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Distance Revisited

Chapters from British/US–Hungarian Relations

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Bella Beretzky
Ákos Diglics
Boglárka Dobos
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Distance Revisited. Chapters from British/US-Hungarian Relations

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Ágnes Beretzky

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ágnes Beretzky: Introduction 7

Chapters from British–Hungarian Relations

Ákos Diglics: Beyond Diplomacy: Ferenc Pulszky's London "Mission" (1849–1851) 11

Adrienn Gulyás: The Question of 19th-Century Camp Nursing in the Light of the Nursing Management Activities of Zsuzsanna Kossuth and Florence Nightingale 33

Renáta Tóth: A "Noble Philhungar": The Portrayal of Arthur J. Patterson and The Magyars in Hungarian Newspapers from 1862 to 1870 53

Míra Perger: James Bryce and Hungarian–British Diplomacy: From Early Admiration to Strong Parliamentary Support in the Era of Trianon 71

Ágnes Beretzky: Eyre Crowe in the Foreign Office (1906–1925) 87

Boglárka Dobos: An Irishman in Wartime Hungary: Sir Owen O'Malley's Diplomatic Service in Budapest (1939–1941) 105

Chapters from US–Hungarian History

Zoltán Peterecz: US–Hungarian Diplomacy in the Horthy Era: American Ministers in Hungary during the Interwar Years 131

Bella Beretzky: Forgotten Legacy: The Life and Philanthropy of Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi in Hungary 163

Distance Revisited – Átértékelt távolság. Rezümék 201

On the Authors 207

INTRODUCTION

Ágnes Beretzky

This collection, *Distance Revisited: Chapters from British/US–Hungarian Relations*, reflects a dual journey. On one level, it represents the dedicated efforts of a select group of individuals who, across a century, worked to bridge the political, economic, and cultural divide between the Anglo-American sphere and Hungary. Their stories are a testament to the power of personal engagement. The reader meets the political persistence of Ferenc Pulszky and James Bryce, the humanitarian spirit of Florence Nightingale – that in comparison with the Hungarian pioneer of nursing, Zsuzsanna Kossuth, together with Arthur J. Patterson's rare responsiveness to Hungarian culture, as well as the diplomatic sensitivity of British Minister to Hungary Owen O'Malley. One can also examine the unique philanthropic role played by Gladys Vanderbilt, the daughter of the richest American of the time, whose actions forged bonds of a very personal nature. These chapters chronicle how such remarkable characters actively worked to lessen the distance, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration. Certainly, they operated in a world shaped by geopolitical realities, which the present volume cannot disregard. Two manuscripts unveil the conflict-ridden British–German relationship as well as the attitude of the US diplomatic circles towards Hungary (and East-Central Europe in general).

On another, equally significant level, *Distance Revisited* is an homage to a different kind of gap-bridging – the journey from student to researcher. Five of the studies presented here are the product of rigorous research by Master of Arts students in English Studies at Károli Gáspár University. Several of these authors have ventured beyond standard academic practice, engaging with serious, original inquiry and, in many cases, uncovering previously unpublished sources, such as the correspondence of British Minister Owen O'Malley at the National Archives of Ireland or that of Gladys Vanderbilt at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. By doing so, they have not only contributed new knowledge to the field but have also narrowed the distance between academic potential and professional achievement.

Therefore, the present volume invites the reader to reconsider not only the historical or cultural ties between nations, but also the very act of scholarly discovery itself. It is a dual narrative of connection – the cultural-diplomatic

and the academic – revisiting the spaces between Hungary and the great powers and the distance between an emerging student and a researcher.

The editor as well as the authors hereby express their gratitude for the various research grants provided by the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary as well as for the generous funding that made the publication of the present volume possible. They are also indebted to the following people for their assistance at various levels: Jill Smiley, Katalin Hegyi, Erzsébet Stróbl and Miklós Péti.

Chapters from British–Hungarian Relations

BEYOND DIPLOMACY: FERENC PULSZKY'S LONDON "MISSION" (1849–1851)

Ákos Diglics

Introduction

Ferenc Pulszky was one of the most influential Hungarian diplomats to England in the nineteenth century. During the escalation of the Hungarian War of Independence in 1849, Pulszky fled Hungary and went on his unauthorized mission to London. This study analyzes Pulszky's diplomatic activity from the ongoing Hungarian War of Independence until the arrival of Lajos Kossuth (1802–1894) in Britain in 1851, who was not only the most prominent politician and great leader of the resistance, but a good friend of Ferenc Pulszky. Additionally, the study examines Pulszky's character and choices in order to provide a broader image on the man who laid the foundations of early British–Hungarian diplomacy.

The Hungarian War of Independence was preceded by the Reform Era which has no formal starting point, but an end: March 15, 1848 marks the restless and brave endeavours of the Hungarian civilians, manifesting in an initially bloodless revolution against the suppression of the Habsburg Dynasty. The Hungarian War of Independence was not only the result of the Spring of Nations, a series of revolutions that swept through the Continent in early 1848, but it was certainly inspired by the spirit of the Reform Era, its intellectual background and ambitions. With the combination of strong national sentiment and liberal thinking, the aim of the new Hungarian intelligentsia was to reform and rebuild the prevailing parliamentary system and social structure. The aspirations of the Reform Era in Hungary were first voiced at the first Diet in 1825 in Pozsony,[1] held again after 13 years of pause. Ferenc Pulszky in his memoir, *Életem és Korom* [My Life and Age],[2] named a similar start for this

[1] Bratislava, Pressburg – the capital city of today's Slovakia.

[2] Pulszky, Ferenc, *Életem és Korom* [My Life and Age], first published in 1880-1881, Budapest (in four volumes). For this study, I have used the second edition (Franklin-Társulat, 1884) – hence: Pulszky, *Életem és Korom* (Volumes I and II); and occasionally the third edition, 1958, Budapest, Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó – with the preface and commentary of literary historian Ambrus Oltványi (1932–1983).

era: "This apathy lasted for twenty-five years, and at last the events of 1823 shook the nation out of its dull sleep [...]".[3]

Born in Eperjes[4] in 1814, Ferenc Pulszky became a major figure of this era by the late 1830s as a result of consciously building his career and connections. In his memoir, *My Life and Age*, first published in 1880-1881, Pulszky retrospectively gives account of his early life: "[...] as a Protestant, I had no prospect of a high government office, and there was no need to seek a lower one."[5] However, he certainly had a strong vision for the future of Hungary, and also gravitated increasingly towards politics.

As well as offering an insight into Ferenc Pulszky's political engagement during the Reform Era and the War of Independence, the present paper focuses primarily on his diplomatic activity in London in the period of 1849–1851. Although Pulszky referred to his stay in England as his "London mission", no official document would validate his statement of going to the British capital for gaining sympathy and support.[6] Acknowledged historians, such as Thomas Kabdebo,[7] who portrayed Pulszky's diplomatic activity in England most comprehensively, or Lajos Kossuth expert Róbert Hermann,[8] jointly view Pulszky's act of leaving war-torn Hungary at the turn of 1848-1849 as a safe option, not as a diplomatic mission. Yet it is a historical fact that during his stay in London, Pulszky managed to arouse much sympathy for the Hungarian cause.

The present paper analyses Ferenc Pulszky's early and most influential acts in London, where, as aptly put by Kabdebo, he served as a "self-appointed Emissary to England," restlessly seeking to propagate the Hungarian cause and its leader, Lajos Kossuth.[9] The further aim of this study is to evaluate the role of Pulszky, neither a traitor nor a hero; whereas several of his contemporaries, like PM Bertalan Szemere (1849) addressed him as "cowardly runaway,"[10] while Pulszky's own memoirs depict a rather heroic picture of himself.

My Life and Age by Pulszky serves as both an inspiration and the major primary source. It offers more than just a sentimental nostalgia for the glorious days of the Hungarian freedom fight and resistance: it contains a vast array of significant historical events, names, and valuable insights into Pulszky's personal relations. Additionally, another memoir will also be discussed in this

[3] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom*, I, 2.

[4] Prešov in today's Slovakia, the northeast of the former Hungarian Kingdom.

[5] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom* I, 5. In the original: „mint protestánsnak nem lehetett kilátásom magas kormányhivatalra, kisebbnek keresésére nem szorított a szükség". (All translations from Hungarian are mine, unless otherwise indicated – Á.D.)

[6] Ibid. Chapter: „Kiküldetésem külföldre" [My Dispatching Abroad], 421–433.

[7] Thomas Kabdebo (1934, Budapest – 2018, Dublin), Hungarian writer, poet, literary translator, literary historian, and research historian.

[8] Róbert Hermann (b.1963), Széchenyi Prize-winning Hungarian historian, publicist, writer.

[9] Thomas Kabdebo, *Diplomat in Exile: Francis Pulszky's Political Activities in England, 1849–1860*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 30.

[10] Qtd. in Kabdebo, *Diplomat in Exile*, 15.

study: *Memoirs of a Hungarian Lady. With a Historical Introduction, by Francis Pulszky.*[11] More a propaganda book and a source of income for the exiled family, the first published co-work of the Pulszky couple was printed in 1850, offering an insight into the work of Pulszky in London. It will be argued that even lacking in the official authorization and support from the Hungarian government, Ferenc Pulszky was the first truly successful Hungarian diplomat in the turbulent mid-nineteenth century. His success was based on his complex character and on his prominent personal connections. Pulszky's strong vision on Hungary's future was matched with his pragmatic skills and work ethic.

The Arch of Pulszky's Career and Life (1835–1848)

In 1835, the promising young man Ferenc Pulszky was only 21 years old when he got involved in politics. He belonged to the young intelligentsia who were seeking to join the liberal opposition party, led by Ferenc Deák (1803–1876), who was known and acknowledged for his patient and more compromising attitude in politics. Owing to his strict upbringing, quality education and natural talents to forge ties and build rapport, Pulszky quickly grew in stature, which was further enhanced by his good social connections. Thus, the multi-talented Pulszky smoothly and swiftly joined the higher political circle, where he gained recognition and earned a well-regarded reputation. Besides his strict, loving father, Károly Pulszky (1756–1841), and his intellectually defining maternal uncle, Gábor Fejérváry (1780–1851), Pulszky always had great figures, "geniuses" as he would call them, to look up to: formidable 19th-century statesmen, e.g. Lajos Kossuth, István Széchenyi, as well as the above-mentioned Ferenc Deák. On the one hand, Pulszky's keen self-awareness must have led him to quickly recognize that he lacked the charisma and skill set that constitute a powerful and well-liked leader. On the other hand, he possessed all the qualities that made him a superb ally of great persons.

Pulszky acquired his comprehensive and deep knowledge from his uncle, the noted archaeologist Gábor Fejérváry, who introduced the young Ferenc to Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian liberal philosophy and Adam Smith's innovative ideas on economy and wealth, alongside ancient philosophy and classical philology.[12] Additionally, Pulszky's liberal thinking and cosmopolitan virtues were enhanced through the numerous – mostly Western – European trips with his uncle: in 1833 to Italy, during 1836 a more extensive tour in Western Europe, and in 1845 a visit to Italy again.

[11] Theresa Pulszky, *Memoirs of a Hungarian Lady. With a Historical Introduction by Francis Pulszky*, (London: Henry Colburn,1850).

[12] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom*, I, 23.

From the mid-1830s, Ferenc Pulszky became an active member in Hungarian political life. He passed the bar examination in Pozsony, where he had previously studied law as a student of law. The turning point in his life arrived in the summer of 1835, when the twenty-one-year-old Pulszky paid regular visits to the acclaimed poet Ferenc Kölcsey (1790–1838). Kölcsey composed *Himnusz* in 1823, the anthem of Hungary, and it was him who planted patriotism into Pulszky's heart. Pulszky summarized his encounter with the liberal opposition in the following way: "I only visited Deák once, I found him cold, I could see that he was the head of the opposition, but Kölcsey was the heart of it."[13]

In the same year, right after returning home from Pozsony in 1835, Pulszky was announced deputy notary of Sáros County.[14] During this period between 1835–1836, he went on a more extensive Western European trip with his uncle. This journey turned out to be one of the most influential phenomena in Pulszky's life, as it fundamentally shaped Pulszky's general character.

Later, in the year of 1839, Pulszky was elected the delegate of Sáros County to the Pozsony Diet. This first major political milestone for Pulszky was highly influenced by his uncle, as Pulszky himself acknowledged Fejérváry's efforts in helping his career.[15] Besides the future of Hungary, Pulszky's other passion was archaeology,[16] and he was simultaneously involved in – broadly speaking – cultural projects and initiatives. This balance between politics and culture dominated his whole life, with slight discrepancies periodically, and he was able to perform well at both fields continuously.

From 1840 to 1843, Pulszky worked as the notary of the Codification Commission for the Diet, editing the new Criminal Code. The committee included the most prominent legal experts of the time: Bertalan Szemere and Gábor Klauzál, both serving in the later Batthyány government of 1848 March–October, the former as the First Minister of the Interior and the latter as the Minister for Agriculture, Industry and Trade; László Szalay, Pulszky's good friend, who became the first diplomat to London by Kossuth's authorization; László Bezerédj, the loyal supporter of the Liberal Party; and József Eötvös and Béla Wenckheim, the former was the First Minister for Education and Religious Affairs and the latter was the Minister of the Interior of the Andrássy government (1867–1871). Pulszky had a close professional and personal connection to these influential men, and he also gained serious recognition by his writings in the German papers in Pest, e. g. the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, and also by his

[13] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom* I, 69–70. („Deáknál csak egyszer voltam, hidegnek találtam, láttam ugyan, hogy Ő az ellenzék feje, de Kölcsey volt annak a szíve.")

[14] Eperjes, Pulszky's hometown, was in Sáros County.

[15] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom,* I, 111–115.

[16] The Fejérváry family, Pulszky's mother's side, was a well-known and highly respected archaeologist and art collector family.

essays, such as "On the History of Hungary,"[17] and "On the Regulation of the Danube."[18]

In 1845, Pulszky met Theresa Walter in Vienna,[19] and both parties recollect the same memory of falling in love right after their first encounter. They got married in the same year, and their firstborn child, Ágost (1846–1901) was born in the following year. In 1846, Pulszky bought the Szécsény estate with the former Forgách castle on it. Both his father-in-law, August Walter, and his uncle, Gábor Fejérváry, supported the purchase. By the time the second son, Gábor (1847–1866), was born in 1847, the Pulszky family had already moved to the Szécsény estate.[20] Unfortunately, they could not long live a happy and carefree life, due to the growing tension between Hungary and the Habsburg Dynasty.

By March 1848, the wave of revolutions reached Vienna, and in two days, it reached Pest, too. This bloodless Revolution on March 15 embodied the willpower and spirit of independence of the Hungarian people. Pulszky arrived in Pest around this time and immediately became a member of the Committee for Public Peace ("Közcsend-bizottság") to secure order. The next agenda was forming and consolidating a firm Hungarian government. On March 23, the first independent Hungarian government was formed with PM Count Lajos Batthyány (1807–1849). In the Batthyány government, Pulszky first obtained a post as Secretary of State for Finance assisting Kossuth directly, who was the Minister for Finance.

Meanwhile, new laws sanctioned by the Habsburg Emperor in April 1848 were passed and included several points furthering reforms in Hungary, ending the prevailing feudal system, and recognizing Hungary as a constitutional monarchy. The April Laws were sanctioned on April 11, 1848 by the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, Ferdinand V,[21] who, however, was forced to resign in December to be followed by the 18-year-old Franz Joseph.[22] By that

[17] Pulszky, Ferenc, „Eszmék Magyarország története philosophiájához" [Ideas toward the Philosophy of Hungarian History], *Athenaeum,* "Tudományok és szépművészetek tára", ed. Schedel and Mihály Vörösmarty, assoc. ed. József Bajza, vol. 7, no. 29 Pest, Athenaeum (1838).

[18] Pulszky, Ferenc, „Töredékes észrevételek a Dunaszabályozás és keleti kérdés iránt" [Fragmentary Observations on the Regulation of the Danube and the Eastern Question], *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung,* "Felföldi Népmondák", Pozsony [Pressburg] 1840.

[19] Theresa Pulszky (1819–1866), the first wife of Ferenc Pulszky, the mother of his children.

[20] Gyulai, Éva, „Egy református politikusfeleség a bécsi „'zweite Gesellschaftból'" [A reformed politician's wife in the Viennese "zweite Gesellschaft"]: Pulszky Terézia (Therese Walter, 1719–1866), in Dénes Dienes, Erika Kegyes, and Éva Gyulai (eds.), *A nők jelenléte és szerepe a magyar protestáns szellemiségben* [The presence and role of women in the spirit of Hungarian protestantism], (Sárospatak: Hernád Kiadó, 2019), 234.

[21] Ferdinand I of Austria, but Ferdinand V as King of Hungary between 1835–1848.

[22] Franz Joseph I Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary (1848–1916): the longest reigning "king" in the Hungarian history.

time Austria and Hungary had already been at war, and the new king was not crowned in Hungary (by the Holy Crown), thus he was not recognized as King.

In May, Pulszky was appointed Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs under Prince Esterházy,[23] and until October 1848 he represented Hungarian politics in Vienna, yet as Prince Esterházy joined the royal court fleeing to Innsbruck in mid-May 1848, Pulszky stayed in Vienna and became responsible for the Hungarian Foreign Office to Vienna. However, after the manifestation of the violent events of the second Viennese Uprising on October 6, 1848, Pulszky had to flee the capital. He managed to return to Hungary and became one of the most wanted men after Kossuth, as the former Viennese court tied Pulszky's name to the Uprising.[24]

Meanwhile in Hungary, the Habsburgs had not yet declared war against Hungary directly, but they instigated Count Josip Jelačić,[25] who had already attacked Hungary from the south, in September 1848. Soon after his return to Hungary, Pulszky joined the Committee of Hungarian National Defence in November. The Habsburg Army, led by Prince Windisch-Grätz,[26] attacked Hungary from the northwest in December. As the Habsburg Imperial Royal Army was more powerful than the newly formed independent Hungarian National Guard (the so-called "Honvédség"), the Diet had to be moved from the capital (Pest) more eastwards, to Debrecen.[27] Pulszky's last official position, before going on the so-called dispatch to London, was at the Committee of National Defence, where he was responsible for the commercial affairs.[28]

In December 1848, Ferenc Pulszky left Hungary. As a promising young man who not only had great abilities but also had all the skills that were needed on a diplomatic mission. But most importantly, he had gained enough experience, which enabled him at the turn of 1848-1849 to act swiftly and consciously.

1849, London

Ferenc Pulszky left Hungary with the supposedly strong vision of awakening sympathy for the Hungarian cause in Britain. There are significant patterns

[23] Kabdebo, *Diplomat in Exile*, 11. "Király személye körüli minisztérium államtitkára"; Prince Pál Esterházy (1805–1877): Hungarian Minister to the King.

[24] After the Imperial Minister for War Baron Theodor Franz Baillet von Latour was lynched on October 6 and the tension was at its peak, Pulszky kept on encouraging the anti-Habsburg Viennese politicians to form an independent government with the help of Hungary. (Pulszky, *Életem és Korom* I, 394–395.)

[25] Josip Jelačić (1801–1859): Pro-Habsburg politician and soldier, of Croatian origins.

[26] Alfred Candidus Ferdinand to Windisch-Grätz, Commander-in-chief after the second Viennese Uprise (6th October 1848).

[27] Significant city of Eastern Hungary.

[28] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom*, I, 495.

which show continuality in Pulszky's life: one of the reoccurring elements is his escaping a heated situation. Naturally, he did not have control over the events of the mid-nineteenth century, but one thing he could do excellently throughout his life was to adapt. However, among other skills, Pulszky's intellectual capacity – either born with or acquired – and his personality determined his fate. This subchapter aims to highlight Pulszky's ambition and act of choosing London, Great Britain – as both a personal shelter and potential ally for Hungary.

One of the major motivations behind Pulszky's escape to Great Britain was his own security, as after the vehement escalation and outcome of the October Uprising in Vienna, alongside Kossuth, Pulszky also had a "prominent placement" on the Habsburg's list of wanted rebels. This was his third escape: the first was in 1836,[29] the second, from Vienna, as has been discussed above. The third escape during the turn of 1848-1849 was closely connected to the previous one, as Pulszky had been a wanted person and a significant figure of the Hungarian rebellion, whose arrest would have served as a great deterrent to others, either those involved in the freedom fight or the potential members.

Both the first and second getaways are essential for this study as they either show a pattern and logic (the first) or give more insight into the real reasons (the second) for Pulszky's act of leaving Hungary. Also, the joint experience of these two "getaways" provided Pulszky with experience, both in terms of escaping a heated situation and settling down abroad. Besides these life-lessons, Pulszky had a major advantage in the person of his uncle.

Kabdebo draws a very interesting parallel between Kossuth and Pulszky by unfolding the details why Pulszky fully admired Kossuth, but also provides an intriguing difference which then also became a pattern: "[...] while Pulszky, when he got himself into trouble, was whisked off to a foreign tour by his uncle, Kossuth welcomed the role of the martyr."[30] Pulszky could rely on his childless

[29] Pulszky went on a Western European trip with his uncle when – following the end of the Diet – arrests were made among the members of the young intelligentsia's casino, the *Társalgási Egyesület*, established in 1834, where liberal ideas were channelled and the conservative monarchy was challenged. Those members who stayed in Hungary were captured, among them László and Ferenc Lovassy, János Tormássy and seemingly also their spy/informant János Lapsánszky, who was sent to Vienna with the *alter ego* of János Klein. Suggesting that Fejérváry intentionally arranged such an extensive journey for this very reason would be an overstatement, but it is certain – as Pulszky himself claimed in his memoirs – that his uncle considered it wiser to stay abroad until the heated situation calmed down in Hungary. (Pulszky, *Életem és Korom* I, 82–84.)

[30] Thomas Kabdebo, "Reception of Kossuth in England and the Magazine Punch in 1851," *Hungarian Studies1. No.2.* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1985), 226. By "martyr" Kabdebo refers to the imprisonment of Kossuth in 1837. The deep sympathy was due to the similar origins of Kossuth and Pulszky as they were both "Protestant from Northern Hungary," both men came from the middle strata of untitled Hungarian nobility," and "both their respective ancestors were of mixed Slav and Magyar stock."

uncle, to whom he was like a son. Pulszky would regularly get into trouble which was sorted out one way or another by his uncle.

During this brief time that is being examined, Pulszky's actions in London could rightly be regarded as patriotic, tireless, and – perhaps – even heroic. At the same time, Eszter Waldapfel[31] is highly critical about Pulszky, whom she regards as being rather irresponsible and superficial, concluding that Pulszky merely floated in the turmoil of the revolution rather than acted consciously and deliberately.[32] With a vast array of sources on the era, Waldapfel neglects the role Pulszky played in London, while highlighting and praising the prominent figures of Great Britain, as friends who helped the Hungarian cause.[33]

Based on sources, there seems to be a constant duality in Pulszky's life: he moved between politics and culture; his liberal thinking and early cosmopolitanism shifted to patriotism and national sentiment; after a heroic engagement in serious political matters, he left the heated situation as a rational average man. What is clear from these examples is that Pulszky's duality was rather the means of his balance in life than a questionable act or behaviour. Yet, it is also true that the last – and most important – example draws a different picture of Pulszky. Without exonerating Pulszky from his act of leaving Hungary at the end of 1848, I can say he did what most rational people would have done. Pulszky did not simply "run away," but he chose what he had considered the best both for his family and his country. During the time of his escape, at the turn of 1848-1849, the Diet of Pest had to move to the east, to Debrecen, and the Habsburg pressure was increasing. However, like Kossuth, Pulszky could have stayed longer in (eastern) Hungary.

Reasons for Settling Down in London

London, as the desired destination, was not simply a fortunate coincidence for Pulszky, but a deliberate decision: he had already been to Great Britain, knew several places, spoke the language, and was also fond of British culture.

[31] Eszter Waldapfel (1906–1968), the editor of the *A forradalom és szabadságharc levelestára I.–IV.* [Archives of the Revolution and War of Independence I–IV], (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 1955; 1965).

[32] Waldapfel, *Archives* IV, 19: „Ha Pulszky veleszületett, sokszor a felelőtlenségig menő felületességéből kivetkőzni nem is tud, úgy látszik módszerein – barátainak sürgetésére – változtatott" ("Pulszky was not able to overcome his innate superficiality, which often bordered on irresponsibility, yet he seems to have changed his ways at the urging of his friends"). Waldapfel, *Archives* III, 32: „Pulszky inkább a véletlenek összejátszása folytán belesodródott az eseményekbe, semmint önként és tudatosan vállalta volna a forradalmi harc következményeit" ("Pulszky was drawn into the events by a confluence of coincidences rather than voluntarily and consciously accepting the consequences of the revolutionary struggle").

[33] Waldapfel, *Archives* IV, 8–19.

Furthermore, he had significant personal connections either acquired during his early political career – D. J. Vipan was the oldest of Pulszky's British friends[34] – or through his wife: the Cabinet Minister Lord Lansdowne who enthusiastically helped both Pulszky's acclimation in London and the Hungarian cause.[35] Finally, Pulszky was already aware of the importance of mass media, and simultaneously, he trusted the liberal institution and spirit of the British Parliament. He went to Britain to settle down, and, most probably, his initial intent was to balance and "mirror" the Austrian pattern of acquiring outside support for a domestic issue. But, as it will be discussed in detail in the next subchapter, Pulszky's greatest success was achieved by publishing in newspapers, with the help of a well-crafted Hungarian propaganda.

After travelling to Britain for the first time, Pulszky wrote a travel journal about the Isles,[36] which was a highly fashionable genre at the time. Like his peers who could visit Britain, he was enchanted by the diversity and uniqueness of England. The so-called phenomena of Anglo-philia, or "Anglomania," was already peaking during this period in Hungary, mostly due to István Széchenyi, who was amongst the few who had had the chance and ability to personally experience Great Britain and brought back to Hungary some of its spirit and style: Széchenyi introduced horse breeding and races, he established the National Casino in 1827, and in 1849 he had the Széchenyi Chain Bridge built, which was the first permanent bridge across the Danube, connecting Pest and Buda.[37]

Pulszky had significant foreign connections even before leaving Hungary. Interestingly enough, those connections were not because of his previous travels to the British Isles, but either from Hungary, or – and this was the more determining – via Theresa's family, the Walters. The Walters were a wealthy banker family in Austria, who hosted great events with distinguished guests. Besides assisting Pulszky to get acquainted with Lord Lansdowne, his mother-in-law wrote additional recommendation letters, for example, to Louisa Douglas, the daughter of the late Admiral John Erskine Douglas.[38] But certainly, it was Lord Lansdowne who had both the ability and the desire to support Pulszky in his self-appointed mission.

[34] All the sources, including Pulszky's memoirs, refer to him as D. J. Vipan – there is no further/specific information about him.

[35] Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, 3rd Marquess of Lansdowne (1780–1863). Theresa Pulszky was the friend of Lord Lansdowne's daughter (Lady Louisa), and her mother, Henriette Walter (1796–1882), also had a close friendship with the lord and his family.

[36] Ferenc Pulszky, "Úti Vázlatok 1836-ból" [Travel Sketches], in Baron József Eötvös (ed.), *Budapesti Árvízkönyv* I., [The Budapest Flood Book], (Pest: Heckenast, 1839), 67–169.

[37] László Országh, "Anglomania in Hungary, 1780–1900," *Angol Filológiai Tanulmányok / Hungarian Studies in English* no. 12 (1979), 26–28.

[38] Gyulai, *Egy református politikusfeleség*, 243.

Pulszky not only recognized Great Britain as the leading power of the nineteenth century, but with its advanced parliamentary system and a (though "unwritten") constitution, also as the model of the new, liberal world. Indeed, the latter often served as the main argument for Hungary, which was the only country besides England having a firm, long-established constitution. Besides drawing a parallel between the two countries, Professor Géza Jeszenszky commends Pulszky's achievements, articulating his determining role in winning over the British intelligentsia and promoting the Hungarian cause. The Hungarians' trust in British politicians and the members of the intelligentsia turned out to be indeed realistic in most cases because of the rapidly growing interest towards the Hungarian cause, which was seriously driven by the restless work of Pulszky's British friends. Moreover, this interest increased among all the nations of Great Britain, including the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh. [39]

Pulszky first reached Paris in January 1849, where he visited his friend, *Chargé D'Affaires* László Teleki. Pulszky claimed that Kossuth rather expected sympathy and support from the French, as, according to Pulszky, he did not believe in the orthodox, pro-Austrian British foreign policy.[40] However, the official authorization of László Szalay as Hungarian Minister to Britain took place on November 12, 1848, and the diplomat went on his mission in December with high hopes.[41] This time Szalay was directly and officially appointed and instructed by Kossuth to promote Hungary as a sovereign state and contact the foreign ministry, especially Lord Palmerston.[42] However, Szalay did not succeed in meeting Palmerston in person. Moreover, his position was undermined by the fact that, due to balance of power considerations, Palmerston did not recognize Hungary as a sovereign country, but only as part of the Austrian Empire.[43]

Ferenc Pulszky most definitely had a strong vision about a flourishing relationship between Hungary and Great Britain. He must have been aware of his talents and abilities, and also deeply trusted his connections. In his memoirs, even a slight sense of hubris can be found in some places.[44] The overall self-awareness – and even pride – was generally the driving force of Pulszky, besides

[39] Géza Jeszenszky, *Lost Prestige: Hungary's Changing Image in Britain 1894–1918*, (Reno, Nevada: Helena History Press, 2020), 51. Géza Jeszenszky also highlights the importance of the Hungarian constitution, which was six hundred years old then.

[40] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom* I, 435–436.

[41] Angyal, Dávid, *Szalay László emlékezete születése 100. évfordulója alkalmából* [In memory of László Szalay on the 100th anniversary of his birth], in *A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia elhúnyt tagjai fölött tartott emlékbeszédek XVI. kötet. – 11. szám*, (Budapest: MTA, 1914), 356.

[42] Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston (1784–1865), the most influential British statesman of foreign policy in this era, later Prime Minister (1855–1858, 1859–1865).

[43] Kabdebo, *Diplomat in Exile*, 6–7. See Szalay's and the British Foreign Office's correspondence in December.

[44] For example, when Pulszky recalls his memories on women – before having met Theresa – which is not tasteless, but rather bragging (Pulszky, *Életem és Korom*, I, 192). Or when Pulszky

his pragmatic skills, such as being discerning, understanding, able to (swiftly) adapt to people and their styles.

Besides Pulszky's exceptional (self-)trust, in terms of his political career he had everything to be a great diplomat except for Kossuth's official authorization. Kossuth, by that time, was the absolute leader of the Hungarian War of Independence since the resignation of the Batthyány government on September 11, 1848 and with the establishment of the new Committee for National Defence (Országos Honvédelmi Bizottmány) on October 2. Therefore, Pulszky's journey to London was simultaneously dangerous (– because of the exceeding pressure from the Habsburg army, the closed borders, and the secret police's surveillance) and hard (– because of the lack of official authorization and personal support from his close friend, Kossuth). In his memoirs, *My Life and Age*, Pulszky's tone suggests that the close personal connections were extremely important for him. Thus, the real hardship for him must have been leaving his family, and arbitrarily leaving his official post, risking his general reputation and connections.

The Self-Appointed London Mission

Pulszky arrived in London towards the end of February, where he was surprised by the sight: the ports were busy, the streets were packed with life, and London was flourishing. He came a long and risky way through continental Europe to reach the British Isles, which seemed more real and promising than what he could have imagined.[45] From the very first day, Pulszky was characterized by strong confidence and determination.

Immediately when Pulszky arrived, he acquired an accommodation at Golden Square, with the hope to master the language and pronunciation. Then he visited his old friend, Vipan, who was at the time Pulszky's only personal connection in England. "It is difficult to get an English friend," he recalled much later, "but he remains a friend for life."[46] Indeed, Vipan offered his assistance to Pulszky in every possible way. The next day Pulszky was invited for breakfast by the very welcoming Ada King, Countess of Lovelace (1815–1852), the daughter of the well-known poet Lord Byron. Pulszky praised Lady Lovelace's salon, which he considered one of the most visited by prominent figures, for example, Charles Babbage (1791–1871), an English polymath, who is often credited as

lists his illustrious "rivals" and mentions that in the end it was him who could win Theresa's love (Ibid., 200).

[45] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom*, I, 444.

[46] Ferencz Aurelius Pulszky and Terézia Walter Pulszky, *White, Red, Black: Sketches of American Society in the United States during the visit of their guests*, (New York: Redfield, 1853), 249.

the "father of the computer" and who was a lifelong friend of Lady Lovelace.[47] At the same time, with the help of Henriette, his mother-in-law, Pulszky soon got entrance into further prominent circles of England, including Lord Lansdowne. Lord Lansdowne belonged to the highest circles of both politics and culture, which was the best possible combination.

Pulszky was well aware of Kossuth's failed attempts of diplomatically reaching Lord Palmerston. The Foreign Secretary remained convinced that balance of power in Europe could only be sustained by a strong and vital Austria which could counterbalance Tsarist Russia.[48]

Learning Kossuth's lack of success in establishing contact with the highest diplomatic circles, Pulszky deliberately and directly went only to those people who he believed could assist him. As the most powerful tool of propaganda in the nineteenth century was the press, Pulszky's major aim was to gain public – and by that political – sympathy for the Hungarian cause in the media, as he believed it would finally put pressure on the British Parliament.

Before Pulszky's appearance in British journalism, the Chartists[49] had already advocated for the Hungarian cause in their newspaper *The Northern Star*, established and run by the Irish Feargus O'Connor. O'Connor became the leading voice of the Chartists by 1849, yet as the movement was declining and their social-radicalism did not really match the liberal radicalism of the Hungarian cause, their advocacy was not effective.[50] Apart from *The Northern Star*, press in England had been dominated by pro-Austrian articles: echoing the Habsburg narrative, they labelled the Hungarian freedom fight as a rebellion.[51]

Pulszky was a pragmatic and rational man: he knew exactly how mass media worked and he also experienced its influence on politics. He witnessed how anti-Hungarian propaganda worked long before the War of Independence. For instance, in 1835, as one of the leading figures of the pan-Slavic Illyrian movement, Ljudevit Gaj was permitted by the Viennese court to advocate Croatian interests and to be financially backed by the Russians to counterbalance the growing Hungarian nationalism.[52]

[47] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom,* I, 444–445.

[48] Gavin B. Henderson, "Historical Revision: LXXXIV. – The Foreign Policy of Lord Palmerston," *History* 22, no. 88 (1938), 338. Soon British diplomacy had to focus on the question of the insurrections in Lombardo-Venetia, too: Palmerston noted that Northern Italy was not the "shield of Ajax" but the "heel of Achilles" for Austria, meaning that, unlike Hungary, holding fast to Italian provinces would weaken the Habsburg Empire. Charles Sproxton, *Palmerston and the Hungarian Revolution*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1919), 24.

[49] Workingclass self-help movement in Britain that promoted among others payment for MPs and an extension of voting rights.

[50] Margot Finn, "'A Vent Which Has Conveyed Our Principles': English Radical Patriotism in the Aftermath of 1848," *The Journal of Modern History* 64, no. 4 (1992), 638–639.

[51] Róbert Hermann, "1848 – Revolution and/or War of Independence?," *Rubicon Online*, https://rubicon.hu/en/cikkek/1848-revolution-and-or-war-of-independence

[52] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom*, I, 101, 137.

Pulszky also had experience in the creation of pro-Hungarian pamphlets, as he wrote articles in Kossuth's *Pesti Hírlap*, which was established after his amnesty in 1840. Sanctioned by the Viennese court, the paper could only exist due to Lajos Landerer, who had close connections with the Viennese secret police. *Pesti Hírlap* soon became the leading voice of Hungary and the best-selling news organization, which, despite growing censorship, the Habsburgs could not fully silence.[53]

Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that Pulszky's thrust for arranging a personal meeting with Palmerston was based on two foundations: influential friends of his and the Hungarian cause, together with his self-confidence. Additionally, Pulszky's social skills were also excellent, which further increased his chances of success. Whether he was a guest or a host, Pulszky savoured every social gathering, and his persona was largely admired by everybody in his company.[54]

Besides the above-mentioned Vipan and Lord Lansdowne, Pulszky gained many supporters for the Hungarian cause. One of the first great supporters of the oppressed Central European countries was the liberal Lord Dudley Coutts Stuart, who was later described by Pulszky as "the friend of the oppressed, the advocate of the balance of power [...]."[55] From the mid-1830s onwards, Lord Dudley's direct support for Poland against Tsarist Russia changed some of his peers' perception about East-Central Europe, together with their orthodox imperialistic views. By the end of March 1849, the bright historian John Mitchell Kemble organized a lunch meeting with William Lloyd Birkbeck, a legal scholar and the President of the Birkbeck Literary and Scientific Institution of London. These men, and possibly D. J. Vipan, held a meeting where they discussed the foundation of an organized committee dealing with the Hungarian question, which later became the Hungarian Propaganda Committee. The Committee was officially established in June 1849, with the aim of counterbalancing the prevailing Austrian and pro-Austrian press by advocating the Hungarian cause in the press.[56]

[53] Novák, László, *A Nyomdászat Története V.* [The History of Printing, V], (Budapest, published by László Novák, 1928), 25. Kossuth, Lajos, *Szerkesztői jegyzetek a Pesti Hírlaphoz, I. (1841)* [Editorial notes for the Pesti Hírlap, I (1841)], edited by Csaba Fazekas, (Miskolc: Bíbor Kiadó, 2003), 7, 12.

[54] Merényi, Hajnalka, "A Pulszky-Szalon" [The Pulszky Salon], *Budapesti Negyed*: *Társasélet Pesten és Budán*, (Budapest Főváros Levéltára, 2004), 339.

[55] Pulszky and Pulszky, *White, Red, Black*, 10.

[56] Besides the aforementioned Committee members, the list of helpers is rich and prominent: Joshua Toulmin Smith (1816–1869), a political theorist, lawyer and the archaeologist of Parliament (as Pulszky refers to him); Charles Frederick Henningsen (1815–1877), a Belgian-American writer who fought with Tomás de Zumalacárregui (1788–1835) in the Carlist War in Spain (1833–1876); Francis William Newman (1805–1897), an English scholar, moral philosopher, and one of the brightest and most acknowledged contemporary thinkers of Britain and younger brother of Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801–1890); John Edward Taylor (1830–1905), the later co-owner of his father's newspaper, the *Manchester Guardian*; Sir Charles Lyell, 1st Baronet (1797–1875), a Scottish scientist, renowned geologist of the nineteenth century, and one of the early patrons of Pulszky in London. See Horváth, Jenő, "A londoni magyar

Pulszky had two major tasks in the committee. Firstly, he was the bridge between England and Hungary, bringing news from the homeland, either forwarding them in German or in "imperfect English." Secondly, he helped to arrange the distribution of work at his lodgings at Jermyn Street, a more prestigious home for the upcoming meetings and guests. This new accommodation became the quasi headquarters of the Committee, where all the details about the publications were discussed. The inexhaustive list of daily papers which were publishing pro-Hungarian articles ran as follows: *The Daily News*,[57] *The Morning Advertiser*, *The Examiner*, *Spectator*, *Observer*, and even Lord Palmerston's organum, *The Globe*. Beside these, Pulszky also enumerated other provincial and Sunday press products too, together with the monthly magazine *The Edinburgh Review*, which published articles by Pulszky and his friends.[58] These substantial lists reveal the well-structured mechanism behind the Hungarian propaganda, which, however, was not merely Pulszky's heroic work. Indeed, the list rather shows the multitude behind the restless British contribution to the Hungarian cause, and it nuances Pulszky's role in this shared enterprise.[59]

Meanwhile in Hungary, the Diet of Debrecen declared the dethroning of the Habsburg Dynasty on April 14, 1849, and Kossuth was appointed the independent country's Governor-President. Only one year had passed since the initial promising reforms of the April Laws, and by 1849, the tension between Austria and Hungary was at its peak.[60] Such drastic measures were problematic for several reasons, especially in terms of Pulszky's diplomatic mission. Negotiation with Austria, which Kossuth definitely opposed but had been suggested by Palmerston, became impossible. The news about the dethronement further distanced the British Foreign Secretary, who personally sympathized with the Hungarian cause, but an independent country ran counter to British interests.[61] Some historians suggest, however, that while the British Foreign Office and Palmerston were anti-Russian, their idea of supporting the Austrian Empire in order to become a strong counterbalance

propaganda-bizottság 1849-ben" [The Hungarian Propaganda Committee in London in 1849], in *Budapesti Szemle. 242. Kötet*, (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1936), 130.

[57] Most articles were published in the *D.N.*; Pulszky remained its correspondent for a long time.

[58] A. Dénes Jánossy, "Great Britain and Kossuth," *Archivum Europae Centro-Orientalis* – Tome 3. Fasc. 1–3. (1937):70. – Some of the mentioned men and newspapers are from Pulszky's memoir, others were collected from various sources: Ferenczy, József, *Pulszky Ferenc Életrajza* [The Biography of Ferenc Pulszky], (Budapest–Pozsony, published by Károly Stampfel,1886); Lajos Lukács, *Chapters on Hungarian Political Emigration 1849–1867*, (Budapest, Akadémia Kiadó, 1995). And Kabdebo, Jánossy, Horváth, Waldapfel, Sproxton.

