. References to these are given by quoting the name of the author, and where appropriate the year of publication, followed by the page reference.

² 'German' is to be understood here as to mean 'of German mother tongue'.

³ An indication of the present ambiguity of its meaning is the statement under the entry 'Central Europe' in *Webster's geographical dictionary* (1949), 211, where this term is called 'indefinite and occasional'.

would it not be better to cease using this term altogether? This step was indeed taken by a number of geographers, though not necessarily for that reason. Many others will, however, agree with P. M. Roxby who wrote (1926, 378) that Central Europe is a real entity, a major region with a definite personality;⁴ and thus the term becomes indispensable.

Before showing by selected examples the great variation in definitions of Central Europe, it seems appropriate to quote some authors who denied its existence altogether or stated that it ceased to exist at a certain time. The Austrian scholar, Erwin Hanslik, stated emphatically during the First World War that Central Europe was only a phantom of the imagination and that along a line from Trieste via Vienna, Prague, Breslau to Königsberg, the east began without any transition.⁵ Using a somewhat more westerly boundary roughly following the Elbe river, a similar principal division into east and west was used by Sir Halford Mackinder shortly after the First World War in his *Democratic ideals and reality* and in his concept again there was no space for a Central Europe.⁶ Similarly the French historian, Joseph Aulneau, wrote in the inter-war period that Central Europe was no entity and existed only in the minds of the conquerors and writers.⁷ As an example of those authorities who are of the opinion that Central Europe *no longer* exists, the statement of H. G. Steers may be quoted: ‘“Mitteleuropa”, that first principle of German geographical thought, has gone. . . .’⁸

Among those who do believe in the existence of Central Europe we find that the conflict of opinions is even greater than is usually appreciated. An indication of this is shown in Figure 1 where the boundary lines of maps of various types and of major series of topographic maps, all bearing the name ‘Central Europe’ in this or another form, are indicated by different symbols. For obvious reasons

⁴ Cf. also E. DE MARTONNE (1930, 3): ‘Ainsi l’Europe centrale n’est pas un mot’.

⁵ ‘Es gibt kein “Mitteleuropa” als natürliche und kulturelle Wirklichkeit. Bei Triest, Wien, Brünn, Prag, Oderberg, Breslau, Posen und Königsberg hört der Westen auf, setzt der Osten ohne jeden Übergang ein.’ (1917, 94).

⁶ Map ‘The real Europe’ (1919, 154). His ‘heartland’ (1919, Figure 24) is based on a world-wide concept and might be called ‘Middle Eurasia’. W. G. East stated ‘Sir Halford Mackinder too found reason to distinguish a middle or transitional area in Europe, fronting the inland Black and Baltic seas, between the maritime Europe to the west and south and the purely continental area which stretches east of the Volga’ (1948, 40). I have been unable to trace a publication by Sir Halford Mackinder which makes this clear distinction and I do not think that his ‘inner or marginal crescent’ (1904, 435), which again is part of a world-wide concept, should be interpreted in the sense of constituting a Central Europe. In fact the only clear indication that he at one time recognized the existence of a Central Europe seems to be the fact of his being the editor of the series *The regions of the world* which includes the volume *Central Europe* by Joseph Partsch. It is difficult to estimate now how much credit for this particular concept of Central Europe should go to the editor and how much to the author, but in the first instance it seems largely to be due to Sir Halford Mackinder as is indicated by the following remark by Partsch in the preface: ‘. . . he [the editor] and I were agreed that, in order to secure the unity of the whole work, the plan and division of the material must be settled by the editor for the guidance of his fellow workers’ (1903, ix).

⁷ ‘Où commence et où finit l’Europe centrale? . . . Elle n’est en effet ni un Etat ni un assemblage d’Etats. Elle n’a vécu que dans l’imagination des conquérants où des écrivains’ (1926, 8).

⁸ (1948, 28); and on p. 31, ‘Since Central Europe as conceived by modern geographers has gone. . . .’

a map will usually depict a somewhat greater area than its title suggests, but it nevertheless conveys an idea, especially in comparison with other maps, of the

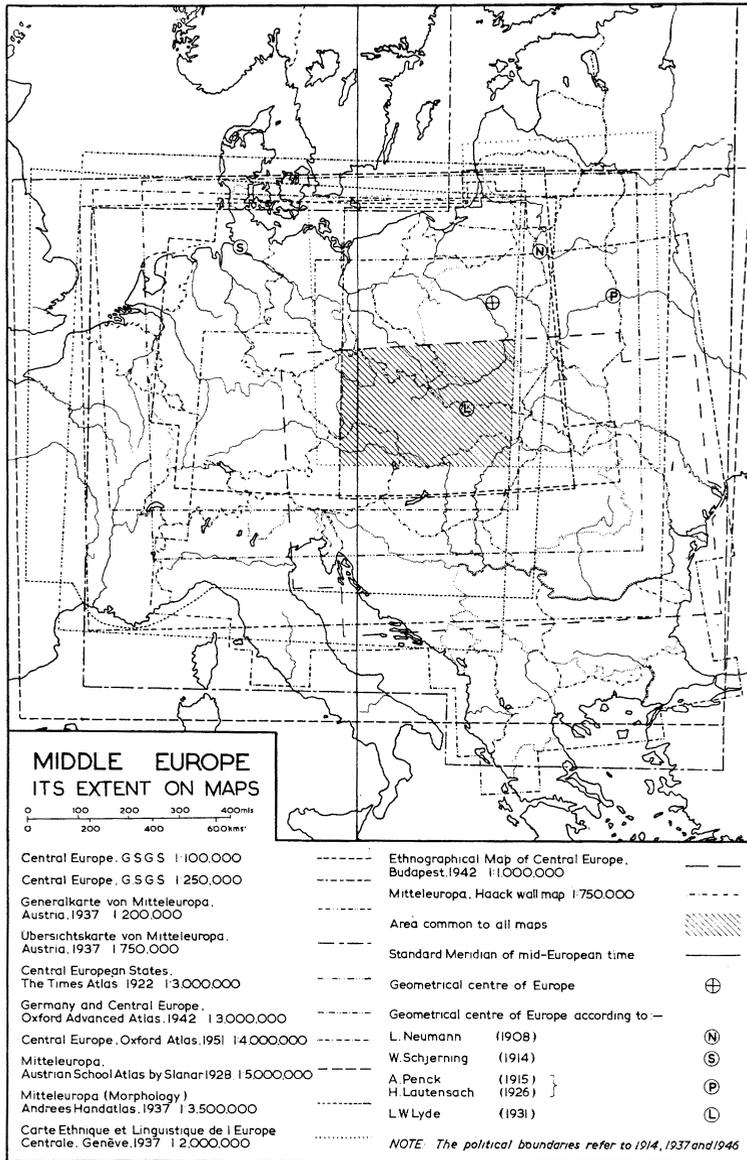


FIGURE 1—Middle Europe: its extent on maps.

The areas covered by, and the area common to, twelve maps and map series all bearing the name Central Europe (or the equivalent in French and German), and their location with respect to the geometrical centre of Europe and the standard meridian of mid-European time.

approximate extent envisaged for the area to which its title refers. Little agreement exists, and the area common to all maps, indicated by shading, is extremely small; it includes the greater part of Czechoslovakia and extends into Austria, Germany, Hungary and Poland. Two more things are indicated on the map, which by their very names, should bear a close relationship to Central Europe: the geometrical centre of Europe and the standard meridian of so-called Central European Time. One would expect that there would be agreement at least as regards the geometrical centre of Europe, since this is a question that is to be solved by measuring, but this is not the case.⁹ Accepting the conventional eastern boundaries of Europe, the geometrical centre, marked on Figure 1 by a crossed circle, is near Warsaw. Other places which have been stated as the geometrical centres of Europe are Grodno; the mouth of the Elbe river; the Rokitno swamps; and the Tatra mountains.¹⁰ Even if we accept these locations as alternatives, save for the last one, all are situated outside the common area. This applies to an even greater degree when we consider their location in relation to the area common to a selected number of definitions as shown in Figure 2. I suggest that the term 'Middle Europe' should be used in preference to 'Central Europe, since the latter inevitably creates a misleading impression about the location of the centre of Europe and thus about the space relationships within Europe.¹¹ For this reason, but also considering the political and cultural disintegration since 1939, it seems that the case for using *central* because it means more than geometrical centrality, as Roxby wrote (1926, 379), is no longer valid. Similarly, since the standard meridian of Central European Time (15° east of Greenwich) is far to the west of the centre of Europe, and further since we are faced with a time *belt* reaching the extremities of the Continent north and south, whereas the word *central* implies a compact area approximately equidistant from all margins, I suggest that the term mid-European Time (used for instance in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*¹²) is to be preferred.