[59] Kabdebo's work depicts most precisely and linearly the actual gatherings; Horváth puts more stress on the acts and achievements; and Lukács is probably the best teller, yet, very accurate.

[60] Francis W. Newman, *Selected Speeches of Kossuth, Condensed and Abridged with Kossuth's Express Sanction* (London: Trübner & Co., 1853), 11: Kossuth's speech on 14 April 1849 – Declaration of Independence of Hungary: "...the house of Lorraine-Hapsburg, as perjured in the sight of God and man, has forfeited its right to the Hungarian throne."

[61] I. W. Roberts, "The Russian Intervention in Hungary in 1849: Some Thoughts and Considerations," in *Hungarian Studies* 5/1. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989), 63–64.

to Russia was a mistake since Austria was already too much influenced by Tsarist Russia.[62]

After the ambivalent month of April 1849, May brought better news for Pulszky from Baron Kázmér Batthyány, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Batthyány praised Pulszky's endeavours in London and encouraged him to continue his mission by making the Foreign Office realize that Tsarist intervention constituted a grave threat and convince them to help to end the conflict. Batthyány highlighted potential benefits for Britain: the extension of British dominance in the region and further favourable commercial opportunities.[63]

There are two other important aspects of the first Batthyány letter sent to Pulszky. First, the Minister officially appointed Pulszky *chargé d'affaires*. Ironically, Pulszky did not claim his official status anywhere, as the dethronement of Franz Joseph was viewed suspiciously in Britain, as well as temporarily weakened Pulszky's credibility; he was repeatedly articulating the constitutional structure of Hungary, in which the narrative of the Declaration of Independence did not fit comfortably.[64] Secondly, Batthyány sent Colonel Alajos Bikkes(s)y, Kossuth's loyal friend, to Britain to explain the dethronement and Hungary's official status. Thus, Batthyány gave permission for Pulszky to keep on working at his best discretion. The only stipulation was that Pulszky should get in touch with Batthyány as soon as possible and provide news from England regularly.[65]

The summer of 1849 was a turning point from several aspects: the Hungarian Propaganda Committee was able to win over the majority of the most prestigious newspapers and shifted their focus to organizing public assemblies in July. They believed that more speeches were necessary to encourage and win the people personally.[66]

Theresa Pulszky arrived in London in July, bringing comfort and hope for Pulszky amidst the growing tensions.[67] Not only did she support Pulszky as his wife, but she had also personally witnessed the ongoing events of the Hungarian War of Independence. Theresa also gained British friends for the Hungarian cause through the highly prestigious salons, at least as many as Pulszky. She duly received praise for her charm and engaging personality, in support for both Pulszky and the Hungarian cause.[68]

[62] Jenő Horváth, "Russia and the Hungarian Revolution (1848-9)," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 12, no. 36 (1934), 633.

[63] Batthyány's letters to Pulszky, May 14 and 19, 1849, Debrecen (Pulszky, *Életem és Korom*, I, 540–542).

[64] N. J. Szenczi, "Great Britain and the War of Hungarian Independence," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 17, no. 51 (1939), 567.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Horváth, "A londoni magyar propaganda-bizottság 1849-ben", 152.

[67] The three children could not yet go to London, they stayed with Gyula Tanárky (1815–1886), who was the loyal employee and friend of the Pulszky family. He managed to smuggle the three Pulszky boys to London in the autumn of 1849, where he became their tutor.

[68] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom,* I, 461, 463.

While Pulszky's restless attempts were not in vain, they could not persuade the adamantly anti-Russian British Foreign Office to take real action against the Russian encroachment of Hungary. The devastating news of the capitulation at Világos on August 13 1849 reached England about a week later, which utterly changed the status and opportunities of Pulszky to represent the Hungarian cause in Britain.[69]

Pulszky's Role in London after the Fall of the Hungarian War of Independence

Immediately after the fall of the Hungarian War of Independence, Pulszky's major task transformed into advocating for the safety of Kossuth and other prominent freedom fighters. Although Kossuth managed to escape to Constantinople – where the Ottoman Empire was welcoming the Hungarian emigrants – both Austria and Russia sought their extraditions. Due to Pulszky's and his friends' former endeavours, Lord Palmerston had already instructed his Minister in Constantinople to reassure the Sultan about England's firm support against any possible Austro-Russian threats.[70]

The next task for Pulszky was to help the arrivals of Hungarian emigrants. In the two years until Kossuth's final landing in 1851 in Southampton, 313 émigrés disembarked in London.[71] The Pulszky couple became the patron of those arriving exiles, while still awaiting their three children; smuggling them to London was challenging, but through loyal friends and connections, the three boys arrived in safety in the autumn of 1849.[72]

Unlike the personal relief for the Pulszky family, the autumn of 1849 revealed great tragedy in Hungary. The bloody Habsburg retaliations took place on October 6, 1849, on the anniversary of the Viennese Uprising, with thirteen top generals hanged in Arad, and the first Hungarian Prime Minister, Lajos Batthyány, shot in Pest. The shameful events not only provoked general outrage in Britain but also led to an outpouring of British sympathy for Hungary.[73]

Although the War of Independence was defeated, the Pulszky couple did not cease their propagandist activities: their first book, titled *Memoirs of a Hungarian Lady, by Theresa Pulszky. A Historical Introduction by Francis Pulszky* was published in 1850, with the aim of providing a historical background to Hungary and its just freedom fight, and a close-report about

[69] Ibid. In the last chapter of Book I titled "A Catastropha Augusztustól októberig" Pulszky referred to the surrender at Világos, August 13, 1849 and to its aftermath as "catastrophe."
[70] Roberts, "The Russian Intervention in Hungary in 1849," 71.
[71] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom,* II, 18.
[72] Ibid., 19.
[73] Roberts, "The Russian Intervention in Hungary in 1849," 60–65.

Theresa's personal encounters with the war. Kabdebo highlights the popularity of the memoir, due to its pleasant and captivating style.[74]

In contrast, Róbert Hermann is more critical: the majority of the work echoes Pulszky's voice only, and, unlike the title, the work "is rather a watered-down version of the Declaration of Independence and [the exiled Kossuth's] Vidin letter."[75]

Neither Kabdebo nor Hermann mentioned the (partially) financial consideration behind the memoir, which is another important aspect, as Pulszky discussed in detail the difficulties of making a living in exile. Their estate in Szécsény had been seized by the Austrian authorities, and they could not expect money from their families due to the surveillance of the secret police. Pulszky was offered financial help, but he did not want to accumulate any debt either. Therefore, both Ferenc and Theresa Pulszky started their writing careers. Their loyal friends kept on helping them both with the correction and editing of texts and with the bureaucratic aspects of publication. Pulszky highlighted the generous remuneration for written works in England: Theresa, for example, was paid 100 guineas for her memoir. Yet it is obvious that money was not the sole reason behind creating the memoir.[76]

It is certain that after the suppression of the War of Independence, the Hungarian cause gained more popularity among British people, which helped the memoir reach a broader segment of society than the previous press propaganda campaign. The book, probably even more than the campaign, had an important role in forming the perception and reputation of both Hungary and its people.[77]

In this setting, it is no surprise that the curious British audience was absolutely intrigued by the leader of the Hungarian resistance, Lajos Kossuth. In addition, Pulszky's endeavours focused on propagating not only the Hungarian cause, but also Kossuth's image as a "Great Man." Like Odysseus or the Bible's David, Kossuth was depicted as the ingenious and brave man behind the dangerous quest of Hungary; a mysterious yet reasonable figure. Kabdebo argues

[74] Kabdebo, *Diplomat in Exile*, 41–42. The newspapers – interestingly those which had been rather close to Pulszky – praised the memoir; Kabdebo finishes the section with the lines: "Apparently the reviewers either missed or were too polite to point out the subtle Hungarian propaganda that permeates the work."

[75] Kossuth's letter from Vidin (north-western Bulgaria), on September 12, 1849. In the letter, Kossuth summarizes the end of the War of Independence and blames General Artúr Görgey (1818–1916) for his unauthorized capitulation. Kossuth addresses the Hungarian exiles of France and England and encourages them to keep on advocating for the Hungarian cause. Róbert Hermann, "The Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–1849," in *Hungarian Historiography* (Aetas. 1999), 65–66. („A többi rész inkább a Függetlenségi Nyilatkozat és a vidini levél érvkészletének felvizezett változata, amelyet a szerző néhány nevezetesebb okmány közlésével próbált hitelesebbé tenni".)

[76] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom*, II, 19.

[77] Ibid. 66.

that throughout his life Pulszky always admired and gravitated towards great men; he liked to be "an *éminence grise* supporting a great man – first Deák, later Kossuth, then Garibaldi,[78] and finally Deák again – while Kossuth had the mould of a charismatic leader."[79] It is important to highlight that while following these great men, Pulszky always sought and prioritized Hungary's best interest. In Zsuzsa Lada's wording, Pulszky was "Kossuth's backstage manager" who systematically prepared everything for the Master's long-awaited arrival. Lada draws a parallel between the structure and mechanism of the Hungarian propaganda and the Kossuth propaganda, and highlights Pulszky's and the British sympathizers' significant role in the creation of a desired image of Kossuth as the heroic leader of the War of Independence. In fact, Kossuth's popularity in Britain was largely due to Pulszky's hard work.[80]

Kossuth's exile in the Ottoman Kütahya was referred to as an imprisonment, making him a living-martyr, the champion of freedom, as well as the humanized hero. The Kossuth-propaganda worked just as well as the previous – and ongoing – propaganda for Hungary. By the time they started to prepare the great leader's journey from the Ottoman Empire – with Anglo-American support[81] – Kossuth's popularity was at its peak and his arrival in October 1851 at Southampton was one of the biggest sensations in England at the time.[82]

By September 1851, the U.S appointed the *USS Mississippi* to sail Kossuth from Smyrna to America. Kossuth's idea was to visit some of the western countries of continental Europe – and naturally England – before arriving in Washington DC. However, as Pulszky writes, the continental European politicians feared Kossuth because of his strong and charismatic personality, which could have caused undesired consequences for the reigning parties and their politicians.[83] Thus, Kossuth was allowed to land in Marseilles, but he was not permitted to travel through France to London. Therefore, he decided to travel to Malaga then board the English ship the *Madrid* to finally reach Southampton, on October 23, 1851.[84]

Both the US Consul, Rodney Crosskey, and the Mayor of Southampton, Joseph Andrews, awaited his landing. Besides the huge crowd that had been gathered to witness Kossuth's arrival, there was Lord Dudley Stuart with

[78] Guiseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882) was an Italian general, revolutionary and republican. Pulszky later befriended him and even named one of his sons after Garibaldi (1861–1926).

[79] Thomas Kabdebo, *Reception of Kossuth in England*, 226.

[80] Zsuzsanna Lada, "The Invention of a Hero: Lajos Kossuth in England (1851)," *European History Quarterly* 43 (2013), 5–26.

[81] Tim Roberts, "Lajos Kossuth and the Permeable American Orient of the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 5 (2015), 802–803.

[82] Kabdebo, *Reception of Kossuth in England*: 226–227. Kabdebo is more specific with the efforts of both the U.S and Britain.

[83] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom,* II, 11–12.

[84] Kabdebo, *Reception of Kossuth in England*, 227.

Palmerston's letter inviting Kossuth to his rural country house. The leading figure of Italian *Risorgimento*, Guiseppe Mazzini, called Pulszky's attention to Palmerston's aim of weakening Kossuth's public reputation by introducing him to the pomp and circumstance of British aristocracy, arguing that the charm of the elite could either spoil Kossuth or simply distance him from the people.[85] However, Kossuth – without supposedly being aware of Mazzini's fear – politely refused Palmerston's offer, stating that he had a mission to speak to the people. The two men never met, presumably due to Queen Victoria's and Prime Minister Lord John Russell's pressure.[86]

For Pulszky – who remained loyal to Kossuth, which was not common among other exiles – this long-awaited meeting was the manifestation of their redeemed connection and friendship. As he writes, it was he and Theresa who first came on board and greeted and hugged the Kossuth family, while the harbour echoed with the ovation of people. It would be hard to tell which was more important to Pulszky: Kossuth's regained friendship, or the return of the genius.[87]

Kossuth's speech in Southampton both surprised and won the people, as his previous studies of the English language and culture during his imprisonments (before 1840, and in Kütahya from 1849) enabled him to write a complex address.[88] His English probably was not flawless, but it was definitely not as weak as he called it in his later speech in Boston, 1852. However, it is certain that Kossuth's first Southampton oration was a great success. Kossuth highly impressed both the people of England and journalists; William Newton, for instance, in the British Unionist and Chartist's article from the *Operative*, claimed that "[n]ever before did a defeated rebel – a branded outlaw – an impoverished exile, meet with such a welcome."[89] The initial sensation did not fade and Kossuth was even encouraged to stay longer in England before moving on to his extensive tour of the United States. So first he visited London and then to Manchester and Birmingham. At last, on November 20, 1851, aboard the *SS Humboldt* and joined by Pulszky, Kossuth left England for the United States.[90]

[85] Ibid.

[86] Réka Anna Szerencsés, "The Palmerston-portrait of Lajos Kossuth in the light of his press appearances published during the Crimean War," *Történelmi Tanulmányok XXX.* (Debrecen, 2022): 146.

[87] Pulszky, *Életem és Korom,* II, 66.

[88] Frank, Tibor, *Britannia vonzásában* [In the attraction of Britain], (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 2018), Angol-amerikai történelmi tanulmányok I. kötet, 25–26. Especially Shakespeare had a great influence on Kossuth, as he often articulated it.

[89] Gregory Claeys, "Mazzini, Kossuth, and British Radicalism, 1848–1854," *Journal of British Studies* 28, no. 3 (1989), 246.

[90] Pordán, Ildikó, "László Károly beszámolója Kossuth amerikai útjáról" [Károly László's account on Kossuth's trip to America], *Kutatási Füzetek* 2 (Janus Pannonius Tudományegyetem: 1996). László Károly (1815–1893) was Kossuth's secretary in 1850–1852 and wrote a diary about Kossuth's American journey.

All in all, Pulszky's pivotal role – both in terms of advocating for Hungary and Kossuth – cannot be denied. The irony about his diplomatic career was that he had achieved more, he was much more successful prior to obtaining the official permission by Batthyány, a document he neither needed nor used.

Conclusion

Besides his talents, there were two factors that enabled Pulszky's diplomatic mission to be more successful than that of his predecessor, Szalay. First of all, Pulszky already had great connections and recommendations addressed to the British elite, and secondly, the *status quo*, the Austro–Russian collaboration and the Tsarist intervention in Hungary, had given a different view on the events of the previous Austian–Hungarian conflict, prompting the British Foreign Office to step out of the shadows of diplomacy. Nevertheless, on the personal level, there were two other factors in Pulszky's "mission" which seriously complicated his tasks: his family, Theresa and the three children (one newborn), who had been left behind; and the initial lack of official authorization, peaking in Kossuth's and in other peers' disappointment and disdain. The lack of official support by the Hungarian Government was rather insignificant in terms of building firm connections with the influential British intelligentsia, which soon had manifested as the sole pragmatic means. The more problematic aspect for Pulszky was his spoiled relationship with Kossuth and his damaged reputation amongst some of his former Hungarian friends and colleges, as he had left Hungary without official permission. Therefore, his diplomatic mission was not only important for the sake of Hungary, but also for his own sake: to regain his reputation by achieving meaningful results in Britain.

There is a strong pattern of dualism in Pulszky's character: he was a cosmopolitan and a patriot at the same time, acting autonomously and relying on great figures, admiring culture and strongly advocating for the sovereignty of Hungary.[91] Pulszky himself also confessed that he had been overall more spirited about Hungary and its future than about cultural matters. Interestingly, at the same time, he had accomplished great reforms in the field of culture in his life. Naturally, as the Pulszky family's name is equivalent with modern museology in Hungary, this aspect of Pulszky's life is incomparable to his diplomatic mission, which, however, cannot be considered as a failure either.[92]

[91] Archaeology, museums – museology, literature, history, languages, etc.

[92] Ferenc Pulszky was the director of the National Museum of Hungary for 25 years (1869–1894); his son, Károly Pulszky (1853–1899) followed his father's passion for high culture and its extensive presentation as well as introduction to the public, and became the first director of the Országos Képtár, the predecessor of the Szépművészeti Múzeum (Museum of Fine Arts) between 1878–1881.

The former is Pulszky's *magnum opus*, while the latter is a determining milestone in Anglo–Hungarian diplomacy.

The rational aim of his mission could not have been more than winning over British public opinion, and by that, gaining political recognition with the hope for support from the British Foreign Office. The idea was to build up Hungary's reputation by articulating its lawful and just endeavours in the name of seeking sovereignty. The logical chain consisted of different steps. First, his mission was to win over the powerful and willing elite of Britain who had further ties to the practical part of the advocacy – the mass distribution of propaganda via various newspapers. Second, its aim was to shape the public opinion about Hungary through the news articles and pamphlets, winning over the people of Britain. And last, Pulszky attempted to put pressure on British foreign politics, supported by a growing pro-Hungarian section of the British public.

What made Pulszky a remarkable diplomat was his sobriety – sobriety in recognizing and maintaining balance in his life, creating a dual life in working in the field of culture and politics, but not a double life. All his characteristics, either his congenital abilities or his acquired skills, determined his success in life. Also, *similis simili gaudet*, Pulszky fitted well into the high circles due to his extensive knowledge and entertaining character, which instantly enabled him to preserve his pre-reputation – thanks to his initial supporters – and to even move forward among the British elite.

There are two ways of understanding and looking at Pulszky's "self-appointed" mission in Britain, either by articulating Pulszky's lack of official authorization and search for security or by highlighting his diplomatic activity and success in London. Géza Jeszenszky highlights Pulszky's leading role in winning over some of the most prominent figures of Britain, and by that, gaining significant public interest for the Hungarian cause in England.[93]

Ferenc Pulszky was a very complex personality, so is his perception. Obviously, Pulszky's autobiography, *My Life and Age*, should be read critically in historiographical terms, but as a memoir, it is an outstanding piece of work, as the author provided an authentic and vivid picture about the complexities of nineteenth century Hungary and the dynamics of the Western World. In his excellent dissertation titled *Palmerston and the Hungarian Revolution*, Charles Sproxton assessed Pulszky's memoir the following way: "Wherever possible, I have tested the accuracy of his [Pulszky's] statement, and have come across nothing worse than slips of memory [...]."[94] Indeed, *My Life and Age* is both an excellent source for the era and an amusing piece of literature.

Pulszky himself was a patriot, but he never aspired to greater glories than what he could achieve, which is often falsely interpreted as his lack of

[93] Jeszenszky, *Lost Prestige,* 50–51.
[94] Sproxton, *Palmerston and the Hungarian Revolution*, 57.

revolutionary attitude or perseverance. It is worth quoting from his letter to the literary historian, critic, and university professor Ferenc Toldy:

> I have grasped much more in my life than I could have excelled in any one profession [...] I have always [...] won the appreciation of clever people, but never more; [...] I am considered necessary by my contemporaries in public life, but they probably do not love me. The younger generations are rather attached to me, and I am content with that. You see, I know my place.[95]

Pulszky admired Kossuth but lived in Deák's legacy: more contemplation and less radicalism.

[95] Szilágyi, János György, "'Ismerem a helyemet' (A másik Pulszky életrajz)" ["I know my place" (the other Pulszky biography)], in his *Szirénzene. Ókortudományi Tanulmányok* [Siren Music. Archaeology Studies], (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2005), 357. The original letter is available: Noémi Viskolcz, Emese Pócsi, "'Believe me, my life has been like any novel of a thousand and one nights.' Autobiographical letters of Ferenc Pulszky from 1869," *Magyar Könyvszemle (*2022), 528–529.

THE QUESTION OF 19TH-CENTURY CAMP NURSING IN THE LIGHT OF THE NURSING MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES OF ZSUZSANNA KOSSUTH AND FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE[1]

Adrienn Gulyás

Introduction

This study aims to provide an insight into the lives and activities of two extraordinary women as care managers. Drawing a parallel between the lives of the Hungarian Zsuzsanna Kossuth, widow of Rudolf Meszlényi, and the English Florence Nightingale is a long-standing Hungarian historical and social demand. It is no coincidence that the majority of the novels about Zsuzsanna Kossuth include a comparison of her with her English contemporary. This competitive thought-pattern was mentioned but not elaborated on in Zsuzsa Osváth's work, *A betegápolás regénye a magyar szabadságharcban* (1961),[2] but it is an interesting fact that Erzsébet Kertész also dedicated an independent volume to her English 'rival' (1976)[3] earlier, while her novels called *Úttörő asszonyok* (1979) and *Kossuth Zsuzsanna* (1983)[4] were written only later. The juxtaposition can also be seen in the latest biographical novel, *Kossuth Zsuzsanna* (2019)[5] written by Anna Berényi. In addition to fiction, the world of sciences and the sphere of public healthcare also show a strong interest in the given topic. The nursing management work of Zsuzsanna Kossuth was examined by Károly Kapronczay and Endre Szemkeő,[6] the statistical activities of Florence Nightingale by Vera

[1] The paper was translated by Viktória Baráth.

[2] Osváth, Zsuzsanna, *A betegápolás regénye a magyar szabadságharcban* [The Novel of Nursing in the Hungarian War of Independence. Textbooks for Vocational Schools in the Field of Healthcare], (Budapest: Medicina, 1961).

[3] Kertész, Erzsébet, *A lámpás hölgy* [The Lady with the Lamp], (Budapest: Móra Ferenc Ifjúsági Könyvkiadó, 1976).

[4] Kertész, Erzsébet, *Kossuth Zsuzsanna*, (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1983).

[5] Berényi, Anna, *Kossuth Zsuzsanna*, (Budapest: Noran Libro Co., 2019).

[6] Kapronczay, Károly and Szemkeő, Endre, "A magyar ápolónőképzés kezdetei" [The Beginnings of Hungarian Nurse Training], *Orvostörténeti Közlemények* 29, no. 183–198. (1983); Gazda, István (ed.), *Az 1848/49-es forradalom és szabadságharc egészségügye és honvédorvosai* [Health and Military Doctors of the 1848/49 Revolution and War of Independence], (Piliscsaba–Budapest: Magyar Tudománytörténeti Intézet/Semmelweis Orvostörténeti Múzeum, Könyvtár és

Kármán[7], and innovations in the area of field nursing by Dóra Czeferner.[8] György Németh, Chief Archivist of the National Archives, paid his tribute with a publication titled "Kossuth Zsuzsanna, az első magyar főápolónő" [Kossuth Zsuzsanna, the First Hungarian Chief Nurse],[9] while Katalin Mária Kincses, a staff member of the Veritas Institute for Historical Research and Archives, commemorated the work of the two lead field nurses with her article titled "Mióta vannak ápolónők a fronton?".[10] On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Zsuzsanna Kossuth's birth, the Hungarian Nursing Association, initiated by Hungarian nurses and healthcare professionals, proclaimed a commemorative year in 2017. The association's vice president, Rózsa Fehér Vártokné, delivered her ceremonial speech under the title "Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) élete és munkássága".[11] Today, the nursing management work of Zsuzsanna Kossuth can scarcely be placed into context without comparison to her English contemporary. In contrast, English memory politics and nursing historiography have remained unaware of the Hungarian national chief nurse. Moreover, it is a great omission of Hungarian historiography that Zsuzsanna Kossuth has not yet been accorded a fitting place in both Hungarian and global historical

Levéltár, 2000); Kapronczay, Károly and Szemkeő, Endre, *Kossuth Zsuzsanna országos főápolónő működése az 1848-1849. évi szabadságharcban* [The Activities of Zsuzsanna Kossuth, National Chief Nurse, during the 1848-1849 War of Independence], https://mek.oszk.hu/05100/05112/pdf/Kapronczay_Szemkeo_KossuthZs.pdf (accessed 12 November 2023); Kapronczay, Károly, "A betegápolás kérdése a szabadságharc idején" [The Question of Nursing during the War of Independence], *Orvosi Hetilap* vol. 126, no. 6 (1985): 340–343.

[7] Kármán, Vera, "Florence Nightingale statisztikai munkássága" [The Statistical Work of Florence Nightingale] *Demográfia* 13, no. 1–2 (1970): 117–124.

[8] Czeferner, Dóra: "Florence Nightingale és a modern nővéri hivatás kezdetei" [Florence Nightingale and the Beginnings of the Modern Nursing Profession], *Újkor.hu,* https://ujkor.hu/content/florence-nightingale-es-a-modern-noveri-hivatas-kezdetei?fbclid=IwAR0wVZvXLCt5zkyks8979zzbTTDNCIJSVfop7gv8TFaBmEfzq1pK9rb5Ids (accessed 04 November 2023); Czeferner, Dóra, "Pillanatképek az ápolónőképzés történetéből" [Snapshots from the History of Nurse Training], *Levéltári Közlemények*, 91 (2020): 71–84; Czeferner, Dóra, "A lámpás mögött. Florence Nightingale és a modern nővérképzés története" [Behind the Lamp: Florence Nightingale and the History of Modern Nurse Training], in Czefner, Dóra – Fedeles, Tamás (eds.), *Dögvészkalauz: Járványok és gyógyításuk története az ókortól napjainkig* [Plague Guide: The History of Epidemics and Their Treatment from Antiquity to the Present], (Pécs: Kronosz Kiadó, 2021), 165–183.

[9] Németh, György, "Kossuth Zsuzsanna, az első magyar főápolónő" [Zsuzsanna Kossuth, the First Hungarian Chief Nurse], https://aktakaland.wordpress.com/2018/08/15/kossuth-zsuzsanna-az-elso-magyar-foapolono/ (accessed 04 November 2023).

[10] Kincses, Katalin Mária, "Mióta vannak ápolónők a fronton?" [Since When Have There Been Nurses at the Front?] https://veritasintezet.hu/hu/mindennapi-tortenelem/6663-miota-vannak-apolonok-a-fronton (accessed 04 November 2023).

[11] Vártokné Fehér, Rózsa, "Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) élete és munkássága" [The Life and Work of Florence Nightingale], http://magyarapolasiegyesulet.hu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Florence-Nightingale-%C3%A9lete-%C3%A9s-munk%C3%A1ss%C3%A1ga.pdf (accessed 04 November 2023).

consciousness, which makes the examination of these two extraordinary careers all the more compelling.

The central thesis of this study, based on the previously formulated guidelines, is not the continuation of the competitive scheme, but the examination of the relevant parts of the two life paths, followed by the substantiation of why it is (not) possible or (not) worthwhile to draw a parallel between the nursing-management activities of the two women. Within the framework of this article, the examination of the ongoing cults of the two historical personalities was not in consideration; furthermore, it does not intend to present the full life careers; in both cases, it reviews the period from the beginning of their professional lives up to their positions strictly connected to nursing, more precisely, military field head nurse roles. The topic, accordingly, can be expanded in any direction in the future without restrictions. Regarding the theme, the writing concentrates on the nursing history of the Hungarian War of Independence of 1849 and the Crimean War, specifically focusing on the official periods of the two head nurses.[12] Following the contextualization of the topic, the study is structured according to four major aspects. The primary subject of the research is the examination of the two women's social status, circumstances, and mentality. An important aspect is the analysis of their qualifications and experiences acquired in the field of nursing, as well as the duration and scope of their held positions, in proportion to which the system of nationally established field hospitals, the number and quality of institutions under their supervision, can be examined.

Zsuzsanna Kossuth and the Issue of Military Field Nursing during the War of Independence

The youngest sister of Lajos Kossuth was born on February 19, 1817 in Sátoraljaújhely, under the name of Zsuzsanna Erzsébet Paulina Kossuth.[13] The Kossuth family belonged to the ancient middle-noble families of Upper Hungary; regarding their origin, they likely rose from the Slavic castle serfs of Turóc County. They were confirmed in their estates in 1263 by Béla IV, and by the 19th century, the family had split into several branches, thus the Kossuths lived in the counties of Borsod, Gömör, Pest, Nógrád, and Zemplén, as well.

[12] Zsuzsanna Kossuth could have held her position as Chief Nurse of All Military Hospitals from her appointment on April 16, 1849, roughly until the resignation of Lajos Kossuth on August 11, 1849. In contrast, Florence Nightingale arrived in Scutari, Turkey, on November 4, 1854, and served as Superintendent of the Female Nursing Establishment in the English General Military Hospitals of Turkey until her departure on July 28, 1856. For the sake of simplicity, I used the term "chief nurse" for Florence Nightingale as well, since the two positions covered similar areas of responsibility.

[13] Susánna Ersebet Paulina, February 19. 1817. FS.

Zsuzsanna's mother, Karolina Weber, was the daughter of a Lutheran postmaster from Olaszliszka; while her father, László Kossuth, was a landless official, initially a registrar, then a manorial attorney at the Andrássy family's estate in Monok. Besides Lajos, Zsuzsanna had three sisters: Karolina, Emília, and Lujza.[14] Few sources are known about Zsuzsanna's girlhood; moreover, her assistance—which could be regarded as the antecedent of her nurse-management activity—beside her brother, Lajos Kossuth (who was active as a cholera commissioner in 1831), is highly questionable.[15] Her later biographer and American friend, Miss Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, commemorated Zsuzsanna's education. According to her, from an early age Zsuzsanna was taught by a private tutor, who instructed her in music, drawing, a deeper knowledge of the Hungarian language, foreign languages, literature, and history.

Upon the Kossuth family's move to Pest, Zsuzsanna's formal education was interrupted, but from then on, she participated in her brother's and father's duties. In Lajos's case, she helped with the editing of the *Törvényhatósági Tudósítások* (Municipal Reports), and in the work of László Kossuth, she had to assist due to his rheumatic hand.[16] On the first day of Whitsun month, 1841, Zsuzsanna Kossuth entered a mixed marriage with the brother of her sister-in-law, Rudolf Meszlényi, then moved to Sárbogárd with her husband.[17] Her more intense participation in public affairs began at the first Pest general assembly of the Protective Association (Védegylet), at which she took part as a member of the Fejér County delegation. Her written report on the event is the so-called *Védegylet letter*.[18]

Zsuzsanna spent seven happy years in marriage, during which two children were born: Gizella and Ilona.[19] Her husband, Rudolf Meszlényi, also a reform politician and landowner in Fejér County, passed away suddenly in January 1848.[20] At that time, Zsuzsanna was eight months pregnant, expecting their

[14] Róbert Hermann, "Lajos Kossuth: A Biographical Sketch," in Katalin Körmöczi (ed.), *"…I Bow Before the Greatness of the Nation": The Kossuth Legacy*, (Budapest: Hungarian National Museum, 1994), 10–13.

[15] Rabati, Magda, *Meszlényiné Kossuth Zsuzsanna, 1817-1854: dokumentumok a Kossuth család életéből* [Zsuzsanna Kossuth-Meszlényi (1817–1854): Documents from the Life of the Kossuth Family], (Budapest: Novoprint, 2005), 27.

[16] In her memoir, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody mentions the *Pesti Hírlap* ("*Pesth Hirlap*"), but given the date of their move to Pest, it is more likely that she referred to the Törvényhatósági Tudósítások [Municipal Reports]. See: Peabody N. C., *Memorial of Madame Susanne Kossuth Meszlenyi* (Boston: printed by John Wilson and Son, 1856), 6–8.

[17] Marriage Record, May 1, 1841: Noble Meszlényi Rudolf (Roman Catholic) and Noble Kossuth Susanna (of the Augsburg Confession). Parish Register (FS).

[18] Rabati, *Meszlényiné Kossuth Zsuzsanna*, 87–90.

[19] Meszlenyi Gisela Katalin Rosa, February 16, 1842. Parish Register (FS); Meszlenyi Ilona Susanna Charlotte, March 9, 1843. Parish Register (FS).

[20] Rudolf Meszleny Meszlényi, husband of Kossuth Susanna. 34 years old, noble county judge. From Székesfehérvár. Died of pulmonary congestion on January 13, 1848. Parish Register (FS).

son—young Rudolf—who was born on February 6, 1848, in Sárbogárd.[21] Zsuzsanna was a woman inclined to illness, with a sensitive disposition, thus the elevated revolutionary mood of March touched her less deeply in her solitude in Sárbogárd. Her lifelong illness, which also accompanied her as head nurse, had already been mentioned in 1837 by her brother, who paid 3 gold pieces to her doctor in a letter addressed to Dr. Uffer for his sister's treatment.[22] After her husband's death, Zsuzsanna struggled with ear inflammation; "though it has burst in one ear, may God grant the other would burst too in a few hours," wrote her mother, Mrs. László Kossuth, to the family friend Antal Vörös.[23] In February, 1848 she suffered from "perpetual suffocation,"[24] and in March, her sister Lujza Kossuth-Ruttkay wrote of her condition to Lajos's wife, Terézia Meszlényi: "the bitter duty fell upon me to support poor Zuzinka then, when she had to gather all her strength—not to let her heart break."[25] In several of her letters, Zsuzsanna similarly reported to her friend Antal Vörös: "Oh! I would sweetly kill myself, for the word of faith is moot, when the true cry of sorrow speaks."[26] "Every point of thought converges solely on me; and my own sick emotion. – My painful fate does not allow me to melt into the great moments of homeland and public interest,"[27] From Zsuzsanna's correspondence with Antal Vörös, it is known that from January to July 1848, she constantly struggled with lethargy and suicidal thoughts caused by mourning. In August 1848, she moved to Pest with her elderly mother and children; for their support, she took in boarders. After the capital was given up in early January 1849, the Kossuth family also fled to Debrecen, but Zsuzsanna's little son could not endure the hard journey from Pest to Szolnok.[28]

In the midst of deep lethargy and hopelessness came Lajos Kossuth's request—almost like a lifeline—to his sister on April 16, 1849, in which he appointed her "the chief nurse of all field hospitals."[29] Zsuzsanna's appointment was

[21] Rudolf Meszlenyi, February 6, 1848 FS.

[22] Rabati, *Meszlényiné Kossuth Zsuzsanna*, 40-41.

[23] Letter from Mrs. László Kossuth to Antal Vörös, January 20, 1848. In: Rabati, *Zsuzsanna Kossuth-Meszlényi (1817–1854),* 99.

[24] Letter from Zsuzsa Kossuth to Antal Vörös, February 6, 1840. In: Kertész, *Kossuth Zsuzsanna,* 32–33.

[25] Letter from Mrs. Ruttkay, née Kossuth Lujza, to Mrs. Lajos Kossuth, March 19, 1848. In: Rabati, *Meszlényiné Kossuth Zsuzsanna,* 100.

[26] Letter from Mrs. Meszlényi, née Kossuth Zsuzsanna to Antal Vörös, April 18, 1848. In: Földes, Éva and Szabó, Emma, *Kossuth Zsuzsánna. A magyar szabadság ismeretlen hősnőjének élete és levelei* [Zsuzsanna Kossuth: Life and Letters of the Unknown Heroine of Hungarian Freedom], (Budapest: Private Publishing, 1944), 41.

[27] Letter from Mrs. Meszlényi, née Kossuth Zsuzsa, to Antal Vörös, July 22, 1848. In: Rabati, *Meszlényiné Kossuth Zsuzsanna,* 113–114.

[28] Halász, Tünde Erzsébet, "Kossuth Zsuzsanna életútja" [The Life Path of Zsuzsanna Kossuth], *Orvostörténeti Közlemények* 57, no.1–4. (2011): 159–165.

[29] Kossuth's decree establishing the position of national chief nurse: "Kossuth intézkedése az országos főápolónői tisztség létesítésével kapcsolatban.". In: *Kossuth Lajos Összes Munkái*

published in the *Közlöny* (Official Gazette) on April 20, 1849.[30] Attitudes toward the head nurse varied. The Minister of War, Artúr Görgei, and the peace-supporter politician and linguist, Pál Hunfalvy, viewed the decision with distrust,[31] while National Chief Field Doctor, Ferenc Flór,[32] Lieutenant General Henryk Dembiński,[33] and Deputy Minister of War, György Klapka, approached the national head nurse with faith.[34] Her scope of duties was most precisely articulated by Artúr Görgei: "The ability of the fair sex for nursing has indeed never been doubted; but nursing a patient, and organizing and leading all the medical care affairs of a nation—or even of a fighting army—are two different things."[35] Zsuzsanna Kossuth carried out her duties within the Ministry of War's Health Department, led by Ferenc Flór, besides which she was entrusted with the supervision of the National Head Nurse Institute and the hospital equipment warehouse.[36]

In April 1849, Zsuzsanna entered the service within a fundamentally developed healthcare system. At the initiative of the National Home Guard Military Council, the establishment of the Honvéd Medical Corps had begun in May 1848: the organization of field hospitals, the determination of the work and responsibilities of Honvéd doctors and their subordinates had started, but Ignác Stáhly, previous head of the Honvéd Medical Corps, had already requested Ferenc Eckstein to organize a course for nurses in civilian and military hospitals.[37] On January 22, 1849, Ferenc Flór took over the leadership of the Health Department from Stáhly, paying increasing attention to the issue of nursing. Equipment and instrumentation were standardized; service and operational regulations were issued; procedures were defined; and hospital order, data

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[Complete Works of Lajos Kossuth], Vol. XV: *Kossuth Lajos 1848/49-ben, V., Kossuth Lajos kormányzóelnöki iratai* [Gubernatorial Documents] *1849 április 15. – augusztus 15*, edited by István Barta, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1955). https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Kossuth-kossuth-lajos-osszes-munkai-1/kossuth-lajos-osszes-munkai-xv-150DA/kossuth-lajos-184849-ben-v-kossuth-lajos-kormanyzoelnoki-iratai-1849-aprilis-15-augusztus-15-150E3/?page=6

[30] Kossuth's decree establishing the position of national chief nurse. Appointment decree of Widow Rudolf Meszlényi, née Zsuzsanna Kossuth, as national chief nurse. *Közlöny* [Bulletin] 2, no. 84 (1849): 1.

[31] Hunfalvy Pál, *Diary 1848–1849*, (Gyomaendrőd: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1986), 265.

[32] Rabati, *Meszlényiné Kossuth Zsuzsanna*, 138, 144.

[33] Ibid., 27.

[34] Ibid., 142, 145.

[35] Görgey, Artúr, *Életem és működésem Magyarországon 1848-ban és 1849-ben* [My Life and Work in Hungary in 1848 and 1849], Revised and annotated by Tamás Katona, translated by István Görgey, (Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1988), vol. 2, 112.

[36] Zakar, Péter, "Görgei Artúr, a Szemere-kormány első hadügyminisztere [Artúr Görgei, the First Minister of War in the Szemere Government]," in Hermann, Róbert et al. (ed.), *Görgei Artúr, "a tiprott hős" – Válogatás a 2016. és 2018. évi Görgei-konferenciák előadásaiból* [Artúr Görgei, "the Trampled Hero": Selected Lectures from the Görgei Conferences of 2016 and 2018], (Budapest: Line Design Kiadó, 2020), 80.

[37] Kapronczay and Szemkeő, "A magyar ápolónőképzés kezdetei", 185.

reporting, and nursing duties were specified. According to the customs of the time, weak-bodied, elderly, convalescent, or disabled soldiers were employed for nursing tasks. In addition, nurses who were either civilians or prisoners of war were also employed on civilian wages.[38] Even the creation of the so-called "medical assistants" group did not bring a breakthrough, as hospital service without military rank—even with higher pay—did not appeal to young surgical students, who instead applied for field service.[39] Sometimes members of ethnic minorities were conscripted for hospital service, but Lieutenant Colonel Geropoldi's[40] complaint also showed the severe shortages in the nursing system: "the local field hospitals suffer severely from a lack of nurses, […] to cover the pressing needs of the time, an Illyrian nurse was employed, who was immediately dismissed to avoid any unpleasant displays."[41]

Due to the above-mentioned facts, women in nursing tasks were indispensable. In the appointment of Zsuzsanna Kossuth, Meszlényi's widow, on April 16, 1849, it is stated:

> the relevant authorities, royal commissioners, and commanders and supervising doctors of the field hospitals are hereby instructed that in all those measures which […] the head nurse, or by her instruction the assistant nurses, shall deem useful and expedient, they shall consider it their unavoidable civil duty to assist in the execution thereof.[42]

Among the most important tasks of the head nurse was the involvement of women in nursing, which Zsuzsanna Kossuth articulated in her calls issued on April 23,[43] May 7,[44] and May 13, 1849:[45] "Every woman who feels strength within herself, seek out the hospitals in the area or in the countryside. […] And if either the authorities or the hospital administration personnel hinder or

[38] Ibid., 142, 145.

[39] Ibid., 187.

[40] Geropoldi Liberale (1791–?), honvéd lieutenant colonel, garrison commander of Szeged and later chief commander of military hospitals there. In: Bona Gábor, "Generals and Staff Officers in the War of Independence 1848–49," https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Bona-bona-tabornokok-torzstisztek-1/tabornokok-es-torzstisztek-az-184849-evi-szabadsagharcban-23DD/iii-eletrajzi-adatok-273C/torzstisztek-27A0/geropoldi-liberale-28EA/ (accessed 10 November 2023).

[41] G. Tóth, Ilona, Az 1848/49. évi forradalom és szabadságharc szegedi dokumentumai a csongrád megyei levéltárban. [Documents of the 1848/49 Revolution and War of Independence in Szeged in the Csongrád County Archives] (Szeged: Csongrád Megyei Levéltár, 2000), 633, no. 335.

[42] Kossuth's decree establishing the position of national chief nurse.

[43] Gazda, *Az 1848/49-es forradalom és szabadságharc egészségügye és honvédorvosai*, vol. 1, 149.

[44] Appeal: "Honleányok, testvéreim!" [Daughters of the Nation, My Sisters!], Meszlényi-Kossuth Zsuzsanna, May 7, 1849. *Közlöny* [Bulletin] 2, no. 99. (1849): 366.

[45] "Honleányok, testvéreim!" [Daughters of the Nation, My Sisters!], Meszlényi-Kossuth Zsuzsanna, May 13, 1849. *Pesti Hírlap* 9, no. 288. (1849): 55.

show weakness in cooperation, report to me immediately." In addition to the recruitment, supervision, and direction of the nurses, Zsuzsanna's authority included the National Head Nurse Institute, which was housed in Debrecen, in the building of the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Trade on Czeglédi street.[46] The central hospital supply depot also fell under the institute—and thus the head nurse's authority—which meant that Zsuzsanna kept inventory of material needs for the field hospitals[47] and supervised the collection, storage, and distribution of supplies. It is no coincidence that she sent out her call to the directors of the field hospitals, requesting them to send in their supply needs.[48]

Her authority was reinforced by Deputy Minister of War György Klapka in his directive, in which he emphatically ordered the medical directors of field hospitals and military commanders to respond to the supply report previously sent by the head nurse, and to maintain proper order in the hospitals under their leadership, since the head nurse, on her inspection rounds, had the authority to report any negligence to the Ministry of War.[49] Zsuzsanna's duties also included inspecting the conditions of the field hospitals and conducting on-site surveys for the establishment of new institutions, for which she made proposals based on her experiences. Alongside Lajos Kossuth's sister, "two assistant nurses from the circle of so-called merciful ladies" were intended to be appointed, but on May 13, 1849, military chief physician Ignác Barna[50] was assigned as her escort.[51] Based on the previously developed travel plan of the Health Department, special attention was recommended to the field hospitals of Tiszafüred, Jászberény, Hatvan, Gödöllő, Vác, Balassagyarmat, Léva, and those generally located at greater distances.[52] Numerous complaints were

[46] Gazda, *Az 1848/49-es forradalom és szabadságharc egészségügye és honvédorvosai*, vol. 1, 148–149.

[47] Letter from the national chief nurse to the City Office of Kecskemét requesting that local women wishing to help present themselves to the city authorities, who will inform them of the current needs of the hospital in Kecskemét for sheets and undergarments. July 7, 1849. In: MNL Bács-Kiskun County Archives. IV. 1604. IV. 110/1–3.

[48] Gazda, *Az 1848/49-es forradalom és szabadságharc egészségügye és honvédorvosai*, vol. 1, 148–149.

[49] To the medical directors and military commanders of the field hospitals. György Klapka, acting Minister of War. May 10, 1849. *Közlöny* [Bulletin] 2, no. 101. (1849), 373.

[50] Barna Ignác (1822–1894), chief physician of the 13th Hussar Regiment, later superintendent of the hospital in Nagykároly, subsequently appointed chief physician alongside national chief nurse Meszlényi-Kossuth Zsuzsanna, with whom he participated in the inspection tour of field hospitals. Gazda, *Az 1848/49-es forradalom és szabadságharc egészségügye és honvédorvosai*, vol. 2, 424.

[51] Ibid., vol. 1, 150.

[52] *Az Egészségügyi Osztály útiterv-javaslata*. MNL OL H 85 1848-1849. minisztériumi levéltár, Honvédelmi Minisztérium Egészségügyi Osztály 1849/1546. *Travel plan proposal of the Medical Department. Hungarian National Archives,* National Archives. H 85 1848–1849. Ministry Archives, Ministry of Defense, Medical Department, nos. 1546/1849.

received about the personnel and conditions of the field hospitals, as buildings not originally intended for healthcare purposes had to be converted in a short time. In Szeged, for example, the Upper Town Minorite convent, the Lower Town Franciscan convent, the Piarist monastery and school buildings were used,[53] but sometimes even factory buildings were designated for this purpose.[54] Besides the constant lack of equipment, the issue of "the daily increasing number of worms and lice in hospitals" caused particular difficulties, which "have very bad consequences for the patients […] For this reason, a vermin-burning furnace was found appropriate in the hospitals."[55]

The head nurse played an important role in the collection of donations, which assisted in covering the material and equipment shortages that the field hospitals constantly suffered from. In her task, the head nurse was aided by her sister-in-law, Terézia Kossuth-Meszlényi, about whom contemporaries held divided opinions, but the lines Zsuzsanna wrote after her husband's death are quite telling: "Teréz! she remains Teréz! – when nature created such a woman, it created a grand lie. […] I thought that the pain of loss would soften her heart, she knew how to cry, but not to forget herself…"[56] Kossuth's wife likewise issued an appeal to Hungarian women,[57] and later, as president of the Women's Association—(first in general, and then specifically the one formed in Debrecen) for the care of patients in field hospitals—she played a prominent role in organizing and collecting donations.[58] Both men and women participated enthusiastically in charitable giving, though at times, entire cities, counties, institutions, or religious communities donated or lent larger sums in a single contribution for the care of the wounded. It was not uncommon for soldiers themselves—wounded comrades or veterans unfit for further service—to donate for the benefit of their still-serving but injured fellow soldiers. Supplies and equipment provided by this self-organized segment of society included: rags, fine and coarse lint, straw mattresses, shirts, underpants, leg coverings, bedsheets, pillows, pillowcases, quilts, bandages, wound dressings, cloths, trusses, undergarments, soap, comforters, wraps, towels, blankets, handkerchiefs, and footwraps.[59]

[53] Military Hospital Affairs, 182. In: G. Tóth, Az 1848/49. évi forradalom és szabadságharc szegedi dokumentumai a csongrád megyei levéltárban, 101.

[54] Lieutenant Colonel Geropoldi Liberale, chief commander of the military hospitals in Szeged, requests the conversion of the Lefter factory and the Tobacco Factory into hospitals. Ibid., 398.

[55] Military Hospital Affairs, 182. Ibid., 101.

[56] Letter from Mrs. Meszlényi, née Kossuth Zsuzsanna to Antal Vörös, 18.04.1848. In: Rabati, *Meszlényiné Kossuth Zsuzsanna,* 105.

[57] Appeal by Mrs. Lajos Kossuth. In: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Országos Levéltár (Hungarian National Archives, National Archives). H 85 1848–1849. Ministry Archives, Ministry of Defense, Medical Department, nos. 1849/708.

[58] Donations. *Közlöny* [Bulletin] 2, no. 121 (1849): 454; Donations. *Közlöny* 2, no. 135 (1849): 510; Donations. *Közlöny* 2, no. 154 (1849): 573.

[59] Donations. *Közlöny* 2, no. 62 (1849): 219; *Közlöny* 2, no. 68 (1849): 244; *Közlöny* 2, no. 90.

The majority of these donations were delivered to the hospital supply depot near Zsuzsanna Kossuth's residence in Debrecen (located at 317 Csapó Street), from where distribution and transport to field hospitals began.[60]

In early June 1849, Minister of War Artúr Görgei dismissed Dr. Ferenc Flór, appointing Dr. Sándor Lumniczer in his position. Lumniczer also lent his support to the work of the national chief nurse. As the Austrian and Russian armies advanced, the capital once again had to be evacuated. In this context, Zsuzsanna sent Mrs. Pál Balogh, the chief nurse of Pest, to Komárom, while calling upon Hungarian women through a public appeal to take in and care for seriously wounded soldiers who remained in the city. Those who could not be placed with families were transported to the hospital of the Order of Mercy in Buda. The execution of this operation was entrusted to Júlia Székáts, Amália Balogh, and Karolina Forster.[61] On July 4, 1849, Zsuzsanna travelled to Szeged with the government to assist with the relocation of the Pest hospital. However, as the military situation rapidly deteriorated, she was forced to flee with her family. Eventually, she was captured by Russian forces in Nagyvárad. At the request of Field Marshal Julius von Haynau of the Imperial-Royal Army, she and her family were handed over and taken to the prison of Buda Castle.[62]

Florence Nightingale and the Question of British Field Nursing in the Crimean War

Florence Nightingale was born on May 12, 1820, in the city of Florence.[63] Her wealthy and politically influential father, William Edward Nightingale,[64] inherited a significant fortune from lead-mining and metallurgy; while her mother, Frances Smith,[65] was the daughter of a radical Member of Parliament, William Smith.[66] The family atmosphere was fundamentally imbued with progressive spirit, as Florence's grandfather, William Smith, supported the abolition of slavery (anti-slavery movement) and advocated for voting rights for Jews, Catholics, and other religious groups. Her mother's sister, Julia Smith,[67] also proved to be a progressive thinker, professing abolitionist principles; while

(1849): 332; *Közlöny* 2, no. 121 (1849): 454; *Közlöny* 2, no. 146 (1849): 547; Gratitude-thanks. *Pesti Hírlap* 9, no. 310 (1849): 132.

[60] Gazda, *Az 1848/49-es forradalom és szabadságharc egészségügye és honvédorvosai*, vol 1, 148.

[61] Kapronczay and Szemkeő, "Kossuth Zsuzsanna országos főápolónő működése az 1848-1849. évi szabadságharcban", 4.

[62] Halász, "Kossuth Zsuzsanna életútja", 159–165.

[63] Florence Nightingale, May 12. 1820 FS.

[64] William Edward Shore Nightingale (1794–1874) FS.

[65] Martha Frances Smith (1782–1880) FS.

[66] William Smith (1756–1835) FS.

[67] Julia Smith (1800– ?) FS.

her cousin, Barbara Bodichon,[68] was one of the leaders of the suffragette movement and a supporter of women's employment.[69] The family spent most of their time at their country estates in Lea Hurst, Derbyshire and Embley Park, Hampshire.

Florence viewed her childhood and girlhood as a gilded cage. Her sister, Parthenope, one year her senior, found enjoyment in embroidery and drawing, fashionable pastimes of the era, while her younger sister was a scientifically curious person craving solitude. William Nightingale viewed the education of his daughters in an enlightened way; he taught them grammar, composition, mathematics, music, modern languages, as well as classical Latin and Greek. His instruction had a decisive effect on his younger daughter, who found traditional female social roles too restrictive.[70] Florence was also influenced by her multifaceted and critically reflective religiosity. Though a follower of the Anglican Church, she also read Catholic mystics and Evangelical and Unitarian writings. The most significant turning point in her life was the winter of 1836, when, upon reading the works of American pastor, Jacob Abbott,[71] she had her first experience of God, which prompted her to devote her life to the service of the Lord. Florence's mission began with nursing and supporting destitute villagers and victims of an influenza epidemic.[72] The initially vague felt divine intention became clearer during the 1840s, and thus Florence gradually turned toward professional nursing.

Nurses at the time belonged to the lowest prestige layer of society. In London, there were twenty teaching hospitals, among them two with medieval origins: St Bartholomew's and St Thomas's. According to the 1841 census, 4,687 women worked as nurses in London, but only 600 of them were full-time hospital employees.[73] At the time of the 1851 census, 25,466 individuals worked as professional nurses in Great Britain, 39,139 as home nurses, and 2,822 as midwives, which still demonstrated the predominance of home care.[74] The image of nurses at the time is best captured through the characters Sarah Gamp and

[68] Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827–1891) GEA.

[69] Lynn McDonald, *Florence Nightingale: A Very Brief History*, (London: SPCK, 2017), 3-4.

[70] Kirsteen Nixon, *Florence Nightingale: Celebrating Her Life and Legacy*, (London: Pitkin Publishing, 2020), 4–5.

[71] According to tradition, Florence Nightingale was sitting on a bench under the cedars of Lebanon at Embley Park when she was called by the Lord. In reality, however, she was reading Jacob Abbott's works in her bedroom: *The Corner-stone, or A Familiar Illustration of the Principles of Christian Truth* (Buffalo, 1852) and *The Way to Do Good. Or The Christian Character Mature,* (Boston, 1836).

[72] Mark Bostridge, *Florence Nightingale: The Woman and Her Legend,* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 52–55.

[73] Ibid., 94–95.

[74] Florence Nightingale, *Notes on Nursing,* (London: Rydon Publishing, 2021), 138-139.

Betsy Prig in Charles Dickens' novel, *Martin Chuzzlewit*,[75] who occupied a position somewhere between a domestic servant and a skilled laborer. Every hospital had a "matron" who acted like a housekeeper. She was responsible for hiring nurses, making schedules, and managing the hospital's inventory. Beneath her was the day nurse, who worked in the wards as a kind of hospital maid, cleaning, making beds, etc. The third group consisted of night nurses, typically elderly charwomen or cleaners, who, for a bowl of food and a few shillings, after their day's work, would sit in the wards from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. watching over patients. Recurring problems associated with nurses included lack of basic hygiene, alcohol consumption, sexual relations with patients, acceptance of bribes, and theft.[76] Thus, Florence Nightingale's attraction to nursing, coming from a wealthy family belonging to the British social elite, was understandably incomprehensible to both her family and high society.

In 1847, Florence travelled abroad in the company of Charles and Selina Bracebridge.[77] During this period, she met Sidney Herbert[78] and his wife, Elizabeth, in Rome, who not only accompanied her on her professional tours of monasteries and hospitals, but also became influential friends and supporters. In 1850, Florence visited Kaiserswerth near Düsseldorf, at the Deaconess Institution, which functioned as a hospital, nursery, workhouse (penitentiary), orphanage, and teacher training centre. This experience intensified her desire for the nursing profession, and she later returned there. In the convent, she prepared medications, learned wound dressing, observed amputations, and kept vigil over dying patients. Here, Florence experienced the sacred service embodied in nursing, as opposed to the previous perception of it as a form of earning money.[79] In January 1853, she was offered the position of "Superintendent of The Establishment for Gentlewomen During Illness", where learned and respectable but low-income upper-class women were cared for. Florence's responsibilities included inspection of the premises, selection of the chaplain, and management of finances.[80] Florence's experiences culminated in her service

[75] Charles Dickens, *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit,* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843).

[76] Bostridge, *Florence Nightingale: The Woman and Her Legend*, 93–96.

[77] Charles Bracebridge (1799–1872) and Selena Bracebridge (1800–1874) were art-loving world travelers who accompanied Florence Nightingale to the Institute of Protestant Deaconesses in Kaiserswerth and later visited her during the Crimean War.

[78] Sidney Herbert (1810–1861) was an English aristocrat and member of the House of Lords, holding the title of 1st Baron Herbert of Lea. As a politician, he later served as Secretary at War during the Crimean War. His wife, Elizabeth Herbert (1822–1911), was a writer, translator, philanthropist, and influential social figure.

[79] Nixon, *Florence Nightingale: Celebrating Her Life and Legacy*, 6–7.

[80] For Florence Nightingale's more than one-year service at the Institution for the Care of Gentlewomen during Illness, see: Louise C. Selanders, Karen Lake, and Patrick Crane, "From Charity to Caring: Nightingale's Experience at Harley Street," *Journal of Holistic Nursing*, 28 (2010).

during the Crimean War, which, according to her own words, was the pinnacle of her life: "I am now in the heyday of my power."[81]

The Ottoman Empire, which was considered the "sick man of Europe," had entered a steep decline by the end of the 19th century, signs of which included Serbian independence movements supported by Russia and Greece's secession from the empire. The breakdown of Turkish territorial integrity also spurred the expansion of Russian, French, and British spheres of interest. Tsar Nicholas I sought control over the strategic straits of the Bosporus and Dardanelles. France increased its eastern influence by occupying Algeria, while British colonial interests aimed to secure trade routes towards India, always intending to keep Russian influence away from the Mediterranean. Overlaying the fragile political-economic status quo was the long-standing Orthodox–Catholic dispute over the supervision of holy sites in Palestinian territory, which ultimately saw the Ottoman government favouring Catholic interests. The issue escalated and resulted in military conflict.[82]

The British army declared its entry into the war on March 28, 1854. During the conflict, William Howard Russell[83] produced the first professional war correspondences, which, thanks to the use of the electric telegraph, were published in newspapers as early as the following day. Additionally, Roger Fenton[84] documented the British army's everyday life through photographs. As the battles increasingly concentrated on the Crimean Peninsula, the issue of the wounded proved most severe there. Under pressure from the outraged public opinion, Secretary of War Sidney Herbert asked Florence Nightingale to organize a nurse corps for the military hospital in Scutari, with government support. According to him: "There is but one person in England that I know of who would be capable of organizing such a scheme…"[85] Florence accepted the position of Superintendent of the Female Nursing Establishment in the English General Military Hospitals in Turkey. She organized a recruitment committee and established a strict set of criteria. Applicants had to have nursing experience and practical knowledge. She selected thirty-eight suitable individuals,

[81] Nixon, *Florence Nightingale: Celebrating Her Life and Legacy*, 6–8.

[82] Bodnár, Erzsébet, "A krími háború (1853-1856). Előzmények és diplomáciai csatározások" [The Crimean War (1853–1856): Antecedents and Diplomatic Struggles]" *Századok* 135, no. 1 (2001), 135–147.

[83] William Howard Russell (1827–1907), correspondent for The Times during the Crimean War, was one of the first professional war reporters. For a detailed version on his war reports, see: Angela Michelli Fleming and John Maxwell Hamilton, *The Crimean War as Seen by Those Who Reported It: William Howard Russel and others* (Baton Rouge, 2009).

[84] Roger Fenton (1819–1869), one of the most celebrated photographers in 1850s England, initially studied law and painting before founding the Royal Photographic Society. Appointed official photographer of the British Museum in 1854, he traveled to Crimea where his war photographs gained wide acclaim.

[85] Nixon, *Florence Nightingale: Celebrating Her Life and Legacy*, 8.

including hospital nurses, Anglican sisters, and Roman Catholic nuns.[86] They left London on October 23, 1854, and arrived in Constantinople via Marseilles. On November 4, 1854, they reached Scutari (modern-day Üsküdar, Istanbul, Turkey).[87] Three military hospitals for Her Majesty's Army were established on the eastern (Asian) side of the Bosporus, alongside a civilian hospital in Smyrna (present-day Izmir, Turkey). The largest British military medical facility was the Scutari hospital, located opposite Istanbul. The second was the Kulalie Hospital, four miles (approx. 6.5 km) from the mouth of the Bosporus, while the Royal Naval and Marine Hospital was situated in Therapia (now Tarabya, Turkey), five miles (approx. 8 km) from the entrance of the Black Sea.[88] Additionally, in the winter of 1855-1856, the hospitals at Renkioi ("Civil Hospital at Renkioi") and Abydos ("Hospital at Abydos") were established.[89]

During her approximately one year and nine months of service, Florence Nightingale was primarily stationed at the Scutari hospital complex. This complex included several buildings, such as the Barrack Hospital, the Stable Hospital, the General Hospital, and the Palace Hospital (Haidar Pasha Hospital), where officers were treated. There was also a designated burial ground for the hospital and logistical points for loading and unloading patients and the wounded from ships. These two sites were located by the northwestern wall of the Barrack Hospital and the southern side of the General Hospital. The former lay on a steep incline, making stretcher transport particularly difficult.[90]

The conditions in Scutari and the British military hospitals were extensively documented by Lord Sydney Godolphin Osborne[91]—a friend of the Secretary of War, Sidney Herbert—who recorded his civilian observations in the 1855 publication called *Scutari and its Hospitals*. A man deeply interested in medical matters, Osborne openly criticized the British Army's limitations and authoritarian approach to hospital administration. When he offered his assistance, he received the dismissive reply: "They had everything—nothing was wanted."[92] Subsequently, Osborne served as a military chaplain and witnessed

[86] The Florence Nightingale Museum (FNM) compiled a database listing all 38 nurses who served in the East, including their names, addresses, professional experience, later postings, and, in some cases, their postwar fate. https://www.florence-nightingale.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Register-of-Nurses.pdf (accessed 16 November 2023).

[87] Nixon, *Florence Nightingale: Celebrating Her Life and Legacy*, 8–9.

[88] The National Archives (UK): WO 32/7580. "Statement of the Proceedings of the Sanitary Commission Dispatched to the Seat of War in the East," (19.02.1855.), 8.

[89] On the hospitals, see: Report to the Right Hon. Lord Panmure, G.C.B., etc., "Minister at War, of the Proceedings of the Sanitary Commission Dispatched to the Seat of War in the East 1855–56," (London: 1857), 57–64.

[90] Ibid., 8–37.

[91] Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne (1808–1889), an English clergyman, writer, and philanthropist, provided detailed reports that contributed to the improvement of military hospitals during the Crimean War.

[92] He repeatedly refuted claims that "they [the wounded] have everything, they lack nothing."

horrific scenes. In the "Dysentery and Cholera Wards," patients lay on decaying wooden planks, dressed in parasite-infested clothes they had worn for months. Many suffered from dysentery, diarrhoea, and "Varna fever" (a form of dysentery). Osborne also wrote of wounded soldiers who arrived on hospital ships, but died before reaching land, in the harbor, or during transport.[93] He reported the inhumane treatment of Russian prisoners with amputated limbs, who were thrown into heaps and cursed by Turkish soldiers during transport from the Barrack Hospital to Kulali.

Florence Nightingale and her nurses provided the only real relief amidst such inhumanity.[94] They arrived the day before the Battle of Inkerman (November 5, 1854) and had to begin work immediately. The nurses were first assigned to the Barrack Hospital, which had been handed over to the British by the Ottoman authorities for medical use. The long barracks were poorly ventilated, lacked operating rooms and laundry facilities, and had no proper drainage.[95] According to Osborne, wounded men lay on wooden platforms lined up in two rows with only a narrow passage between them for the surgeons to move through.[96] With her nurses' help, Nightingale established laundry facilities and kitchens. The former was equipped with hot water and even a drying machine, both of which were sent by Charles Dickens and England's wealthiest woman, Angela Burdett-Coutts.[97] Clean bedding and clothing were especially important for soldiers plagued by vermin and filth. The wounded greatly benefited from the arrival of French volunteer chef Alexis Soyer,[98] who prepared meals rich in vegetables and protein using a specially designed mobile kitchen—replacing the usual salted meat, hardtack, and rum. However, conditions were severely worsened by the proximity of the cemetery, the water supply was contaminated. Additionally, open Turkish-built sewage channels were inadequate for waste disposal. Sometimes, the channels became blocked with animal carcasses, causing sewage to backflow into the wards through the toilet holes. Nightingale's innovations in hygiene and nutrition saved hundreds of lives. It is no coincidence that newspapers dubbed her "The Lady with the Lamp," as she was known to walk the hospital corridors at night. In reality, a fifteen-year-old Irish

[93] Florence Nightingale compiled a table documenting deaths during hospital transports, showing that between September 15, 1854, and April 7, 1855, a total of 30,291 patients arrived at the Scutari Hospital, of whom 2,002 died en route. In: Florence Nightingale, *Notes on Hospitals*, (London, Rydon Publishing, 2021), 40.

[94] Osborne Lord Sidney Godolphin, *Scutari and Its Hospitals*, (London: ?, 1855), 1–22.

[95] McDonald, Florence Nightingale: A Very Brief History, 26.

[96] Osborne, *Scutari and Its Hospitals*, 16.

[97] Angela Burdett-Coutts (1814–1906), the wealthiest baroness in Victorian England, inherited her wealth from her banker family and devoted much of it to philanthropy.

[98] Alexis Soyer (1810–1858), a French chef living in England, volunteered in Crimea, assisting Florence Nightingale in the Scutari Hospital. His portable stove, the "Soyer Field Stove" (also known as the "Scutari Teapot"), remained in use by the British Army for 120 years. See: FNM, Lambeth Palace Road 2, London.

soldier carried the lamp,[99] while Nightingale collected farewell letters from dying soldiers.[100]

The harsh conditions also took their toll on the nurses. Nightingale mentioned in her letters that typhoid fever and cholera claimed victims even among her own detachment. Mrs. Walford died of cholera at the Scutari hospital on August 30, 1855, just a few hours after falling ill.[101] Later, through Elizabeth Herbert, Florence requested six more nurses due to the impact of disease.[102] In addition to illness and death, others were dismissed for unsuitability—five members of the first nursing group were sent home, three for drunkenness.[103] Nightingale, who strongly opposed alcohol consumption, came into conflict with Mary Seacole, the Jamaican herbalist and entrepreneur who ran the British Hotel, offering accommodation, meals, and entertainment (including alcohol) to British officers.[104] Disagreements also arose among head nurses, notably Mary Stanley,[105] who—leveraging her influential connections—organized a second nursing contingent to be sent to Constantinople. Florence had not been informed of this in advance by Sydney Herbert and had already voiced her belief that nuns were unsuitable for nursing duties. Nevertheless, Stanley's 46-member unit included fifteen nuns. Florence ultimately resolved the resulting spatial and communication problems by sending Stanley's group to the Kulali hospital. However, Stanley struggled to maintain discipline. Complaints arose concerning proselytization and flirtation disguised in spiritual language.[106] Due to such abuses, Florence made professional experience her top priority throughout the war. This is evidenced by a surviving nurse application form from The National Archives, which required applicants to list: name, age, past nursing experience (where and how long), personality traits (sobriety, honesty, cleanliness, diligence, intelligence, good temperament), and two references

[99] Popular Anglo-American and European culture often remembers Nightingale with a "Greek" or "Genie Lamp," as also seen on her statue in London. In reality, she used a Turkish accordion-style lantern called a fanoos. See: FNM, Lambeth Palace Road 2, London.

[100] McDonald, *Florence Nightingale: A Very Brief History*, 27–29.

[101] Florence Nightingale, letter to unknown recipient, August 31, 1855, CWFN https://bpb-ca-c1.wpmucdn.com/sites.uoguelph.ca/dist/3/30/files/2019/07/USA1.pdf (accessed 16 November 2023).

[102] Florence Nightingale's letter to Elizabeth Herbert, 26.02.1855. British Library, Manuscripts Reading Room. *Florence Nightingale Papers*, MS 43,396, Vol. IV, f25.

[103] Nurses sent to the Military Hospitals in the East. Florence Nightingale Museum. *Register of Nurses*. https://www.florence-nightingale.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Register-of-Nurses.pdf (accessed 16 November 2023).

[104] For more on Mary Seacole's life and work, see: Helen Rappaport, *In Search of Mary Seacole: The Making of a Black Cultural Icon and Humanitarian,* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2022).

[105] Mary Stanley (1813–1879), daughter of Edward Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, was a philanthropist, nurse, and leader of the second group of nurses sent to Crimea. She was both a friend and occasional rival of Florence Nightingale.

[106] Baylen J. O., "The Florence Nightingale – Mary Stanley Controversy: Some Unpublished Letters," *Medical History,* 18, no. 2, (1974): 186–193.

detailing how long and in what capacity they knew the applicant, as well as a statement about their health.[107]

The war, which had claimed mass casualties over two years, officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on March 30, 1856. However, Florence was the last of the nurses to leave Scutari, doing so only on July 28, 1856. Avoiding public celebrations, she traveled incognito under the alias "Miss Smith" by train to Derbyshire. Malnourished, utterly exhausted, and in poor health, she arrived at Lea Hurst on August 7, 1856.[108] She experienced the symptoms much earlier. By October 1855, she had developed sciatica, ear infections, chronic laryngitis, chronic dysentery, rheumatism, and insomnia—which together suggest that she had contracted "Crimean Fever." Florence suffered from numerous ailments for the rest of her life, which several British historians now attribute to brucellosis, a bacterial infection (Brucella melitensis) discovered in 1887 and spread through contaminated goat's milk. She endured persistent loss of appetite, depression, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, muscular and joint pain, and chronic spinal inflammation.[109]

Summary and Outlook

Social and Family Circumstances

In my study, without claiming to be exhaustive, I have attempted to outline the life paths and nursing organization activities of two women who were contemporaries and pioneers in the history of nursing. During my research, I discovered numerous similarities and differences between the social status, emotional and health backgrounds, as well as the chief nursing work of Zsuzsanna Kossuth and Florence Nightingale. The life of Zsuzsanna Kossuth, who came from a landless lower-noble family from Upper Hungary, was generally influenced by periodically recurring existential insecurity. After the death of her father, the imprisonment of her brother, and later the death of her husband, Zsuzsanna lived her daily life in existential uncertainty, and very often found herself in the role of breadwinner. Florence, who belonged to the English social elite, lived a life characterized by financial security; in fact, she even had her own income from an allowance periodically paid by William Edward Nightingale. During the Crimean War, she contributed from her own wealth to the supply of hospitals multiple times, but her transformation into an icon—supported by her family as well—namely "The Lady with the Lamp" as a trademark, also opened

[107] The National Archives (UK): WO 25/264. "Nurses' Testimonials" (1851–1856).
[108] Nixon, *Florence Nightingale: Celebrating Her Life and Legacy*, 17.
[109] Bostridge, *Florence Nightingale: The Woman and Her Legend*, 281–282.

many wallets for the care of the wounded. In the case of Zsuzsanna, since we cannot tell whether she participated at the age of fourteen in her brother Lajos Kossuth's activity as a cholera commissioner during the 1831 epidemic, it is likely that she acquired her nursing experience primarily through home care practices customary at the time, as she cared for her sisters, Emília and Lujza, and their mother on several occasions. Florence, entering the nursing profession as a result of inner divine inspiration, consciously built the knowledge base from her young girlhood that she later utilized at the Institution for Sick Gentlewomen and subsequently in Crimea. Florence regarded nursing as her vocation and life goal, and thus never considered marriage, although she did have several suitors during her lifetime—including the quite serious figure of Richard Monckton Milnes.[110] Zsuzsanna married Rudolf Meszlényi, a reform politician from Fejér County, in May 1841, and they lived in a happy marriage for about seven years. One year after the death of her husband in early 1848, she also lost her young son, and—as she herself wrote—she was most preoccupied by her ailing, painful emotions, in other words, her grief.

Nursing Management Activity

Before presenting the nursing organizational activities of Zsuzsanna Kossuth and Florence Nightingale, it is important to emphasize that the wartime circumstances themselves required entirely different healthcare and organizational mindsets. The major difference between the 1848/49 Revolution and War of Independence and the Crimean War lies in the theaters of war: the War of Independence took place within Hungary's territory, while in Crimea, the British army marched in with expeditionary forces; however, the front itself stretched over the territory of the Russian Empire, and the Balkan and Transcaucasian theaters of war were on Ottoman territory. During her work, Florence put her own physical and mental health at risk, but her family observed the events from the hinterland, outside the war zone. During Zsuzsanna's term in office, she organized hospital care in accordance with the military operations of the War of Independence, while also needing to care for her family, who lived in full exposure to armed conflict. Zsuzsanna's accomplishments should be evaluated within a time frame of approximately four months, whereas Florence's within a period of one year and nine months. Additionally, the systems of field hospitals were constructed differently: the British army mostly maintained permanent field hospitals behind the front lines, while during the War of Independence, a system was built in several stages, consisting of dressing stations and mobile and permanent field hospitals, which

[110] Richard Monckton Milnes (1809–1885), 1st Baron of Houghton, was an English politician, writer, and poet, and Florence Nightingale's most ardent suitor.

were constantly being deployed or redeployed according to current needs. In numerical terms, the amount of hospitals maintained by the British army in the Crimea did not even reach ten,[111] whereas estimated data regarding the number of permanent and mobile hospitals during the War of Independence suggest that until the surrender in August 1849, over one hundred such institutions operated in the regained parts of the country.[112] Adding further nuance to the picture: the hospital complex in Scutari, divided across different buildings, was a facility with several thousand beds,[113] while in Hungary, hospitals in Komárom with 1,540 beds or in Eger and Miskolc with 1,000 beds were already considered large in comparison to the average bed count of 100–200.[114] There are two common elements in the cases of Zsuzsanna and Florence: they were invited to their positions by a friend or sibling in whom they trusted, and the acceptance of their office divided public opinion in their respective environments.

Although we can speak of an appointment as chief nurse in both cases, significant differences in scope of authority can in fact be observed. Zsuzsanna Kossuth undertook a task of national responsibility within a well-established healthcare system, i.e. the equipment and supply of all field hospitals located in Hungarian territory fell under her responsibility. She also monitored the founding of new hospitals and supervised the accurate logistics of deliveries to and from the material warehouse in Debrecen. Beyond all this, her tasks included addressing the shortages of professional hospital nurses—that is, recruiting and distributing female nurses, as well as appointing chief nurses to oversee their work. Florence Nightingale, as the Supervisor of the Institute of Nurses for All British (Public) Field Hospitals in Turkey, according to the current research, spent most of her time at the hospital complex in Scutari, where she essentially performed the role of hospital director. She continuously maintained the orderliness of the wards, directly supervised food quality with the help of Alexis Soyer, organized and supervised the nurses' duties, introduced hygienic innovations, corresponded for donations and with the family members of deceased or ill soldiers, and managed hospital administration, from which she compiled statistical tables. In summary, numerous similarities and contrasts can be found between the two life paths; however, it is undeniable that both women belonged among the most outstanding figures of their age.

[111] Report to the Right Hon. Lord Panmure, G.C.B., &c., "Minister at War, of The Proceedings of the Sanitary Commission Dispatched to the Seat of War the East. 1855-56," (London: 1857), 57–64.

[112] Gazda, *Az 1848/49-es forradalom és szabadságharc egészségügye és honvédorvosai*, vol 1. 52.

[113] See in detail: The National Archives (UK): WO 32/7580. "Statement of the Proceedings of the Sanitary Commission Dispatched to the Seat of War in the East," (19.02.1855.), 8.

[114] On Hungarian military hospitals during the War of Independence, see: Vasvári Jenő, "A szabadságharc tábori kórházai" [The camp hospitals of the war of independence], Gazda, *Az 1848/49-es forradalom és szabadságharc egészségügye és honvédorvosai*, vol. 1, 50–61.

A "NOBLE PHILHUNGAR": THE PORTRAYAL OF ARTHUR J. PATTERSON AND *THE MAGYARS* IN HUNGARIAN NEWSPAPERS FROM 1862 TO 1870

Renáta Tóth

According to the Hungarian constitutional historian László Péter, who emigrated to the UK following the 1956 Hungarian Revolution,[1] the interpretation of law, constitution and the subsequent political discourse played a crucial role in determining the direction Hungarian politics went in the nineteenth century. He argued that it was only after reading Montesquieu's work that the Hungarian nobility started to realize that their customary laws could actually be considered a constitution. This realization facilitated an eager exploration of the constitutional past which, together with a similarly growing enthusiasm for the cultivation of the Hungarian language, was a pivotal element in shaping Hungarian national identity in the century.[2] These were also at the focus of attention at the great turning points of Hungarian history in the century: the 1848-1849 Revolution and War of Independence and the 1867 Austro-Hungarian Compromise.[3] Among the many different forms nationalism took in the modern world, the Hungarian variant was characterized particularly by a concern with constitutional history and the cultivation of the national language.[4]

The Hungarian national "awakening" lasted several decades, and was rather a gradual process, more a struggle than something happening overnight. The questions of changing or reinterpreting certain laws not only resulted in disputes in the Hungarian Diet, but sparked tension with the Habsburg Court, as Hungary was under Austrian control at the time, though retaining its distinct legal and political identity. These tensions surfaced most radically during 1848–1849 but had already been present for a long time and persisted until the collapse of the Monarchy. As the Austrian Empire was geographically the

[1] Gyáni, Gábor, "Péter László (1929–2008)," *Holmi* 20, no. 7 (July 2008): 983–987.

[2] László Péter, *Hungary's Long Nineteenth Century: Constitutional and Democratic Traditions in a European Perspective*, edited by Miklós Lojkó, (Belgium: Brill, 2012), 184–185, 193, 196.

[3] Although the legal changes that resulted in the creation of the Dual Monarchy are most often referred to in English as the 1867 Compromise, László Péter chose to use the word 'Settlement' instead, because he argued that 'Compromise' had a slightly pejorative overtone. For more details about his approach see: Péter, *Hungary's Long Nineteenth Century*, 8–9.

[4] Ibid., 220.

second-largest country in Europe (after Russia) and the third-most populous,[5] more and more Western countries paid attention to the situation there.

One of these countries was Britain, which was the ultimate role model for Hungarian politicians and public figures in the nineteenth century—in political, economic, cultural, and other significant respects.[6] This special admiration for England started with the French, who began to discover "a great and prosperous country […] hitherto unknown. English institutions and concepts began to be studied, English literary works translated, English patterns of behaviour imitated, and English words borrowed."[7] Several Hungarian noblemen from prince Miklós Esterházy to the counts György Festetich and Ferenc Széchényi managed to visit England "for various purposes," most often to study its industry, agriculture and political system.[8] When Hungarian issues were sporadically discussed in English journals, the same Hungarians were eager to learn British opinion and rejoiced at British sympathy which, they believed, would turn into active support. As Jeszenszky remarked, there was an amount of ambiguity between the British public opinion and the official political action regarding specific Hungarian issues like the 1848-1849 Revolution and War of Independence: the British were generally in favour of liberal movements, but did not endorse the cause of an independent Hungary, due to the strategic position attached to the Austrian Empire as the pivot of the European balance of power.[9]

Public opinion, especially in Britain, mattered to Hungarians very much. Jeszenszky defined the term as "the sum of the opinions on matters of public interest (in other words, public affairs) expressed publicly,"[10] highlighting the role of the English press, especially that of *The Times* and its Viennese correspondents.[11] Another eminent Hungarian historian, Tibor Frank, conducted research on English press releases concerning Hungary in an earlier period from 1865 to 1870 (the years surrounding the 1867 Compromise). He claimed that "during the period from the so-called Reform Era (that is between 1825 and 1848) to the Second World War, the British official and unofficial positions had

[5] Eric Roman, *Austria-Hungary and the Successor States: A Reference Guide from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Facts on File, 2003), 403–404.

[6] László Országh, "Anglomania in Hungary, 1780–1900," *The New Hungarian Quarterly* 22, no. 82 (1981): 168–179.

[7] Logan Pearsall Smith, "The English Element in Foreign Languages," in *Words and Idioms* (London: 1928), 44–46, qtd. in Országh, "Anglomania in Hungary," 168.

[8] Ibid., 170.

[9] Géza Jeszenszky, *Lost Prestige: Hungary's Changing Image in Britain 1894–1918* (Reno, Nevada: Helena History Press, 2020), 40–46.

[10] Jeszenszky, *Lost Prestige*, 49–50.

[11] On the most influential Viennese correspondent of *The Times*, Henry Wickham Steed, see Ágnes Beretzky, *Four Britons and Nationalism. Henry Wickham Steed, Robert William Seton-Watson, Arnold Joseph Toynbee and Carlile Aylmer Macartney in/on East-Central Europe and Beyond (1903–1978)*, (Reno, Nevada: Helena History Press, 2024), especially 16–21.

an impact on the course of events in Hungary."[12] Thus, it might be worthy to look at a "(famous) scholar from England"[13] who got acquainted with and wrote substantially on Hungary and its people at that time, Arthur John Patterson.

Patterson was born in 1835 in London and graduated from Cambridge twenty-four years later.[14] Like many in his generation, his fascination with Hungary was based on the events of the 1848-1849 Revolution and War of Independence, which had been widely covered in English newspapers at the time.[15,16] Having read much about the country, Patterson eventually came for a visit for the first time in 1862 for five months. Then, two longer visits followed: in 1863–1864 he came back for one, and in 1865–1867 for almost two years. As a British expert on Hungary, G. F. Cushing noted that what distinguished him from other travellers was his unfading interest in Hungary and his eagerness to learn the language as much as possible.[17] Patterson's personal experience made him a unique commentator on Hungarian issues, too. When going through several authors and newspapers or magazines in his study, Frank notes that Patterson was particularly well-informed with regard to local Hungarian affairs. This personal approach made his writings on Hungary more authentic, and Frank highlights three of his articles written for the *Fortnightly Review* regarding the 1865 Hungarian elections[18] and his major, two-volume work, *The Magyars: their Country and Institutions* (hereafter referred to as *The Magyars*), published in 1869, just two years after the Compromise.[19] Frank regards the latter as "the single most significant British work of the era of the

[12] Frank, Tibor, "Magyarország az angol publicisztikában (1865–1870)" [(The Portrayal of) Hungary in British Journalism (1865–1870)], *Századok* 109, no. 3–4 (1975): 574. In the original: „A reformkortól a második világháborúig terjedő szakaszban az angolok hivatalos és nemhivatalos állásfoglalásai, a közvélemény reakciói hatással voltak a hazai események alakulására." (All translations from Hungarian are mine – R.T.)

[13] "Vegyesek" [Miscellaneous news], *Orvosi Hetilap,* 8, no. 36 (September 4, 1864): 604. In the original: "Angliából a hires tudós Patterson." https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/OrvosiHetilap_1864_09/?query=Angliából+a+hires+tudós&pg=7&layout=s.

[14] G. F. Cushing, "Arthur Patterson," *Angol Filológiai Tanulmányok / Hungarian Studies in English* 18 (1985): 5, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41273811.

[15] Arthur J. Patterson, *The Magyars: their Country and Institutions,* vol. 1 (London: Smith, Elder et Co 15. Waterloo Place, 1869), 22.

[16] Describing his collection of books still preserved in the library of Eötvös Lóránd University in Budapest, Frank remarks that the rarities in connection with the Hungarian Revolution in his collection were most probably purchased in his youth. See: Tibor Frank, "Arthur J. Patterson and *The Magyars*," in his *Picturing Austria-Hungary: The British Perception of the Habsburg Monarchy 1865–1870* (New Jersey: Center for Hungarian Studies and Publications, 2005), 118–119.