⁹ In a strict mathematical sense an irregular surface does not possess a centre. In *Webster's new international dictionary* (London, 1943), 434, 'centre' is defined as 'orig. the point round which a circle is described; . . . a point at the average distance from the exterior points of a body or figure'. Applied to any large part of the earth's surface this may best be interpreted as that point which serves as the centre of the circle which can be drawn on the globe round the area in question touching as many points of its periphery as possible.

¹⁰ *Grodno*: crossing point of the lines from Gibraltar to the North Cape and from Cape da Roca to the Urals [sic] (L. NEUMANN, 1908, 447); *Mouth of the Elbe*: equidistant from the entrance of the White Sea, the southernmost point of Greece, Cape Tarifa, and the north-western point of Iceland (W. SCHJERNING, 1914, 67); *Rokitno swamps*: the longest diagonals that can be drawn across Europe cross there, and nearby are also the mid-points of these diagonals. The point of Europe equidistant from the boundary meridians and parallels, which could be used as an alternative centre, is near the source of the Memel (Nyeman) (A. PENCK, 1915, 16; also H. LAUTENSACH, 1926, 17); L. W. LYDE (1931, 1), simply states: 'Even the *Tatra* mass, the geometrical centre of Europe, is within 300 miles of three seas.'

¹¹ Even such an experienced geographer as J. F. Unstead, who stated that 'Central Europe may be thought as lying directly across the centre of Europe', was misled (1927, 51). *Webster's new international dictionary* contains the entry Mid-Europe (1943, 1556) but not Central Europe.

¹² Fourteenth edn. (1929-32), vol. 22, 224. Section *Time, standard*, by Sir Arthur Stanley Edgington.

The divergence of opinion as to the extent of Middle Europe becomes even greater when we compare the actual *definitions* given by various authors. A map showing the boundaries of an author's particular notion is only in a few cases provided, and thus in Figure 2 I have, in the other instances, attempted to plot these boundaries on the basis of the respective texts. This map aims to give

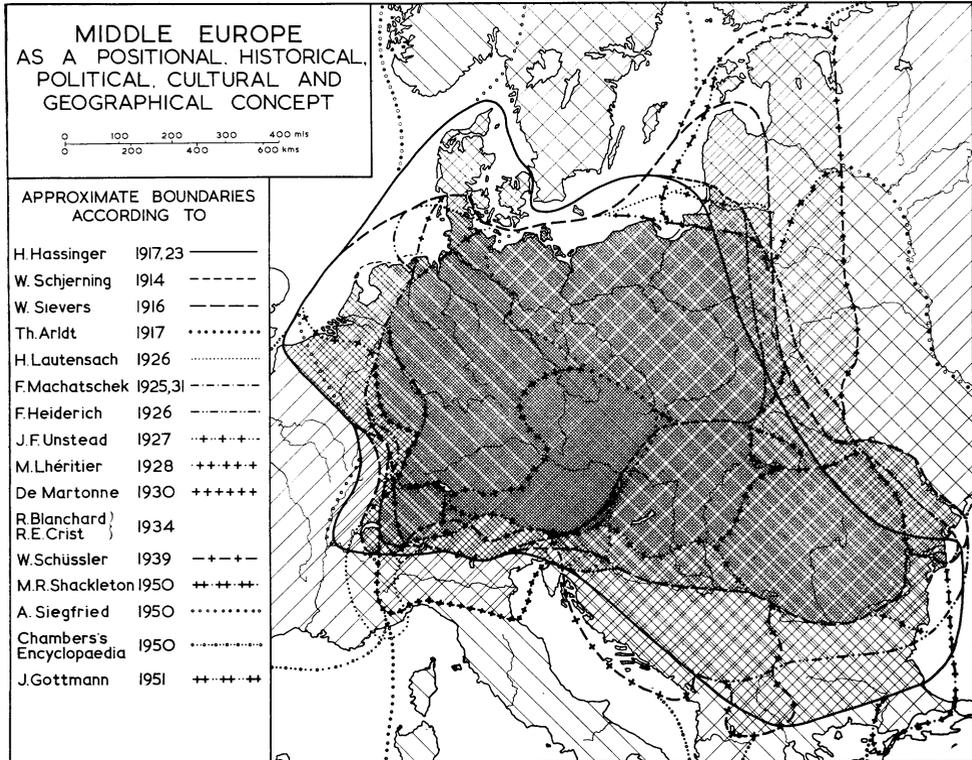


FIGURE 2—Middle Europe as a positional, historical, political, cultural and geographical concept: a graded assessment of the degree of coincidence existing between sixteen definitions of Middle Europe.

The shading density is directly proportional to the number of authorities who included a given area within Middle Europe. The various patterns are only the accidental result of the process of superimposition. For an explanation of the R. Blanchard and R. E. Crist boundary, see footnote 13.

a visual impression by graded shading of how frequently parts of Europe are included within Middle Europe: it is, in fact, sixteen maps superimposed.¹³

¹³ Although in most cases it would be possible to follow on the map the boundaries of the area conceived as Middle Europe by one of the selected authors, the map aims at something different. The plotting of the boundaries was only a necessary step in the construction of the map. In cases where boundaries coincided, however, only one could be marked; in the case of Blanchard – Crist no separate symbol appears, since there is a complete coincidence with sections of boundaries of other definitions. The individual maps are based on the following sources: H. HASSINGER (1917, 478) (map); W. SCHJERNING (1914, 67); W. SIEVERS, 1916, taken from H. Hassinger (1917, 467-8); Th.

Each of these 'maps' gives one author's concept of Middle Europe, and in each case the area thus named is shaded in the same degree of density. The disposition of the lines of shading of each successive 'map' is chosen in such a way that they fall into a gap left by the previous one. The degrees of shading density, which by this process increase in an arithmetical progression, are therefore in a direct relationship to the number of authors who include a certain part within Middle Europe; the various patterns, however, are only accidental results of this process of superimposition. As can be seen, the areas in some cases included within Middle Europe extend surprisingly enough beyond the part of Europe shown on this map, and the only part of the continent which has never been included is the Iberian Peninsula. On the other hand, the area which all these authors agree belongs to Middle Europe is no more than Austria and Bohemia-Moravia.

The definitions used here are of a wide range and include strictly speaking non-geographical ones. It is often difficult to classify definitions in order to arrange them into groups, but I believe that such a grouping is the key that will disentangle the terminological knot and lead to the desired clarification. The classification I have attempted is fourfold:

- (i) Middle Europe as a topographical term ('topographical' here used in its original meaning, indicating the position of an area).
- (ii) Middle Europe as a physical region, based on a single physical criterion or a number of them.
- (iii) Middle Europe, a concept with an historical or political bias.
- (iv) Middle Europe as a geographical region delimited by means of both physical nature and cultural elements.

Middle Europe as a Topographical Term

Considering the history of modern geography and the area conceived, it is not surprising that the term appears to have been first used in its German form *Mittleuropa*.¹⁴ To my knowledge it appears for the first time in 1808 in a

¹⁴ H. Cord Meyer rightly criticized the statement, which he incorrectly attributed to Hilda Ormsby, that it was first used by Mendelssohn in 1836. He quotes (179, footnote 4) as the first geographical use of the term *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen*, 7 (1861). There, in a report on new geographical literature, it appears as the title of three different railway maps, two of which, however, are quoted as already in their fourth and fifth editions respectively.