[17] Cushing, "Arthur Patterson," 7, 10.

[18] Arthur J. Patterson, "The Electoral Laws of Hungary," *The Fortnightly Review* 5 (May 15 – August 1, 1866): 1–14; Patterson, "Country Life in Hungary before the Elections," *The Fortnightly Review* 5 (August 1, 1866): 705–717; Patterson, "A Hungarian Election," *The Fortnightly Review* 6 (August 15–December 1, 1866): 129–150.

[19] Frank, "Magyarország az angol publicisztikában," 577, 579.

Compromise," calling the reader's attention to its strong "pro-Magyar bias", as, for instance, Patterson did not even bother to get acquainted with the non-Hungarians.[20]

Patterson's neglect of non-Magyars probably contributed to the warmth of welcome the English traveller received in the capital and beyond, which can be gauged from the newspaper articles written about him or his works. In the following, it is attempted to discuss several newspaper articles in which Patterson and his works were praised. These positive portrayals, published in the years after the Compromise, may have shaped not only the Hungarian assessment of the English but also their self-image: Hungarians admired Arthur J. Patterson not only for his refined Englishness, but also for being pro-Hungarian as an Englishman.

Before turning to the analysis of contemporary newspaper articles concerning Arthur J. Patterson and his works, some background information should be mentioned about Hungarian journalism in the second half of the nineteenth century. One of the main characteristics of Hungarian journalism at the time was the vast number of periodicals in the country, thus, the press was one of the main instruments of civic liberalism. In fact, in the years around the Compromise up until 1875, promoting ideologies was the most significant characteristic of any Hungarian journal. There was also a special type of newspaper that is known in the literature as *közművelődési sajtó*, a journal devoted to educating the public. Among others, it aimed at harmonizing certain Western liberal practices with Hungarian traditions, thus the innovative spirit of liberalism was matched with the national sentiment. This movement was called national liberalism, however, the emphasis shifted gradually from *liberalism*, the head of the phrase, to the modifier, *national*, so it became more and more nationalistic, or nation-focused in nature.[21]

From the 1860s on, a form of Anglomania, or rather, as the renowned Hungarian linguist and literary historian, László Országh puts it, "Anglophily", was very much in the air;[22] the upper classes looked up to England as "the perfect country" and were eager to gain recognition from the much-appreciated land.[23] Even though Anglophilia in Hungary started with translating British belletristic works at the end of the eighteenth century, it soon turned into political interest when pamphlets appeared highlighting the similarities between the British and Hungarian constitutions, in a rather naïve manner. Then in

[20] Frank, "Arthur J. Patterson and *The Magyars*," 109, 113.

[21] Németh G., Béla, "Bevezetés," in Domokos Kosáry and Németh G. Béla (eds.), *A magyar sajtó története. II/2: 1867–1892* [Introduction, in *The History of The Hungarian Press. II/2: 1867–1892*], (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1985), 14–21.

[22] Anglophily is the expression used by Országh, but hitherto I will use the more common phrase to refer to the love of English things, Anglophilia. See Országh, "Anglomania in Hungary," 177.

[23] Ibid., 174.

the Reform Era, Anglophilia spread quickly, so it was no longer only the aristocracy who were open to English influence. Still, it was thanks to one of the greatest figures of Hungarian history, Count István Széchenyi (1791–1860), that Hungarian Anglophilia was given "impetus, meaning, and direction." Inspired by his four visits to England between 1815 and 1833, he set out to modernise his country "making use of and pointing always to the mechanical and technical superiority of Great Britain." Though he repeatedly highlighted the fact that the English should not be imitated in a servile manner, he organised the building of bridges, the introduction of "various kinds of modern machinery" and other Western liberal/capitalist practices based on the English example. His enthusiasm for England (labelled by some of his contemporaries as "Anglomania") made a great impact on his contemporaries, too: many of the younger generations wanted to study the English legal and economic system and dreamt about "adapting English institutions to Hungarian needs."[24]

Thus, the cultural and political currents of Hungarian Anglophilia in the first half of the nineteenth century help to explain the enthusiastic reception of Arthur J. Patterson. Upon his first visit to the country in 1862, a government-affiliated paper, *Sürgöny* [Telegram] revealed that as a Cambridge graduate, Patterson was quite amazed by the rare collection of books that could be found at the Abbey's library at Pannonhalma.[25] His subsequent journeys to Hungary were much longer: he essentially lived among the Hungarians for almost three years.[26] During that time, there were several articles published about his travels, as people were naturally interested in what the English traveller was doing in their country. It is remarkable that his intentions were already openly discussed in newspapers in 1863, for example, in the politically-oriented *Pesti Napló* [Pest Daily], when Hungarians could not see the fruits of his labours yet:

> An Englishman, Arthur Patterson, is writing an extensive work about our country's social, industrial, commercial as well as literary issues, and aiming to collect data on site, he has already visited our country for the second time and plans to stay in Pest for a longer period. He has already gained some knowledge of the Hungarian language and wants to learn it perfectly.[27]

[24] Ibid., 169, 173–174.

[25] "Napi ujdonságok" [Daily news – Editorial], *Sürgöny*, 2, no. 132 (June 8, 1862): 27; no. 133 (June 11, 1862): 29. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/Surgony_1862_2/?pg=293.

[26] Frank, "Arthur J. Patterson and *The Magyars*," 109.

[27] "Különfélék" [Editorial], in *Pesti Napló*, 14, no. 4146 (December 8, 1863): 26. In the original: "Patterson Artur nevü angol terjedelmes munkát ir hazánk társadalmi, ipar és kereskedelmi, ugyszintén irodalmi viszonyairól, s a helyszinén kivánván adatait összegyüjteni, most már másod izben meglátogatta hazánkat, s ezuttal hosszabb ideig szándékozik Pesten tartózkodni. A magyar nyelvről már vannak előismeretei s tökéletesen meg akarja tanulni." https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiNaplo_1863_12/?pg=24&layout=s

Other newspapers, such as *Sürgöny* [Telegram] and an experimental art journal, *Szinházi Látcső* [Opera Glasses],[28] also published short articles about Patterson's second stay in Pest, similarly highlighting his great work in progress and efforts to learn the language.[29]

In the years to come, Patterson's fame rose in Hungary, not accidentally, as the local papers started to reference him as "the famous scholar from England"[30] or "the learned Englishman."[31] Evidence suggests that he participated in – at least – two significant public events in 1864, which were reported in newspapers. Among these only one will be discussed here,[32] a so-called "carnival ball" on February 1, 1864. Apart from praising the amazing ladies and dances, the article in *Szinházi Látcső* also noted that several foreigners were present, among whom, quite remarkably, only Patterson was named.[33] Moreover, he was introduced as *the one* who intended to write an English book on Hungary, and it was also highlighted that he was rather amazed by the ball.[34] Another paper, intended for families, *Családi Kör* [Family Circle][35] went even further by proposing that the pleasant atmosphere of the ball would positively affect the tone of Patterson's new book on Hungary: "Should he write his book under the influence of this ball's impressions, it will be imbued with deep sympathy [for the Hungarians]."[36] As it has been noted earlier, the Hungarians were fascinated by England and the English at the time, so it is understandable that they hoped

[28] Miklóssy, János, „Irodalmi, szórakoztató, művelődési sajtó" [Literary, Entertainment, and Cultural Press], in Kosáry and Németh G. (eds.), *A magyar sajtó története II/1: 1848–1867,* 676.

[29] *Sürgöny*, 3, no. 283 (December 11, 1863): 34, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/Surgony_1863_12/?query=Patterson+Arthur+angol+alattvaló&pg=33&layout=s; *Szinházi Látcső*, 1, no. 241 (December 6, 1863): 943, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/SzinhaziLatcso_1863/?query=kimeritő+munkát+ir&pg=942&layout=s.

[30] "Vegyesek," in *Orvosi Hetilap,* 8, no. 36 (September 4, 1864): 604. In the original: "Angliából a hires tudós Patterson." https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/OrvosiHetilap_1864_09/?query=Angliából+a+hires+tudós&pg=7&layout=s.

[31] "Budapesti hirvivő" [Budapest Reporter], in *Családi Kör*, 5, no. 6 (February 7, 1864): 70. In the original: "Patterson ur, egy tudós angol." https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/CsaladiKor_1864/?query=Patterson+ur+egy+tudós+angol&pg=69&layout=s.

[32] Regarding the other event, a banquet held in honour of Hungarian doctors and scientists, see: "Vegyesek," *Orvosi Hetilap,* 8, no. 36 (September 4, 1864): 603–604 and *A Hon,* 2, no. 199 (September 1, 1864): 4, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AHon_1864_09/?query=orvosok+és+természetvizsgálók+tiszteletére&pg=3&layout=s.

[33] "Az 'urak' bálja" [The Ball of the 'Lords'], *Szinházi Látcső*, 2, no. 34 (February 3, 1864): 125. In the original: "A férfi vendégek körében sok külföldit láttunk. Patterson ur, ki hazánkról egy angol könyvet készül Írni, el volt ragadtatva e vigalom szépségétől. Egy belga vendég is örömteljesen vegyült a tánczkörökbe." https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/SzinhaziLatcso_1864-1/?query=e+vigalom+szépségétől&pg=124&layout=s.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Miklóssy, János, "Irodalmi lapok" [Literary Journals], in Kosáry and Németh G. (eds.), *A magyar sajtó története II/1: 1848–1867*, 417–418.

[36] "Budapesti hirvivő," in *Családi Kör*, 5, no. 6 (February 7, 1864): 70. In the original: "Ha e bál által okozott benyomások alatt irja művét, nagy rokonszenv fogja azt átlengeni." https://adt.

to make a positive impact on the English guest who was more than just another "superficial traveller"[37] – he was known to have come to Hungary with "scholarly purposes" from the beginning.[38]

Being an honourable Englishman with an interest in Hungary was already more than enough to receive several mentions in journals while travelling across the country. Patterson, nevertheless, went even further than that: in 1866, he wrote three articles about the 1865 Hungarian elections in the *Fortnightly Review*,[39] he eagerly collected data for his notable book on Hungary and also made some outstanding translations from contemporary Hungarian literary works to English.[40] Before turning to the examination of the Hungarian assessment of his book, *The Magyars*, let us take a closer look at how Hungarians perceived Patterson's work as a translator of Hungarian literature.

With regard to Patterson as a translator, he received his first mention in 1867. A provincial newspaper aligned with the Centre-Left opposition, *Magyar Polgár* [Hungarian Citizen][41] claimed that Patterson would translate Sándor Halmágyi's novel, *Elv és előitélet* [Principle and Prejudice],[42] which on the other hand did not materialize. What Patterson did translate, however, was the great Mór Jókai's *Az új földesúr* [The New Landlord].[43] Published in 1868, it attracted

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arcanum.com/hu/view/CsaladiKor_1864/?query=rokonszenv+fogja+azt+átlengeni&pg=69&layout=s.

[37] There are two newspapers which compared Patterson's thoroughness to other travellers' superficiality. In *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág* [Hungary and the Wide World], it is written that "Patterson nem tartozott a felületes utazók közé kik tizannyit irnak, mint a mennyit futtában látnak és hallanak; ő mélyen és alaposan kívánt megismerkedni viszonyainkkal" *(Patterson did not belong to the group of superficial travellers who write ten times more than what they could get a fleeting glimpse of – he aimed to gain a deep and thorough understanding of our affairs…).* See the whole context in "Patterson Arthúr," *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág,* 6, no. 8 (February 27, 1870): 88, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/MagyarorszagEsANagyvilag_1870_1/?query=magyarország+és+a+nagyvilág&pg=87&layout=s.

In *Vasárnapi Ujság* [Sunday Journal], however, the superficiality of German travellers was mentioned specifically: "felületes német utazók unalmas hazugságai" (*the boring lies of superficial German travellers*). See the whole context in Endre György, "Patterson J. Arthur," *Vasárnapi Ujság,* 19, no. 27 (July 7, 1872): 329–330, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/VasarnapiUjsag_1872/?query=felületes+német+utazók&pg=332&layout=s.

[38] Napi ujdonságok," in *Sürgöny*, 2, no. 133 (June 11, 1862): 29. In the original: "…tudományos czélokból utazván Magyarországban…" https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/Surgony_1862_06/?pg=28&layout=s.

[39] See Footnote 18.

[40] Cushing, "Arthur Patterson," 6–8.

[41] Gergely, András and Veliky, János, "A politikai sajtó helyzete a kiegyezés után" [The State of the Political Press after the Compromise], in Kosáry and Németh G. (eds.), *A magyar sajtó története. II/2: 1867–1892*, 49.

[42] *Magyar Polgár*, 1, no. 5 (March 31, 1867): 19. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/MagyarPolgar-Kolozsvar_1867/?pg=16&layout=s.

[43] The cover says: "The New Landlord. Translated from the original Hungarian of Maurice Jókai, by Arthur J. Patterson. In two volumes. London: Macmillan and CO. 1868." https://mek.oszk.hu/16300/16303/pdf/16303_2.pdf

considerable press coverage that year, both in Hungary and in England. As Cushing noted, it is of great importance that Patterson chose to translate the very novel of Jókai which had "the most direct political bearing upon the Compromise," as it portrayed the heroic resistance of the Hungarians after the failed 1848-1849 Revolution and conveyed an optimistic message: that Hungary's national virtues could ultimately turn former enemies into allies — a notion that seemed to be affirmed by the 1867 Compromise itself. Patterson's work was and still is lauded as the first complete Jókai novel translated into English, which is all the more remarkable given the relatively short time, that is, five years, that passed between the Hungarian and English publications of the novel.[44] How uncommon this publication was can also be noticed by looking at some articles reporting on the book's release. Before the event,[45] five articles had already been circulated about the upcoming work while after the publication, several reviews from English journals were translated and published in Hungarian periodicals – the first of which appeared in Jókai's own journal, *A Hon* [The Homeland],[46] at the beginning of May 1868. The interconnectedness of Anglophilia and Hungarian nationalism can be already observed in the following excerpt from *A Hon*, which not only demonstrated English interest in Hungarian issues, but also highlighted that even the English, observing from abroad, could recognize the former anti-Hungarian attitude of the Viennese government—the end of which was clearly welcomed in 1868:

> Thanks to Mr. Patterson, we are now able to form a clearer—and presumably truer—conception of the nature of that resistance which sustained the Hungarians from 1849 to 1859 in their opposition to the anti-Hungarian rule of the Viennese government. Yet we would be even more indebted to him were he to render into our language some novel through which we might understand what caused the change in public sentiment in Hungary, and how it came to pass that patriots such as the one portrayed in the hero of the present work could be persuaded to heed the voice of reason and to follow Deák.[47]

[44] Cushing, "Arthur Patterson," 8.

[45] *A Hon,* 6, no. 51 (March 1, 1868): 3, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AHon_1868_03/?pg=0&layout=s; *Magyar Polgár*, 2, no. 28 (March 4, 1868): 99, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/MagyarPolgarKolozsvar_1868-1/?pg=94&layout=s; *Pesti Napló*, 19, no. 5358 (March 4, 1868): 11, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiNaplo_1868_03/?pg=8&layout=s; *Budapesti Közlöny,* 2, no. 54 (March 5, 1868): 642, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/BudapestiKozlony_1868_03/?pg=38&layout=s; *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág,* 4, no. 26 (March 8, 1868): 106, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/MagyarorszagEsANagyvilag_1868_1/?pg=95&layout=s.

[46] Pók, Attila, "A *Hon* (1863–1867)," in Kosáry and Németh G. (eds.), *A magyar sajtó története II/1: 1848–1867*, 639–648.

[47] "Apróságok" [Brief news], *A Hon,* 6, no. 101 (May 1, 1868): 1. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AHon_1868_05/?pg=0&layout=s In the original: "Hála Patterson urnak, most már képesek vagyunk tiszta, s feltehetjük, hogy valódi fogalommal lenni azon szenvedőleges ellentállás természetéről, mely a magyarokat 1849-től 1859-ig fentartá a bécsi kormány nemzetellenes

Most probably, it was because of the 1867 Compromise that there was such an unusual interest in Hungarian matters in England.[48] Still, the Hungarians were very pleased that finally their voice was heard in the West, especially in England, which led to a very selective translation of the original *Saturday Review* article, which runs as follows:

> Written in Hungarian for Hungarians, by one of their most popular authors, it may be accepted as a fair reflex of the feelings which prevailed among them during the period within which its events are supposed to have taken place, and much may be learnt from it regarding the subject which it is mainly intended to illustrate. That subject, says the translator, is "the passive resistance made by the Hungarians to the anti-national domination of the Viennese Government, between the years 1849 and 1859," and of it we are undoubtedly able, thanks to Mr. Patterson, to form a clear and, it may be presumed, a correct idea. We should be still further indebted to him if he would render intelligible to us some story illustrative of the change of feeling which has recently taken place in Hungary, and serving to explain how such obstinate, and apparently unreasonable, patriots as the principal hero of the present work were induced to listen to the voice of reason and of Deak, to sacrifice their dearest animosities, and to forego the longing for revenge which they had so studiously kept alive through years of sorrow and suffering.[49]

Despite recommendations by eager Hungarians, Patterson did not translate any other novel by Jókai later, but he collected and sent five further reviews directly to the renowned writer that were published in England during the summer of 1868.[50] Interestingly, only four of them appeared in the literary daily, *Fővárosi Lapok* [Capital City Papers],[51] in November. As this report contained some thought-provoking remarks reflecting on the Hungarian national sentiment of the time (while celebrating the English reviews on Jókai's newly translated novel), it is worth including a few excerpts:

> A few months ago, a Hungarian novel translated by Sir Arthur Patterson was well received by English (literary) critics, who are among the most discerning in the world. […] To satisfy our national pride, we have collected and translated

uralmával szemben. Még nagyobb hálára kötelezne azonban minket, ha nyelvünkre tenne valamely regényt, melyből megérthessük, mi okozta Magyarországon a hangulatváltozást s miként történt az, hogy az oly patrióták, mint a milyent az előttünk levő regény hősében látunk, rávétethettek hallgatni az okos szóra és Deákra."

[48] Frank, "Magyarország az angol publicisztikában," 584–589.

[49] "The New Landlord," in *The Saturday Review,* 25, no. 651 (April 18, 1868): 525–526. https://archive.org/details/sim_saturday-review-uk_the-saturday-review_1868-04-18_25_651/page/524/mode/2up?q=Patterson

[50] A. J. Patterson to Mór Jókai, undated (1868), Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár Kézirattára, Fond V/435 (Hungarian original).

[51] Miklóssy, „Irodalmi, szórakoztató, művelődési sajtó," in Kosáry and Németh G. (eds.), *A magyar sajtó története II/1: 1848–1867*, 656.

> those precious reviews about his [Jókai's] novel which were published in the most prestigious English journals recently. [...] We cannot really add anything, just want to express our joy over the great acknowledgement with which a Hungarian novel was received in England, in the land of great literature.[52]

As it can be seen from these lines, the fact that these reviews were written in England, with "great" literary traditions, the "most discerning" critics of which it was not easy to live up to, added greatly to the overall value of the reviews and, at the same time, boosted (Hungarian) national pride.

Another work that Patterson translated was Pál Gyulai's *Egy régi udvarház utolsó gazdája* [The Last Master of an Old Manor-House]. It was published only in 1872 in *Cornhill Magazine*,[53] but owing to the report published in *Fővárosi Lapok*, the manuscript could have been completed by 1868 and was even read by an unnamed English critic. From this critic's review, the journal quoted the part in which he praised how nicely artistic expression and national character were intertwined in the book.[54]

Having examined the Hungarian reactions to Patterson's first visits to the country and to his work as a translator of Hungarian literature, it is time to turn to his major work, *The Magyars*, and how it was received in Hungary. The book was published in London in November 1869, only two years after the Compromise; Patterson not only described the contemporary Hungarian political settlement, but provided a detailed account of its social, geographical and economic situation, putting all this into Hungarian historical context. The complexity of the book was probably one of the reasons why Frank lauded it as "the single most significant British work of the era of the Compromise."[55] The book elicited a positive response both in England and in Hungary, however, the latter was not elaborated on by Frank, so in the followings we will be looking at the reception of Patterson's book in Hungarian newspapers.

The first notice of *The Magyars* appeared at the end of 1869, only a month after its publication in London, in a report about the meeting of a renowned literary society called *Kisfaludy Társaság* [Kisfaludy Society] during which the

[52] A. E., "Angol birálók Jókai regényéről" [English Critics on Jókai's Novel], *Fővárosi Lapok,* 5, no. 275 (November 28, 1868): 1096–1097. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/FovarosiLapok_1868_11/?pg=92&layout=s In the original: "Nehány hóval ezelőtt az angol kritika – mely legszigorúbb az egész világon – nagy örömmel fogadott egy magyar regényt is, melyet sir Patterson Arthur forditott angolra. […] Nemzeti büszkeségünknek teszünk eleget, midőn összegyűjtjük és leforditjuk ama értékesebb birálatokat, melyek e regényről a legtekintélyesebb britt folyóiratokkan nem rég jelentek meg. […] Mi részünkről keveset toldhatunk hozzá. Csak örömünket fejezzük ki azon, hogy Angliában – a nagy irodalom e földjén – ily elismeréssel találkozott egy magyar regény."

[53] Cushing, "Arthur Patterson," 8.

[54] *Fővárosi Lapok,* 5, no. 261 (November 12, 1868): 1041. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/FovarosiLapok_1868_11/?pg=36&layout=s.

[55] Frank, "Arthur J. Patterson and *The Magyars*," 109.

book was introduced.[56] A similar report about the same meeting was published in *Fővárosi Lapok*, too.[57] Both journals highlighted the great amount of time the respectable author devoted to Hungary and the "English" thoroughness of his description of the country. They also took pride in having such an amazing foreign member in the Society,[58] who took great pains not only to learn their language, but wrote such a comprehensive work on their country, as well as recommended his work to his Hungarian friends and even sent a copy with an introductory letter in Hungarian. It was also suggested in one of the articles that foreigners could gain a "full and favourable picture"[59] of Hungary from the book, and in the other article, it was emphasised that Patterson "truly rendered a service"[60] for the country. Here, again, Anglophilia and national sentiments were intertwined: Hungarians admired Arthur J. Patterson not only for his refined Englishness, but also for being sympathetic to them as an Englishman.

Apart from these short remarks, a longer article was published about *The Magyars* in *A Hon* shortly after the above-mentioned report.[61] Even though the article referred to some smaller mistakes in Patterson's work, generally, it deemed the book to be "absolutely suitable for informing the English about the outward and inward characteristics of our country."[62] The anonymous writer of the review also compared *The Magyars* to previously published books about Hungary and concluded that Patterson's work "surpassed all the others that came into print recently in terms of content, sound judgement and accuracy of data."[63] Patterson's knowledge of Hungarian was once again mentioned, with the cultural nationalist argument that language was "the most direct key to understanding any nation and country."[64] The journalist spoke highly of the author because of his knowledge of Hungarian, contrasting him with another

[56] "A Kisfaludy-Társaság havi ülése" [The Monthly Meeting of The Kisfaludy Society], *A Hon,* 7, no. 300 (December 30, 1869): 163. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AHon_1869_12/?query=teljes+és+vonzó+képet+nyer&pg=162&layout=s.

[57] *Fővárosi Lapok,* 1, no. 299 (December 31, 1869): 105. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/FovarosiLapok_1869_12/?query=szolgálatot+tett&pg=104&layout=s.

[58] Patterson was elected to be the foreign member of the Kisfaludy Society earlier in the same year, probably in January 1869. Based on *Fővárosi Lapok,* 1, no. 23 (January 29, 1869): 95. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/FovarosiLapok_1869_01/?pg=92&layout=s.

[59] "A Kisfaludy-Társaság havi ülése," *A Hon,* 7, no. 300 (December 30, 1869): 163. In the original: "Szóval az idegen teljes és vonzó képet nyer Patterson müvéből…"

[60] *Fővárosi Lapok,* 1, no. 299 (December 31, 1869): 105. In the original: "igazi szolgálatot tett."

[61] "Patterson könyve hazánkról" [Patterson's Book on Our Homeland], *A Hon,* 7, no. 301 (December 31, 1869): 166. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AHon_1869_12/?query=a+magyar+faj+van+hivatva&pg=165&layout=s.

[62] Ibid. In the original: "teljesen alkalmas arra, hogy belőle az angol nép megismerje hazánk külső és belső tulajdonságait".

[63] Ibid. In the original: "tartalmasság, helyes itélet és az adatok pontossága tekintetében nagyon tulszárnyalja mindazon termékeket, melyeket az utóbbi időkben irtak hazánkról…"

[64] Ibid. In the original: "Patterson plane szükségesnek találta megtanulni nyelvünket, e legegyenesb kulcsot arra, hogy valamely ország és nemzet viszonyait megérthessük."

English traveller to Transylvania, Charles Boner,[65] who, not knowing the natives' language but only German, could only observe the country through "German spectacles." Thus, Patterson eventually came to be praised for having corrected some of Boner's misconceptions about Transylvania, too.

Patterson's corrections of Boner and his sympathy towards Hungary received great attention in the country as they both could be utilized to underpin or even validate the prevailing Hungarian national sentiments in Hungary at the time. Patterson's "pro-Magyar bias"[66] had a great impact on Hungarians' self-image: the respectable Englishman viewed them as a state-forming nation of the Monarchy, "having been called to rule", which was flattering to Hungarians who had already started to promote Hungarian supremacy in the region. Soon, this image was to be even more endorsed and echoed in Hungarian journals:

> By reading Patterson's book, all foreigners will be convinced of the truth that on the multilingual territory of the crown of St. Stephen, it is the Hungarian nation who has been called to political, literary, and social supremacy. […] It is hoped that the choice has been made sufficiently varied to interest several classes of English readers who may wish to make themselves acquainted with *a country to which recent events have given increased importance*. [...] It will probably give the English reader a clearer and more lifelike idea *of a people who have so many claims on our interest and our sympathy*.[67] (Emphasis in the original.)

[65] Charles Boner (1815–1870), an English travel writer, poet and translator, was one of the British authors who engaged with Hungary in the 19th century. He published a book about Transylvania a few years before *The Magyars* appeared: *Transylvania; Its Products and Its People,* (London: Longman–Green–Reader–Dyer, 1865). For more details on Boner's book see: Frank, "Magyarország az angol publicisztikában," 578, 580–581.

[66] Frank, "Arthur J. Patterson and *The Magyars*," 113.

[67] Patterson, *The Magyars*, vi, 3. As quoted in *A Hon,* 7, no. 301 (December 31, 1869): 166. The author of the Hungarian article claims: "Átalában Patterson könyvéből minden külföldi meg fog győződni arról az igazságról, hogy szent István koronájának vegyes ajkú területén a magyar faj van hivatva a fölényre, politikai, irodalmi és társadalmi tekintetben." Then, the same article quotes Patterson in Hungarian: "Azt hiszem, az összeállitás elég változatos arra, hogy az angol olvasók számos osztályát érdekelhesse, ha meg akarnak ismerkedni oly országgal, melynek a legújabb események növekvő fontosságot kölcsönöztek. […] Reménylem, hogy az angol olvasó e könyvbül lehetőleg tiszta és élethü képet fog nyerni arról a népről, melynek oly nagy igénye lehet érdekeltségünkre és figyelmünkre." (These sentences were quoted from the original work of Patterson above.)
What is fascinating is that some great contemporary Hungarian nationalists, for instance, Pál Hoitsy, went even further than the writer of the article by suggesting that Hungarians should even become the first nation of the world. See: Hoitsy, Pál, *Jövőnk s az uralkodóház: Geológia mint politikai tényező* [Our Future and The Dynasty: Geology as a Political Factor], (Budapest: Révai testvérek, 1895), 54, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nnc1.1002506408&seq=5 (accessed 14 May 2025).

These sentences were quoted to highlight the essence of Patterson's work – at least from a Hungarian point of view: they affirmed the feeling of "increased importance" in Hungarians as well as their hope to gain the much desired "interest and sympathy" of the English.

As *The Magyars* was published at the end of 1869, newspapers were still quite eager to introduce the excellent work to the Hungarian readership in the following year. A note about the exceptional English book on Hungary appeared in the first place of the "Literature and Art" column of the newspaper of the Calvinist-leaning noble intelligentsia, *Vasárnapi Ujság* [Sunday Journal],[68] and the journal also featured three longer excerpts from the book later in the same year.[69] The first was from the chapter written about Debrecen,[70] the second from the chapter about Szeged[71] and the last from the chapter about "the Magyar peasant" (to use Patterson's phrase),[72] from which the latter seems to have the most relevance with regard to the national sentiment at the time. What is important to emphasise, however, is that, by citing an Englishman's positive remarks on the nature of the Magyar peasant, the article could have reinforced the very national pride in readers that Patterson himself observed in peasants. Apart from the national pride, Patterson also introduced the Magyar peasant as polite and hard-working, and made some further, rather favourable remarks on the Magyar peasants in comparison with peasants from other nationalities, and thus, he elevated the Hungarians above the rest. Patterson illustrated how the Magyar peasants thought highly of themselves by describing their general conviction that other countries were not able to sustain their residents, which belief was based on the observation that many more people moved into Hungary than moved out. Furthermore, he elaborated on the idea that the Hungarian peasant "shows greater readiness to adopt new modes of cultivating the land than the German colonist,"[73] and is not as

[68] "Irodalom és művészet" [Literature and Art], *Vasárnapi Ujság,* 7, no. 1 (January 2, 1870): 13. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/VasarnapiUjsag_1870/?query=angol+könyv+magyarországról&pg=12&layout=s. For more information about the journal see: Buzinkay, Géza, "A nemesi értelmiség református színezetű lapja, a Vasárnapi Ujság" [The Newspaper of The Calvinist-leaning Noble Intelligentsia, The Sunday Journal], in Kosáry and Németh G. (eds.), *A magyar sajtó története. II/2: 1867–1892*, 217–225.

[69] Arthur Patterson, „A magyar és hazája" [The Hungarian (man) and His Country], *Vasárnapi Ujság,* 17, no. 26 (June 26, 1870): 322–323; Arthur Patterson, „A magyar és hazája II," *Vasárnapi Ujság,* 17, no. 27 (July 3, 1870): 334–335; Arthur Patterson, „A magyar és hazája III," *Vasárnapi Ujság,* 17, no. 28 (July 10, 1870): 350–351. Translation from the English; translator unknown. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/VasarnapiUjsag_1870/?query=A+magyar+és+hazája&pg=325&layout=s, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/VasarnapiUjsag_1870/?query=A+magyar+és+hazája&pg=337&layout=s,https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/VasarnapiUjsag_1870/?query=A+magyar+és+hazája&pg=353&layout=s.

[70] Arthur J. Patterson, „Alföld Cities – Debreczin," in his *The Magyars,* vol. 1.

[71] Arthur J. Patterson, „Alföld Cities – Szeged," in his *The Magyars,* vol. 1, 130–149.

[72] Arthur J. Patterson, „The Magyar Peasant," in his *The Magyars,* vol. 1, 150–205.

[73] Patterson, *The Magyars,* vol. 1, 156–157. A partial Hungarian translation of this

profit-seeking as others either. Patterson also deemed it generally advisable to employ Hungarians, because of their work ethic – he claimed that they did not like the work which was not well done. All these comments clearly illustrate the English traveller's "pro-Magyar bias"[74] which was obviously quite appealing to the Hungarians.

The Hungarophilia in Patterson's book is even more highlighted in the excerpts from *The Magyars* that were featured in the *Székely Hirlap* [Székely Journal][75] in July 1870, around the same time as *Vasárnapi Ujság*, as their selection of excerpts consistently dealt with nationality issues – primarily the political and cultural situation of Hungary's ethnic minorities – a topic that will be discussed in more detail below. To the first published passage a general introduction to Patterson's work was attached, in which the significance of the work as a sign of Western (!) interest in Hungary and Patterson's exceptionally conscientious approach were stressed. Besides, *The Magyars* was claimed to be a book worthy of anyone's attention.[76]

So, "parts of general interest" featured in *Székely Hirlap* were exclusively about the situation of nationalities in Hungary, or in a wider sense, in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Understandably, the first part was about the Transylvanian Szeklers or Székelys after whom the newspaper was named. In this passage, Patterson called Transylvania a citadel in which the Szeklers served as a Hungarian garrison, even declaring that the future political existence of Hungary would largely depend on whether Hungarians could keep this "citadel" or not, which he even referred to as the Hungarian Ireland.[77]

In the next passage featured in the journal, titled "The future of our [Hungarian] nationality,"[78] Patterson's standpoint regarding the future of Hungary was revealed. He observed that countries would tend to become more and more unified, thus he predicted this to be the "fate" of Hungary, too. Though he outlined three different scenarios for such a unification (with Hungarians,

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passage—somewhat adapted—was published as "A magyar és hazája III," *Vasárnapi Ujság* 17, no. 28 (July 10, 1870): 351. The newspaper text reads: "A magyar paraszt a földmivelési módot is könynyebben változtatja, mint a többi magyarországi nép…" https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/VasarnapiUjsag_1870/?query=A+magyar+és+hazája&pg=353&layout=s.

[74] Frank, "Arthur J. Patterson and *The Magyars*," 113.

[75] The *Székely Hirlap* [Székely Journal] was an educational weekly journal published in Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureș) between 1869 and 1875. For more information about journals published in Transylvania at the time see: Gergely, András and Veliky, János, "Balközépi néplapok," [Center-left (people's) Newspapers], in Kosáry and Németh G. (eds.), *A magyar sajtó története*. II/2: *1867–1892*, 107–108.

[76] "'A magyarok, országuk, és intézményeik.' Patterson Arthurtól," *Székely Hirlap,* 2, no. 54 (July 6, 1870): 218. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/SzekelyHirlap_1870/?query=A+magyarok%2C+országuk+és+intézményeik&pg=205&layout=s.

[77] Ibid.

[78] "'A magyarok, országuk, és intézményeik' Patterson Arthurtól. II: A nemzetiségünk jövője," S*zékely Hirlap,* 2, no. 55 (July 9, 1870): 222. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/SzekelyHirlap_1870/?query=A+magyarok%2C+országuk+és+intézményeik&pg=209&layout=s.

Germans or Slavs as the dominant nationality), he clearly promoted the one in which Hungarians would be the driving force of the process. This, in the interpretation of several contemporary Hungarians, e. g. the journalist Jenő Rákosi, would have meant the acceleration of Magyarization.[79] Patterson came to adopt an eerily similar stance in this respect: he basically lamented the fact that – mainly due to the Viennese government's attitude – the assimilation of nationalities had not been successful so far.

The idea of Hungarian supremacy is even more underlined in the next three excerpts that were published in the *Székely Hirlap*. The third and fourth passages from *The Magyars* which were chosen to be featured discussed the other nationalities of Austria-Hungary in a quite condescending manner.[80] Though it is not in the scope of this paper to analyse how certain nationalities were portrayed in Patterson's main work, it must be mentioned that, despite some positive characteristics of non-Hungarians, it was still the Hungarians who were depicted as being superior to other neighbouring nationalities.

It is no wonder that these highly nationalistic ideas culminated in the final excerpt from *The Magyars* which was re-published in *Székely Hirlap*.[81] In this passage, Patterson openly advocated for the supremacy of the Hungarian language which would unite the peoples of the Monarchy – whom he already referred to as "children of a common home(land)." He argued that the socially and politically most significant segment of the population was Hungarian, and both the law and the literature of the land was (mainly) in Hungarian. Consequently, it appeared logical to him that the other nationalities should adopt Hungarian as the official language. A similar attitude can be observed in British imperial policy of the time, particularly in Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Minute* [*on Indian Education*] (1835).[82] There, Macaulay pointed out that Indian dialects were "poor and rude" and were inadequate for carrying significant scientific or literary information, advocating instead for English as the medium of education. He famously asserted the "intrinsic superiority of Western literature" over the literary traditions of India and Arabia. Just as English was

[79] Süle, Antal (ed.), *Rákosi Jenő: Élete és Művei* [Jenő Rákosi: His Life and Works], with contribution by Albert Apponyi, Kunó Klebelsberg, Aladár Schöpflin et al., (Budapest: Fővárosi Könyvkiadó, 1930), 73.

[80] "'A magyarok, országuk, és intézményeik' Patterson Arthurtól. III," *Székely Hirlap,* 2, no. 57, 59 (July 16 and 23, 1870): 230, 238. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/SzekelyHirlap_1870/?query=A+magyarok%2C+országuk+és+intézményeik&pg=217&layout=s, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/SzekelyHirlap_1870/?query=A+magyarok%2C+országuk+és+intézményeik&pg=225&layout=s.

[81] "A magyarok, országuk, és intézményeik" Patterson Arthurtól. IV," *Székely Hirlap,* vol. 2, no. 61 (July 30, 1870): 246. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/SzekelyHirlap_1870/?query=A+magyarok%2C+országuk+és+intézményeik&pg=233&layout=s.

[82] T. B. Macaulay, "Minute by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay dated the 2nd February 1835," in *Selections from Educational Records: Part I, 1781–1839*, ed. H. Sharp (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1919), 107–117.

introduced as the language of culture across the British Empire, Hungarian came to function as a lingua franca – especially in the multiethnic Kingdom of Hungary.

Interestingly, Hungarians also shared Patterson's views on the Hungarian language – Rákosi similarly envisioned a Hungarian-speaking majority in the country when he repeatedly gave voice to his dream of having "thirty million Hungarians."[83] Though Hungarian nationalism could not turn into national imperialism as envisioned by Rákosi, it truly became the central tenet of political life with a great emphasis on language as a marker of national identity.[84] Patterson's arguments also reinforced this view: he maintained that since both the major laws and the dominant literature were Hungarian, moreover, the parts of the country with Hungarian majority population were more developed – thus it could be only the Hungarian language which was predestined to rule over the others.

As previously discussed, newspapers preferred to feature selected passages from Patterson's *The Magyars* which supported the predominant Hungarian nationalistic sentiment of the first years of the Dual Monarchy. Still, there was a journal for the urban middle-class, printed between 1865 and 1884, *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág* [Hungary and the Wide World],[85] which chose to quote Patterson on a completely different issue, that is, the situation of Hungarian literature.[86] It is all the more surprising, since this part highlighted the shortcomings of the Hungarian literary life of the time rather than its strengths. In these excerpts, Patterson complained about "the want of a sufficiently large reading public" and the great influence of politics on literary life as the main issues that needed to be resolved.[87] But such voices were in the minority; the idea that Hungarians are called to supremacy in the region was presented as the core message of Patterson's book. How important the foreign image of Hungary was can be clearly seen from essentially two remarks in this article in *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág*. Firstly, it was recalled that Hungary's fame had already been established in England thanks to the spirit of 1848-1849 and the great statesmanship of Ferenc Deák. Secondly, here Patterson was mainly praised for undertaking the noble task of familiarising his fellow Englishmen with Hungary.

[83] Süle, ed., *Rákosi Jenő: Élete és Művei*, 264, 410–413.

[84] Katherine Verdery, "Internal Colonialism in Austria-Hungary," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* vol. 2, no. 3 (1979): 386, 396, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.1979.9993274.

[85] For more information about the journal, see: Buzinkay, Géza, "A nagyvárosi polgárság lapja, a Magyarország és a Nagy Világ" [The Journal of The Metropolitan Middle Class, Hungary and the Wide World], in Kosáry and Németh G. (eds.), *A magyar sajtó története. II/2: 1867–1892*, 230–239.

[86] "Patterson Arthúr," *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág,* 6, no. 8 (February 27, 1870): 88.

[87] Arthur J. Patterson, "Hungarian Literature," in his *The Magyars,* vol. 2, 186–187, 190–191.

To conclude, Arthur J. Patterson truly undertook this "noble task" of introducing Hungary to the English, which was partly the reason why he received such a great newspaper coverage in Hungary from his first visit to the country in 1862 to the publication of *The Magyars* in 1869 and even at the beginning of the 1870s. A wide range of periodicals featured articles about him and his works, from *Orvosi Hetilap* through *Szinházi Látcső* to *Vasárnapi Ujság*, which all tended to highlight the pro-Hungarian attitude of Patterson, the famous English scholar. Patterson's deep sympathy for Hungary earned him the title "the noble philhungar,"[88] and the devoted Englishman's partisan writings may have further convinced many contemporary Hungarians of the rightness of their cause: national supremacy.

[88] "Patterson Arthúr," *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág,* 6, no. 8 (February 27, 1870): 88. In the original: "a nemes philhungar."

JAMES BRYCE AND HUNGARIAN–BRITISH DIPLOMACY: FROM EARLY ADMIRATION TO STRONG PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT IN THE ERA OF TRIANON

Míra Perger

Introduction

The most obvious question might be why a member of the House of Lords, born in Ireland, with no apparent Hungarian roots, would, during a period marked by anti-Hungarian sentiment in his home country, emerge as one of the principal advocates for Hungarian interests and a key ally among non-Hungarian politicians. This question can however be easily answered when examining James Bryce's biography with greater attention to his political career and journeys abroad. Lord Bryce was keen on Hungary from a young age, which is well documented in his works, speeches, as well as personal letters. The study aims to provide a wide range of secondary, but mostly primary sources on and from the pro-Hungarian politician to help to fully understand the motivation behind his actions and the importance of his strong advocacy during his time.

James Bryce, also known as Viscount Bryce of Dechmont, held many prestigious positions throughout his career, such as Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, President of the Board of Trade, Chief Secretary for Ireland, and finally, the British Minister to the United States. In addition, he held numerous titles and honours, including the Order of Merit (OM), Fellowship of the British Academy (FBA), Fellowship of the Royal Society (FRS), Royal Victorian Order (GCVO), and Privy Council (PC). Bryce was born on May 10, 1838, in Belfast, Ireland, into a family of intellectuals, with an anti-Burgher Presbyterian[1] minister grandfather and a geologist and mathematician brother. Such a pedigree already suggested an extensive biography for the young Bryce, which he moulded into something even greater by his own intellect. After graduating from Glasgow University, he continued his studies at Trinity College, Oxford, where he developed a keen interest in

[1] The Anti-Burgher Presbyterians emerged from the 1747 split within the Scottish Secession Church in opposition to the Burgher Oath. The oath required office-holders to profess loyalty to the established Protestant religion, which the Anti-Burghers rejected on the grounds that it violated their religious conscience and blurred the line between the separation of church and state.

the areas where history, law, and governance converge. His debut essay, *The Holy Roman Empire*, which won him an Arnold Prize at the age of 25, examined these concepts and set the stage for his future success. It was during this period that he visited Hungary for the first time as well. He acquired a Fellowship at Oriel College, Oxford and was reading for the Bar in London.[2] He worked both as a lawyer and as the Regius Professor of Civil Law at Oxford University between 1870 and 1893.[3] However, he did not live the life of an ordinary academic. Bryce had an insatiable curiosity about people and the world around him, which foreshadowed an extensive number of adventures around the globe. During these journeys, Bryce meticulously observed the people, their habits, and the beliefs he encountered. He began writing studies based on these journeys, employing a methodology not of a classical research historian but rather of a contemporary one.[4]

James Bryce's political career was rooted in his interest in contemporary issues, such as the Eastern Question, which also brought him to the centre of politics after a period of focusing solely on the field of law. He began his political career at the age of 42 as a Liberal MP for Tower Hamlets, a borough in East London, speaking in the House of Commons with a highly critical approach to the Disraeli government and its policy regarding the Eastern Question. His advocacy for this issue began after his journey to Transcaucasia and Ararat in 1876, during which he published a travel journal with a matching title in 1878 – the same year he visited Hungary for the second time, detailing it in his *Memories of Travel*. After his travels to the Armenian regions, he instantly began his lifelong advocacy against the oppression and cruelties inflicted upon the minority living within the Ottoman Empire. His duties as a politician did not prevent him from taking part in his regular journeys, and he continued to visit several parts of Europe as well as the United States. His intellectual ability, combined with his experience from extensive traveling, made him the perfect candidate for PM William Ewart Gladstone to be appointed Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1886. However, this position was unfortunately short-lived due to the defeat of the Liberal government in August of the same year, following its failure on the matter of Irish Home Rule. Being personally affected as a northern Irish himself, Bryce closely followed the issue of self-government for Ireland within the UK, and he firmly believed that it could only be solved by Home Rule. However, he also found himself in a genuine dilemma when he met Ulster Liberals, including his own relatives, who opposed the Bill.[5] In 1888, Bryce published *The American Commonwealth*, his second magnum opus after *The Holy Roman Empire*,

[2] Keith Robbins, "History and Politics: The Career of James Bryce," *Journal of Contemporary History 7*, no. 3/4 (1972): 39–40, http://www.jstor.org/stable/259904.

[3] Charles E. Merriam, "James Bryce (1838–1922)," *American Bar Association Journal* 8, no. 2 (1922): 87, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25710764.

[4] Robbins, "History and Politics," 40.

[5] Ibid., 41–43.

a comprehensive study of American government and law, which demonstrated his nuanced understanding of history, legal systems, political science and analytical thought.[6] In 1892, when Gladstone formed his new government, he offered Bryce the office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. As a natural choice, he was also offered membership in the Cabinet Committee, which aimed to solve the issue of the Irish Home Rule Bill, which he still believed was the only right choice.[7]

After the end of the Gladstonian era in 1894, James Bryce became an opposition back-bencher once again and continued his extensive traveling, including to the United States, Canada, North Africa, France, and, most importantly, South Africa. In 1905, when the new Liberal government was formed, he was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland. Bryce's political career, however, culminated in his appointment as British Minister to the United States from 1907 to 1913, owing to his experience in foreign matters from his political career, as well as his background in law and history. His success as a Minister lay in his tirelessness, accepting innumerable invitations from universities, colleges, bar associations, and churches. Bryce was also the first British Minister to make an official visit to the Pacific Coast. His success as a writer and historian allowed him to enter influential intellectual circles as well, which otherwise might have been somewhat suspicious for a British Minister.[8] Throughout his life, he advocated for the cause of nationality and liberty, but with caution: "No one then supposed that national feeling would reach its present height. It is surely carried to excess when men think only of the glory and the power of their State and forget what they owe to mankind at large."[9] Bryce believed that this could only be prevented by having a comprehensive knowledge of history:

> It is absolutely essential to know a long range of history in order to follow the movements and changes of the past; and no one who knows one period or one country without knowing other contemporary countries, and without knowing that which went before and that which comes after, will be able to make real progress or to get the true view.[10]

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 halted James Bryce's retirement, and he continued his career as Chairman of the Inquiry, which aimed to explore the alleged German atrocities in Belgium.[11] It was clear that despite the ongoing war, Bryce was strongly against endorsing any sort of war propaganda. As an example, he advised his colleague Arnold J. Toynbee, who was preparing his Wellington House pamphlet in 1915 on Germany's massacres, to avoid

[6] Merriam, "James Bryce," 88.
[7] Robbins, "History and Politics," 45.
[8] Ibid., 45–49.
[9] Quoted in Ibid., 50.
[10] Quoted in Ibid., 50–51.
[11] Ibid., 51–52.

turning it into a mere "campaign document."[12] Instead, he urged Toynbee to focus on stopping the massacres and holding Germany as accountable as possible.[13] On the brink of the war's end, his attention turned to yet another underdog, vanquished Hungary and later the unjust terms of the Treaty of Trianon, about which he made numerous memorable speeches at the House of Lords. The British politician's sustained efforts in favour of Hungary from 1918 up until his death in January 1922 will be analysed in three, chronologically organised subchapters.

Biography, Background, and the Path to Sympathy for Hungary

James Bryce became a successful author from a young age and an expert in topics such as history, jurisprudence, constitution and politics, which all specially shaped his standpoint on Hungary. In his early work *The Holy Roman Empire*, both the European and the Hungarian history was analysed in intricate detail. Historical developments were introduced in chronological order, including the description of the loss of independence of the Habsburg Monarchy besides the struggles over the constitution. Moreover, he recognised the importance of the 1848-49 Revolution and War of Independence in Hungary as a fight for sovereignty:

> It had made things seem possible—seem even for a moment accomplished—which had been till then mere visions; it had awakened a keen political interest in the people, stirred their whole life, and given them a sense of national unity such as they had not had since 1814.[14]

This early account of Hungary provides critical insight into the perspective of the young historian and later prominent political figure, which culminated in his advocacy against the unfair terms of the Treaty of Trianon following the end of the First World War. As a result of Bryce's profound knowledge of European history, he was perfectly able to understand the background of Hungary's loss of self-determination in the critical months prior to and during the peacemaking.

[12] Quoted in David Monger, "Networking against Genocide during the First World War: The International Network behind the British Parliamentary Report on the Armenian Genocide," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 16, no. 3 (2018): 300, https://doi.org/10.1080/14794012.2018.1482714.

[13] Ibid.

[14] James Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire*, (New York: Macmillan, 1901), 419.

James Bryce began his extensive traveling all around the globe from the 1860s up until his death in 1922, which included but was not limited to Italy, Iceland, Central Europe, the Mountains of Ararat, the United States, Egypt, India, and South Africa.[15] Hungary was no exception; he visited the country for the first time already in 1866. One of the earliest contacts he acquired among Hungarians was with the writer and statesman Baron József Eötvös, whom he met at his villa at Svábhegy, Budapest. In a letter dated August 31, 1866, he described his journey and the visit to Baron Eötvös with great sympathy towards the inhabitants of the country: "The Hungarians are a courteous graceful people, and among their women a wonderfully large proportion of pretty faces."[16] Afterwards, Bryce continued to explore parts of Hungary and visited the Transylvanian Gyergyószentmiklós, Tusnád, Brassó-Kronstadt, Nagyszeben-Hermannstadt, and finally Arad.[17]

One of the most detailed descriptions of Hungary by James Bryce is his *Memoirs of Travel*, where he dedicated an entire chapter to "The Mountains of Hungary" which he visited in 1878. Apart from introducing the history and heritage of the Hungarians in its main events, he described the geography, topography, and scenery of Hungary in an intricate structure. This includes the mountains, such as the Tátra [Tatry], bodies of water, hills, forests, housings, flora and fauna, and so on; but Bryce not only focused on the environment, but on the inhabitants as well: their history, customs, and traditions. An interesting example was his mentioning the interplay of languages, viz. Hungarian and German or Slovak, the great variety of cuisines and cultures, with special attention to dances such as the "Rákóczy March" or "csárdás". Interestingly, Bryce also described Hungary as "the most political country in the world"[18] when he was introduced to the grievances against the Habsburgs or the Russians, but remarked Poland as the true friend of Hungary – "Poles and Hungarians always get on with one another: have they not a common enemy in Russia?"[19]

James Bryce also expressed respect for prominent Hungarian political figures, such as Ferenc Deák, which he first acquired in his youth, when hearing the Hungarian politician's speeches in Scotland. Furthermore, in the autumn of 1889, in Turin, Italy, Bryce expressed true approbation to the veteran Lajos Kossuth, whom he came across during his journey.[20] After *The Holy Roman*

[15] H. A. L. Fisher, *James Bryce* (Viscount Bryce of Dechmont, O.M.), vol. 1 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1927), ix.
[16] Ibid., 126.
[17] Known in Romanian as Gheorgheni, Tușnad, Brașov, Sibiu, and Arad respectively. "Notes and Letters," *The Hungarian Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1938): 750–51.
[18] Viscount Bryce, *Memories of Travel* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1923), 107.
[19] Ibid., 115.
[20] Fisher, *James Bryce*, vol. 1, 51.

Empire, was translated and published in Hungarian,[21] he addressed the following letter on January 7, 1903, to the translator's (Professor Ármin Balogh's) father: "The admiration which I have felt even since 1848-49 for the Hungarian nation and its history makes it seem all the more of an honour to my book to be presented to your fellow countrymen in their own form of speech […]."[22] From the same letter we can learn that Bryce had even attempted to pick up some Hungarian:

> How much do I wish that it had been possible for me to have pursued the study of your noble Magyar language, which I once, many years ago, began to learn, so that I might have been able to appreciate the skill with which, I feel sure, you have rendered the original into your language.[23]

In James Bryce's other acclaimed work, entitled *Studies in History and Jurisprudence (1901)* he continued to outline constitutional history, touching on that of Hungary as well, which he characterised as "ancient and very interesting."[24] The book also explored questions and issues regarding sovereignty when it came to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It is evident that the British scholar was highly knowledgeable about European history as well as constitutional issues, which, combined with his extensive travel experience and the many connections he established, made him a qualified observer when it later came to the issue of post-WWI peace treaties. Taking such background into consideration, Lord Bryce can by no means be considered an uninformed outsider – it is safe to say that he was more of an insider in many cases, let alone compared to several of his British contemporaries.

Ever since its creation in 1867, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had been regarded as a pivot of European stability in Britain. However, as a result of the political calamity in 1905-1906, viz. the constitutional crisis,[25] as well as the

[21] James Bryce, A római szent birodalom. Translated by Ármin Balogh. (Budapest: MTA, 1903).
[22] Ibid., 753.
[23] James Bryce to Professor Ármin Balogh's father, January 7, 1903, Hindleap, Forest Row, Sussex, quoted in "Notes and Letters," *The Hungarian Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1938): 752.
[24] Viscount Bryce, *Studies in History and Jurisprudence*, vol. 1, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1901), 133, https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/bryce-studies-in-history-and-jurisprudence-vol-1.
[25] The Hungarian Constitutional Crisis of 1905-1906 was a political stalemate between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and a coalition of Hungarian oppositional parties, sparked by demands for greater autonomy, including the use of Hungarian language in the military. The crisis ended in a weak compromise that left the military underfunded, deepened political divisions, and failed to address minority rights, ultimately weakening the Dual Monarchy before World War I. See Ágnes Beretzky, *Four Britons and Nationalism: Henry Wickham Steed, Robert William Seton-Watson, Arnold Joseph Toynbee, and Carlile Aylmer Macartney in/on East-Central Europe and Beyond (1903–1978)*, (Reno, Nevada: Helena History Press, 2024), 17–18.

emerging activities of the Slavs and other nationalist groups, the previously pro-Dual Monarchy stance gradually evaporated; before and during the First World War a strong public and political opinion arose, with a highly anti-Hungarian tone: the result of, among others, the meticulously directed campaign by politicians, activists and journalists, especially the journalist Henry Wickham Steed and the historian-publicist Robert William Seton-Watson.[26]

Seton-Watson began to publish articles in newspapers, such as the *British Spectator*, where he claimed that Hungarians treated their minorities, mainly the Slovaks in an autocratic, oppressive way. Moreover, during WWI, he also launched a vast pro-Serbia campaign in Britain, calling attention to other articles, films, leaflets or concerts dedicated to the suffering of the Serbian population.[27] Additionally, Steed visited several conferences in France, contributing to his extensive foreign connections. Steed and Seton-Watson founded the weekly political magazine in the United Kingdom operating between 1916 to 1920 and entitled *The New Europe*, which supported the emancipation of minorities within the Monarchy. The Foreign Office set up the Political Intelligence Department in 1918, where the main members were part of *The New Europe* crew as well – like Steed and Seton-Watson. In the so-called Department of Enemy Propaganda, Seton-Watson was appointed as the Head of the Austro-Hungarian Division.[28] It was clear that following April 1918, the strategy of the British government was to dismember the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy by means of supporting the minorities and demonizing Hungary.

However, Steed and Seton-Watson not only took part in a mere political activism against Hungary but also played an important informatory role when it came to drawing up the peace settlements. Although not a member of the British delegation sent to Paris, in his Memorandum of December 1918, Seton-Watson even proposed new borders for Hungary, largely in service of Romanian, Yugoslavian, or Czechoslovakian interests.[29] Accompanied by Seton-Watson, Steed also travelled to the French capital during early 1919, and their influence was also evident on certain British delegates, such as Harold Nicolson. The member of the Czechoslovak Territorial Claims Commission avowed that he had been "overwhelmingly imbued" with the doctrines of *The New Europe* – a weekly

[26] Zoltán Cora, Erik Papp, and Dorottya Forrai, "The Treaty of Trianon and the Hungarian Post-War Settlement in the Eyes of the British," *AMERICANA E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary* 16, no. 1 (2020), https://ojs.bibl.u-szeged.hu/index.php/americanaejournal/article/view/45451. Beretzky, *Four Britons*, 23–24, and Ágnes Beretzky, "Twin Champions of the Slovak-Cause: Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and Robert William Seton-Watson," *Central Europe* 21, no. 1 (2023): 51–65, 58.

[27] A detailed analysis of the campaign can be found in Patrik Szeghő, "A New Europe: A Foreign Policy Weekly and Yugoslav Unity," *Jel-kép: Communication, Public Opinion, Media 2016*, no. 1: 71–80.

[28] Cora, Papp, and Forrai, "The Treaty of Trianon."

[29] Beretzky, *Four Britons*, 47–48.

journal issued under the auspices of Ronald Burrows and, primarily, Seton-Watson.[30] Apart from *The New Europe*, foreign editor and later editor-in-chief of the prestigious *Times*, Steed could easily influence the British public to support the national self-determination of the Slavic peoples as well as create Great-Romania at the cost of Austria or Hungary.[31]

Ultimately, during and after the Great War, anti-Hungarian sentiment was far more dominant, which, however, does not imply that there were no prevalent and important pro-Hungarian figures. The following subchapter will focus on how Viscount James Bryce gained prominence and respect in the Hungarian public discourse as a result of his frequent support for Hungary.

Stance in the House of Lords amidst Anti-Hungarian Sentiment

It is already palpable that Viscount Bryce was a prolific writer, who voiced his opinion about the First World War in an essay written in 1916 entitled *The Defence of Right*. The author began the essay by calling the Great War a "war of principles,"[32] by which he meant that Great Britain had entered the war to defend the ideology she represented, that is "the cause of Right."[33] Nothing could be gained from any kind of warfare, but much could be lost, he continued, such as the invaluable population from each class and all parts of the country. In the final parts of the essay, Bryce urged the unity of people to preserve humanity in the war and to fight with dignity and self-restraint, as against hurting civilians, women, and children, who had already been victimised by the Germans.[34] Throughout the essay, Germany was depicted as the major enemy, the initial aggressor, and the most barbaric.

After the Great War, Lord James Bryce expressed his support for Hungary for the first time in the House of Lords in December 1919, during the discussion on the Romanian military aggression and occupation of East and Central Hungary, including the capital. His question on the paper – a formally tabled question for discussion for the sitting – first explained the background of the conflict, namely that Romania had territorial claims over the entirety of Transylvania and other parts of Hungary such as the Partium and parts of Banat, totalling twenty-three counties. Bryce requested serious consideration for such

[30] Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking* 1919, (London: Methuen, 1933), 33. On Nicolson, see Ágnes Beretzky, "In Close Tandem? The Parallel Biographies of Harold Nicolson (1886–1968) and Allen Leeper (1887–1935)," *Orpheus Noster* 15, no. 3 (2023): 26–35, 28–29.

[31] Cora, Papp, and Forrai, "The Treaty of Trianon."

[32] James Bryce, "The Defence of Right," in *For the Right: Essays and Addresses (1918),* by Members of the Fight for Right Movement, (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1918), 1.

[33] Ibid., 2.

[34] Ibid., 3–6.

a matter, as he identified the Romanian claim to the whole of Transylvania and to the twenty-three counties of Hungary with "the economic ruin of Hungary."[35] Furthermore, mentioning Austria's dire economic situation after the harsh conditions imposed on her by the Peace Treaty, such as famine, Bryce warned that no such mistake ought to be repeated. Instead, he suggested that an impartial commission be formed to decide which parts should be given to Romania, and which should remain within the borders of Hungary, based on the ethnic principle. Moreover, he called attention to the almost exclusively Hungarian-inhabited area in East Transylvania, called Székelyföld or Szeklerland and warned against its incorporation into Romania, "alien in religion, language and race."[36] He also expressed his concern that the Paris Conference was about to ignore its very own principle, namely national self-determination, which could result in new conflicts, further discontent and an insurrection of war: "everyone who knows the spirit of the Hungarians will know that sooner or later there will be trouble, and that we may have a recurrence of those quarrels of nationalities out of which the last war sprang."[37] Finally, recalling his travels to Hungary back in 1866, Bryce called attention to the long-lasting friendship between England and Hungary, whose short-lived alliance with Germany – the greatest enemy of Great Britain – he attributed to coercion owing to the fear of the Russians. Thus, British sympathy and support for Hungary, he opined, should not wane.[38]

Unfortunately, James Bryce could not alter the course of events in any way. After the devastating Treaty of Trianon was signed on June 4, 1920, which sanctioned Hungary's loss of two-thirds of its territory and two-fifths of its population, however, he brought up the country's fate again in yet another speech in the House of Lords. This particular session focused on the League of Nations, the international organization established in Versailles to guarantee peace. Bryce enthusiastically supported the League and emphasised its potential role in solving the grievances of the Hungarians regarding the new borders imposed by the Peace Treaty.[39] In his speech he referred to the *Lettre d'envoi* by the French Prime Minister Alexandre Millerand, that is an annex to the Treaty of Trianon, which acknowledged that the Treaty "did not everywhere correspond precisely to ethnic or economic exigencies."[40] The text called

[35] Viscount Bryce, Transylvania—Bishops' Memorial, *House of Lords Debates*, 16 December 1919, vol. 38, cc210–9, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1919/dec/16/transylvania-bishops-memorial#S5LV0038P0_19191216_HOL_641 (accessed 30 November 2024).

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Viscount Bryce, The League of Nations, *House of Lords Debates,* 22 July 1920, vol. 41, cc422–67, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1920/jul/22/the-league-of-nations#S5LV0041P0_19200722_HOL_13 (accessed 1 December 2024).

[40] Quoted in Ibid.

attention to the responsibilities of the Council and a Boundary Commission in the League of Nations, with the main goal to determine and possibly resolve the injustices. While Bryce found the report constructive, he continued, together with a few other House of Lords members, to object to the Treaty with Hungary, which in his opinion was "unduly harsh and quite unjust."[41] He closed his speech by expressing hope for progress on the matter in the future by means of mitigation.[42]

Some ten months later on May 5, 1921, the most important parliamentary speech was held by Viscount Bryce during the sitting on the Treaty of Peace Hungary Bill. The speaker addressed the bill as "fait accompli,"[43] calling on the people to have "unavailing protest against, the harshness and injustice which this Treaty displays,"[44] for which it was not the Foreign Office to blame, but the decision-makers in Paris, and later, those in London. Lord Bryce rejected the earlier defences of the Treaty, and only agreed with the fact that the case and the connected questions were a difficult matter. His dedication and affection for Hungary was very clear, as he described the country as a great, and long-standing kingdom on the Continent, which had played an important and determining part of European history. He also described the inhabitants of the country as "exceptionally high-spirited and liberty-loving people."[45] While lauding the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, he also referred to General György Klapka as "one of the heroes of 1849,"[46] and added that under the leadership of Ferenc Deák, the country won its liberty, for which Hungary should have earned the sympathy of England. Bryce dismissed the allegations of Hungarian war guilt, and even added counter-arguments, like Prime Minister István Tisza's widely-known hesitation to enter the conflict.[47]

Viscount James Bryce continued to condemn the decisions about the new borders of Hungary that resulted in a loss of massive territory and three million of the Hungarian-speaking population. However, he was not blinded by his sympathy for the country either and acknowledged a need for change when it came to certain minorities, such as the need to set up Czechoslovakia, or that it was necessary to give the southern and some central parts of Transylvania to Romania. These changes were all founded upon the self-determination of nations, as they were differing in linguistic, ethnic, and in the case of Romanians, religious connections. He also explained that in many cases

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Viscount Bryce, Treaty of Peace (Hungary) Bill, *House of Lords Debates*, 5 May 1921, vol. 45, cc223–50, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1921/may/05/treaty-of-peace-hungary-bill#S5LV0045P0_19210505_HOL_27 (accessed 5 December 2024).
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

determining the right frontiers for each nationality constituted a highly difficult task, such as in the case of the Ruthenians, who had been allocated to Czechoslovakia, even though, according to Bryce, they had never expressed a desire for detachment from Hungary. Additionally, due to historical reasons, many populations of different traditions or languages intertwined, which resulted in the impossibility of determining a clean-cut border. At the Paris Peace Conference, he added, the principle of self-determination was often completely ignored when it came to clear cases, such as the 500,000 Szeklers who were placed under Romanian rule, with important and advanced cities such as Kolozsvár (Cluj), Arad and Nagyvárad (Oradea), almost entirely populated by Hungarians.[48] The reason behind the harsh conditions of the peace treaty for the Hungarians, Bryce concluded, had been their former mistreatment of minorities within their territory. However, he added that this could be applied to all of Central and Eastern Europe, and the Romanian oppression of Hungarians at the time was even more severe than what the Prussians had done in Posen or the Czars in Poland; consequently, he saw no justification for the punishment of Hungary alone among all the other governments.[49] Then, he ended his speech with a reference to Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points on the reconstruction of European borders based on justice, sovereignty, and national self-determination, which had been entirely neglected. Finally, he issued a prophecy: "Unjust settlements seldom last. Can anyone believe that the arrangements embodied in this Treaty are calculated to create peace? They are more likely to sow the seeds of future war, and that at a time when peace is the supreme need of the world."[50] While Viscount Bryce did not live to see the outbreak of the Second World War, he foresaw many of its reasons, meticulously enumerating them in this parliamentary speech in particular.[51]

Bryce in Hungarian Papers: Life and Legacy

As has been shown, after the war ended in the fall of 1918, James Bryce was actively supporting the cause of Hungary in and outside the British Parliament. The following subchapter aims to discuss how this renowned public figure and his postwar pro-Hungarian activity were represented in Hungarian newspapers, touching upon his legacy. The selected newspapers have different ideological backgrounds, which may well allow us to get a more general picture of the assessment of Bryce in Hungary.

[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.

Világ (1910–1926), a liberal, radical newspaper of the elite and an important and influential part of Hungarian media, reported on James Bryce numerous times. In a 1920 issue, along with a biography, his sympathy for the country was described in a highly positive manner, characterising him as the "predestined protector of Hungary." The disregard of him by Hungarian politicians was criticised, on the grounds that if they had asked him for help, they might have been able to influence English public opinion regarding Trianon, either directly or indirectly by Bryce, or his political connections, with the help of British magazines such as *The Contemporary Review*, *New Statesman* and *Nation*, characterised as unbiased and well-informed.[52]

A Christian, socialist daily paper titled *A Nép* informed that James Bryce, along with Thomas Legh, 2nd Baron Newton – Bryce's colleague in the advocacy for Hungarian interests – were recognised for their noble stand on the peace treaty and awarded with gratitude by the Nógrád County Legislative Committee, unanimously decided at the meeting of 15 July 1921. The gratitude was communicated in a transcript to Lord Bryce and Lord Newton, and at the same time all the jurisdictions of Hungary were requested to take similar action.[53]

Magyarság, another Christian daily paper, appealing to intellectuals and nationalists, published an interview between James Bryce and Sándor Tóth that appeared in *Szabadság (Liberty)*, a Hungarian-language newspaper founded in Cleveland in the United States. The interview provided a brief discussion between the Viscount and the writer about Hungary, more precisely, on the postwar treaty, current affairs, and patriotism. Lord Bryce commented on the treaty provisions as unjust, since the population of the regions involved had not been consulted on their preferences. He showed a great deal of sympathy with the Hungarians' simmering resentment over the Treaty. "But the embers smoulder for a long time before their flame finally bursts forth. It would be far better to scatter the coals and pour clean water over them to extinguish even the last spark"[54] continued the Viscount, which illustrated the opinion he voiced at the House of Lords a few months before, that the 1920 Peace Treaty did not provide a fair and long-lasting settlement after the First World War. The

[52] Feleky, Géza, "Lord Bryce," *Világ*, vol. 11, no. 2 (January 2, 1920), 1–2, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/Vilag_1920_01/?query=james+bryce&pg=13&layout=s (accessed 18 December 2024).

[53] "Nógrád vármegye hálája" [Nógrád County is being grateful], *A Nép*, vol. 3, no. 105 (September 7, 1921), 6, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/ANep_1921_09/?pg=105&layout=s (accessed 18 January 2025).

[54] "Bryce Viscount megérti, hogy Magyarország nem nyugodhatik bele igazságtalan sorsába" [Bryce Viscount understands why Hungary cannot become reconciled to her unjust fate], *Magyarság*, vol. 2, no. 199 (September 8, 1921): 5, reporting on an interview originally published in *Szabadság (Liberty)*, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/MagyarsagMilotayPetho_1921_09/?query=james+bryce&pg=48&layout=s (accessed 20 January 2025).

interview ended with a message from Bryce addressed to the Hungarian Americans, urging them to preserve the love for their homeland, to pass this on to their children as well, which Hungary both needed and deserved.[55]

In another issue of *Világ* from 1922, James Bryce's speeches in the House of Lords were described as being with "youthful temperament", "fiery passion" and "avid sympathy" despite his advanced age. The idea that the Viscount was not well-known among Hungarian political figures or in government circles was also suggested by the article; it was argued that the Budapest University should have awarded the *honoris causa* title for his "beautiful work" conducted as a historian and sociologist, "the great English professor, who, at the age of eighty-eight, had embraced the cause of the Hungarians with the fiery youth of twenty-year-olds."[56] Additionally, it was suggested that Bryce should have been awarded with an honorary citizenship as an acknowledgment for his advocacy for the Hungarian cause. It was also suggested that if some Hungarian politicians had been as loud and consistent in declaring English friendship as Lord Bryce was loud and consistent in speaking up for Hungary, England would have expressed its gratitude to such Hungarian politicians in a more ceremonial form. Even though Bryce's support was not motivated by any personal gain whatsoever, the article drew attention to the lack of any kind of gratitude, and it was the tenth time *Világ* encouraged that gratitude.[57]

Shortly after the publication of the article, Viscount James Bryce passed away at the age of 84. An obituary published by *Szózat*, a political right-wing (or even far right) daily newspaper, expressed posthumous gratitude for Bryce on behalf of Hungary, saying that he was characterised as a humanist with a noble heart and brilliant mind, whose love for Hungary did not come from any sort of propaganda or personal interests, but from an academic, liberal background, allowing him to remain unbiased. It was also reported that the 297th session of the National Assembly commemorated the late politician as well. The assembly, which took place on January 25, 1922—three days after Lord Bryce had passed away—opened with a commemoration by a representative, Lajos Szádeczky-Kardoss, who characterised the British academic-politician as one of the most enthusiastic friends of Hungary, as well as the intellectual leader of the advocacy for Hungarian interests within the House of Lords in England. His opinions and speeches on Hungary were presented in brief quotes which were observed as the following: "these words, expressing noble sentiments and thoughts, ensure a lasting tribute to Lord Bryce's memory in the history of the Hungarian nation. One who felt this way toward us and thought

[55] Ibid.

[56] "Elszólás," [Slip of a Tongue], *Világ*, vol. 13, no. 4 (January 5, 1922): 1, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/Vilag_1922_01/?query=elsz%C3%B3l%C3%A1s&pg=1&layout=s (accessed 18 December 2024).

[57] Ibid.

of us in such a manner deserves our gratitude, even in the dust of death."[58] Lajos Szádeczky-Kardoss ended his speech by calling upon the session and the government to convey the nation's grateful reverence to the House of Lords in England. Finally, the paper's section ends with the following lines: "One of the most remarkable personalities in contemporary Europe has left us, and we can take pride in the fact that such a warm-hearted soul held a deep and genuine affection for us, rooted in a true understanding of what it means to be Hungarian."[59]

In conclusion, Hungarian newspapers, quite regardless of political or ideological affiliation, considered James Bryce as a highly positive figure and a friend of the Hungarian nation. No wonder, as everyone in the country, from Socialists to Conservatives, equally condemned the harsh treaty that befell Hungary in 1920. It also became apparent that the Hungarian acknowledgment of the renowned figure was exceedingly limited, primarily to occasional expressions of gratitude – such as those from the Nógrád County Legislative Committee. This absence of recognition was most prominently highlighted by *Világ*. This did not change drastically after his death either, apart from occasional obituaries and the aforementioned parliamentary speech. Arguably, the most significant gesture of gratitude would have been the granting of the honorary membership in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. However, this did not occur due to his sudden death in January 1922.[60]

Conclusion

As it was discussed, Viscount James Bryce firmly advocated for the cause of the Hungarian nation, on a matter that was essentially hopeless, as the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had been an enemy of the British during the Great War and postwar independent Hungary was viewed in London as a weak vanquished state. This period was marked by a strong anti-Hungarian sentiment, which made it extremely difficult to make one's voice heard. His efforts stemmed from a liberal, humanitarian perspective – advocating for the underrepresented

[58] Szádeczky-Kardoss, Lajos, *Nemzetgyűlési napló, vol. XV, 448–500*, National Assembly, Session 297, 25 January 1922. https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/OGYK_KN-1920_15/?pg=505&layout=s (accessed 19 January 2025).

[59] "A Magyarok Barátja" [The Friend of the Hungarians], *Szózat*, January 26, 1922, 4th year, no. 21, page 6, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/Szozat_1922_01/?query=james+bryce&pg=261&layout=s (accessed 18 January 2023).

[60] Gábor Hamza, Emlékezés James Bryce-ra, a kiemelkedő jogtudósra – adalék a magyar–brit kapcsolatokhoz a római jog és a jogtörténet területén = Remembering James Bryce, the Outstanding Legal Scholar – Contribution to the Hungarian–British Legal Relations in the Field of Roman Law and Legal History, *Dokumentáció, MTA IX. Gazdaság- és Jogtudományok Osztálya (Kézirat)*, https://real.mtak.hu/159604/.

and amplifying the voices of the oppressed of his time. He was dedicated to spreading information grounded in fact and evidence, firmly opposing bias and propaganda. Drawing on his extensive expertise in history and jurisprudence, he consistently emphasized the principle of national self-determination.

James Bryce's travel to the region allowed him to develop sympathy for their inhabitants, familiarize himself with their history, traditions, and grievances, and form personal relationships. His characteristic, comprehensive exploration of countries, along with his deep interest in people, set him apart and made him an outstanding historian and politician of his time. The personal connection he established with these areas and their peoples, coupled with his sympathy for their grievances, laid the foundation for his advocacy and reflected his humanitarian attitude. He acted not for personal gain but was driven solely by a sense of personal commitment to spreading knowledge and truth, as free from propaganda as possible, to the general public.

James Bryce's longstanding respect for Hungary was not diminished by the strong anti-Hungarian sentiments prevalent in the Foreign Office and among key decision-makers around 1918-1920. In fact, the transformation of Hungary from a semi-great power into a vanquished, weak and isolated country further deepened the liberal Bryce's sympathy.

EYRE CROWE IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE (1906–1925)

Ágnes Beretzky

Introduction

Undeniably a key figure of the British Foreign Office, Eyre Crowe (1864–1925) was able to shape British foreign policy, especially during the years 1907 to 1925. Unlike contemporary Liberal Imperialists like Edward Grey or Herbert Asquith, Crowe had a European outlook: an all-powerful navy was a major consideration in his thinking, but unlike his colleagues, not only as a means to protect the Empire and avoid war, but rather as a tool to preserve the balance of power and prevent the dominance of a single power in Europe. He was a realist who grounded his thinking about foreign relations in power, believing that the balance of power was the cornerstone of British policy before the war and worked to encourage his government to vehemently counter any challenges to the European balance, particularly those posed by Germany.

Crowe's pre-1914 work and ideas have received ample scholarly attention in contrast to his activities during and after the Peace Conference, where he truly had a significant impact on both British policy and postwar Europe. It is all the more interesting as after WWI, Europe had lost much of its prominence in influencing world politics and the war had irrevocably changed the balance of power. Therefore, it is astounding, too, that British politicians and diplomats like Crowe had as much influence as they did.

Not much has been written on Eyre Crowe himself, and the only so far available, much hagiographic biography, by his youngest daughter Sybil, is generally believed to be so biassed that it has been suggested to include the subtitle, "Daddy was always right."[1] The present paper aims to provide a much more detached analysis of Crowe's activity within the Foreign Office, arguing that the greatest influence he had over British diplomacy was not so much through his pre-1918 anti-German stance, but rather his 1919-presence at Versailles as a cardinal figure in the peace-making process.

Sir Eyre Alexander Barby Wichart Crowe was born in Leipzig in an anti-Hohenzollern, middle-class family. His English father, Joseph Archer Crowe,

[1] Keith Wilson, "Review," *The English Historical Review*, vol. 3, no. 442 (June 1996), 786–87, and Keith Neilson, "Review," *Canadian Journal of History*, no. 1 (April 1995), 141–42.

was the British Consul-General in the city, as well as a noted art critic and journalist. Not incidentally, on his Prussian mother Asta von Barby's side, he was also a distant relative of the Nazi diplomat Joachim (mistakenly von) Ribbentrop.[2] Crowe received his entirely non-English education in Düsseldorf and Berlin; he turned eighteen when he first set foot in England and retained his German accent, especially when upset, till the end of his life. His Germanness stuck in private, too; he married his first cousin, the widowed Clema von Bonin, née Gerhardt, who ran a meticulously ordered household, very much to his pleasure.[3]

In the Foreign Office 1892–1918: Crowe as the Anti-German Diplomat

It was young Eyre's ambition to follow his father into diplomatic service, so that he "could be proud";[4] after the Foreign Office exams, he served as junior clerk for seven long years, and from 1892, together with the lodging that came with his job as resident clerk, Crowe got access to all telegrams that flooded the Foreign Office during the off-peak hours. It was in this period that he abandoned his Christian faith in favour of intellectual agnosticism and also immersed himself in military and naval history, which led to a deeper understanding of international relations.[5] In 1906, at last, he reached the rank of senior clerk and could attain a position of influence, dedicating a great deal of his efforts to the German question.

Eyre Crowe's writing of historic importance titled "Memorandum on the Present State of Relations with France and Germany" started to circulate at the Foreign Office on January 1, 1907. The original purpose of the Entente, argued the author, was to eliminate the "causes of friction" between France and England; it was not a formal alliance, nor was it intended to be offensive or to strengthen France against Germany. The German challenge to Pax Britannica, however, became increasingly obvious and owing to its attempts to undermine the Anglo–French Entente of 1904, the loose pact between France

[2] Sibyl Crowe and Edward Corp, *Our Ablest Public Servant: Sir Eyre Crowe, 1864–1925*, (London: Merlin Books, 1993), 9 and 17.

[3] By that time, he was 39 and widowed Clema, 34, a mathematician with two sons. It was a marriage of equals in all respects, and a fully joyous one, eventually with four kids of their own.

[4] Crowe and Corp, *Our Ablest Public Servant*, 12.

[5] Unlike the Christian ethos shared by most of his peers, his outlook on foreign policy originated in a pragmatic view of what was best for England. His attitude to religion did not alter. Just before he passed away, Crowe had been approached to grant permission for a memorial ceremony to be held in Westminster Abbey. He refused, believing it was inappropriate to be remembered by a religion and God he did not worship. Sir Alan Campbell, "Sir Eyre Crowe, 1864–1925," *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Historical Branch, Occasional Papers*, No. 8, (August 1994), 34. See also Crowe and Corp, *Our Ablest Public Servant,* 489.

and Britain to settle colonial disputes transformed into something more significant, a mutual security alliance.

In the following section, Crowe turned to British foreign policy, the basis of which he believed was her geographic status as an island: "Sea power is more potent than land power […] a maritime State is, in the literal sense of the word, the neighbour of every country accessible by sea." According to him, British strategy included a moral component that set the country apart from the other great powers: "England, more than any other, non-insular Power, has a direct and positive interest in the maintenance of the independence of nations, and therefore must be the natural enemy of any country threatening the independence of others, and the natural protector of the weaker communities."[6]

In the rest of his Memorandum, Crowe was focusing on Germany: as long as it "competes for an intellectual and moral leadership of the world in reliance on her own national advantages and energies England can but admire, applaud, and join in the race."[7] However, only a few pages later he doubted that such peaceful competition was possible; a strong, restless Germany, the "descendant of Prussia," could not live in peace with Britain, thus, only a British policy of demonstrating power could stop it from pursuing its "unhealthy" aspirations:

> Germany is deliberately following a policy which is essentially opposed to vital British interests, and that an armed conflict cannot in the long run be averted, except by England either sacrificing those interests, with the result that she would lose her position as an independent Great Power, or making herself too strong to give Germany the chance of succeeding in a war. This is the opinion of those who see in the whole trend of Germany's policy conclusive evidence that she is consciously aiming at the establishment of a German hegemony, at first in Europe, and eventually in the World.[8]

With his Memorandum, Crowe gained a reputation of being passionately anti-German within the Foreign Office; some of his contemporaries went so far as to allege that he had been chiefly responsible for the Anglo–German estrangement prior to WWI as the "prime mover" of foreign policy or as its "Evil Spirit",[9]

[6] G.P. Gooch and H.W.V. Temperley (eds.), *British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898–1918*, London: H.M.S.O, 1926–1938., vol. 3, Appendix A, 398–520, 401–403.

[7] Ibid., 407.

[8] Ibid., 414. Former Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Thomas Sanderson was unwilling to regard German colonial expansion as an expression of direct threat and added: "if the mere acquisition of territory were in itself immoral, I conceive the sins of Germany since 1871 are light in comparison to ours." Ibid., 430. Crowe responded: "[M]y object […] was not at all to portray a record of black deeds, but to show that the line of action followed by England with amiable persistency for twenty years did not in the end secure what she expected and bargained for: Germany's friendship and political support." Ibid., 428.

[9] Alfred F. Pribram, *Austria-Hungary and Great Britain 1908–1914*, (London: Praeger

and, quite recently, he was still tagged as "the best-known exponent of the anti-German line".[10] US historian Richard Cosgrove, on the other hand, downplayed Crowe's role, stressing that before 1906, a younger Foreign Office staff led by Sir Francis Bertie had already spread criticism of Germany which was shared by Sir William Tyrell, who would eventually become Foreign Secretary Edward Grey's[11] private secretary.[12]

Despite the several anti-German voices in the Foreign Office, it was Crowe's Memorandum that came to be called the foundation document for Anglo–German relations. Quite recently, the dominant theme in the scholarly discussions of pre-1914 British–German relations has been identified as the "Anglo–German antagonism paradigm", viz. the idea that the major cause of WWI was the attitude of a belligerent Germany pressuring a hesitant Britain to make one concession after another.[13] As Australian International History Professor Matthew Fitzpatrik has claimed, such simplification of an important phase of international relations seems not only one-sided (it attributes colonial crises exclusively to German activity, when, in fact, British and German imperialisms were closely related), but also teleologically flawed (regarding its orientation toward explaining German war guilt).[14] Historians, it seems, have overestimated the influence of the Crowe Memorandum on the evolution of British foreign policy, precisely because after 1918, when countries rushed to publish their diplomatic records in an attempt to clear their names of responsibility for the onset of the war, the Memorandum was frequently cited as a forebear of the German war guilt thesis.[15]

Publishers Inc., 1951), 86. and Hermann Lutz, *Eyre Crowe Der Böse Geist des Foreign Office,* (Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 1931).