ARLDT (1917, 1-2). Arldt states that on geographical grounds Italy should be included, but on political grounds excluded, and on two maps (6, 9) he gives a number of alternatives for the western and eastern boundaries of Middle Europe. H. LAUTENSACH (1926, 6) (map); F. MACHATSCHKEK (1925, 3-4, and 1931, 39-41) (map); F. HEIDERICH (1926, 3); J. F. UNSTEAD (1927, 50); M. LHÉRITIER (1928, 51); E. DE MARTONNE (1930, 2-3); R. BLANCHARD-R. E. CRIST (1934, 211); W. SCHÜSSLER (1939, 8); M. R. SHACKLETON (1950, 240-3); A. SIEGFRIED (1950, 17-20); K. RISHBETH, section Europe, anthropology, *Chambers's encyclopaedia* (London, 1950), vol. 5, 443; J. GOTTMANN (1951, 334). Not plotted on this map but interesting in this context is F. Braun's concept of Middle Europe; according to him the centre of the region is at Cologne and the region stretches for about a thousand kilometres in all directions, thus even including England. Cf. 'Europa als Erdteil', in *Das Erdbild der Gegenwart*, ed. W. Gerbing (Leipzig, 1926), 8.

publication by August Zeune of Berlin.¹⁵ He defined *Mittleuropa* as comprising *Karpatenland* (the lower Danube basin), *Hercinialand* (the traditional German lands including the entire Rhine basin) and *Sevannenland* (France). Although he made attempts in a later publication to justify his subdivisions of Europe as *Naturabtheilungen* (1820, 93-6), it is in fact only location which is the common denominator, the situation between the northern and southern European peninsulas and islands, forming a median west-east strip through what L. W. Lyde in 1931 termed 'Peninsular Europe'. For that reason, it seems justifiable to assign Zeune's use of the term to the first of the four groups in question. Also, merely based on location, the term *Mittleuropa* was used by Hassel in 1819 in a comprehensive German geographical reference work to denote a median strip across Europe, this time in a north-south direction and included the German states, Austria-Hungary, Switzerland and the Italian peninsula.¹⁶ Quoting a non-German author, the French geographer Denaix in 1833 used *l'Europe centrale* very much as Zeune had done to describe a west-east strip from the Pyrenees to the rivers Vistula and Tisza.¹⁷ Later the use of the term in a purely topographical sense gave way to other concepts using the same term but attaching to it a specific content as a common denominator. Nevertheless it may still be found used in this original way now and then; for instance by Kathleen Rishbeth in *Chambers's encyclopaedia* (vol. 5 (1950), 443) where it denotes the *entire* part of Europe between its northern and southern islands and peninsulas and thus even includes Russia.

One might think a term doing no more than indicating location would be quite valueless to the geographer, but another aspect should also be considered. Just *because* of the absence of further implications which makes it independent of political events and historical changes, it may be useful as a term of reference to any middle part of Europe and as the name for a map or a series of topographical maps covering such a part. Since its limits may therefore legitimately vary a great deal, it is suggested that the term should not be used as a proper name, and 'middle' in this case should be spelt with a small initial letter thus forming an equivalent to the German *mittleres Europa*. Alternatively mid-Europe or median-Europe could be used. In cases of doubt, it should be referred to by its full name: middle Europe in a topographical sense.

¹⁵ A. ZEUNE, *Gea. Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Erdbeschreibung* (Berlin, 1808). Quoted from E. MEYNEN (1935, 84).

¹⁶ A. C. GASPARI, G. HASSEL and J. G. F. CANNABICH, *Vollständiges Handbuch der neuesten Erdbeschreibung* (Weimar, 1819), I, viii; II, 38. Since this is the third though absolutely rewritten edition of this work an attempt was made to check whether this term had been used already in the earlier editions, the first, published in three parts in 1797, 1799 and 1801, and the second, 1802, both of which were never completed. When eventually copies of these earlier editions were traced, it was found that the term does not appear in any of them. The general plan of the work, as set out in the preface of the second edition, suggests that the term *Deutschland* was used in place of what was later referred to as *Mittleuropa*, since it is stated by Gaspari that the first and second volumes were to contain the general introduction as well as *Deutschland*, the third volume, western and southern, and the fourth volume, northern and eastern Europe. (For a discussion of the term *Deutschland*, see p. 22.)

¹⁷ M. A. DENAIX, *Étude de géographie naturelle sur l'Europe centrale*. Quoted from M. Lhéritier (1928, 44, footnote 2).

Middle Europe as a Physical Region

Similarly beyond historical changes is Middle Europe as a physical region.¹⁸ Once the criteria are agreed upon, the extent of the area to which they apply can be found quite objectively by observation, measuring and plotting the results on a map. Surprisingly this concept is almost as old as the former since it resulted from August Zeune's *Naturabtheilungen* already mentioned, and especially from Carl Ritter's ideas on *Naturgebiete*, for the delimitation of which he considered relief to be the most important criterion.¹⁹ Thus in a German geographical text-book of 1839, *Mittleuropa* was defined as a region formed by the Alps, together with the mountain systems and lowlands attached to them.²⁰ This concept covered much the same area as found by Zeune. This notion, which included France within Middle Europe, prevailed until the 1870s and even later. It was, for instance, used by Friedrich Ratzel who, at the end of the century, called it 'Middle Europe in its widest sense',²¹ and later still in 1904 by Wilhelm Götz in his book *Historische Geographie* which forms part 19 of the collection *Die Erdkunde*. He divided *Mittleuropa* into three parts, Gaul-France, the Alpine regions and *Deutschland*, and stated (p. 223) that on account of space relations France is also part of *Mittleuropa* since only a small section of that country is linked to the Mediterranean shores. Usually, however, by that time this term had come to be used for a smaller area, one which previously had commonly been called *Deutschland*, as the latter term was being applied more and more to the German Empire in spite of its official name, *Das Deutsche Reich*. Although *Deutschland* had obviously referred to an ethnical²² and historical quality, when replaced by *Mittleuropa* this region was nevertheless defined on the basis of physical criteria. A number of definitions of this kind could be given,²³ but one stands out, the paper by Albrecht Penck.²⁴

¹⁸ Since there is no general agreement as to whether the use of the word 'natural' should be limited to regions defined exclusively on a physical basis, as suggested by Unstead, or whether it should be used to describe the larger synthetic entities which are based on both physical and human criteria as advanced by Roxby, this term had better be avoided (cf. ROXBY, 1926, 381). The corresponding German term to physical region is *Naturraum*.

¹⁹ *Die Erdkunde in ihrem Verhältnis zur Natur und zur Geschichte des Menschen* (Berlin, 1817).

²⁰ C. E. MEINECKE, *Lehrbuch der Geographie für die oberen Classen höherer Lehranstalten* (Prenzlau, 1839).

²¹ 'Between the Alps and the North and Baltic Seas, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Black Sea, lies a part of Europe to which Alps, Carpathians and Balkans, vast lowlands, and rivers like the Rhine and Danube give a similarity to the major landforms, a region whose climate is of a similar type and whose plant cover from one end to the other spreads the same carpet of forests, meadows, heathlands, bogs and pastures. This is Middle Europe in its widest sense. . . . To this Middle Europe belong all neighbours of Germany except Russia . . . That part of the Balkan Peninsula situated towards the Danube is also drawn into its embrace by this mighty river' (1898, 7-8).

²² *deutsch* from *diutisc*, later *diutisch* 'of the people' (popularis), cf. J. and W. GRIMM, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1860), vol. 2, 1043.

²³ For references, cf. H. HASSINGER (1917, 450-1).

²⁴ 1887, 91-113. It is only fair to add that this is not the only and final definition of Middle Europe by A. Penck as is sometimes implied. Later he revised it to include the lower Danube basin and wrote: 'Durch zwanzig Jahre in Wien lebend, habe ich mehr und mehr empfunden, dass ich vor dreissig Jahren Mittleuropa viel zu enge Grenzen gesetzt und seine Südostgrenze gerade dorthin verlegt habe, wo die geographische Gliederung Europas eine Stelle vorzeichnet, um die sich durch Jahrhunderte Länder kristallisiert haben' (1915, 17).

Since *Deutschland* as contrasted to *Deutsches Reich* has been mentioned, a few words should be said regarding it. *Deutschland* is a very vague term; little agreement existed among German writers about the area that it was meant to cover and it has often been deliberately misused. It is, however, too great a generalization when Hilda Ormsby writes that 'To the pre-war writers the term "Deutschland" signified the German administrative state . . .' and that the application of this term for a larger area independent of political boundaries was a 'deliberate movement to establish this new use of the term . . .' (1935, 340, 342). This movement, which no doubt existed, aimed to use the term in its original meaning which had persisted through the centuries since its first appearance in the eleventh century in the form *Diutischemi lande*.²⁵ Dickinson stated correctly (1943, 32-3) that *Deutschland* 'has been used for centuries to designate the wider area of the German-speaking peoples, and of alien peoples who in the past have been greatly influenced by German culture' and H. Cord Meyer admitted (1946, 179) that up to 1871 '*Deutschland* was an accepted ethnic-geographic term . . .'²⁶ It is truly a historical irony that the first political unit ever to bear this name as its *official* title is the Federal German Republic, the *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* which does not even cover the entire area of what remained of the German state after the Second World War.

Although for the reason outlined above Middle Europe was mostly interpreted at the turn of the century in a narrow sense among German geographers, a work was published that made a well-argued case for a wider concept of Middle Europe. This was Joseph Partsch's *Central Europe* which appeared in its English edition in 1903 and one year later in the unabridged German original. At first much criticized for this wider interpretation, not only abroad but also in Germany,²⁷ it eventually brought again wide recognition of a Middle Europe extending beyond the boundaries of the area formerly called *Deutschland*. Since Partsch, to indicate the area dealt with, enclosed a map showing a group of states, it is not always fully appreciated that his criterion for delimiting this region was the physical nature, in particular relief.²⁸ His famous sentence where he sums up the character of Middle Europe proves this point: 'The triad of Alps, hills and plain is the governing chord of the symphony of the Middle European landscape. Where one of these notes ceases to sound Middle Europe ends.'²⁹

In later years the delimitation of regions and thus of Middle Europe was done more and more on the basis of both physical and cultural elements, but nevertheless some geographers retained the principle of delimiting exclusively by the former. In Figure 3 four others are plotted, besides Penck's and

²⁵ For reference cf. E. MEYNER (1935, 6 and 135).

²⁶ The whole question of the origin and later uses of the term was discussed fully by Emil Meyner in his well-documented book, *Deutschland und Deutsches Reich*.

²⁷ G. G. CHISHOLM (1904, 242-4); A. KIRCHHOFF (1905, 28-9); TH. FISCHER (1905, 48-53).

²⁸ The boundaries of the region are plotted in Figure 3 on the basis of the text (1903, 1-3).

²⁹ Quoted in my own translation from the German edition (p. 4) since in the English edition (p. 2) much of the original flavour is lost.

Partsch's concepts already mentioned. As is brought out by the shading, which is done by using the same cartographic technique as in Figure 2, the common area is much more extensive than on the previous map where different types of definitions were represented, and consists of Germany within its 1937 boundaries, Austria, Switzerland and Bohemia-Moravia. Alfred Hettner stated his

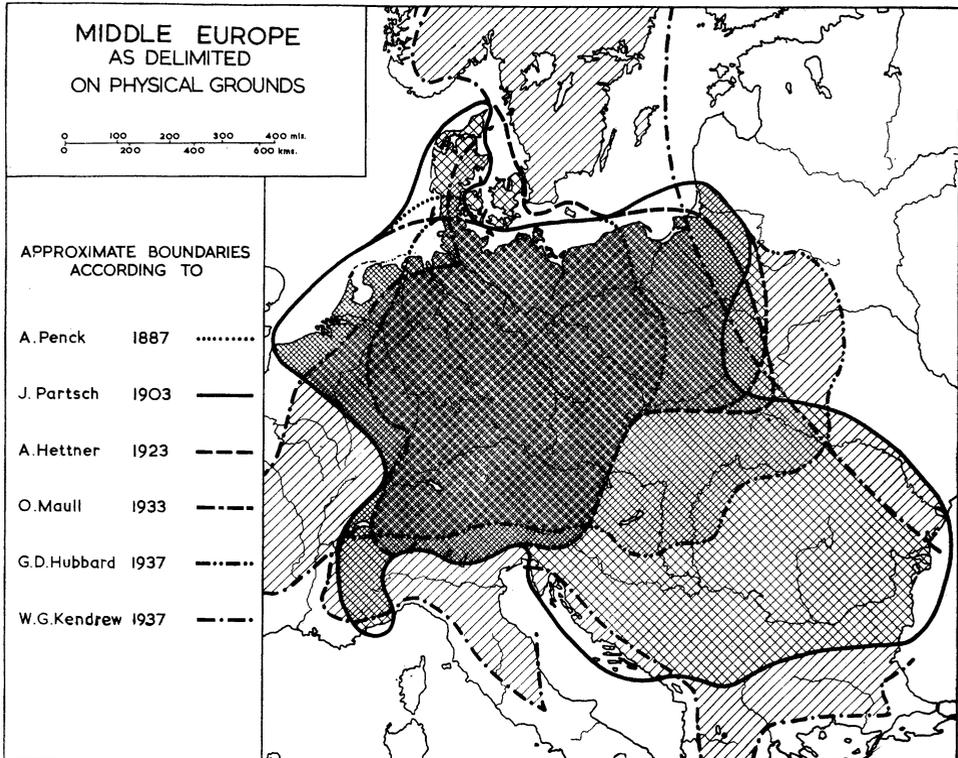


FIGURE 3—Middle Europe as delimited on physical grounds: the amount of agreement existing about the concept of Middle Europe as a physical region.

The shading density is directly proportional to the number of authorities who included a given area within Middle Europe. The various patterns are only the accidental result of the process of superimposition.

definition first in 1907 and retained it in the later editions of his book (1932, 136). His major point of disagreement with Partsch is over the south-eastern part which he added to the Balkan Peninsula, naming the whole region South-eastern Europe though he did not go back to the earlier narrow definitions of Middle Europe but stated that *Mittleuropa* and *Deutschland* should not be equated (1923, 132). In contrast to Hettner who held that cultural criteria are unsuitable for delimitation of regions in geography (1908, 106; 1927, 296), Otto Maull recognized them as important for that purpose but employed them only at what one might call the 'lower part of the scale' of the regional hierarchy. Middle Europe, as a region to be placed approximately in the middle of the

scale, was delimited exclusively on the basis of physical criteria whereas the next smaller region *Deutschland* is distinguished from Middle Europe by its distinct cultural properties, and characterized by a cultural landscape of German character (1933, 8). This Middle Europe is almost the same as Hettner's except for Denmark which is excluded on account of the different space relationships.³⁰ The remaining definitions indicated on this map are based on a single physical criterion, climate. W. G. Kendrew's definition aims to be only a climatic division of Europe and not a generally applicable region.³¹ G. D. Hubbard, on the other hand, uses climate as the criterion to delimit the major regions of Europe but then groups a number of states together which fit best into the regions thus established (1937, 4; map). I am not aware of a British publication where the subdivision of Europe into major regions is based solely on physical factors, though the following remark of W. G. East (1948, 40) pointed in this direction: 'Central or Middle Europe remains and must remain as a permanent fact because it rests on the physical structure of the continent. . . .'³²

Summing up this section we may say that the concept of Middle Europe as a physical region is very useful because of its objective basis and its permanency, although many geographers would agree that it is not our ultimate aim when we wish to establish a subdivision of Europe into its major regions. But again I wish to point out that we should make ourselves quite clear and, whenever we use Middle Europe in this particular sense, give it its full name: 'Middle Europe as a physical region.'

When we turn to concepts of Middle Europe with an historical and political bias or as a geographical region, we enter much more difficult ground by introducing human elements that are liable to quick changes. Any definition given must, therefore, be related to a certain time so that many definitions, though different, may nevertheless be correct. Furthermore, here we enter the field of the humanities where the subjective element inevitably plays a greater part. The fundamental problem is that the very definition of Europe as a continent is only possible by taking the human factor into account and that, therefore, its eastern boundary has been subject to changes during history.³³ Thus we may conclude that Middle Europe, historically and geographically an area with certain cultural qualities, is not fixed in space, and once it had come

³⁰ Basis for plotting the boundaries (MAULL, 1933, 3-5).

³¹ This map can be found in all editions of his book *The climates of the continents* (1922 and 1927, 211; 1937 and 1941, 241; 1953, 312). This map, with some alterations, was reproduced by L. D. STAMP, *Europe and the Mediterranean* (1932, 26), and this in turn with further alterations reproduced by N. G. J. POUNDS in *An historical and political geography of Europe* (1947, 18).

³² Cf. WILHELM BRÜNGER (1951) who attempted a geomorphological classification of Europe in Eastern, Middle and Western Europe without, however, making this the basis of the geographical regions of Europe.

³³ For a short discussion of the concept of Europe as a continent and its changing eastern boundary, cf. O. MAULL (1951, 667-8). *Ibid.*, 670, he states: '“Europa” ist eben kein geographischer Begriff, der sich in die Reihe der Erdteilbegriffe einfügen liesse.'

into being it tended to expand and move eastward parallel with the gradual eastward expansion of Europe.

Middle Europe as an Historical and Political Region

The first question which presents itself is: 'At what moment in the history of Europe did Middle Europe emerge?' This question has been answered in various ways. Oskar Kossmann in his book, *Warum ist Europa so?*, where he interprets European history on a basis of time and space, came to the following conclusion: back in prehistory, when, in the general movement of civilization from the Near East via Greece and Rome, the first rays of this advance began to penetrate to the northern parts of Europe, there was one section which on account of its physical nature was particularly favoured to become the nucleus of a separate development. This was the Cimbrian region, the Danish islands and peninsulas, and they did in fact become the cradle of the Teutonic peoples and of Middle Europe. Far enough removed from the Mediterranean world, which first advanced into the continent through the Ligurian gate, and sheltered from the forces of the steppe coming from the east, it was possible that here enough energy could concentrate which eventually resulted in expansion, for various reasons, in the only possible direction, namely south. It interposed a separate Middle European world between east and west, bringing about the principal tripartition of the great northern slope of the European continent into a Celto-Roman, a Teutonic and a Slav section. The western boundary of this middle part was determined by Caesar's defence line which dammed the Teutonic flood and forced it to fill the space east of the Rhine between the northern seas and the Alps. Its eastern boundary, which persisted through the early Middle Ages, was in turn determined by the defence line from the mouth of the Elbe to the Bohemian Forest, which offered itself to the Teutonic tribes against the forces thrusting from the east (1950, 89 and 110).