[10] Géza Jeszenszky, *Lost Prestige: Hungary's Changing Image in Britain 1894–1918,* (Reno, Nevada: Helena History Press, 2020), 221.

[11] As Foreign Secretary between 1905 and 1916, Grey boasted the longest continuous tenure in office.

[12] In 1904, the future British Minister to Paris, Bertie declared that Germany "has never done anything for us but bleed us. She is false and grasping & our real enemy commercially and politically." Bertie to Mallet, June 11, 1904, Bertie MSS., Series A, F.O. 800/170. Qtd. in Richard A. Cosgrove, "The Career of Sir Eyre Crowe: A Reassessment," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 4, no. 4 (Winter, 1972), 193–205, 196.

[13] It was popularised by the British international relations historian and A. J. P. Taylor-student, Paul Kennedy in his *Rise of the Anglo–German Antagonism, 1860–1914,* published in 1980.

[14] Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, "A Farewell to the Thucydides Trap: The 'Anglo–German Antagonism' as History and International Relations Paradigm," *German History*, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1093/gerhis/ghaf028. Fitzpatrick criticises Kennedy for having applied a double-standard; the benevolent British Empire, a token of stability as a historical given in contrast with imperial predator Germany. (In this Kennedy is not alone, as he was following in the footsteps of anti-revisionist German historians, like Fritz Fischer and, more recently, many have endorsed his antagonism paradigm, e.g. Harvard Kennedy School national security analyst, Graham Allison.) It well serves consumers of history, especially political analysts who assist politicians, to decipher issues regarding contemporary geopolitical conflicts and international security.

[15] Richard A. Cosgrove, "The Crowe Memorandum and British Foreign Policy, 1907–1914," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 72, 4 (1973), 530–31.

There is another reason to be wary of Eyre Crowe's influence. While as the Head of the Western Department from 1906, and as Parliamentary Under Secretary from 1912, he became Lord Grey's primary adviser on European issues, he was never fully integrated in the Foreign Office. Most probably due to his German origins, he did not succeed as candidate for the position of Permanent Under Secretary of State; according to Sir Charles Hardinge, Viceroy of India, he was "so palpably German" with a "quite unpresentable" wife.[16] In fact, Crowe's rise through the ranks was not due to a great social standing or Oxbridge education, but rather to great talent and hard work. Lacking in old school ties, he could never belong to the inner circle of British diplomats of Grey, Hardinge, Sir Arthur Nicolson,[17] etc., who communicated frequently via informal channels, viz., in private letters. Crowe always felt like an outsider, and all he could do was to compensate with avid reading habits. Given his disposition, training, and social standing, he held a somewhat lone position in the Foreign Office.

Despite Crowe's relative isolation, there existed an excellent working relationship between him and Grey. The 1914 July crisis, on the other hand, highlighted their diplomatic strategy differences. The more dynamic Crowe, who had been preoccupied with the threat from Germany, urged Grey to send a "warning signal" to the Kaiser – only to make it clear that Britain would support France in the event of a German invasion. In a memorandum written on July 25, he got to the heart of the matter: "the point that matters is," he argued, "whether Germany is or is not absolutely determined to have this war now. If the moment either Austria or Russia begins to mobilise, H.M.G. give orders to put our whole fleet on an immediate war footing, this may conceivably make Germany realise the seriousness of the danger to which she would be exposed if England took part in the war."[18] In contrast, Grey was very cautious about committing Britain to any action; he left no stone unturned, trying to find a diplomatic solution that would be acceptable to all sides. Grey biographer Michael Waterhouse aptly stated that "he was the only European statesman who fought hard for peace during the July crisis."[19] As it is well known, in the political sphere there was strong opposition to entering the war, and the

[16] "Much as I admire Crowe's ability," wrote the notorious snob Hardinge to Sir Arthur Nicolson in June 1913, "I shall be sorry if he becomes head of the Foreign Office. It will lower the prestige of the office, as he is so palpably German and his wife quite unpresentable." Quoted in Cosgrove, "The Career of Sir Eyre Crowe: A Reassessment," 195-196.

[17] Nicolson was sent to Budapest as Consul-General in 1888 and filled prestigious positions afterwards as Minister to Spain as well as to Russia and, eventually as Permanent Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 1910 to 1916.

[18] Sir Eyre Crowe's Memorandum of July 25, 1914. Public Record Office London Foreign Office [hereafter: PRO FO] 371/2158.

[19] Michael Waterhouse, *Edwardian Requiem: A Life of Sir Edward Grey,* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2013), 407.

public opinion was also largely in favour of neutrality. Only the German invasion of Belgium and rumours about atrocities against Belgian civilians changed the general British approach.

With the British entry to WWI, Crowe's prestige declined, an unmistakable sign of which was his early 1915 transfer from the Western Department of the Foreign Office to the relative obscurity of the Commercial Department (which, however, greatly benefited from his organizational talents). What is more, a series of newspaper campaigns against him stirred up public hatred: the *Daily Mail* accused him of having a pro-German attitude, another paper, the suffragette *Britannia*, demanded that Crowe's German background as well as his relatives should be investigated. As a civil servant could not answer such charges for himself, Sir Edward Grey and Sir Robert Cecil had to defend him in the House of Commons. As late as September 1918, outside Crowe's house, about a thousand demonstrators demanded that he be replaced at the Foreign Office by "someone of purely British blood."[20] Crowe bore the humiliations with dignity.

In Versailles: The Skyrocketing of a Career

The opening of the Versailles Peace Conference in January 1919 not only offered Crowe a new opportunity for public service, but it was also a major turning point in his career: he had travelled to Paris as a member of the British delegation, and a year later, in the absence of Prime Minister David Lloyd George, he left the city as, in fact, its Head. His talent to deal with diplomatic detail soon came to the forefront; in a strictly confidential letter in December 1919, the British Minister to France called Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon's attention to Crowe:

> May I say just one word here about Crowe? He is not able to blow his own trumphet [*sic*]. May I blow it for him? You probably already appreciate how well he had done in the Conference but I must tell you how universal here is the praise that is given to him by his colleagues. Several of them have told me that he has gone into the room with some proposition to put forward in which he has found himself in a minority of one, and yet in the end he has, by his powers of persuasion and his great knowledge, been able to turn the whole meeting round to his point of view.[21]

Another British delegate, the future British Minister in Tehran, Herman Cameron Norman, reported home the followings:

[20] Cosgrove, "The Career of Sir Eyre Crowe: A Reassessment," 200.

[21] Lord Derby to Lord Curzon, December 8, 1919, PRO, Ashridge, F.O. 794/2. Qtd. in Cosgrove, "The Career of Sir Eyre Crowe: A Reassessment," 201.

> It is no exaggeration to say that he [Crowe] dominates that assembly and that there is hardly any limit to his power of making his colleagues accept his proposals. This is partly owing to the fact that he is the only person who has ever sat on the Council who really knows the questions with which he has to deal in all their bearings but it is also largely the result of the respect and affection which he has been able to inspire in the other representatives by the combination of firmness with conciliation which he is able to achieve.[22]

Eyre Crowe was convinced that it was in harmony with the mission of England "to resist the powerful and to support the weak."[23] In order to fulfil this mission, he duly participated in all of the territorial committee meetings that he had been assigned to; moreover, he was also appointed the British representative to the Central Coordinating Committee, which was tasked with overseeing all territorial matters.[24] He was remembered to actually have been "the centre of everything";[25] it is reasonable to claim that Crowe was involved in almost every territorial settlement in 1919-1920 Europe.

However, as it is well-known, no committee was created to consider events and border proposals from the point of view of any vanquished country, Germany not excepted. Foreign Office specialist on the British Empire Delegation, James Headlam-Morley, bemoaned this omission, believing Crowe had lost a chance to use his unparallelled knowledge of the country to advance a more solid European settlement: "Really this should have been Crowe's business but he did not use the opportunity."[26] Crowe thought differently. In a Minute to Foreign Secretary Balfour dated April 10, 1919, he declared:

> I trust [the] proposal to start meetings with German and Austrian Representatives in Paris at once, without waiting for the definite decision of the Allied and Associated governments as to the terms of peace to be demanded, will be categorically rejected. If it were adopted, the utmost confusion would be created and the door opened wide to every form of intrigue.

[22] Norman to Campbell, December 18, 1919, PRO, Ashridge, F.O. 794/2. Ibid.

[23] Harold Nicolson, *Being the Life of Sir Arthur Nicolson, First Lord Carnock, and a Study of the Origins of the Great War,* (New York: Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930), 239.

[24] Harold W.V. Temperley, ed., *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, (London: H. Frowde and Hodder and Stoughton: 1920–24), vol. 1, 258.

[25] Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919,* (London: Constable & Co., 1934), 271.

[26] Headlam-Morley was also, though partly, educated in Germany and had a German wife. Agnes Headlam-Morley, Russell Bryant, Anna Cienciala (eds.), *Sir James Headlam-Morley, a Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference, 1919,* (London: Methuen, 1972), 170. On the omission of the vanquished countries, see Headlam-Morley's Memorandum titled "A Note on the Austrian Treaty," in which the author was critical of Seton-Watson and Lewis Namier for being somewhat one-sided. Lojkó, *British Policy,* 362–366, especially 363.

> Moreover, it could drive the Roumanians, Czechs, and Yugo Slavs really to despair if the Great Five [The Big Five/Four], after refusing to admit the Representatives of those countries to the deliberations in which their future frontiers are discussed—and intended to be settled—were now to admit that the settlement was to be negotiated with the enemy before the allies have arrived at any conclusions.[27]

As it was expected, Assistant Under Secretary of State Crowe chose Foreign Office junior clerks he had worked more closely with as assistants: in an office located in room 108 of Hotel Astoria, Harold Nicolson and Allen Leeper duly set out to collect and organise the enormous volume of information on the Danube and Balkan border disputes.[28] "Diplomacy", argued Nicolson, "is by no means the art of conversation. [It is] the art of negotiating documents in a ratifiable and therefore dependable form."[29] In this Crowe indisputably possessed an unmatched talent.

However, much to the horror of such an orderly mind, chaos set in as, even before the conference opened, Crowe himself was flooded by requests from Portuguese, Greek, Czech, Serbian, and Romanian representatives.[30] He would complain to his wife, Clema: "I am having more and more to do, but I do not feel that what I do is going to have any useful results. You cannot imagine the atmosphere of general depression in which the whole of our delegation does its work. Nothing ever goes right or progresses. The confusion at the top is complete and reacts on everything and everybody below."[31] By mid-April, he

[27] Miklós Lojkó, *British Foreign Policy on Hungary 1918-1919. A Documentary Sourcebook*, (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 1995), 150.

[28] On August 4, 1914, as the lowest-ranking employee, Sir Arthur Nicolson's son Harold was tasked with presenting Britain's declaration of war to the German minister in London. He then quickly advanced to the level of Second Secretary at the Foreign Office. Leeper joined Lord Edward Gleichen's Intelligence Bureau in 1915 and he submitted weekly reports on the situation in Russia and the Middle East. In the spring of 1918, he became a member of staff in the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office. See Ágnes Beretzky, "In Close Tandem? The Parallel Biographies of Harold Nicolson (1886–1968) and Allen Leeper (1887–1935)," *Orpheus Noster*, 15, no. 3 (2023): 25–35, 26. Nicolson dedicated his book to Crowe's memory, and he would idolize him as a man of "truth and vigour," who taught him that "Emotional dishonesty can be forgiven, since it knows not what it does. Intellectual dishonesty can never be forgiven." In Nicolson, *Peacemaking,* 211.
In fact, in the narrative of several influential liberal Britons (e.g. historian and journalist Robert William Seton-Watson, correspondent of *The Times* correspondent Henry Wickham Steed or historian and Versailles-delegate Arnold Joseph Toynbee) losing their goodwill regarding Hungary, one would regularly encounter their shock upon having been deceived as well-meaning foreigners.

[29] Nicolson, *Peacemaking*, 208.

[30] This was also the result of the nervous breakdown of Foreign Office Diplomat Sir Ralph Paget, who would have overseen the problems of South-Eastern Europe. Thus, upon arriving in Paris, Crowe was immediately requested to take over Paget's work. Paget never made it to the French capital, but he was appointed Minister to Brazil instead.

[31] Crowe to Clema, MS. Eng. e. 3022, February 12, 1919. Qtd. in Patricia Lynn Pillsworth, *Security, Prestige, and Realpolitik, Sir Eyre Crowe and British Foreign Policy 1907–1925*, A dissertation

turned even more bitter: "This conference is getting more disheartening every day. I do not now believe that anything like a satisfactory peace can possibly be concluded. I am afraid the world will be even more difficult after this war than it was before, which means that we have thrown away our victory and the fighting was almost in vain."[32]

By 1919, Crowe had long sympathised with the idea of the ethnic reorganisation of East-Central Europe, which had been championed by the principal figures behind the influential weekly journal *The New Europe*, most notably, the historian-publicist Robert William Seton-Watson and the Principal of King's College, Robert Burrows. During the war, they were joined by many, e.g. former Balliol-students (Lewis Namier, Harold Nicolson, and Allen Leeper) or émigré politicians (Thomas Masaryk, Edvard Beneš, Ante Trumbić). A new source of legitimacy, viz. the idea of national self-determination served as the foundation of their "New Europe," to be composed of independent nation-states. In 1919 the time seemed to have come and they all gathered in Paris

Apart from his non-elite, *horribile dictu* German education, Crowe differed from the majority of British delegates and their aides in yet another respect:[33] he was no idealist in a sense that he did not believe in the ethnic principle as a "one cure for all". "Human nature does not even justify the expectation that people hanging together by every tie of nationality, blood and interest absolutely refuse to give up quarrelling and fighting among themselves,"[34] he explained to Clema and six weeks later he added, "That nationalism and patriotism are liable to exaggeration and excesses, nobody will deny." However, he also voiced his doubt "whether there are any virtues which remain virtues if absolutely unlimited."[35]

Bearing such limits of the ethnic principle in mind, however, Crowe supported the maintenance or the drawing of ethnic boundaries wherever and whenever possible, at times even against the wishes of an ally. On the Belgian

submitted to the University at Albany, State University of New York, 2013, 184. https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1980&context=legacy-etd

[32] Crowe to Clema, MS. Eng. e. 3024, April 15, 1919. Ibid.

[33] "[…] the concepts 'Germany', "Austria', 'Hungary', 'Bulgaria', or 'Turkey' were not in the forefront of our minds. It was the thought of the new Serbia, the new Greece, the new Bohemia, and the new Poland which made our hearts sing hymns at heaven's gate. This single emotional approach is very significant. […] It is one which presupposes a long and fervent study of 'The New Europe' – a magazine issued under the auspices of Dr. Ronald Burrows and Dr. Seton-Watson with the doctrines of which I was overwhelmingly imbued. Bias was there and prejudice. […] they proceeded […] from a fervent aspiration to create and fortify the new nations whom we regarded, with maternal instinct, as the justification of our sufferings and of our victory." Nicolson, *Peacemaking*, 32–33.

[34] Crowe to Clema, February 8, 1919. MS. Eng. e. 3022, Qtd. in Pillsworth, *Security, Prestige, and Realpolitik*, 184.

[35] Crowe to Clema, March, 25, 1919. MS. Eng. e. 3023. Qtd. in Pillsworth, *Security, Prestige, and Realpolitik*, 165.

request for Dutch territory, for example, he wrote: "I feel strongly that we should avoid the appearance of wishing to carve up the old boundaries of Europe except where imperatively called for."[36] But the imperative was there and it was strong. Regarding Germany, Crowe was in principle not against its unification with Austria, and also voiced concerns about the detachment of the Saar-valley or the creation of a demilitarised Rhein-zone that the French adamantly insisted for security reasons.[37] Furthermore, his opposition to the Polish Corridor boiled down to his concern that a sizable German minority trapped inside a Polish country would lead to instability in the future. Whether owing to David Lloyd George's aversion to Crowe, or any other reason, the idea of the Polish corridor prevailed, making the arrangement in Danzig West and East Prussia in Crowe's opinion "a house of cards that would not stand".[38]

Five years to the day after Gavrilo Princip's bullets sparked the conflict, on June 28, 1919, the Treaty of Versailles formally put an end to the First World War. Soon, several plenipotentiaries left Paris, while many responsibilities remained uncompleted. Crowe was appointed the principal British delegate to the Supreme Council on September 15, 1919. Much to his horror, believing that the Conference should be concluded in no more than a week or ten days, the departing British Prime Minister gave him instructions to close negotiations as quickly as possible.[39] But it was impossible; from September to early January 1920, he was in charge to complete the treaty negotiations with Bulgaria and Austria, as well as with the most complicated among the vanquished, Hungary.

Eyre Crowe on Hungary

The earliest connection between Crowe and Hungary dates back to 1906, the time he was appointed Head of the Western Department in the Foreign Office. It was also the last, and probably the most eventful year of the so-called Constitutional Crisis, that is the fundamental conflict between the aspirations of the Hungarian (Kossuthist) Independence Party and the foreign political interests of the Dual Monarchy, viz. the issue of the increase of the annual contingent of army recruits.[40]

[36] Minute by Crowe, November 30, 1918. FO 371/4353.

[37] Memorandum on Settlement with Germany, December 23, 1918; FO 371/4353 Minute, Sir Eyre Crowe, December 10, 1918., FO 371/4354. Qtd. in Pillisworth, *Security, Prestige and Realpolitik,* 158.

[38] *Sir James Headlam-Morley, A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference, 1919,* 171.

[39] Crowe and Corp, *Our Ablest Public Servant*, 350.

[40] Above all, the Independentists demanded the national reform of the army, i.e. the introduction of Hungarian as the language of command (some seventy words) in all the regiments of Hungary. This claim, nevertheless, touched upon the royal prerogatives, implying the revision of

The crisis ended in April 1906, when after having dropped the army-issue, the Coalition was finally willing to form a government. Eyre Crowe was pleased with the eventual capitulation of the Coalition. "The Hungarians have had their own way for so long, and have so misused their ascendancy, that if the Austrian half of the Monarchy will only firmly assert itself and obtain the Emperor's support, the Hungarian bubble may perhaps be pricked sooner than has hitherto been expected,"[41] he stated in a minute in June. Three months later, in another minute, his old strategy of resting on the maintenance of balance of power resurfaced:

> If and when Hungary establishes her "national independence," it will be time enough to define our attitude and position towards Hungary and Austria. But I cannot doubt that so long as the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy rests on its present basis it will not be serving British interests to arouse Austrian susceptibilities by political flirtation with the Hungarian party of independence.[42]

The year of 1906, however, was crucial in yet another respect. As László Péter, an expert historian on British–Hungarian relations explained, at the general election, the British political landscape had been fundamentally altered by the sweeping victory of the liberals, who popularised questions like social reform and democracy. A distant and largely Catholic rural nation like Hungary with a narrow franchise was simply not compatible with liberal aspirations and outlooks any more.[43] Thus in the subsequent years, it became increasingly typical for Crowe and a number of lower-ranking officials who followed his lead to append dissenting or even vitriolic remarks to reports from the Consuls General in Budapest who were attempting to comprehend and justify Hungarian policy towards its national minorities. One such occasion was, for instance, when Crowe learned and assessed the news that several Turkish students would be coming to Hungary to continue their education: it sounded absurd, he opined, that Hungary would provide the students the route to civilization.[44]

From early onwards, Crowe would cite Seton-Watson to justify his criticism of the Hungarian administration on moral grounds: regarding criticism of the 1910 Hungarian elections, he stated bluntly: "Mr. Seton-Watson is at any rate a serious writer and knows the country [Hungary] most thoroughly. He described what he says *he saw* [original emphasis]. He is an acknowledged authority on

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the Settlement which Franz Joseph resisted. László Péter, "The Army Question in Hungarian Politics 1867–1918," *Central Europe*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (November 2006): 84–110, 97-98.

41 Minute by Crowe, June 3, 1906. FO 371/195/18 082.

42 Minute by Crowe, September 27, 1906, FO 371/8/32 923. Jeszenszky, *Lost Prestige*, 225.

43 Péter, László. "R. W. Seton-Watson's Changing Views on the National Question of the Habsburg Monarchy and the European Balance of Power," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 82, no. 3 (2004): 655–79, 674.

44 Jeszenszky, *Lost Prestige*, 233 and 80.

modern Hungary and an author of repute." Moreover, Crowe also had the senior clerk, Eric Drummond paste over his initial comment that had questioned the impartiality of another staunch critic of Hungarian conduct, the *Times* correspondent Henry Wickham Steed, and made him write another one, this time in support.[45]

After 1910, Crowe's opinion on Hungary only worsened: he described Count Tisza (whom Steed, for example, respected) as "a reactionary of the deepest dye", who "never gets on with anybody."[46] During WWI, Hungary became, in his eyes, not only a country that abused its nationalities and was led by untrustworthy people, but also one that became Germany's ally. Right before the onset of the peace conference, Count Andrássy Jr.[47] issued a statement to the British Foreign Office from Vienna, urging Britain to send troops to Hungary as he shared his fears about the outbreak of Bolshevism in Hungary. He also voiced his concern that Hungary had not been informed about Entente plans regarding the future of the country while large, also Hungarian-inhabited parts of the country had been offered to Czechoslovaks and Romanians. In a Minute, Crowe described Andrássy an "old-school politician á la Metternich" and believed that "Britain should not enter into any political discussions or bargains with the kind."[48] He also called attention to "the absurdity of the Hungarian complaint" that the Hungarians had been unable to place their views before the Entente, sarcastically adding that "in fact, of course, we have been inundated with every Hungarian's view for many months past."[49]

Following the fall of the Dual Monarchy, between Germany and Soviet Russia there was a power vacuum. In order to maintain peace and serve as a vital counterbalance to two powerful, sizable neighbours, Germany and Russia, the new states' position had to be strengthened by the use of ethnic, geopolitical, economic, and geographic justifications—all of which were used in turns or even at once. When two ethnic considerations clashed, senior diplomat Eyre Crowe's opinion was regularly adhered to:

[45] Minutes by Drummond and Crowe on Consul General Esme Howard's dispatch of June 20, which claimed that "as a partisan writer," Seton-Watson's statements were "hardly conclusive." June 28, 1910. FO 371/827/22 911. Quoted in Jeszenszky, *Lost Prestige*, 87.

[46] Minute by Crowe on Max-Muller's dispatch of June 14, 1913, FO 371/1575/27 698. Jeszenszky, *Lost Prestige*, 303.

[47] His father, Gyula Andrássy Senior was the first common Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary (1871–1879), and he himself became the last (between October 24 and 30, 1918).

[48] He repeated this on March 1, 1919, in another minute discussing the serious lack of natural resources as the mines had been taken by the new states, "We should have no touch with the Hungarians. Count Karolyi has, as it is, no reputation to lose." (PRO FO 608/12 No. 46/1/5/2969). Quoted in Lojkó, *Documents*,72.

[49] Minute by Crowe, January 16, 1919. PRO FO 371/3529 No. 4915/W3 and PRO FO 608/11 No. 46/1/1/140. Quoted in Lojkó, *Documents,* 54 and 56.

> When we come to face these ethnographical difficulties, it makes a great difference whether they arise between the Roumanians and the Hungarians who are our enemies, or between the Roumanians and the Serbs, who are our allies. In the first case if it were found to be impossible to do justice to both sides, the balance must naturally be inclined towards our ally Roumania rather than towards our enemy Hungary.

The last sentence of his statement was duly disregarded:

> At the same time this principle must not be carried too far, for our ultimate duty is to produce a condition of things likely to lead to permanent peace.[50]

The British peace-delegation's official proposal for the Hungarian borders dated February 1919 (Figure 1) was based on Seton-Watson's 1918 December Memorandum, omitting his "grey zones," territories with disputed ethnic composition, the future of which Seton-Watson believed to be decided through plebiscites. Compared with Seton-Watson's proposal, the British document left the Große Schütt or Csallóköz (today Žitný Ostrov) with Hungary, but in most cases, its authors decided in favour of the Slavs and Romanians, explaining their decision with economic reasons and wholesale Magyarisation in the past. The proposal was signed by Eyre Crowe and his two aides, the pro-Romanian Allen Leeper and Harold Nicolson.[51] Unfortunately, no one could call their attention to the fact that Magyarization before 1918, either spontaneous or forced, did not affect the disputed and largely agricultural strips of lands which had had indigenous Hungarian ethnic populations from the Middles Ages, as, for instance, the "Partium" (North and West of Transylvania) and parts of Voivodina.[52]

[50] Quoted in Lloyd George, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, vol. 2, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), 597.

[51] Romsics, Ignác, *Helyünk és sorsunk a Duna-medencében* [Our Place and Fate in the Danube Basin], (Budapest, 2005), 61–63.

[52] Carlile Aylmer Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1937), 73–79, 251–53, 380–88.

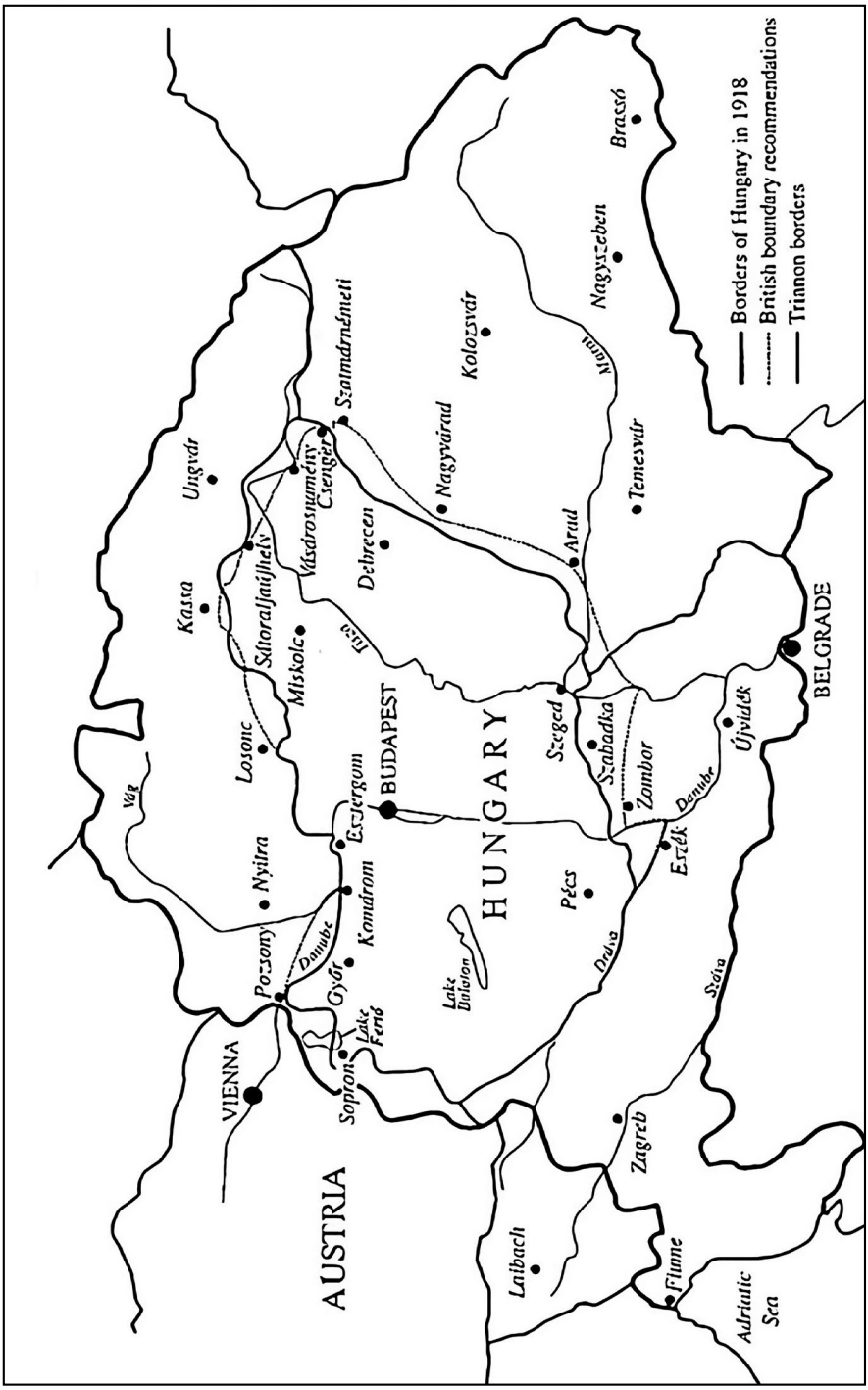

Figure 1. The official border proposal of the British peace delegation regarding Hungary, presented in Paris in February 1919. (Source: Romsics, The Dismantling of Historic Hungary*, 178.)*

As discussed by, among others, Arday and Romsics,[53] the future frontiers of Hungary (with the exception of the one with Austria) were decided upon as early as May 12, 1919. Yet, Hungary caused much concern in Paris, as already in March, Bela Kun established a communist regime and Romanian forces fighting against Kun invaded Hungary and continued on the offensive. "The situation at Budapest calls for action," reported Crowe, "and all our information goes to show that on the slightest sign of determined allied intervention, Bela Kun's government will totally collapse."[54] Crowe assessed the events (the Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary) as simple bribery and stamped as political "foolishness" everything aimed at pacifying the bribers.[55] He seemed to welcome the occupying Romanian forces, but soon Crowe disagreed with Leeper, as he (Crowe) wanted to see the Romanians overthrow Bela Kun and the Communists, whom he saw as a larger danger to East-Central Europe than a group of discontented Magyars.

Crowe believed that the Council ought to threaten to sever ties between Romania and the Allies because Bucharest was still evasive, disobedient and continued pillaging in the occupied territories. He proposed that the Supreme Council should withhold settling the final disposition of Bessarabia in exchange for Romanian compliance. Crowe's solution was backed by Clemenceau and Frank Polk, the US Under Secretary of State, who had replaced Robert Lansing as the US representative. It was on Crowe's initiative that the Council decided to draft and send yet another note to the Romanian government, this one demanding the withdrawal of troops from Hungary or risk a break with the Allies.[56]

Unlike his junior clerk Allen Leeper, Crowe had little sympathy for Romania. regarding it as a faithless ally and its leader Ion Brătianu as most tiresome.[57] He urged the other members of the Supreme Council to issue the ultimatum, and Clemenceau consistently backed Crowe's position in practically every aspect of the debates surrounding Romania,[58] calling him "*un homme à part.*"[59] It seems that Crowe, who at first had backed the Romanian invasion of Hungary, played a key role in their expulsion.

[53] Arday, Lajos, *Térkép, csata után. Magyarország a brit külpolitikában 1918-1919* [Map Following the War. Hungary in British Foreign Policy 1918-1920], (Budapest: Magvető, 1990), and Ignác Romsics, *The Dismantling of Historic Hungary: The Peace Treaty of Trianon, 1920*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

[54] Crowe's Minute on May 30, 1919. Qtd. in Lojkó, *British Foreign Policy,* 206.

[55] Romsics, *The Dismantling of Historic Hungary*, 93.

[56] E.L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (eds.), *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939* [Hereafter: DBFP], *First Series, 25 volumes,* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946), ii, Notes of a meeting, November 12, 1919, 289–92.

[57] Crowe and Corp, *Our Ablest Public Servant*, 335.

[58] Qtd. in Pillsworth, *Security, Prestige, and Realpolitik*, 204.

[59] Nicolson, *Peacemaking,* 211.

The Hungarian delegation arrived in Paris on January 6, 1920, the day of the last meeting of the Supreme Council, which Crowe attended. That evening he caught the flu and, only a few days later, after having been found fit enough to walk, he departed the peace conference. Thus, the peace treaty with Hungary was left to others, most notably to Crowe's former junior clerk, the uncritically pro-Romanian Allen Leeper.

"I shall remain and die in harness"[60]
The Post-War Years

Upon Crowe's return from Paris, the British government honoured him with the Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. Defying his doctors' warnings, after less than two months of sick leave, he returned to the Foreign Office in late February 1920. A long-delayed reward for his service came nine months later with his promotion to Permanent Under Secretary, an office that, despite his merits and fitness, he had not been allowed to take upon Sir Arthur Nicolson's[61] retirement in 1916, as we have seen, due to sheer prejudice. "The post which Crowe had set his heart on all his life fell to him," reported a former subordinate, "I am certain that it was far less from personal ambition that he longed for it than from a mystic sense of duty. He knew better than anyone what careful steering the ship of state required: and he knew positively that he was the best quartermaster."[62]

Prior to World War I, Crowe was convinced that maintaining the balance of power was the best way to guarantee British security, and after the war, unlike many of his contemporaries, he became no sentimental internationalist; he was dubious of the concept of collective security and favoured a return to a balance of power model. He believed that the League of Nations would fail as power and prestige concerns—rather than a desire for peace and disarmament—would still be the main driving forces behind international relations. His perspective changed as a result of unresolved security and reparations difficulties, mainly due to the escalating tension with France, and he began to advocate for a form of collective security that was ultimately embodied in the 1925 Locarno treaties.[63]

[60] Crowe to Francis Oppenheimer, former British Consul-General in Frankfurt, March 1820. Francis Oppenheimer, *Stranger within,* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 413.

[61] Crowe and Arthur Nicolson got on well with each other largely owing to a great similarity of temperament and political views. Nicolson regarded the attacks against Crowe as being largely unfair. Nicolson, *Being the Life of Sir Arthur Nicolson,* 240 and 311.

[62] John Duncan Gregory, *On the Edge of Diplomacy: Rambles and Reflections, 1902–1928*, (London: Hutchinson, 1928), 258.

[63] Pillsworth, *Security, Prestige, and Realpolitik*, 2.

After months of silence following the French occupation of the Ruhr Valley, in January 1923, a memorandum was issued by the Foreign Office, written by Crowe, denouncing the occupation as unlawful and in violation of the Versailles Treaty. The last chapter of Crowe's life, from January 1924 to March 1925, is his finest achievement as Permanent Under Secretary. Crowe persuaded a hesitant French Premier Édouard Herriot to adopt the Dawes Plan, which sought to resolve the reparations conflicts with Germany and Bulgaria.

With no regard to Crowe's delicate health, the imperious Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon grossly overburdened him by never-ending duties.[64] Crowe died in office, working almost to the last hours. According to Harold Nicolson, he was the perfect type of the British Civil Servant, "industrious, loyal, expert, accurate, beloved, obedient, and courageous [who] believed that in the conduct of public affairs it was essential that everything of importance should be recorded in writing and without ambiguity."[65] PM Stanley Baldwin aptly called him "the ablest servant of the Crown."[66] But service to Britain had its limits; Assistant Under Secretary John Duncan Gregory was definitely mistaken in claiming that Crowe's life was the Foreign Office and "nothing but the Foreign Office."[67] The more so, as writing to his eldest daughter in July 1919, that is from a distance at the Paris Peace Conference, Crowe recalled "how good it is to be surrounded by real affection and unselfish sympathy with one does and thinks. […] To me it is the most precious thing in life."[68]

Conclusion

Crowe was a conscientious official of considerable talent, whose fluency in German as well as his mastery of military strategy only added to his genius for organisation. So, above all, his significance stems from the efficient administration of diplomatic business, which became a model for future civil servants. According to Zara Steiner, he was the prime mover behind the administrative reform at the Foreign Office in 1905-1906.[69] Cosgrove agrees: the transaction

[64] Crowe was full of reproach: "Can't the man realize that long after he has gone home in his Rolls-Royce, I have to catch a No. 11 bus for Elm Park Road and sup off sardines or cold sausages before dealing with the evening's telegrams?" Qtd. in Owen O'Malley, *The phantom caravan*, (London: Butler and Tanner, 1954), 59.

[65] Ibid., 239.

[66] Crowe was equally a family man. Twenty months after he died, his second daughter, Una was found dead: she was reported to have drowned herself due to a nervous breakdown after brooding over her father's death. https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/82039030

[67] Gregory, *On the Edge of Diplomacy*, 255.

[68] Crowe to Asta Crowe, July 29, 1919. Qtd. in Crowe and Corp, *Our Ablest Public Servant*, 61. Crowe's eldest daughter died prematurely.

[69] Z.S. Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 80–81.

of routine business in a highly efficient manner was "Crowe's greatest contribution to British diplomacy before 1914."[70]

Despite his German orderliness and attention to detail[71] and quite in contrast with his daughter's apologetics,[72] Crowe was anti-German for various reasons. As we have seen, he disapproved of and had doubts about the Kaiser's Germany, the militaristic, anti-liberal state. His allegiance to Britain was another factor contributing to his anti-German sentiment, which was largely forged by his long service in the Foreign Office. He lived at a time when his loyalty to his adopted country excluded that to his country of birth.

However, especially when compared to the fellow-diplomats who worked close to him in Paris, Crowe was not blatantly anti-Hungarian. Although he had been among the first to stress the need for effective British action against Germany's aggressive colonial ambitions, at Versailles, with an eye to the future viability of the settlement, he proposed a fairer settlement for his country of origin. His knowledge of Hungary was based on Robert William Seton-Watson's books and ideas, however, his attitude to the country was defined above all by his stance on Germany. Therefore, it is quite probable that, arriving in Paris in January 1920, the Hungarian delegation would have received a somewhat more favourable welcome than which they eventually got from the British delegation, dominated by the blindly pro-Romanian Allen Leeper. But that is the province of contrafactual history.

[70] Cosgrove, "The Career of Sir Eyre Crowe: A Reassessment," 199.

[71] "Nothing was too insignificant for regulation: the width of the blotting-paper to be used, the method of tying tape round a dossier, the number of papers to be included in the dossier [...]" recalled a junior clerk. Qtd. in Gregory, *On the Edge of Diplomacy,* 258–259.

[72] Crowe and Corp, *Our Ablest Public Servant*, 73.

AN IRISHMAN IN WARTIME HUNGARY: SIR OWEN O'MALLEY'S DIPLOMATIC SERVICE IN BUDAPEST (1939–1941)

Boglárka Dobos

Introduction

Twenty-three months in Budapest—a remarkably short time, yet one of utmost significance in diplomatic relations between Britain and Hungary. In May 1939, Owen O'Malley arrived in Budapest as the newly appointed British Minister. During the eighteen years before his inauguration, five British Ministers had served in Hungary, none of whom had such a favourable reputation in Hungary. O'Malley's Irish identity and its influence on his diplomacy, however, have not yet received any scholarly attention. Even though he had to act in line with the Foreign Office as a British representative, he aimed to dispel British disillusionment with Hungary, which had considerably dominated the early twentieth century.

In the early 1900s, British distrust in Hungarian politics was markedly driven by the efforts of two British political writers, Henry Wickham Steed, the Vienna correspondent for *The Times*, and Robert William Seton-Watson, an influential British historian and publicist.[1] Following the victory of the Liberal Party in Britain in 1905[2] and (also) due to the constitutional crisis in the Dual Monarchy, first Steed and then Seton-Watson turned increasingly critical of Hungary.[3] In their writings, they claimed that ethnic minorities suffered severely under the Hungarian political system, while the (friendly)

[1] Géza Jeszenszky, *Lost Prestige: Hungary's Changing Image in Britain 1894–1918*, (Reno, Nevada: Helena History Press, 2020), 8.

[2] Jeszenszky, Géza, "Magyarország a brit gondolkodásban és külpolitikában, 1848-tól 1945-ig" [Hungary in British Political Thought and Foreign Policy, 1845–1945], *Külügyi Szemle 13*, no. 2 (2014): 154.

[3] The constitutional crisis of 1905–6 in the Dual Monarchy was a protracted conflict between the Crown and Parliament. After the 1905 election, the opposition parties in Hungary (forming the Coalition) won the majority in the House, thus altering the status quo that had existed since 1875. The Coalition demanded greater national autonomy in the army, most importantly, the use of Hungarian as the language of command, which the king, Franz Joseph, consistently rejected. Although the crisis ended with a compromise in 1906, it left behind severe political damage before the outbreak of World War I: a weak army dependent on Germany, publicity of the nationality problem, and the collapse of Hungary's reputation as a liberal state. See

warnings to Budapest remained unheard or were sometimes countered with ad hominem attacks. This unfortunate fact and, more importantly, the outbreak of World War I contributed to the about-turn of Steed and Seton-Watson, who from 1914 began promoting the dissolution of the Monarchy with the ultimate aim of establishing nation-states in the Danube Basin.[4] During the war, their influence significantly increased, which was not the least supported by launching the weekly propaganda journal *The New Europe*, as well as their entering government positions in early 1918, where they could effectively influence British war propaganda.[5]

On June 4, 1920, at the Paris Peace Conference, the nationality problem, successful anti-Hungarian propaganda, and, above all, participation in the war as a vanquished country resulted in the break-up of historic Hungary. With the ratification of the Treaty of Trianon, the territory of the country was reduced by two-thirds and the population by three-fifths,[6] detaching one-third of the Hungarian ethnic population, too.[7] The severe penalty imposed by the Entente thus became a national catastrophe for Hungarians.

No one in Hungary could endorse such drastic terms. Consequently, some reconstitution of the pre-1918 borders became a central theme of the average person as well as the political establishment in the interwar years. As a result, the Hungarian Government started pursuing revisionist[8] foreign policies by seeking steady diplomatic relations in the international arena.[9] However, vanquished Hungary and Britain, one of the prime peacemakers, obviously did not see eye to eye regarding revisionist demands. In 1925, for example, the Foreign Office stated that no alteration of the frontiers drawn in Versailles was feasible.[10] Additionally, from 1927, the foreign policy of Prime Minister István Bethlen's Government became Italian-oriented, further separating Britain and Hungary.[11] Regarding economics, Hungary's foreign debt did not appeal to British interest in the region either.[12]

László Péter, "The Army Question in Hungarian Politics 1867–1918," *Central Europe 4*, no. 2 (2006): 99, 109.

[4] Jeszenszky, *Lost Prestige,* 9.

[5] Ágnes Beretzky, *Four Britons and Nationalism: Henry Wickham Steed, Robert William Seton Watson, Arnold Joseph Toynbee and Carlile Aylmer Macartney in/on East-Central Europe and Beyond (1903–1978)*, (Reno, Nevada: Helena History Press, 2024), 41.

[6] Miklós Zeidler, *Ideas on Territorial Revision in Hungary 1920–1945*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 41.

[7] Jeszenszky, "Magyarország a brit gondolkodásban és külpolitikában," 158.

[8] In Hungarian foreign policy, revision referred to the wish to alter the borders settled by the 1920 Treaty of Trianon.

[9] Zeidler, *Ideas on Territorial Revision in Hungary*, 69.

[10] Memorandum on the Situation in Central Europe, FO, 11 November 1925, DBFP, xxvii, 128 quoted in Gábor Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe, 1918–1933* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 146.

[11] Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe*, 151.

[12] Ibid.

From 1936-1937, Britain upheld its policy of offering concessions toward Nazi Germany, labelled as appeasement.[13] On March 12, 1938, under the fig leaf of just ethnic claims, Hitler's imperialist ambitions led to the Anschluss, the annexation of Austria into the German Reich, which further increased Germany's power in East-Central Europe.[14] Thus, Britain was increasingly impelled to turn its attention to the Danube Basin. In May 1938, the Foreign Office started investigating whether British political influence could be prompted by economic means in the region. When they examined the importance of the Danube Basin countries to British interests, Hungary came in last on their proposed priority list.[15]

The distanced attitude in the Foreign Office toward Hungary in the 1930s was also significantly influenced by the reports of Geoffrey Knox, who served as British Minister to Budapest between 1935 and 1938. He firmly believed Hungary was already a lost cause to London and opined that no money or energy should be wasted trying to save it.[16]

Nonetheless, by the summer of 1938, the European situation was further complicated due to German territorial demands in Czechoslovakia. Hitler's ambition for the dismemberment of the country was based on its complex minority setting, including three million Sudeten Germans.[17] Thus, as Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain remained convinced that the policy of appeasement could prevent the outbreak of another war, he signed the Munich Agreement on September 29, 1938, alongside Italy and France, conceding the annexation of those parts where Germans were in the majority.[18] The Agreement also stipulated that minority disputes between Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia should be resolved through bilateral negotiations within three months.[19] Soon, the news of the unsettled negotiations, however, met with reluctance in the Foreign Office. Ultimately, on November 2, 1938, in what was later termed the First Vienna Award, Germany and Italy decided that Hungary would regain over fourteen thousand square kilometres (about 5464 sq. miles) in the south of Slovakia and Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia with a large majority of the Hungarian ethnic population.[20] The increasing influence of

[13] Britain's diplomatic strategy in the 1930s toward Germany, whose growing power threatened European peace. It involved concessions—even territorial gains—to prevent another war's outbreak.

[14] Bán D., András, *Illúziók és csalódások (Nagy-Britannia és Magyarország 1938–1941)* [Illusions and Disappointments: Great Britain and Hungary, 1938–1941], (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 1998), 33.

[15] Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 42.

[16] Ibid., 43.

[17] Balázs Ablonczy, *Pál Teleki 1879–1941: The Life of a Controversial Hungarian Politician*, (Reno, Nevada: Helena History Press, 2024), 182.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 54.

[20] Ablonczy, *Pál Teleki*, 186.

Germany thus prompted Britain to re-evaluate its diplomatic strategy in East-Central Europe.

Consequently, British rapprochement with Hungary marked a crucial point in foreign policy when in May 1939, Owen O'Malley, a diplomat of Irish descent, was appointed the new British Minister to Budapest. Although several distinguished historians, including András Bán D., Róbert Barta, Gábor Bátonyi, Ágnes Beretzky, Géza Jeszenszky, Gyula Juhász, Ignác Romsics, Miklós Lojkó, or Miklós Zeidler, have conducted extensive research on British–Hungarian interwar relations, little or no emphasis has been placed on investigating the roots of Owen O'Malley's empathy towards Hungarians. Unlike his predecessor in the Foreign Office, the very distant if not disagreeable Geoffrey Knox, O'Malley demonstrated a pro-Hungarian attitude and maintained close relations with the political elite in Hungary. Therefore, this paper argues that while the Foreign Office tried to distance itself from the political struggles in the Danube Basin, Owen O'Malley's inauguration as British Minister to Budapest in 1939 significantly enhanced diplomatic engagement in British–Hungarian relations. O'Malley's Irish heritage prompted his empathy towards the Hungarian standpoint in territorial revision driven by a deep insight into the complexities of power politics in East-Central Europe.

An Empathetic Friend of Our Nation: Sir Owen O'Malley's Media Image in Hungary

The news of Owen O'Malley's appointment as British Minister reached Budapest in April 1939, and the Hungarian press welcomed him with full support. The periodicals covering his inauguration emphasized, among others, his Irish nationality and his empathy towards the Hungarians. In an interview with the *Pesti Napló* on May 28, 1939, O'Malley stated that he had personally asked the Foreign Office to assign him to Budapest due to his ancestral connections to Hungary and sympathy with its people.[21] He observed two significant parallels between the Irish and Hungarians, namely that both nations shared an utmost respect for individual liberty and deep affection for their native lands.[22]

Other Hungarian media outlets, such as *Magyar Nemzet*, noted that Owen O'Malley's appointment to Budapest was favourable for Hungarians, as the new British Minister was a sympathetic ally of the country.[23] The paper also compared Irish and Hungarian history, particularly their endless struggle for

[21] Doblhoff Báró, Lili, "Magam kértem, hogy helyezzenek Magyarországra" [I personally asked to be assigned to Hungary], *Pesti Napló*, May 28, 1939, 3.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Kunszery, Gyula, "Owen St. Clair O'Malley," *Magyar Nemzet*, June 2, 1939, 4.

political and religious freedom in the shadow of oppressive external forces.[24] Moreover, as the fate of O'Malley's ancestors proved, when the political struggles in their homeland became hopeless, the Irish and Hungarians fought and died for the freedom of other suppressed nations. Besides the similarity in historical experience, the article's author also discovered a parallel between an Irish and a Hungarian war song. The refrain in an Irish soldier's ballad "[…] we will return, we will return, we will return, or never […]"[25] closely resonated with a marching song from a Hungarian regiment during World War I: "Do not cry, Budapest girls, we will return, if ever, if ever, or never."[26]

In June 1939, the moderate conservative *Pesti Hírlap* also reported that Owen O'Malley had accepted the position of chairman of the Save the Children Fund's[27] working schools in Hungary, thus contributing to the noble cause of supporting those in need.[28] Consequently, the media's favourable assessment of O'Malley laid the foundation of his reputation in the public sphere.

The Role of 'Personal' Diplomacy: Sir Owen O'Malley's Attitude to Prime Minister Pál Teleki and Regent Miklós Horthy

During his service in Hungary between May 1939 and April 1941, Owen O'Malley maintained personal contacts with many in the political elite, which often contributed to his deep understanding of domestic issues and foreign policies. The outbreak of the war in September 1939 prompted a closer cooperation with the Hungarian Prime Minister, Pál Teleki, due to the increased need for political exchange and discourse on the East-Central European situation and Germany's imperialist ambitions. In his memoirs, O'Malley described Teleki as "very much a family man, inspiring his intimates and subordinates with unbounded devotion."[29] He also stated that Teleki respected the English but did not think highly of the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, and Foreign Secretaries Lord Halifax or Anthony Eden. He also asserted that despite the severe political pressure from the outside—Germany's influence

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid. In the original: Ne sírjatok, budapesti lányok, / Visszajönnek a huszárok / Valaha, valaha vagy soha. (Translation mine – B.D.)

[27] The Save the Children Fund, founded by Eglantyne Jebb in 1919, sought support for the starving children in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy during the Allied Powers' blockade in World War I. Jebb also marched to Geneva in 1924 to read her Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which became the first legal right concerning children.

[28] "Az új budapesti angol követ leánya apja magántitkárnője és a követség úrnője lesz" [The daughter of the newly appointed British Minister to Budapest will serve as her father's private secretary and as the official hostess of the British Legation], *Pesti Hírlap*, June 4, 1939, 11.

[29] Owen O'Malley, *The Phantom Caravan*, (London: John Murray, 1954), 204.

and the growing network of Gestapo agents—the Hungarian Prime Minister remained incorruptible. Teleki's devotion to Hungary was genuinely appealing to him.[30] In 1940, O'Malley opined that in the contemporary political sphere in Hungary, no one could surpass Teleki's political talent and firm character.[31] Moreover, he compared Teleki to a prominent Irish politician, Éamon de Valera, the first President of the newly founded Irish Republic in 1921, who conveyed the same fundamental values, such as adherence to the Catholic faith, eminent intellectual ability, and devotion to principles.[32]

Besides maintaining personal relations with Pál Teleki, Owen O'Malley regularly met with Regent Miklós Horthy, with whom he developed a lasting friendship. O'Malley and his wife often attended dinners at Horthy's residence. Mrs. O'Malley—who earned a high reputation as a novelist writing under the pseudonym Ann Bridge—noted in one of her letters sent to a family friend in 1940 that Horthy expressed that the political circles in Hungary hoped she would write a book about Hungary for publication in England and the United States. In the same letter, she exclaimed: "I love the place already, I like the people! The Regent is an angel."[33] The affection was mutual. In his autobiography, O'Malley revealed that Horthy offered to take care of his daughter, Jane, in Budapest when the diplomatic relations between Britain and Hungary were broken off in April 1941.[34] O'Malley did not leave his family, especially his daughter, behind; however, Horthy's proposition suggests a deep connection and trust between the two families.

The friendship between Owen O'Malley and Regent Miklós Horthy was also documented in the media. O'Malley also preserved several press extracts that covered his years in Hungary, most of which focused on his close connection with the Regent. The two often went to the countryside for weekend shots, and Horthy even invited him to his country estate in Gödöllő. In 1940, the *Daily Telegraph* noted that O'Malley won over the Regent with his cultured manner and keen sense of humour. The paper also highlighted that after only eight months in Hungary, O'Malley became one of the most highly esteemed diplomatic members of the political circles.[35]

However, Owen O'Malley regarded his status within political circles as more of a burden than a privilege. In a letter to his wife in December 1939, he acknowledged the difficulties he faced in his diplomatic role as the European conflict escalated and expressed his fear of the potential outcome of the war.

[30] Ibid.
[31] Ablonczy, *Pál Teleki*, 217.
[32] O'Malley, *The Phantom Caravan*, 205.
[33] Ann Bridge to Angus Graham, April 10, 1940, MSS 21691, fol. 9, 1309, National Library of Ireland.
[34] O'Malley, *The Phantom Caravan*, 211.
[35] "Minister's Borrowed Guns," *Daily Telegraph*, 1940, MSS 21688, fol. 5, 1279, National Library of Ireland.

Despite the diplomatic pressure, by the end of 1939, he was compelled to restrict his social engagements to minor consultations due to his serious digestive problems and abdominal pain. Yet he was committed to learning and contemplating the situation in Hungary from first-hand information. "I have got all the people who matter taped," he wrote, "that is, the Regent and PM and MFA and elder statesmen".[36] This passage indicates that for O'Malley, the role of 'personal' diplomacy was an integral part of his duties. Even during the frequent physical suffering, he continued to record his conversations with Prime Minister Pál Teleki, Regent Miklós Horthy, and Minister of Foreign Affairs István Csáky. Like Teleki, he believed in first-hand consultations without delegating social obligations to a third party, which contributed to the legitimacy of the information flow.

Owen O'Malley's sympathy toward the Hungarian Prime Minister and the Regent demonstrated a crucial element of diplomatic engagement. The barrier—typically present in official interactions between a diplomat and a political figure due to language differences and formal protocol—vanished as a result of frequent informal encounters, such as family gatherings and joint hunting trips, which enabled the development of personal connections. These personal connections were also built on shared principles, such as devotion to the home country or firm religious faith, which ultimately prompted a deep mutual attachment. Consequently, Owen O'Malley's diplomacy was unique in strategy because of his sensitivity and close connections with the Prime Minister and Regent, which enhanced diplomatic engagement in British–Hungarian relations. O'Malley not only promoted British interests in Hungary but also tried to be cognizant of Hungary's difficult political position. However, such approach had its obvious limits as O'Malley represented the Foreign Office after all.

A Celtic Parallel: Sir Owen O'Malley and Carlile Aylmer Macartney

Besides building personal relations with prominent political members in the Hungarian Government, Owen O'Malley often received reports from a British historian and Foreign Office expert, Carlile Aylmer Macartney. Like O'Malley, Macartney came from the Celtic peripheries, with Northern Irish roots, and had a passionate interest in understanding the complex ethnic problems in the Danube Basin.[37] Soon after the First World War ended, Macartney left Britain

[36] Owen O'Malley to Ann Bridge, December 20, 1939, MSS 21691, fol. 1, 1300, National Library of Ireland.

[37] Miklós Lojkó, "C.A. Macartney and Central Europe," *European Review of History* Vol. 6, no. 1 (1999): 38.

to become a journalist in East-Central Europe, where he could experience the unfolding political conflicts resulting from the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.[38] During the interwar years, he immersed himself in studying the region's politics and languages and published numerous memoranda on the Danube Basin.[39] His expertise ultimately led to his appointment as a specialist in East-Central European affairs at the Foreign Research and Press Service during World War II, which merged with the Political Intelligence Department, forming the Foreign Office Research Department.[40]

Owen O'Malley found an ally in Macartney. Consequently, in November 1939, he suggested to the Foreign Office that Macartney should visit Hungary, as his expertise on Hungarian affairs would be valuable for the British Legation in Budapest.[41] According to O'Malley, Macartney's presence would prompt pro-British propaganda among the Hungarian political circles, thus improving intelligence gathering. O'Malley's superiors approved the proposition; however, they warned the British Minister not to share the confidential reports with Macartney.[42]

Similarly to O'Malley, C.A. Macartney also sympathized with PM Pál Teleki.[43] In February 1940, the British historian sent a memorandum to O'Malley regarding his own conversation with Teleki, elaborating on the Hungarian Prime Minister's views on territorial revision in Transylvania.[44] According to Macartney, Teleki emphasized that the Hungarian Government, and, more importantly, the public, would not accept any initiatives on minority protection in Romania without altering the status quo.[45] As indicated in the letter, Teleki did not seek the reconstitution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; instead, he advocated for regional unity among South-East European states.[46]

In March 1940, Owen O'Malley forwarded a detailed memorandum written by Macartney on Hungary's political situation to the Foreign Office, which

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 39–40.

[41] Owen O'Malley to Mr. Strang, November 11, 1939, PRO FO 371 23116/C18636/18638/21 quoted in Fürj, Orsolya, "A brit diplomáciai jelenlét Magyarországon 1924 és 1941 között: A British Legation szervezete és működése" [British Diplomacy in Hungary from 1924 to 1941: Structure and Activity of the British Legation], PhD diss. (Debreceni Egyetem, 2017), 118–119.

[42] Owen O'Malley to Mr. Strang, November 11, 1939, quoted in Fürj, "A brit diplomáciai jelenlét Magyarországon," 119.

[43] Beretzky, *Four Britons and Nationalism*, 194.

[44] C.A. Macartney to Owen O'Malley on his conversation with Hungarian Prime Minister Pál Teleki, 29 February 1940, quoted in Barta, Róbert, *A magyarság vonzásában—Válogatás Carlile Aylmer Macartney írásaiból és beszédeiből* [In the Attraction of Hungarians: Selected Writings and Speeches by Carlile Aylmer Macartney], (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Történelmi Intézete, 2021), 187.

[45] C.A. Macartney to Owen O'Malley, 29 February 1940, quoted in Barta, *A magyarság vonzásában*, 187.

[46] Ibid.

further demonstrates that the British Minister to Budapest deeply respected Macartney's viewpoints.[47] Macartney highlighted, among others, his sympathy with Regent Miklós Horthy and PM Pál Teleki, assessed Hungary's internal affairs favourably, and propagated, quite naively, that German military presence in the country would meet severe opposition from the public.[48] Macartney's distinct pro-Hungarian political standpoint thus aligned with O'Malley's, who promoted British rapprochement with Hungary from the beginning of his service in Budapest.

The pro-Hungarian Anglo-Irish Owen O'Malley and Carlile Aylmer Macartney have been contrasted by historians with such unfriendly British figures of Scottish descent, as Geoffrey Knox and Robert William Seton-Watson. While O'Malley and Macartney could resonate with Hungarian history[49] and were open to meeting and maintaining personal relationships with political members as well as the people of the country, Knox and Seton-Watson upheld their criticism of the Hungarian regime and advocacy for the Successor States, particularly for Czechoslovakia, during the interwar years. Thus, while further research is required in this field, it can be argued that a significant aspect of this comparison, besides the dominant role of national identity in approaching political issues, is the powerful influence of personal connections in shaping political standpoints.

The Struggles with the Foreign Office: The Power of Propaganda

Although Owen O'Malley was fully dedicated to dispelling disillusionment with Hungary in the Foreign Office, he was often confronted with the limits of a diplomat's capacity to influence perceptions in London. He felt that "the Foreign Office and Ministers in London knew nothing to speak of about Hungary or Hungarians and did not want to learn—anyhow not to learn from me."[50] This could stem from the distanced attitude of the Foreign Office towards Hungary that characterized the interwar years, as well as the criticism of Hungary by O'Malley's predecessor, Geoffrey Knox. However, from 1939 onwards, O'Malley asserted that he did not share the view that Hungary sold itself to Germany and that the strategic significance of Hungary was worth the Foreign Office's effort to put the country on the side of Britain.[51] The

[47] Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 88.
[48] C.A. Macartney's memorandum on Hungary, undated, PRO, FO 371/24 429, quoted in Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 88.
[49] Lojkó, "C.A. Macartney and Central Europe," 40.
[50] Owen O'Malley, *The Phantom Caravan*, 202.
[51] Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 74.

radical difference between the two ministers' approach to Hungary demonstrates that diplomatic reports were not independent of sympathy and could dramatically shape political decisions.

Owen O'Malley and his daughter were committed to reshaping wartime British propaganda to promote closer engagement in British–Hungarian relations. Thus, Jane O'Malley started editing a daily British bulletin (*Angol hírek* [English News]) in Budapest that provided the news from London.[52] However, she expressed her concerns with the press; suitable propaganda for Hungary did not materialize in Britain, she opined, complaining that the Ministers in London ignored the local situation.[53] She further emphasized her frustration that while the Foreign Office remained hesitant, the German Legation immediately enhanced its media presence in Budapest following the outbreak of war on September 1, 1939.[54]

Similarly, Owen O'Malley regularly expressed his disillusionment with the Foreign Office. His letter from September 1939 demonstrates his frustration with inadequate communication and delayed decision-making. O'Malley expressed his hope "to galvanize them into the realization of our local difficulties".[55] He further stated that the Foreign Office often put the officials in a position where they were forced to exercise discretion; however, if anything went wrong, they criticized the diplomat and disclaimed any responsibilities, thus trying to have "the best of both ends."[56]

It is significant to highlight that O'Malley's pro-Hungarian attitude did not prevent him from recognizing the increasing German influence in Hungary. In December 1939, he wrote that Gestapo agents were among the staff in the British Legation, and no one would know who or how to find out who.[57] O'Malley was also sceptical of Hungary's non-belligerent status in the war, while also pointing out the shortage of British support. He once again noted that a considerable part of the Hungarian society was distinctly pro-German, either out of conviction or due to the Germans' success in winning over the political circles and society through propaganda. Meanwhile, the Foreign Office remained passive, making no effort to counterbalance German wartime propaganda in Budapest.[58] In the spring of 1940, O'Malley claimed that the reluctance of the

[52] See: "Girl Propagandist," *Evening Standard*, March 28, 1940, MSS 21689, fol. 2., 1287, National Library of Ireland.

[53] Jane O'Malley to Ann Bridge, November 4, 1939, MSS 21691, fol. 1., 1300, National Library of Ireland.

[54] Jane O'Malley to Ann Bridge, November 4, 1939.

[55] Owen O'Malley to Ann Bridge, September 21, 193 9, MSS 21691, fol. 1., 1300, National Library of Ireland.

[56] Owen O'Malley to Ann Bridge, September 21, 1939.

[57] Owen O'Malley to Ann Bridge, December 20, 1939, MSS 21691, fol. 1, 1300, National Library of Ireland.

[58] Barcza, György, *Diplomataemlékeim 1911–1945*, I. [My Diplomat Memories 1911–1945], (Budapest: Európa, 1994), 455.

Foreign Office to address the issues in Hungary stemmed from the following factors:

> There was, I think, in the Foreign Office and in most Ministers' minds a hard core of feeling and opinion about Central Europe built up by what may roughly be called the pro-French school of thought and by the patient labour of Czechs—of the charming and persuasive Jan Masaryk and the astute and deceptive Edward Beneš. This was of a nature to make Hungarians, and me also, feel that no burning Hungarian question, such as the merits of the Treaty of Trianon, would be considered fairly in London.[59]

It was well-known to the Hungarian Minister in London, György Barcza, that the Czechoslovak Government in exile, most notably Edward Beneš[60] and Jan Masaryk,[61] actively promoted the recognition of the pre-1938 borders and did their utmost to strengthen negative voices about Hungary in the Foreign Office. However, in July 1940, a dispute escalated between Britain and Hungary when the British Government recognized the Czechoslovak Committee, led by President Beneš in exile, as the representative body of an independent Czechoslovak state. This strategic move was heavily criticized by Barcza and the Hungarian Government.[62] Consequently, O'Malley had to navigate not only the influence of propaganda but also the issue of territorial revision.

Owen O'Malley on Territorial Revision in Transylvania

In July 1939, Owen O'Malley informed Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax that the question of border revision was crucial for securing Hungary's alliance.[63] He highlighted that the Hungarians were justifiably distrustful of Britain because of the Foreign Office's reluctance to address the situation of the Hungarian minority in the Successor States.[64] In 1940, György Barcza emphasized the escalating conflict of the Hungarian-Romanian situation and the despair of Transylvanian Hungarians. Barcza argued that without revising the borders between Hungary and Romania, lasting peace in the Danube Basin could be

[59] Owen O'Malley, *The Phantom Caravan*, 202.
[60] After the annexation of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany in 1938, the Czechoslovak President Edward Beneš established a government-in-exile in Paris, where he advocated for the restoration of Czechoslovak autonomy.
[61] The Czechoslovak Foreign Minister went into exile to London after the First Vienna Award. He was the son of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia.
[62] Jeszenszky, "Magyarország a brit gondolkodásban és külpolitikában," 164.
[63] Owen O'Malley to Halifax, July 3, 1939, PRO, FO, 371/23 116, quoted in Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 74.
[64] Ibid., 75.

unattainable.[65] O'Malley's view on the Hungarian-Romanian situation coincided with Barcza's: he claimed that unless Britain conceded to Hungary's territorial demands in Romania, Hungary would be lost to Britain.[66]

The Hungarian Prime Minister Pál Teleki's and O'Malley's comments from 1939 on the Hungarian-Romanian border revision foreshadowed the course of events. Teleki stated that revisionism posed the greatest threat to Hungarian politics, noting that the public was irrational due to the tempting promises from the Germans, and he warned that the recovery of Transylvania would result in an absolute commitment to Germany.[67] He further claimed that everyone was engaged in politics—even those with little understanding—as people followed emotionally-driven political currents.[68] O'Malley observed similar patterns in Hungarian society, remarking that "nobody talks about anything but politics"[69] in Budapest.

In the spring of 1940, Owen O'Malley realized that Regent Miklós Horthy was willing to sacrifice Hungary's independence from German domination in order to achieve border revision in Transylvania. During a private meeting with O'Malley, the Regent avoided providing direct answers concerning the possibility of German military passage to Romania through Hungary.[70] Although O'Malley supported ethnic revision in Transylvania, he insisted on a clear foreign political line taken by the Hungarian Government. Therefore, in April 1940, he initiated a private meeting with PM Teleki to press the Hungarian Prime Minister for the British standpoint on the German demands.[71] Teleki, however, vaguely answered and entrusted István Csáky to deliver the news that Hungary would not oppose German military passage to Romania.[72] Csáky explained to the British Minister that the reason behind their decision had been that Hungary's resistance to the German military would only last a few days, and he wondered what O'Malley would do in the same position.[73]

While British–Hungarian relations began to deteriorate by the spring of 1940 due to the growing German political influence in Hungary, on May 10,

[65] György Barcza to Halifax, February 9, 1940, quoted in Juhász, Gyula, *Magyarország külpolitikája a 2. világháború kitörésének időszakában, 1939–1940* [Hungary's Foreign Policy at the Outbreak of the Second World War (1939–1940)], (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1962), 695.

[66] Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 84.

[67] Barcza, *Diplomataemlékeim*, I., 446.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Owen O'Malley to Ann Bridge, July 7, 1939, MSS 21691, fol. 1., 1300, National Library of Ireland.

[70] András Becker, "A Step too Far? The Impact of German Military Passage to Romania through Hungary on the Anglo–Hungarian Relationship, April 1940," *Hungarian Studies Review* Vol. 42, no. 1–2 (2015): 61.

[71] Ibid., 64.

[72] Ibid., 65.

[73] Owen O'Malley to Halifax, April 26, 1940, PRO FO 371/24427, quoted in Becker, "A Step too Far?," 65.

1940, Winston Churchill became British Prime Minister. Churchill was fully aware of PM Pál Teleki's pro-British stance[74] and had a personal relationship with Owen O'Malley.[75] Disillusioned with Hungary's long-term commitment to a non-belligerent status, O'Malley visited Teleki on May 11, 1940, emphasizing the potentially grave consequences of allowing German troops to pass through Hungary.[76] Teleki responded sharply, stating that despite the rapprochement in diplomatic matters, the British Government continued to consider Hungary their enemy.[77] Moreover, he emphatically added that "for twenty years, no one, including Britain, cared to ensure a fair settlement and a peaceful atmosphere"[78] in the East-Central European region.

However, on May 14, 1940, the Foreign Office made a considerable offer to the Hungarian Government. They proposed that if Germany forced a military passage through Hungary, Teleki's government should at least protest, which would put the country in the same position as Denmark.[79] Furthermore, if Hungary refused the German demands, the British Government would legitimately accept a Hungarian cabinet in exile, appointed by the Regent.[80] Nevertheless, due to the Axis Powers' successes in the war during the spring of 1940, the Hungarian Government, including Teleki, began to doubt the possibility of an Allied victory.[81]

Besides O'Malley's warnings and disapproval of the pro-German shift in Hungarian foreign policy, Churchill's government redirected its focus from the Hungarian–Romanian conflict to the Anglo–Soviet relations.[82] By the summer of 1940, the British Prime Minister recognized the strategic significance of an alliance with Stalin in order to defeat Nazi Germany.[83] Consequently, the question of border revision in Transylvania was swept off the table of political discourse in Britain.

Hungary's revisionist demand in Transylvania, however, was well-known to Hitler, too. In July 1940, the Soviet Union gradually turned from Germany's

[74] Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 101–102.

[75] Winston Churchill and Owen O'Malley had known each other long before O'Malley's service in Hungary. O'Malley, in the late 1920s, worked for Churchill and assisted him in writing Churchill's famous book entitled *The World Crisis*. See Index to the "Correspondence and other papers of the O'Malley family," MSS 21680.

[76] Memorandum on Owen O'Malley's conversation with PM Pál Teleki, May 11, 1940, quoted in Barcza, *Diplomataemlékeim*, II., 288.

[77] Owen O'Malley's conversation with PM Pál Teleki, May 11, 1940, quoted in Barcza, *Diplomataemlékeim*, II., 289.

[78] Barcza, *Diplomataemlékeim*, II., 289.

[79] C.A. Macartney, *October Fifteenth, A History of Modern Hungary, 1929–1945*, I–II. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1957), 400.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 103.

[83] Ibid.

ally[84] to a rival and considered a joint military action with Hungary against Romania. To avoid war in the region at all costs, Hitler urged the bilateral negotiations between Romania and Hungary on border revision. However, the talks soon reached a stalemate and military mobilization began. In order to avoid an armed conflict, on August 30, 1940, the Second Vienna Award declared border revision with German-Italian arbitration, and Hungary reconstituted the northern part of Transylvania together with the area inhabited by the Szeklers, or Székelys, with more than two million people.[85]

One of the major intellectual sponsors of the Successor States, Robert William Seton-Watson, vehemently opposed the Second Vienna Award. On September 3, 1940, only four days after the German-Italian arbitration, the British historian expressed his critical views in a BBC broadcast, claiming that the Hungarian reconstitution of Northern Transylvania was nothing less than the continuance of the Nazi "enslavement of Europe."[86] Seton-Watson's anti-Hungarian standpoint was also reflected in his attempt to remove Owen O'Malley from his position in Hungary. However, on September 4, 1940, Bruce Lockhart, member of the Political Intelligence Department as well as Director General of Warfare Executive, informed Seton-Watson that there was "little chance of our recalling O'Malley from Budapest," but an official declaration could be expected in which the British Government would "refuse to recognise the transfer of Transylvanian territory."[87]

The following day, on September 5, 1940, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill stated that, despite his disagreement with Hungary's treatment after the First World War, the Second Vienna Award was a dictate; therefore, Britain could not accept it.[88] The Foreign Office also informed György Barcza that the British Government would refuse to recognize any border revision that had been stipulated since September 1, 1939.[89]

[84] On August 23, 1939, the Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov and German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop signed a non-aggression pact—commonly known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact—to secure their spheres of influence in East-Central Europe.

[85] Based on Hungarian statistics, about 50% of the inhabitants were Hungarians, while the Romanian statistics claimed only 38%. Ignác Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century*, (Budapest: Corvina, 1999), 200–201.

[86] Seton Watson, "Message to Rumania," September 3, 1940, Seton-Watson Papers, SEW 14/1/2 quoted in Beretzky, *Four Britons and Nationalism*, 200.

[87] Bruce Lockhart to Seton-Watson, September 4, 1940, Box 32, Seton-Watson Papers. I am grateful to Ágnes Beretzky, for calling my attention to this letter.

[88] Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 106.

[89] Ibid., 107.

The End of British–Hungarian Diplomatic Relations

In Hungary, the Second Vienna Award was greeted with astonishing jubilation, but Hitler's goodwill had its price: Hungary was apparently on the road to becoming a German satellite. On November 20, 1940, the country joined the Tripartite Pact, further distancing its foreign policy from Britain.[90] To sweeten the bitter pill, Owen O'Malley sent a report to the Foreign Office the following day, arguing that Hungary's political decision to sign the agreement with the Axis Powers should not be viewed as a hostile act against London. He emphasized that the political elite, notably Pál Teleki, remained dedicated to maintaining British–Hungarian diplomatic relations, and the Hungarian Government continued to treat British citizens stationed in Hungary favourably.[91] Yet, later on, British political circles started considering that, by joining the Tripartite Pact, Hungarian foreign policy had significantly shifted towards Germany.[92]

On December 12, 1940, PM Teleki made a last attempt to counterbalance Hungary's German orientation by signing the Eternal Friendship Pact with Yugoslavia,[93] which, however, could not promote British–Hungarian rapprochement. In December 1940, British–Hungarian relations further deteriorated due to a change of personnel at the Foreign Office: Anthony Eden was reappointed Foreign Secretary. He did not sympathize with the Hungarians.[94] Nevertheless, Owen O'Malley still saw a window open for securing British–Hungarian relations and actively promoted the plans to establish a Hungarian government-in-exile in the West.[95]

Owen O'Malley was briefed on the plans for a Hungarian government-in-exile on January 26, 1941.[96] Fearing the impending and inescapable decision on a Hungarian–German military alliance, PM Pál Teleki and other prominent members of the Hungarian political elite, including István Bethlen and Tibor Eckhardt,[97] assembled at Regent Miklós Horthy's office to agree on the secret

[90] Ablonczy, *Pál Teleki*, 243.

[91] Owen O'Malley to the Foreign Office, November 21, 1940, PRO, FO 371/24 431, quoted in Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 113.

[92] Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 115.

[93] Ablonczy, *Pál Teleki*, 244.

[94] Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 119.

[95] Owen O'Malley's report to the Foreign Office, January 23, 1941, and January 26, 1941, about the plans for a government-in-exile, PRO, FO 371/26 602, quoted in Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 129. The idea to establish a Hungarian government-in-exile had been on the agenda since 1939–1940, when the government transferred five million dollars to János Pelényi, the Hungarian Minister at Washington. See John Pelényi, "The Secret Plan for a Hungarian Government in the West at the Outbreak of World War II," *The Journal of Modern History* Vol. 36, no. 2. (1964): 177.

[96] Juhász, Gyula, *Magyar–brit titkos tárgyalások 1943-ban* [Secret Hungarian–British Negotiations in 1943], (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1978), 23.

[97] Tibor Eckhardt was the leader of the opposition Smallholders' Party in Hungary until his resignation in 1940. He then was sent to the United States to build a network and promote the Hungarian Government's plans for a government-in-exile.

plans for a government-in-exile.[98] During the January meeting, Horthy concurred that if German demands violated the sovereignty of Hungary, he would form a new cabinet in London under Bethlen's leadership, with O'Malley remaining British Minister and Eckhardt sent to the United States.[99] O'Malley's involvement thus indicated his significant role in Hungarian political decisions as well as the confidence in his diplomatic activity.

The idea of a Hungarian émigré government, however, was received with moderate interest in the Foreign Office. Although the initial communications from British political circles stated they would acknowledge the Hungarian representation with Owen O'Malley in London, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden asserted that the British Government could not make any promises.[100] Additionally, O'Malley doubted Horthy's resistance to German demands, arguing that although the Regent was fearless, at critical times he would nevertheless be indulgent towards the Germans.[101]

Despite Anthony Eden's isolation from supporting the establishment of a Hungarian émigré government in London, Owen O'Malley was determined to reconcile British and Hungarian interests. For this reason, in February 1941, he translated István Bethlen's inaugural speech at the General Assembly of the Kisfaludy Society into English and sent it to the Foreign Office.[102] Bethlen's speech was significant considering its pro-Western and anti-German political undertones.[103] Thus, when O'Malley shared the transcript with the Foreign Office, both Arnold Toynbee and Macartney reviewed and hailed it as a "brave and important"[104] step. The Foreign Office, on the other hand, remained as unsupportive as before.

By the spring of 1941, the events had accelerated. Hungary could no longer avoid military intervention in conjunction with Germany. Despite PM Teleki's concerns and disapproval, a Hungarian–German military agreement on action against Yugoslavia was reached with the Regent's support.[105] Thus, yet another opportunity for revision was at hand. On April 2, 1941, Hungarian Minister to London György Barcza sent a telegram to Budapest stating that the Foreign Office would break off diplomatic relations with Hungary in case of

[98] Juhász, *Magyar–brit titkos tárgyalások*, 23.

[99] Telegram from Budapest to the Foreign Office, January 26, 1941, PRO FO 371/26 602 51. and 53. quoted in Juhász, *Magyar–brit titkos tárgyalások*, 23.

[100] Lajos Olasz, "Steps to Set up a Hungarian Emigré Government in the West, at the Beginning of the Second World War," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 8, no. 9 (2018): 25.

[101] Owen O'Malley to the Foreign Office on 26 January 1941, PRO, FO 371/36 602 52. Quoted in Juhász, *Magyar–brit titkos tárgyalások*, 24.

[102] Beretzky, *Four Britons and Nationalism*, 205.

[103] Romsics, Ignác, *Bethlen István. Politikai életrajz* [István Bethlen: Political Biography], (Budapest: Magyarságkutató Könyvtára, 1991), 285.

[104] PRO FO 371/2603 and 5355/123/121 quoted in Romsics, *Bethlen István.* 285.

[105] Ablonczy, *Pál Teleki*, 246.

participation in an armed intervention against Yugoslavia.[106] Seeing no way out, by the morning of April 3, Teleki had taken his own life.[107]

On April 6, 1941, Germany launched its attack against Yugoslavia, using Hungarian territory as part of the offensive. This left the Foreign Office with no choice but to break diplomatic relations with Hungary. Therefore, a day later, on April 7, Owen O'Malley—who had been a genuine friend to the Hungarians since his appointment in May 1939—faced the task of informing the newly appointed Hungarian Prime Minister, László Bárdossy, of the termination.[108] Despite his departure, O'Malley continued to reflect on Hungarian politics in the subsequent years

In conclusion, Owen O'Malley's service from May 1939 to April 1941 as British Minister to Budapest highlighted the complexities of balancing diplomacy and the use of power politics of the era. His emphasis on 'personal' diplomacy with the Hungarian Prime Minister Pál Teleki and Regent Miklós Horthy enabled him to understand Hungary's difficult position in the international arena. Although his efforts often faced resistance from the Foreign Office, he promoted closer diplomatic engagement between Britain and Hungary in a critical period of history.

A Genealogical Outlook: Sir Owen O'Malley's Irish Heritage

When examining the roots of Owen O'Malley's empathy towards the Hungarians, we should not neglect his family background, the foundation of his national identity, and his stance on minority issues. Although his family had settled in England when Owen was born in 1887, his father, Edward Loughlin O'Malley, a high-ranking lawyer and judge, was dedicated to investigating his lineal ancestors from Ireland. During his lifetime, he discovered more than eight hundred letters from his ancestors and unveiled the pedigree of his forefathers going back to the sixteenth century. After his death in 1932, all material was inherited by his son, Owen O'Malley, who diligently continued the exploration of his ancestors, even during his time as British Minister to Budapest between 1939 and 1941. In those two years in Hungary, he frequently sent letters to both the Irish Genealogical Office and distant relatives to gather more information about his family, expand the pedigree, and understand his ancestors' fate.[109]

[106] György Barcza's telegram to Foreign Minister László Bárdossy, April 2, 1941, DIMK V, 681, 991-992 quoted in Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 129.
[107] Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások*, 129.
[108] Ibid., 132–133.
[109] Index to the "Correspondence and other papers of the O'Malley family" archive material,

For Owen O'Malley, family history was clearly more than a personal matter of interest. After inheriting the letters and pedigrees from his ancestors, he committed to publishing three studies in the *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* in the 1950s on the fate of his family from the sixteenth century onwards, focusing on the influence of British rule on his ancestors. Additionally, two unpublished volumes, written by Owen O'Malley and now located in the National Library of Ireland, explore the narrative of his ancestors. In one of these volumes, he put forward the idea that in order to understand history, one must look beyond the lives of influential individuals who shaped the course of events and observe "the unselfconscious unfolding of the lives of ordinary families"[110] instead.

Consequently, Owen O'Malley's Irish heritage and his approach to understanding historical events through the narrative of his ancestors played a significant role in his life. Thus, when examining his diplomatic service in Hungary and his stance on Hungarian politics, it is crucial to consider how his reflections on his ancestors' circumstances—a family who severely struggled under foreign rule—shaped his identity.

The Influence of British Rule on the O'Malley Family

Owen O'Malley's ancestors originated from Mayo, a county in West Ireland severely affected by the plantations of the English Crown from the sixteenth century onward. Among the family members were lords and captains, as well as high-ranking nobles who possessed large estates in Mayo and could not escape the devastating results of English colonization. Beginning in the sixteenth century, the systematic reorganization of Irish lands—including the seizure and redistribution of estates to English settlers—served a higher purpose for England to prevent political fragmentation and rearrange the social hierarchy. The Irish landowners, particularly Gaelic families, were forced to pledge allegiance to the Crown.[111]

Owen O'Malley was deeply interested in understanding how the English plantations came to disrupt Gaelic families in Mayo by introducing specific declarations and legal amendments that oppressed traditional Irish authorities and laws. In his article written in 1950, he also outlined the impact of the *Composition of the Connacht* agreement from 1585, signed by O'Malley's

MSS 21680, National Library of Ireland. The research for this paper was generously supported by the Irish Bursary Award provided by the Embassy of Ireland in Budapest.

[110] Owen O'Malley, *History of the Belclare, Co. Mayo, Branch of the O'Malley Family in the 18th Century*, typescript, MSS 5619, National Library of Ireland.