The French historian, Michel Lh eritier, gave a different answer to this question in his *R gions historiques* (1928, 46). He is of the opinion that in the Middle Ages there was no space for a Middle Europe since the area meant by it was the eastern march of the continent as expressed by the name of Austria — *Osterreich*, i.e. the eastern march. It emerged in history from the sixteenth century onwards as a result of the growth of Austria and the advance of German civilization to the countries which are now meant by it, although the name used then was not Middle Europe but Germany. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Emperor Joseph II was the first to attempt its political organization, but still the name Middle Europe was not used. The concept of Middle Europe as such appears at the time of the Austro-Prussian antagonism in the middle of the nineteenth century and when the question arose as to whether Austria with its different components would be able to survive. Significant is an article in the official *Wiener Zeitung* in 1849 expressing the opinion that, in a politico-economic union of Middle Europe, Austria would inevitably become the centre of gravity on account of its central position. Exponents of this idea of Middle

Europe during the nineteenth century were the German economist, List, the Austrian Minister of Commerce, Bruck, and the German writer, Paul de Lagarde.

Nevertheless, the problem remained an academic one until the First World War brought about an economic unification of the Middle Powers. It was then possible to see how it might work in peace time, and the idea of Middle Europe as a politico-economic unit was revived. Many writings on this theme were published;³⁴ the most important one is undoubtedly Friedrich Naumann's *Mitteuropa* (1915). It was soon translated into English and French, and thus became fairly well known elsewhere, though it seems that in many cases it was not studied very thoroughly. Although Naumann only expressed his private opinion, which even within Germany and Austria-Hungary received much criticism,³⁵ outside Germany it was often taken to be official German policy. It was interpreted as 'the German aim for domination of the middle part of the Continent' and the very word *Mitteuropa* in English and French usage often came to mean that. It is true that Naumann envisaged a Middle Europe which should be German at its core and that German should be its *lingua franca* (1915, 101), but this, looking at the area he had in mind, was only natural. He spoke bitterly of the tendencies of Germanization (73-5) and anti-Semitism (70-1; 114) and the creation that he wished to result from the war experiences was not a new state organized on German lines, not even a federal state, but a federation of sovereign countries that joined voluntarily as equal partners on the basis of mutual treaties for their common interest (232).³⁶ Only two matters were to be dealt with by a common authority; economic planning and defence (249). Thus, by increasing production and producing more cheaply as a large enterprise, the living standard of the masses could be raised (118-19), and by having trenches round this group of states and a common defence force ready, further war could be averted (257).³⁷ Of this book G. G. Chisholm wrote a valuable review,³⁸ and in the same year further elaborated the subject: '... one may even find in Naumann's book much that is consonant with the proposals that have been put forward for the formation of a League of Nations' (1917(b), 129). Of present-day experience one might add 'much that is consonant with the idea of a Little Europe'.

³⁴ A number of these publications are quoted by H. HASSINGER (1917, 438-9) and H. CORD MEYER (1946, 185-7).

³⁵ Cf. *Rheinisch Westfälische Zeitung* (November 27th, 1915). 'To sacrifice the individuality of Prusso-Germany to the idea of a fictitious Middle Europe would mean to cut away the ground from underneath our feet.' Quoted from M. LHÉRITIER (1928, 47, footnote 2). A summary of the reactions in Hungary is given by Tamás Lengyel *A világháború idején felmerült középeurópatervek és a magyar közvélemény* (The *Mitteuropa* schemes of the Great War and the Magyarian public opinion) published in *Az Ország Utja* 4 (1940), No. 7 (July). In German translation (duplicated) by the *Publikationsstelle Wien* (1940), No. 98.

³⁶ Not as stated by R. E. DICKINSON (1943, 24): 'There would thus be formed a federal state under German tutelage. . . .'

³⁷ Cf. also p. 263, '*Mitteuropa ist Kriegsfurcht*'.

³⁸ He wrote about Naumann's book: '... it is written throughout in the heat, not of passion, but of imaginative thought based on wide and intimate knowledge' (1917(a), 83).

The end of the war did not bring a political order like the one conceived by Naumann but the creation of a number of smaller states. As regards them Lhéritier made the statement: 'Le Mitteleuropa est mort, mais l'Europe centrale n'en existe pas moins . . .' (1928, 47). To him *l'Europe centrale* consisted essentially of the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Empire: Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. His definition, or a modified form of it, came to be widely accepted not so much in Austria but in the other Danube states and also in France and England, where the term Central Europe can still be found used in this sense.³⁹ In Germany this definition was never accepted. The whole region from Finland to Greece, of which Lhéritier's *l'Europe centrale* forms the continental part, was termed *Zwischeneuropa*.⁴⁰ This was a narrowing down of a term originally coined by Albrecht Penck in 1915 (Figure 4). Dividing Europe under the principle of nearness to the open sea and the 'maritime' attitude of its peoples, he established three major regions — *Vordereuropa*, *Zwischeneuropa* and *Hintereuropa*.⁴¹ His idea was that common space relationships would lead the peoples together and that a closely united *Zwischeneuropa* would provide for Europe a strong backbone. He continued: 'Once a strong *Zwischeneuropa* is established then it will no longer be Utopian to speak of the United States of Europe' (1915, 40). Coming back to Lhéritier's concept, though it is a political one, it has also a well-argued geographical basis. He stated: *Europe centrale* is the continental part of a zone of greatest diversity as regards language, cultural influences and religion, which stretches from the North Cape to Cyrenaica and Egypt (1928, 49-50); 'its *raison d'être* is to be a crossroad, a bridge, a turn-plate' (50). *Europe centrale* appears as a synthesis of Europe, and each state again as a synthesis of a synthesis, a little *Europe centrale* and at the same time a whole Europe in miniature (52). The geographical criticism which must be added is one of comparative scale. Although he thought that this *Europe centrale* could be gradually extended, its size is too small to be put side by side with the other major regions of Europe.

Situated between the two powers of Russia and Germany, this *Europe centrale* did not last very long.⁴² Hitler Germany, reviving the idea of Middle

³⁹ As an example cf. *The Times* in the leading article 'Europeans in exile' (January 21st, 1952). Generally, however, it has become more and more customary in the press to refer to all countries behind the 'Iron Curtain' as Eastern Europe. Cf. the article 'Eastern Europe' in the *Manchester Guardian* (May 7th, 1953).

⁴⁰ Indicative of this is a wall map with this title by H. Haack, published by Justus Perthes, Gotha, which covers the following area: from the Vener Lake and the mouth of the Oder river in the west, to a line just east of the Volkhov river, Kiev and the Danube delta in the east. In the north it just includes Helsinki and Leningrad, in the south it goes a little beyond the southernmost part of the Danube.

⁴¹ The map appears in this publication on the cover and as Figure 3 in the text. It is reproduced in H. LAUTENSACH (1926, Figure 44, 191). It is extremely difficult to render these terms into English. Since Europe is a word of Greek origin, a combination with the appropriate Greek prefixes *pro*, *meso*, *meta*, which are also used in biology for denoting a sequence of sections, would recommend itself on linguistic grounds. The resulting terms would thus be Pro-Europe, Meso-Europe and Meta-Europe.

⁴² Doubts about its lasting powers were expressed by the Austrian historian, H. STEINACKER, in his paper 'Österreich-Ungarn und Osteuropa' in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 128 (1923), 377-414, especially 413-14.

Europe as a political concept, now not in Naumann's sense but as propagated by the exponents of geopolitics in the sense of a German-ruled political unit,⁴³ for a time seemed near to putting it into effect. The *Anschluss*, the annexation of Bohemia-Moravia and attempts to establish political control in the other states of Danubian Middle Europe were contributing causes of war. But,

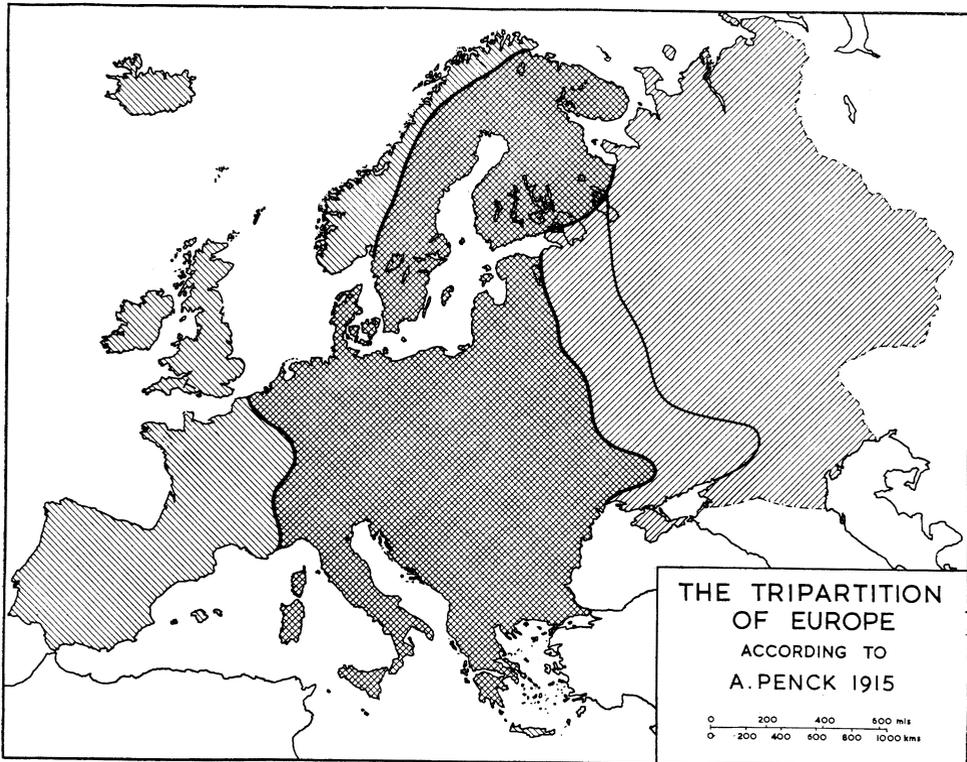


FIGURE 4—The tripartition of Europe on the basis of space relationships into *Vordereuropa*, *Zwischeneuropa* and *Hintereuropa* as suggested by Albrecht Penck in 1915. The zone between Karelia and the Asov Sea he termed the 'Varangian Fringe'.

although liberation of these states was one of the aims the Allied armies fought for, the outcome of the war did not bring the re-emergence of this *Europe centrale*. In 1945, unlike 1920, there was only one power as its neighbour; the states concerned were unable to preserve their independence and soon became Soviet Satellite Europe. Besides Finland and Yugoslavia, which are rather marginally situated, the only state left of these political concepts of *Mittleuropa*, *Zwischeneuropa* and *Europe centrale* alike is Austria, its further existence depending on an understanding between West and East. Will it on account of its particularly advantageous geographical location once again function as a core round which a *Europe centrale* may develop?

⁴³ As an example, see KARL HAUSHOFER (1937).

Middle Europe as a Geographical Region

With the beginning of the twentieth century increasing weight came to be attributed to human geographic criteria for regional classification. Although there were some forerunners who attempted a definition of Middle Europe on the basis of both physical *and* cultural elements, as F. Heiderich (1909, 263-4)

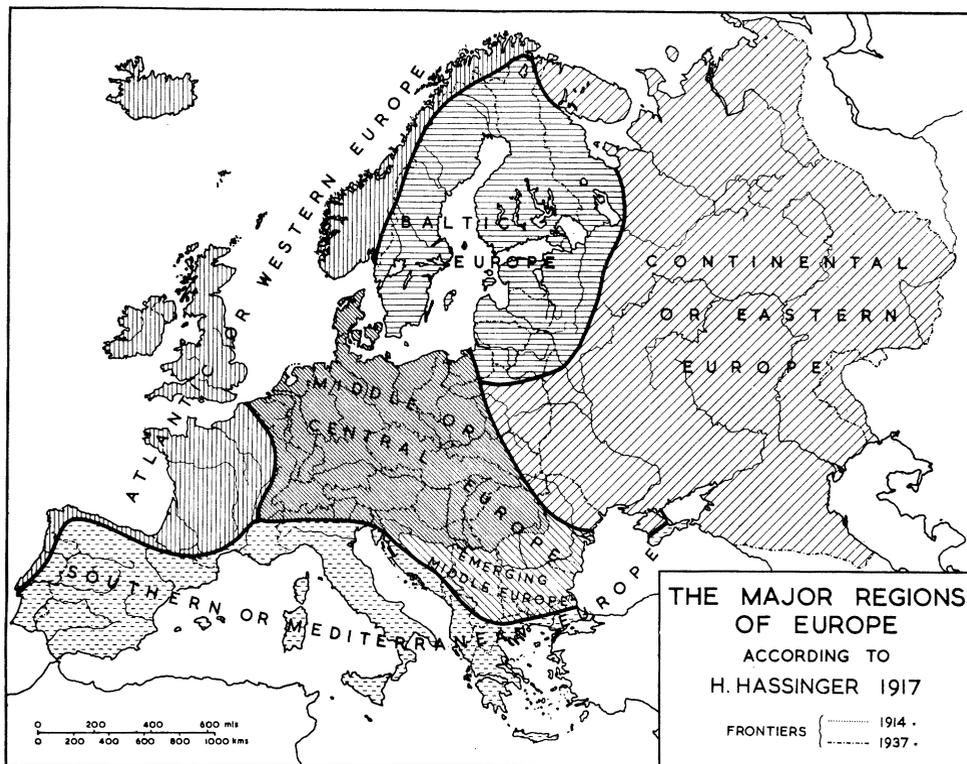


FIGURE 5—The major regions of Europe according to Hugo Hassinger, delimited on the basis of landscape character.

and G. Braun (1916, 1), I think that it is no overstatement to say that one paper stands foremost and had the greatest influence on the further development of the geographical concept of Middle Europe: Hugo Hassinger's essay, *Das geographische Wesen Mitteleuropas*, published in 1917. H. Cord Meyer called it one of the milestones in the development of the *Mitteleuropa* idea (1946, 188), and Dickinson also paid tribute to its importance as 'a masterly essay' (1943, 25). Hassinger's map has been redrawn without alteration, apart from the translation of the names and the additions of the 1937 frontiers (Figure 5).⁴⁴ Being misled by the term *Naturgebiet* it has been said that Hassinger based his

⁴⁴ The map is to be found on p. 478 of Hassinger's paper. It was reproduced by R. E. Dickinson (1943, Figure 2, 25), but as a rough sketch only.

definition only on physical facts⁴⁵ but he used the term *Naturgebiet*, which he took from Carl Ritter, in the same sense as Roxby used the term 'natural region'. Since in his opinion all geographical factors find their expression in the landscape, *the character of the landscape* is the criterion on which he based his delimitation of Middle Europe.⁴⁶ We are facing three groups of geographical factors, the physical which are relatively permanent, the human which are changing and in turn result in changes within the third group, the space relationships. Paying due regard to these changes, Hassinger termed an eastern part of the region *werdendes, heranreifendes Mitteleuropa* (emerging, maturing Middle Europe), (477, 483).

It is impossible to give a short summary of Hassinger's characterization of Middle Europe which does justice to this essay; only a few major points can be mentioned. Middle Europe, situated between the monotonous vast mass of the continent in the east and the maritime west with its indented coastline and many islands, is neither as monotonous as the former nor as diversified as the latter. Though not reaching the open ocean it has access to tributary seas in the north and south; thus maritime influences are considerable, though weaker than in Western Europe. Climate and vegetation, population and economy, and finally the entire cultural and political life owe much to this distinct geographical location. Middle Europe's potential strength lies in its nodality at the crossing of the north-south and east-west lines of communication.

In variety of structure and geology Middle Europe takes first place among the European regions. The mountains, provided with frequent passes, are separated by lowlands: thus crossing in any direction is not difficult. The diverse soils and rocks are an important prerequisite to its economic wealth, its fertility, its industry, and its highly developed division of labour and social structure. Since the rivers drain to the north-west on one hand and to the south-east on the other, a first glance at the drainage pattern might lead to the erroneous conclusion that it consists of two independent parts with their peoples standing back to back to each other, the western ones looking out to the ocean, the eastern ones looking towards the continental interior. 'Middle Europe indeed has a head like Janus looking out to west and east, but it most certainly has only *one* body. Its two halves that seemingly tend to separate are closely linked by nature through their common lines of communications.' Just because the two halves are differently endowed with natural wealth — minerals in the north-west, fertile soils and a favourable climate in the south-east — they are inter-

⁴⁵ 'Since he bases his ideas on natural or physical facts, these are used to define his regions . . . ' R. E. DICKINSON (1943, 26). But Hassinger had stated quite clearly (473) 'The physical and the human as expressions of the local endowment of areas on the earth's surface are so closely interwoven in the landscape that the geographer must not take one out in order to make it the criterion of consideration, judgment and classification of the whole'. Not only did Hassinger deplore the use of a selected criterion or group of criteria as unsuitable for establishing major regions but he also stated that the independent use of all criteria is impossible since the courses of their boundaries differ so greatly (471).

⁴⁶ ' . . . the landscape (*Landschaftsbild*) as the product of the interacting and mutually interrelated geographical factors . . . ' (472).

dependent and more closely linked. Culturally it is the German influence which has acted on the space for centuries, giving unity to the whole. Nevertheless, its cultural and ethnographic diversity is very great. Whereas national states are the natural form of political organization in other parts of Europe where a nation could expand into physically simpler areas, Middle Europe is by its very nature destined to be a 'mediator Europe', culturally and politically (477-88). This briefly is, according to Hassinger, the character of Middle Europe and this region stretches as far as we find this character represented. As he states, its boundaries are therefore zones rather than lines and it is only for practical considerations, such as mapping, that certain natural features which are visible in the landscape have to be selected for a demarcation of its boundaries.

It can justly be said that no other geographer paid as much attention to this particular problem and contributed as much to it as Hassinger in this and subsequent publications, as for instance in the introductory chapter of his book, *Die Tschechoslowakei*.⁴⁷ This statement is by no means derogatory towards other valuable contributions like those made by Roxby, de Martonne, Dickinson and more recently André Siegfried, Jean Gottmann and G. Hoffmann. But, with the exception of Dickinson's book, it was not a central theme to those authors as it was to Hassinger, who, born in Vienna, and occupying the chair of human geography at Vienna University for almost twenty years, was quite naturally concerned with the problem of *Mittleuropa*.

Conclusion

Taking up a basic principle expressed by Hassinger in his paper (476) that 'boundaries of regions are therefore [since the landscape changes continuously through human action] not stable but changeable and mobile in the course of history, and classifications into geographical regions are thus always only of value for the present . . .', it might appear to be logical to conclude with an attempt to answer the question put at the beginning — to what extent the concept of Middle Europe as a geographical region needs to be revised in order to be applicable to the present day? I was tempted to do this but refrained for two reasons. Firstly, this question is rather outside the scope of the paper, and space would not permit a reasoned presentation. Secondly, since so many important facts like the future of Germany and Austria are still undecided, and so much is still in a state of flux, it would be too soon to give any definition of Middle Europe as a geographical region today which would be of more than ephemeral validity. Nevertheless, it seems appropriate to indicate the general direction which the development of Middle Europe has taken since Hassinger's paper was published in 1917.

As a reaction against the over-emphasis once given in geography to states, their capitals, and similar subject matter, political boundaries came to be

⁴⁷ For some of his other contributions in this field, see the bibliography. Cf. also the obituary of H. Hassinger by H. BOBEK in *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen*, 97 (1953), 36-9, with a selective bibliography.

considered as outside the scope of regional geography.⁴⁸ During recent decades the pendulum has swung back and it has been shown in many examples, as for instance in Hassinger's inaugural lecture in Vienna in 1931, that the state is one of the most powerful cultural factors and that its boundaries, though in varying degree, act as differentiating forces upon the cultural landscape.⁴⁹ Changes of state boundaries are always succeeded by landscape changes, which may occur rapidly or gradually and may or may not be striking, depending on circumstances. As regards Middle Europe as a whole, the frontier changes after the First World War made no modification of the boundaries of Middle Europe necessary. On the contrary, within the new states, where areas of more advanced civilization were linked with more backward ones farther east, the process of integration of the 'emerging Middle Europe' to parts of equal standing was accelerated. The consequences of the Second World War are quite different. Since 1939, when various groups of ethnic Germans began to make their way into the *Reich*, we have witnessed a continuous disintegration of Middle Europe as a geographical region. Together with the retreating German armies on the eastern and south-eastern front went many thousands of German settlers, leaving the land that their forefathers had cultivated. In 1939 approximately ten million German nationals lived in the lost eastern provinces, and about eleven million ethnic Germans in the states of eastern and south-eastern Middle Europe. Out of this total of over twenty million Germans, about thirteen million arrived eventually in Potsdam Germany, and almost 400,000 found a refuge in Austria.⁵⁰ We are here not concerned with this greatest folk migration in history as such, but with its effects on the cultural landscape and thus on Middle Europe as a geographical region. Nevertheless, the actual figures of this population movement give an indication of the degree of the landscape changes and Figures 6 and 7 are intended to serve this purpose. The expulsion of the Germans created a population vacuum which so far has only partially been filled, on the whole by peoples taken mainly from the eastern parts of the states affected and thus of a considerably lower standard of civilization. In some cases people were even taken from Asia so that we now find an appreciable number of Mongols work-

⁴⁸ Cf. H. HETTNER (1927, 295).

⁴⁹ Earlier, but not dealt with in such a systematic way as by Hassinger, the geographical importance of the political factors was emphasized by L. W. LYDE: 'It is almost always the political control that gives the dominant note in the most important areas; and, as the method of treating such areas should in each case, as far as possible, be appropriate to the dominant note, the political unit cannot be made subordinate without more being lost than is gained' (1913, iv).

⁵⁰ There is already an extensive literature on the refugee problem. For examples in English see CHAUNCY D. HARRIS and G. WÜLKER, 'The refugee problem of Germany', *Economic Geography*, 29 (1953), 10-25 and the relevant chapters in J. VERNANT, *The refugee in the post-war world* (1953). Important is the publication containing the nine maps by W. ESSEN (1952), of which No. 1 and No. 7 were used for the preparation of Figures 6 and 7, supplemented with statistical data published in the *Geographisches Taschenbuch* (1950), 147-54, and in the case of South Tyrol by the paper by F. DÖRRENHAUS (1953), 191. An official work on the expulsion of the Germans, of which the first volume has appeared, is being prepared by the Federal German Government (*Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mittleuropa bearbeitet von Theodor Schieder, herausgegeben vom Bundesministerium für Vertriebene*, Band I [1953]. (cf. *The Times*, September 17th, 1953).

ing in the industrial region of Upper Silesia.⁵¹ In these areas where the new settlers shape the landscape in a way congenial to them, a very different cultural landscape is emerging, especially in the rural parts and in those towns where war destruction was greatest. Apart from this it is already the dichotomy of low density of rural population within these areas and increased population density

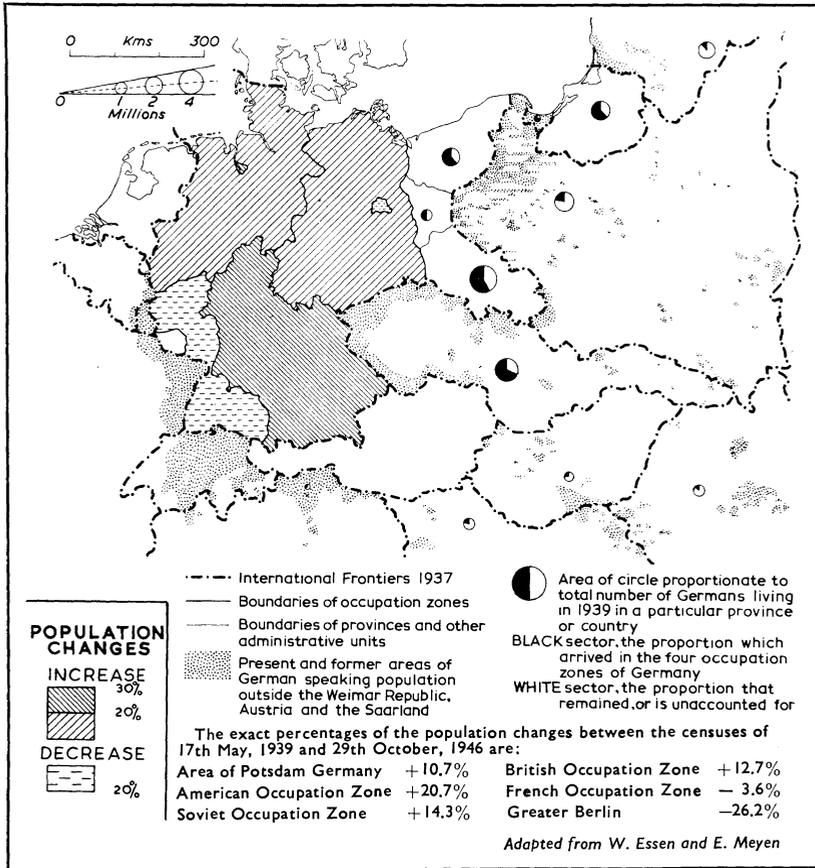


FIGURE 6—The German *Lebensraum*, its contraction from 1939 to 1946 and the overall effect of the westward migration of German nationals (*Reichsdeutsche*) and ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) on the population distribution of each occupation zone.

within the 'two Germanies' which make for differentiation of the landscape east and west of the Oder-Neisse line and the Czech-German frontier. On the one hand, farms and villages have been deserted and forest is springing up on untilled fields: it is estimated that in the lost provinces alone three million acres

⁵¹ E. LENDL (1951, 39); *The Times* (April 1st, 1954). H. G. VON ESEBECK in 'Vertriebene Deutsche und Exilpolen', *Aussenpolitik*, 5 (1954), 20-7, states that the total population in the lost provinces now administered by Poland amounts to five million people at the most, as far as can be gathered from official statistics.

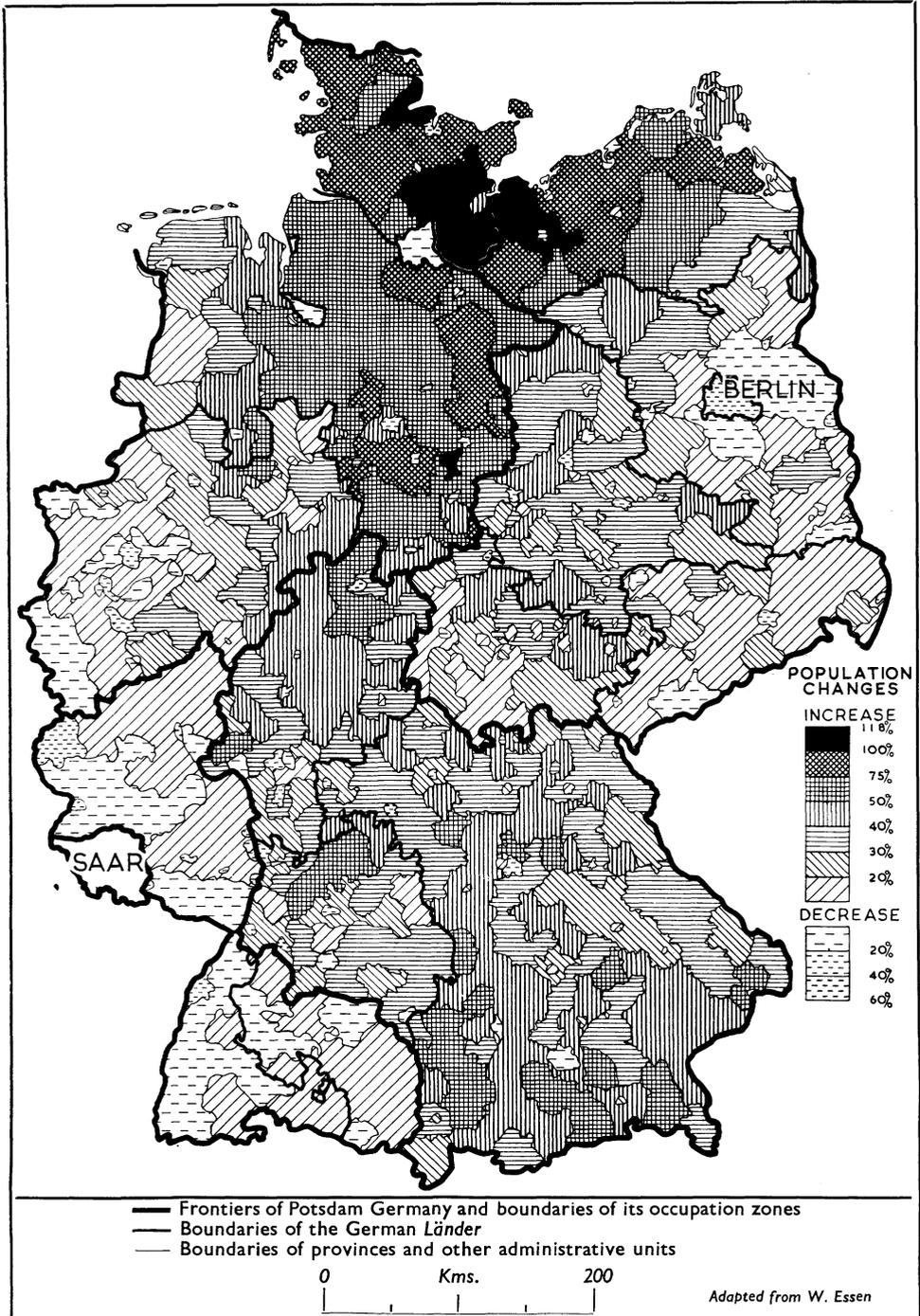


FIGURE 7—The effect of the influx of refugees and expellees on the population distribution of Potsdam Germany.

of farming land have reverted to waste⁵² and it was officially stated that in Czechoslovakia 250 of the former German villages have not been resettled.⁵³ On the other hand there are population increases in parts of over 100 per cent, with a consequent increase in the number of dwellings and intensity of land use. This contrast is emphasized by the difference in ideology which brings with it a certain economic attitude and policy and thus again gives the landscape behind the 'Iron Curtain' a new and different imprint. One need only point at the effect that the land reform has had on the field and settlement pattern where formerly large estates, with huge fields under the same crop, were subdivided into small holdings, though this is only a first stage.⁵⁴ Despite the failures experienced so far, as long as the ideology remains the same, it is only a matter of time until the second stage will come and those newly-created farms, together with the original peasant holdings with their often minute field parcels, will be superseded by *sovkhos* and *kolkhos* (state and co-operative) farms giving the rural landscape yet another appearance. This influence of ideology can even be felt in the Soviet zone of Germany, which, as the events in June 1953 showed, cannot be considered a proper Soviet satellite like the other states within the Russian sphere. A particularly striking example of this is found in Berlin and attention has been drawn to it in a number of publications.⁵⁵ One sentence in *The Times* of April 11th, 1952, brings this out particularly clearly: 'The prospect is that two distinct faces of Berlin would emerge from a prolonged division of the city. Just as the west has its *Clay Allee* and the east its *Stalin Allee* so there is a marked difference in architectural forms which somehow contrives to transmute the ideological conflict into stone.'⁵⁶

In spite of the various changes taking place which give the Soviet zone of Germany certain east European imprints, one cannot separate this area from Middle Europe if this region is to be retained at all. On the one hand, seen on a European scale, Middle Europe would then be too small to be considered a major region in its own right. On the other hand, there is at least not yet sufficient cause for such a major separation. Although Communist-ruled, the traditional cultural landscape has not altered as greatly as some instances might suggest, and the landscape of the Soviet zone is still much more akin to Western Germany than it is to Russia, the East European state *par excellence*. Similarly, but to a lesser degree, what has been said about the Soviet Zone of Germany applies also to the marches still farther east, over which German cultural influence once extended, for many traces pointing to that heritage are still visible.

⁵² TERENCE PRITTE (1953, 207).

⁵³ E. LENDL (1951, 45). For a more detailed discussion of the population changes in north-west Bohemia see the paper by A. HAMMERSCHMIDT where, in two maps and a table of the population figures for ten towns, he compares the population distribution of 1949 with that of 1930.

⁵⁴ Cf. A. E. MOODIE (1954).

⁵⁵ Articles in *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian*, and a paper by P. SCHÖLLER in *Erdkunde*. For details cf. bibliography.

⁵⁶ Only a few examples of the recent geographical changes within Middle Europe as conceived by Hassinger can be given here. The topic has been dealt with more fully by E. LENDL, *Dozent* at the University of Vienna.

For how long these traces will be retained is difficult to gauge, but to change the character of a landscape completely is always a process to be measured at least in decades rather than years.

It is possible to use the 'vague' term Middle Europe in a clear and unmistakable manner provided we express precisely which kind of Middle Europe we mean. 'Middle Europe as a topographical term' and 'Middle Europe in a physical sense' remain unchanged by historical events. 'Middle Europe in a political sense' depends on the political situation at a given time, and at least for the moment has ceased to exist. 'Middle Europe as a geographical region' is *still* with us, though smaller, but still a geographical entity worthy of being studied not as a mere group of states, but as a geographical subject of more lasting character: a geographical region.

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