[111] Raymond Gillespie, "Plantations in Early Modern Ireland," *History Ireland* 1, no. 4 (1993): 43. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27724120.

ancestors. This agreement abolished the Gaelic titles and inheritance law, allowing the Irish chiefs to retain land only if administered on the English model.[112] The English, however, miscalculated the power of Irish traditions and the social embedment of such rules, as O'Malley argued:

> There is in Mayo and, I am sure, always has been, a wide discrepancy between the letter and the spirit, between law and behaviour. We have a long-established aptitude for disregarding authority and the written word, and in many aspects of life the restraints upon us derive their force from custom and the fear of public disapprobation rather than from the Courts and the officers of the law.[113]

Thus, the systematic expropriation of Irish lands and the oppression of Gaelic noble families did not result in full assimilation. The deep roots of ethnicity, tradition, and social affiliation were stronger than subservience to foreign rule. From here sprang O'Malley's understanding of the national complexity of the Carpathian Basin, that of the post-1920 struggles of Hungarian minorities in the Successor States.

Besides focusing on the legal restructuring of Gaelic land administrations, O'Malley's 1952 study also reveals some of his lineal ancestors' resistance to English rule in Ireland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One of his direct ancestors, Captain Charles O'Malley, was actively involved in contemporary political conflicts. During the Williamite War between 1689 and 1691, Charles O'Malley fought on the side of the deposed King James II (1685–1688),[114] whose conversion to Catholicism won the support of the Gaelic Irish.[115] The 1691 defeat of the supporters of James II, however, further diminished the power of traditional Irish families, contributing to a sharp decline in Irish Catholic land ownership, which fell from twenty-two to fourteen percent.[116] Following the war, Charles O'Malley went into exile at the King's Court of Saint Germain in France. Meanwhile, William III (1689–1702) placed a reward on him, offering ransom for his capture, dead or alive.[117]

Alongside Charles O'Malley's forced exile, the prolonged political conflicts led many in the O'Malley family to emigrate. In the above-mentioned 1952 study, we can find a memorandum by Charles's great-grandson, George O'Malley,

[112] Owen O'Malley, "Note on the O'Malley Lordship at the Close of the XVIth Century," *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 24, no. 1/2 (1950): 27–28. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25535327.

[113] Owen O'Malley, "Note on the O'Malley Lordship at the Close of the XVIth Century," 28.

[114] Owen O'Malley, "O'Malleys between 1651 and 1725," *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 25, no. 1/2 (1952): 34. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25550062.

[115] Harman Murtagh, "The Williamite War 1689-91." *History Ireland 1*, no. 1 (1993): 41, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27724047.

[116] Murtagh, "The Williamite War," 42.

[117] Owen O'Malley, "O'Malleys between 1651 and 1725," 33.

dated 1776. This document reveals that some of Charles's five brothers settled in Hungary[118] and took up arms against the Turks during the reconquest of Buda Castle in 1686.[119] This personal family tie to Hungary further strengthened Owen O'Malley's connection to the Hungarians. The chronology of his letters on genealogical research suggests that he had already been aware of this connection before his service in Budapest.[120]

Moreover, Owen O'Malley's reflection on the struggles of his family in the seventeenth century offers an insight into the broader context of Irish history when resilience and sacrifice characterized ordinary lives. He noted that the experience of his ancestors can be juxtaposed with the fate of most Gaelic families during their "destruction or dispersion".[121] The consequences of foreign rule were, as O'Malley stated: "resistance to Cromwellian and Williamite forces, expropriation and outlawry, emigration to the Continent, loyalty to Crown and Church, and English promises—never fulfilled—of restitution […]"[122] His emphasis on restitution requires special attention because as a British Minister, he primarily served to foster British political interests abroad; however, his findings on his family contributed to his sensitivity to ethnic minorities which somewhat distanced him from official imperial ambitions.

The Unfulfilled Promises of Restitution: Parallels with the Hungarian Minority in Transylvania in Post-1920s

The Williamite War, in which Owen O'Malley's ancestor, Charles, took part, ended with the signing of the *Treaty of Limerick* on October 3, 1691, with guarantees for the Irish to restore properties and religious liberty. Article I declared that "Their Majesties, as soon as their affairs will permit them to summon a Parliament in this kingdom, will endeavour to procure the said Roman Catholics such farther security in that particular, as may preserve them from any disturbance upon the account of their said religion"[123] Additionally, Article II stated that those "who shall return and submit to their Majesties' obedience; and their and every of their heir, shall hold, possess, and enjoy, all and every their estates of freehold and inheritance; all the rights; titles and

[118] Ibid., 34.

[119] György Barcza, Hungarian Minister to London, to István Csáky, Hungarian Foreign Secretary, April 29, 1939, MOL, K-64, 79. quoted in Bán D., *Illúziók és csalódások,* 65.

[120] Index to the "Correspondence and other papers of the O'Malley family," MSS 21680.

[121] Owen O'Malley, "O'Malleys between 1651 and 1725," 37.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Henry Brooke Parnell, *A History of the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholics, from the Treaty of Limerick to the Union*, (Dublin: Printed by H. Fitzpatrick, 1808), 6–7, https://jstor.org/stable/60216403.

interest, privileges and immunities [...] that were in force in the said reign of King Charles II."[124]

These provisions are crucial in understanding the extent of English disregard for land restoration and denominational equality. As mentioned in Owen O'Malley's article, his family had already been deprived of their lands and reduced to the mere status of tenants before the reign of Charles II (1660–1685), thus depriving several family members of the right to restitution.[125] Furthermore, O'Malley highlighted that although religious conformity to Protestantism was not essential for social survival in the subsequent years of William's victory, it gradually became more significant in the seventeenth century, resulting in some of his ancestors' conversion.[126] His investigation corresponds to what happened soon after the ratification of the *Treaty of Limerick*. In 1695, two acts of the early Penal Laws—designed to secure Protestant interests in Ireland and limit the rights of Irish Catholics—were enacted. These included a disarming bill that prohibited Catholics from military service and an educational amendment that restricted Catholics' educational opportunities, such as the right to study abroad.[127] This severely contradicted the previous proclamations, suggesting that political interests often demanded false assurances to manipulate the course of events.

The historical experience of the O'Malley family and what Owen O'Malley emphasized in his articles can be juxtaposed with the struggles of Hungarian minorities in the Successor States in the interwar years. In Transylvania, nearly two million ethnic Hungarians suffered severely from the restrictive policies imposed by the Romanian governments after 1920. Their marginalization began with the land reforms of July 30, 1921, which aimed to weaken the denominational network in the region. Ninety-five percent of the lands belonging to the Roman Catholic dioceses of Nagyvárad (Oradea), Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia), Temesvár (Timişoara), and Szatmár (Satu Mare) were seized by the Romanian authorities.[128]

Additionally, a legal conflict escalated when the Romanian Government began seizing the lands of those Hungarians in Transylvania who had chosen Hungarian citizenship and moved back to Hungary—the right to do so above the age of eighteen was legally established in the Treaty of Trianon, proclaiming that they could retain their estates in the detached territories.[129] Those

[124] Brooke Parnell, *A History of the Penal Laws*, 7.
[125] Owen O'Malley, "O'Malleys between 1651 and 1725," 41.
[126] Ibid., 41.
[127] Charles Ivar McGrath, "Securing the Protestant Interest: The Origins and Purpose of the Penal Laws of 1695," *Irish Historical Studies 30*, no. 117 (1996): 44, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30008727.
[128] Diószegi, László et al., *Magyarok kisebbségben és szórványban* [Hungarians in Minority and Diaspora], (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 1995), 140–141.
[129] Beretzky, *Four Britons and Nationalism*, 105.

subjected to expropriation became known as 'optants', and by 1923, two hundred and fifty lawsuits had been brought to court in Paris.[130] However, the Optant Problem was not resolved until as late as 1930.[131] The news of the prolonged legal battle of the Hungarian ethnicity also reached Britain. As Arnold J. Toynbee, a British historian as well as Director of the prestigious Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) highlighted, the Optant Question pointed out the controversy between the peace treaty provisions and the countries' national legislations.[132]

The parallel with the struggles of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania is a significant aspect of the analysis at this point as, during his years as British Minister to Budapest, Owen O'Malley had to navigate British–Hungarian relations in a time when German influence with territorial gains increased in East-Central Europe and the Hungarian revisionist demands for the restitution of Northern Transylvania dominated political thought.

Conclusion

"To swim against the tide is not the way to get on in the Foreign Office unless one can swim underwater."[133] Thus wrote Owen O'Malley in his memoir in the 1950s, which can be fully aligned with his years in Budapest between 1939 and 1941. During those two years, he wished to break the universal 'tide', a distanced attitude of the British emerging in the twentieth century due to the complex nationality question in the Danube Basin and anti-Hungarian propaganda. However, Owen O'Malley's approach to Hungarian politics differed from the widespread disillusionment with Hungary characterizing the interwar years.

This paper, therefore, has argued that a parallel can be drawn between Owen O'Malley's empathy towards the Hungarians and his Irish heritage. His genealogical research revealed that British colonial rule in Ireland severely affected the lives of his family members. His family lost their estates and titles, and their Catholic faith further deepened their marginalization within society. Apart from the grievances of his ancestors, O'Malley was dedicated to studying the legal amendments introduced by the English Crown and their controversies. The unfulfilled promises to retain land and guarantees for equal treatment of religious denominations further deepened O'Malley's disagreement with British imperialism.

Thus, when Owen O'Malley was inaugurated in Budapest in 1939, he was able to see Hungary's difficult position in the international field in its

[130] Ibid., 105.
[131] Ibid., 108.
[132] Ibid.
[133] O'Malley, The Phantom Caravan, 178.

complexity. His Irish heritage prompted his understanding of Hungary's territorial demands in Transylvania and the struggles of ethnic minorities in the Danube Basin. Furthermore, he opposed the reluctance of the Foreign Office to settle disputes in the region due to its favoured economic interests. He enhanced diplomatic engagement by maintaining first-hand consultations with the Hungarian Prime Minister and Regent and promoted the revival of the Hungarophile voices in Britain by constantly propagating Hungary's significance. Although he primarily served to protect British interests as a Foreign Office Minister, he demonstrated a distinctive pro-Hungarian attitude. His legacy reflects the significance of diplomatic roles in foreign affairs and highlights the influence of identity in shaping diplomacy.

Chapters from US–Hungarian History

US–HUNGARIAN DIPLOMACY IN THE HORTHY ERA: AMERICAN MINISTERS IN HUNGARY DURING THE INTERWAR YEARS

Zoltán Peterecz

Introduction

Although the diplomatic relations between the United States of America and Hungary were established only in 1921, the two nations had known about each other ever since the birth of the overseas republic. The news and information traveling back and forth for a long time was informal and haphazard. Not only the huge distance was responsible for it, but also the fact that Hungary was not an independent nation in the 19th century. Actually, its freedom fight against Austria was the first real introduction of Hungary and Hungarians into American consciousness. The doomed struggle for freedom and Lajos Kossuth's successful tour in the Union in 1851-52 put Hungary on the map in the United States.[1] The positive picture that was formed then started to change toward the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. In that period more and more Hungarian immigrants arrived in the New World (that time from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, in which Hungary enjoyed a relatively large sovereignty but still a junior status). These immigrants, mostly peasants, did not possess detailed knowledge of the United States—they were uneducated and did not speak English—but by that time the image of America had already been well trenched in Hungarian culture: America meant the place of possible work opportunities for much higher wages than it would have been possible in the homeland. The about one million Hungarians immigrating to the United States in the period between 1880 and 1914 did not easily assimilate into their new environment. A reason for this was that many of them had planned to stay there for only a few years, and then to travel home and spend their hard-earned money at home. Hungarian immigrants—together with

[1] On Kossuth's tour in the United States, see, John H. Komlos, *Louis Kossuth in America, 1851–1852*, (Buffalo, NY: East European Institute, 1973); György Szabad, *Kossuth on the Political System of the United States of America*, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1975); Tibor Frank, "'…to fix the attention of the whole world upon Hungary.' Lajos Kossuth in the United States, 1851-52," *The Hungarian Quarterly* 43, no. 166 (Summer 2002): 85–98.

other millions arriving from Southern, Central and Eastern European countries—became the target of nativist sentiment.[2]

World War I created a deeper chasm between the two nations. As part of the Monarchy, Hungary and Hungarians were fighting on the side of Germany and against the Allies. The United States entered the carnage in Europe in April 1917 by declaring war on Germany, however, the similar step against the Monarchy did not materialize until December 1917, and the two armies never faced off against each other on the battlefield. During the Paris Peace Conference the major question for the United States was Germany, and despite lofty goals announced in Woodrow Wilson's 14 points in early January 1918, self-determination was established only partially, especially in the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. As is well known, for domestic political reasons, the US Senate refused to ratify the Versailles Peace Treaty. This led to two things: the United States did not become a member of the Wilson-initiated League of Nations; and Washington had to conclude a separate peace treaty in August 1921 (in the same manner as with Germany and Austria at the very same time), and the two countries established diplomatic relations for the first time.[3]

In Hungary, next to the despondency over the Treaty of Trianon (signed June 4, 1920)—which meant the loss of roughly two-thirds of the former territories and population—one sentiment remained still: the wonder of America and the almost blind belief that the overseas power would come to the aid of Hungary in rectifying the new borders. Hungarians always magnified anything positive about America, but sometimes they had a good basis to be preferential. For example, during the Romanian occupation after the ill-fated Hungarian Soviet Republic, the American member of the Inter-Allied Military Mission, Major General Harry Hill Bandholtz, single-handedly made sure that the Romanians could not raid the National Museum, which act made him a popular hero.[4] In addition, American relief efforts were welcome in a nation

[2] Tibor Frank, "Friend or Foe? The Changing Image of Hungary in the United States," in Tibor Frank (ed.), *Ethnicity, Propaganda, Myth-Making. Studies on Hungarian Connections to Britain and America, 1848–1945*, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1999), 309–319.

[3] The Hungarian Parliament passed the resolution on August 12, 1921, the treaty was dated August 29, 1921, while the US Congress ratified the treaty on October 18, 1921 and ratifications were exchanged on December 17, 1921, when the treaty came into force. Ulysses Grant-Smith to Charles Hughes, August 12, and December 14, 1921, 711.64119/8 and /36, Roll 1, M. 709, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter mentioned as NARA); *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter mentioned as *FRUS*), 1921, vol. 2, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1936), 258–59. The text of the treaty is in *FRUS*, 1921, vol. 2, 255–58.

[4] For Bandholtz's activity in Hungary, see, Harry Hill Bandholtz, *An Undiplomatic Diary*, (Safety Harbor, FL: Simon Publications, 2000); Patrick V. Garfield, *A Forgotten Soldier: The Life and Times of Major General Harry Hill Bandholtz*, (West Conshohocken, PA: Infinity Publishing, 2009), 117–143.

where famine was rampant, and when about 13,000 POWs were successfully brought back from the Soviet Union, the $1,200,000 needed for the enterprise was also largely provided by American sources.[5] Therefore, when the first American minister appeared in Hungary in 1922, he could count on a friendly reception but also on huge expectations that he, and through him his country, would act as a guardian angel for Hungary. As we will see, this was an utter misconception on the part of the Hungarian political establishment and the population at large.

It is crucial to state at the outset that Hungary was not an important diplomatic post by all means to the United States. Naturally, the successive American governments had a stake in the political and diplomatic landscape of post-war Europe, but Central Europe—aside from Germany, of course—was not deemed as crucial for American interests. Geopolitical or financial interests did not motivate the White House to pay close attention to the region. That, however, does not mean that the State Department did not follow closely what was going on in the area in general, or in individual countries such as Hungary. As the priority for Washington was to see stability in the region, Hungarian political and economic-financial questions sometimes did reach the threshold of curiosity and more serious consideration and, with the 1920s unfolding, certain American financial circles did see opportunities in the post-war European financial and economic rehabilitation—Hungary included. But in general, Hungary was a white dot for the overwhelming majority of Americans.

Theodore Brentano **(1922–1927)**

Theodore Brentano was named the first ever American Minister accredited to Hungary. For a short interim period from February 1922, *Chargé d'Affaires* Eugene C. Shoecraft took on the conducting of bilateral affairs in Budapest until the minister arrived in May. The first Hungarian minister for the United States, Count László Széchenyi, presented his credentials in January 1922 and remained at his post for the next eleven years. When in April 1921 István Bethlen assumed the post of Prime Minister in Hungary (a position he held for the following ten years)—with support from Admiral Miklós Horthy, the Regent of the Kingdom of Hungary—the political consolidation of Hungary began and with it the economic and financial rehabilitation of the country started to seem ever more pressing and possible. This post-Trianon and precarious economic milieu awaited the first official diplomat from the New World.

Theodore Brentano was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 1854. After grade school he visited Europe and studied at high schools in Switzerland and

[5] Grant-Smith to Hughes, December 10, 1921, 864.00/482, Roll 6, M. 708, NARA.

Germany. After returning to the United States, he enrolled at the National University Law School at Washington, D. C. and became a successful lawyer in Chicago. In 1890 he was nominated for the bench and later he became the first superior court judge of Cook County, Illinois, then Chief Justice, a position he held until 1921.[6] As superior judge, he did a lot for Chicago and Illinois to take property on the shore of Lake Michigan for public purposes, which helped the development of the lakefront at the Windy City.[7] Between 1899 and 1921, Brentano was also treasurer of the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, a German-language Republican paper whose earlier editor had been his father during the Civil War.[8] He was thus a reliable member of the Republican political machinery in the Windy City, therefore he was seen as a trusted man usable for smaller missions in and out of the field of law. Consequently, after retiring from the bench, he was chosen to be the first minister for Hungary by the Harding administration. His knowledge of German must also have played a role, since this was the foreign language that the Hungarian political elite spoke. After the five years he spent in Hungary, he remained a faithful Republican but led a retired life. Theodore Brentano died in Chicago in 1940.

Brentano's nomination came before the Rogers Act of 1924, which piece of legislation tried to reform the diplomatic service of the United States. The Act unified the diplomatic and consular services, created a tier system for officials with fixed salaries and also a system where the various diplomats were to rotate after three years' work in one place, and set up a retirement age of 65. Thus, the way for a merit system was open in the reformed diplomatic service and also, thanks to the launch of the Foreign Service School the following year, professional career diplomats got to the forefront.[9] However, as any reforms, the Rogers Act suffered from flaws, and political nominees have remained a regular feature of the American diplomatic service. It must also be noted that sometimes political appointees served just as well if not better than career diplomats. At any rate, Theodore Brentano represented the classic political appointee in 1922, being a lifelong Republican and having built an illustrious legal career. He was seen as well qualified to a post that apparently did not demand either a lot of work nor would it offer any complications beyond easy

[6] For Brentano's biography, see, *Sketches: Judiciary Candidates*, (Chicago: The Hehrt O. Shepard Co., Printers, 1903), 6; *The New York Times*, July 3, 1940.

[7] *The New York Times*, July 3, 1940.

[8] *Fourth Estate*, Issue 281, July 13, 1899; *The Chicago Tribune*, April 24, 1876.

[9] On the Rogers Act, see, Waldo H. Heinrichs, *American Ambassador: Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 95–106, 115–117; Robert D. Schulzinger, *The Making of the Diplomatic Mind: The Training, Outlook and Style of United States Foreign Service Officers, 1908–1931*, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1975); Richard Hume Werking, *The Master Architects Building the United States Foreign Service, 1890–1931*, (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1977); Lawrence E. Gelfand, "Towards a Merit System for the American Diplomatic Service 1900–1930," *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (1988): 49–63.

solutions. Széchenyi was informed upon arrival that Brentano was "a very good friend of the Hungarians" and supposedly "Hungarian-Americans living here [were] very much delighted to note that Judge Brentano [would] be our next Minister in Budapest."[10] This information might have trickled down to the Hungarian press as well, since on his arrival, one of the Budapest dailies wrote that partially owing to his many Hungarian friends in the United States, Brentano was arriving with sympathy to Hungary.[11]

Brentano's certain words before his departure could be interpreted as a tentative promise of possible American help for treaty revision—at least that is how many Hungarians wanted to understand the minister's words when he said, "[t]he whole world turns to us as arbitrator, and our ideal will ever be to serve as the preserver of world peace. Arbitration, indeed, is an American doctrine."[12] Ever since the Armistice, Hungarians had considered America as the possible saviour. This was a trend that was characteristic of most states in the region, but because of its defeated status and its heavily decreased territory and population, Hungary perhaps more fervently than others looked to the United States as *arbiter mundi* and a beneficial judge, despite the fact that Washington made no steps or allusions, official or other, toward the revision of the relevant details of the treaties. However, since the United States did not sign the Treaty of Trianon, many in Hungary had the misguided conviction that America would help to rectify what was seen in Hungary as an unjust peace dictate.

Hungary was a totally unknown place to the retired Chicago judge. According to the assistant of the former Budapest chargé, Ulysses Grant-Smith, prior to his departure Brentano was not even sure that Charles IV was a member of the Habsburg family.[13] This goes to show that Brentano, like most political appointees, was not very clear about the local circumstances of his future station.

When Brentano arrived in May 1922, the most outstanding issues concerning Hungary were the domestic political landscape, the economic and financial situation of the country, and the foreign relations, especially with the neighboring countries. They all were necessarily intertwined. Following the conclusion of the war, revolutions and then governments replaced one another in quick succession, therefore political stability was the most acute goal to achieve. It was also the evolving view of the American foreign policy with regard to other countries in the world to prioritize stability, so there would be little chance of political upheaval. After Hungary successfully became a member of

[10] Unknown person to László Széchenyi, March 2, 1922, Folder 1, Bundle 5, K 106, Papers of the Washington Legation, Hungarian National Archives (hereafter mentioned as HNA).

[11] *Pesti Napló*, May 7, 1922.

[12] *The New York Times*, April 14, 1922.

[13] Memorandum of the Secretary of the Western European Division, April 22, 1922, 864.00/630, Roll 7, Microcopy No. 708, NARA.

the League of Nations in September 1922, the country's international situation solidified. Belonging to the new international organization automatically meant that it was somewhat protected against the Little Entente's possible bullying and the Hungarian government could also keep on the agenda the problems of the three million Hungarians living in the successor states.[14] Also, since the economic and financial situation was acute, Hungary asked the League to orchestrate a foreign loan to help recovery. The program started in 1924 and its planned two years' time brought undoubted success: Hungary became a financially stable country by 1926.[15]

Brentano kept a low profile in Hungary. He happily mingled with the upper echelons of Hungarian elite and other diplomats, but apart from that he was almost invisible, which suited him well. At the same time, he carefully chose to avoid politics, because he well understood what dangers lurked there. When he could not avoid speaking publicly, he reverberated the usual mantra. For example, the incumbent American minister was always invited to the annual Fourth of July celebration in the City Park of Budapest, where George Washington's statue was situated. In 1926, at the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and a few days after the successful conclusion of the League-orchestrated financial reconstruction, it was almost obligatory for Brentano to be present at the memorial service. On the occasion, he spoke of the traditionally good relationship between the two countries and the help provided by the United States to Hungary in bringing home prisoners of war or by giving direct financial aid.[16] On this occasion, naturally, recognition of the selfless behavior took place at the highest level. While Admiral Horthy wrote to President Coolidge and thanked the United States for its "philanthropic work" in Hungary after the war, Prime Minister Bethlen expressed his gratitude for the "charitable work of your Red Cross and many Americans in [the] interest [of] our fate–stricken people and [for the] most valuable cooperation of an American in [our] work [of the] financial reconstruction."[17] Brentano, through Bethlen, officially thanked the kind message sent on the same occasion by the

[14] On the relationship between Hungary and the organization, see, Zoltán Peterecz, "Hungary and the League of Nations: A Forced Marriage," in Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatley (eds.), *Remaking Central Europe. The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020), 145–165.

[15] On the history of the financial reconstruction of Hungary, see League of Nations, *The Financial Reconstruction of Hungary. General Survey and Principal Documents*, (Geneva, 1926); György Péteri, *Global Monetary Regime and National Central Banking, The Case of Hungary, 1921–1929*, (Boulder, Colorado: Social Science Monographs, 2002); Zoltán Peterecz, *Jeremiah Smith, Jr. and Hungary, 1924–1926: the United States, the League of Nations, and the Financial Reconstruction of Hungary*, (London: Versita, 2013), 80–204.

[16] *Nemzeti Újság*, vol. 8, no. 148, July 4, 1926.

[17] Miklós Horthy to Calvin Coolidge, July 3, 1926, and István Bethlen to Calvin Coolidge, July 3, 1926, Box 15, 1926–1941 USA, Papers of the Protocol Department, 1918-1944, K 62, Foreign Ministry Archives, HNA. This became a typical practice on the part of the Hungarian

Hungarian National Assembly.[18] These were formal acts with little meaning, but in Hungary they were always magnified and interpreted as some significant events.

The ministerial reports sent from Budapest diligently and in quite a detailed fashion informed Washington about the most momentous events concerning Hungary. The monthly reports gave a cross section of every possible angle of Hungarian domestic issues and foreign affairs that could be of interest to the State Department. Regarding Hungary's domestic political arena, the elections, the composition of government, the various voices coming out of the different major political parties and newspaper reports ruled this section of the reports. Another regularly recurring subchapter was the question of the king. This was a very curious point for Americans. Always seeing kingdoms both as a harmful relic of history and also as a romantic European feature, this question was extremely important and sometimes entertaining for American ministers and observers. Hungary was officially a kingdom but without a king. After Charles IV, the last king of Hungary, failed to retake the throne twice over the course of 1921, then soon died, the question became more of an academic one, but legitimist powers in Hungary were never tired of campaigning for young Otto, the legitimate heir to the throne, to take his rightful place. Brentano regularly reflected on the "monarchical tendencies of the Hungarian people."[19]

Washington must have been relieved when Brentano reported that "the Bethlen Government appears today to be in a firmer position than ever."[20] Since the American government always favored stability in the volatile region of Central Europe, they appreciated that the Hungarian regent and prime minister could provide a solid leadership. They trusted that Bethlen would play a constructive or moderate part in the three most important areas: the financial situation of Hungary, the possible revision of the Trianon Treaty, and the question of the king.

There was, however, also ample room for criticism. For example, Brentano complained of unsatisfactory relations between the American Legation and the government. He identified two causes. He blamed incompetency of the Hungarian officials, since answers to inquiries were almost always slow in coming, and he also accused the Hungarian government of trying to avoid living up to various points of either the Trianon Treaty or the separate

leadership, especially of Horthy, while the Americans always sent their good wishes on August 20, the main Hungarian national holiday.

[18] Theodore Brentano to István Bethlen, July 24, 1926, Bundle 3, 1921–1928 B/2, Files Relating to Foreign Policy, Bethlen Papers, K 468, HNA.

[19] Theodore Brentano to Charles Evans Hughes, March 4, 1924, 864.00/573, Roll 6, Microcopy No. 708, NARA.

[20] Theodore Brentano to Frank B. Kellogg, June 4, 1925, 864.00/652, Roll 7, Microcopy No. 708, NARA.

American–Hungarian Treaty of 1921.[21] On another occasion, when the franchise bill was passed in 1925, which did not operate along democratic lines, excluded many people from voting, and also restricted the secret ballot to the capital city and a few larger cities, Brentano wrote of "a disappointing exhibition of the functioning of the legislative branch of the Hungarian Government," and the lack "of constructive statesmanship."[22] In addition, the reports coming out of the American Legation often spoke of anti-Semitism in Hungary.

Hungary's foreign relations naturally took an important place in Brentano's reports, as well. In this domain, Hungary gave no real reason to worry. In this field perhaps the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Consular Rights with Hungary, which was concluded in 1925 between Hungary and the United States, deserves mention. This treaty was needed because the peace treaty between the two countries did not rule every aspect of the bilateral relations satisfactorily. The most-favored-nation principle prevailed, while the Hungarian consulates now could carry out their efforts based on a treaty and were therefore able to better represent the rights of Hungarians in the United States.[23] In a fashion similar to the separate peace treaty with Hungary in 1921, Washington once again unilaterally reserved the right for possible reservations because the US Congress often came up with various points that the State Department had to take into consideration. After the exchange of notes and Hungarian ratification, the US Senate did indeed add some reservations concerning immigration. The final exchange of ratification eventually took place on September 4, 1926, more than fourteen months after signing the treaty.[24]

Brentano confined his monthly and other reports to the State Department strictly to the facts as they came to him from various sources. He and his colleagues had to rely on English-speaking Hungarians for this, otherwise the Hungarian language would have proven too big an obstacle. The sending of factual reports is commendable on the one hand, since his main job was to report what was happening in Hungary without necessarily interpreting events or characters. But on the other hand, he almost never provided his own thoughts regarding the host country and its people. When he did express such judgments, however, he was of the opinion that in a country which finds itself under almost devastating economic circumstances, "mutual tolerance and political broadmindedness is of vital importance. This primary necessity however seems completely absent at the present critical period."[25]

[21] Theodore Brentano to Charles Evans Hughes, July 15, 1924, 864.021/1, Roll 16, Microcopy No. 708, NARA.

[22] Theodore Brentano to Frank B. Kellogg, July 15, 1925, 864.0131/8, Ibid.

[23] For the text of the treaty, see *FRUS*, 1925, vol. 2, 341–54.

[24] Theodore Brentano to Frank B. Kellogg, September 4, 1926, 711.642/25, Roll 1, Microcopy No. 709, NARA.

[25] Memorandum, September 17, 1922, in Theodore Brentano to Charles Evans Hughes, September 20, 1922, 864.00/511, Roll 6, Microcopy No. 708, NARA.

Theodore Brentano's five years in Hungary as the United States' first ever minister was by all means a defining moment in the diplomatic history of the two countries. What is more, these years brought almost only success to Hungary both in the domestic and the foreign policy arena: its finances were put in order and strengthened, the economy started to climb out of its post-war calamity, relations with the neighboring countries were also largely normalized and Hungary seemingly became a trustworthy member of the post-Versailles political system in Europe. Although territorial revision and the question of the king were always on the menu, Bethlen kept these forces in check. Therefore, Brentano had few challenges during his tenure and had every reason to be satisfied when he left Hungary in May 1927. Upon arrival in his home country, he told *The New York Times* that the relations between the United States and Hungary were most cordial and he had always found the greatest appreciation of America by Hungarians, officially and otherwise.[26] Brentano's tenure, despite himself, was a success and a successful first stint of the official diplomatic relations between Hungary and the United States.

Joshua Butler Wright (1927–1930)

After two and a half years of being assistant secretary of state, "Mr. Kellogg's suave and able assistant," who was mainly responsible for administering the personnel questions of the diplomatic service, was awaited by the field.[27] Joshua Butler Wright was appointed as minister to Hungary in February 1927 and reached his designated service area in mid-June. Hungarians wished to see a change in American foreign policy concerning their country. They hoped that closer cooperation might mean a more active American participation in the overhaul of the Trianon Treaty. After Brentano's tenure, who was a political appointee, the news that a professional diplomat was chosen to represent the United States in Hungary was interpreted in a way that it was due to increased importance of Hungary. It was argued that there could be no accident why such a change took place: it must mean that Washington was more interested in Hungary than before.[28]

Joshua Butler Wright was born a few miles north of Manhattan at Irvington-on-the-Hudson, or Irvington, New York, in 1877, but a decade later the family moved to New Jersey. He graduated from Princeton University with a science degree in 1899, and he entered the Diplomatic Service in 1909. His first appointment took him to Honduras, where he could witness what revolution and civil

[26] *The New York Times*, May 10, 1927.
[27] *Time*, February 28, 1927.
[28] *Az Est*, February 17, 1927; *Pesti Napló*, February 17, 1927.

war in Latin America meant. After a short stint in Belgium, he was sent to Brazil for two years. He married Harriet Rodman Southerland in 1916, and had two daughters from that marriage: Mary and Edith. In the same year his orders called him as embassy counselor to Petrograd, Russia. The soon unfolding revolutions and their aftermath obviously left a deep impression on him and made him even a firmer believer of American political and cultural supremacy. Only a few days after the Bolsheviks took power, Butler Wright assessed that the "situation now bids fair to be one which will overshadow any previous one in history," and in many ways he was right.[29] After World War I he started to move up the career ladder. First, he was third then full assistant secretary of state, which was followed by a string of ministerial posts: Budapest, Montevideo, Prague, and Havana, where he died in December 1939.[30]

When Butler Wright arrived in Hungary, the country was at the peak of its postwar economic boom. The League of Nations-orchestrated financial reconstruction proved to be a success: Hungary had become an economically and financially stable country, foreign loans came in, the currency was stable, savings grew, and unemployment was low, although all this positive data only meant that Hungary managed to surpass the prewar levels. Still, it was on the rise, and Italy's friendship, officially declared in April 1927, boosted Hungary's international standing as well.[31] A few days later Butler Wright presented his credentials to Admiral Horthy, the Regent of Hungary, and just like every American minister in the Interwar years, he was genuinely impressed by the ceremony and gave a detailed description of the event in his diary.[32] Horthy did not disappoint on the occasion. To start with, he brought up Jeremiah Smith, Jr. and his role in the financial reconstruction of Hungary, which had been completed the year before, and how much conditions in general had improved in the country. Then he switched to the topic of Bolshevism and was in particular interested in the American minister's experience in Russia during the revolution. Later in the conversation he turned to his other pet subject: hunting.[33]

[29] Diary entry, Petrograd, November 12, 1917, Box 2 Series IV: Diaries, 1909–1936, Joshua Butler Wright Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, USA.

[30] For the biographical information, see, William Thomas Allison, *Witness to Revolution: the Russian Revolution Diary and Letters of J. Butler Wright,* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), xiv–xx; "Joshua Butler Wright (1877–1939)," https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/wright-joshua-butler.

[31] Italy was the first large power in Europe that openly claimed it was going to aid Hungarian efforts of treaty revision. For more detail about the Italian–Hungarian Treaty of friendship, see Hamerli, Petra, *Magyar–olasz diplomáciai kapcsolatok és regionális hatásaik (1927–1934)* [Hungarian–Italian Diplomatic Relations and Their Regional Effects (1927–1934)], (Budapest: Fakultás Kiadó, 2018), 25–64.

[32] Diary entry, June 18, 1927, Series 4: Diaries, Minister to Hungary, 23 May–25 Dec 1927, Box 2, Joshua Butler Wright Papers.

[33] Diary entry, June 18, 1927, ibid.

The most crucial topic regarding Hungary was, of course, the issue of revision. Accordingly, Butler Wright's reports usually started with the news and events regarding the Trianon Treaty and its aftermath in Hungary, and this topic may be said to have ruled the information arriving in Washington. This was the all-defining point and no other issue came close in the ministerial reports. As was his custom, Butler Wright sometimes quoted long sections from Hungarian and European papers that reflected on the question of Trianon at any given moment. His first report for the month of June 1927 contained the sensation of the summer—the Rothermere article just published in the *Daily Mail* that called for giving back some of the territories lost to Hungary in the Trianon Treaty.[34] The article naturally "was received with the greatest enthusiasm throughout" Hungary, however, most European countries believed it meant peril to an already precarious situation in which the voices of many have-nots cried for greater recognition.[35] The Bethlen government realized as well that especially the western powers looked askance at the unfolding propaganda effort, and was quick to announce that not only did it have nothing to do with Rothermere's article but it also did not think treaty revision was a realistic option at the moment.[36] Butler Wright remarked that revision was "nearest and dearest to the Hungarian heart […] a theme whose variations are endless, whose melody is sweet to the Hungarian ear."[37] But, as always, he paid Bethlen his dues in his effort for curtailing the press, therefore never letting the subject sleep but never allowing the flames to get too high either.[38]

As for the general support of revision in postwar Hungary, Butler Wright opined the following: "The Hungarian mind may be said to have been inoculated with the idea of revision the day after the signature of the Treaty of Trianon. This idea germinated and fermented in the blood stream until it developed into a well-defined disease whose first symptom was the passionate 'Nem, Nem, Soha' [No, No, Never] so familiar in the early years after the war."[39] But what was supposed to be the common denominator of the national feeling had become the prey of politics and now was "on the road to becoming the subject of a disorderly squabble among the several factions who wish to appropriate

[34] H. S. Harmsworth (Viscount Rothermere), "Hungary's Place in the Sun," *The Daily Mail*, June 21, 1927. Also see Romsics, "Hungary's Place in the Sun: A British Newspaper Article and its Hungarian Repercussions," in Péter, L. and Rady, M. (eds.), *British–Hungarian Relations since 1848*, (School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London), 193–204; and Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914–1948*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 154–57.

[35] Joshua Butler Wright to Frank B. Kellogg, June 30, 1927, 864.00/703, Roll 8, M. 708, NARA.

[36] *Magyarország*, August 6, 1927.

[37] Joshua Butler Wright to Frank B. Kellogg, December 6, 1928, 864.00 PR/13, Roll 10, M. 708, NARA.

[38] Joshua Butler Wright to Frank B. Kellogg, December 6, 1928, 864.00 PR/13, ibid; Joshua Butler Wright to Frank B. Kellogg, March 13, 1929, 864.00/732, Roll 8, M. 708, NARA.

[39] Joshua Butler Wright to Henry L. Stimson, May 10, 1929, 864.00 PR/18, Roll 11, M. 708, NARA.

it to their own interests."[40] What he did was that he offered an analysis of the evolution of revisionist feelings and agenda in Hungary. The first stage started with the signing of the Trianon Treaty, where prospects were gloomy and reconstruction had to take first place. The second stage began with the Rothermere article, after which the floodgates were open, and only Bethlen's steady leadership managed to keep emotions in check. In his view, the third stage had just started when the various political forces began to pull toward different directions and were trying to advance their own agendas.

The shining moment of diplomatic effort on the part of the United States during Butler Wright's tenure was naturally the Kellogg Pact, or the renunciation of war as settling disputes between countries. After the signatures appeared on the Pact in August 1928, Washington wished to see more countries join their effort—among them Hungary. This American agenda was all the more understandable, since, as Butler Wright reported, the original American call on the international community to renounce war as a means to end arguments failed to register any serious discussion in the Hungarian press.[41] After the fanfare of the signing the Pact in Paris, Butler Wright was ordered to officially hand over an aide-mémoire to the Hungarian government to encourage it to join the growing number of countries adhering to the Pact. At the end of August, when Hungary was ready to join the Pact, the local press expressed its hope but also its doubts as to the practical viability of the plan.[42]

Another important facet of Butler Wright's work was his role as an official link between the two countries, the professional networking, and his attitude about the political elite of Hungary. In harmony with the role that his post entailed, Butler Wright played the official and cordial link between Washington and Budapest. The most visible aspect of this was always the customary Fourth of July celebration in the City Park, but there were other occasions as well where the American minister always did his utmost to further strengthen the cordial relations between the two nations.

The American minister often gathered his information in conversations in his own house or at dinners at other places, or on hunting trips where the intimacy allowed for otherwise confidential thoughts to find their way to the minister's ears. He had a round of informal conversations with the most important politicians in Hungary, in addition to talks with government officials, members of the opposition, journalists, bankers, and various friends. His reports submitted to the Secretary of State were always based upon these experiences.

[40] Joshua Butler Wright to Henry L. Stimson, May 10, 1929, 864.00 PR/18, ibid.
[41] Joshua Butler Wright to Frank B. Kellogg, April 2, 1928, 864.00 PR/5, Roll 8, M. 708, NARA.
[42] Joshua Butler Wright to Frank B. Kellogg, without date, but sometime September 1928, 864.00 PR/10, Roll 10, M. 708, NARA; *Budapesti Hírlap*, August 29, 1928; *Nemzeti Újság*, August 29, 1928; *Pesti Napló*, August 29, 1928.

A further aspect of his work related to the minister's opinion on the country and its people. To himself the main points were the following:

> First: The 'King question' will never die, but is now dormant, and will remain so if Bethlen can keep it so. Second: The territorial question is always to the fore—in Hungarian press and in that of neighbors—and is a sore point because no one will be sufficiently generous on either side. Third: We are easily the most popular of all nations—with the British a close second. Fourth: Everyone seems willing and anxious to talk—even on contentious subject.[43]

He also correctly sized up the difficulty of his job in Hungary, and this was an observation that applied to every American minister in the era: because of the language barrier, he could not mix with everyday people and those of the lower classes, without which it was impossible to formulate a picture that was utterly comprehensive as to what Hungarian people thought and believed.[44] Without that source, he had no alternative but to rely to a certain extent on some propaganda carried out by newspapers and politicians.

His various impressions led him to liken the Hungarians to the Slavs and Latin Americans, of whom he had previous contacts—an observation that few Hungarians would have liked to hear. He described them as "very volatile; very loquacious; given to promises but not to deeds; vain; sensitive and very proud; rather sensuous; fearfully procrastinating; not efficient or cooperative; […] enthusiastic today, cool tomorrow, cold within a week—and very likeable!"[45] He later reiterated this sentiment but added a caveat: "the Hungarians, while very likeable, occasionally must be guided or restrained like children."[46] As a man of his times and representative of the United States, which country had in many ways become the number one power in the world, Butler Wright certainly had in him a streak of superiority when exploring other cultures. Such poor countries as Honduras, Brazil, or Russia did not compare favorably with plentiful America, and this was true for postwar Hungary as well, therefore the overall patronizing tone is hard to miss.

Partly because of the perennial king question, partly to other tangible features of Hungarian politics and society, and partly based on an intimate conversation with the Hungarian Minister of Justice, Butler Wright opined that "a republican form of Government is not suited to this country or, as it may perhaps be better put, Hungary will never be wholly amenable to the principles

[43] Diary entry, July 7, 1927, Series 4: Diaries, Minister to Hungary, 23 May–25 Dec 1927, Box 2, Joshua Butler Wright Papers.
[44] Diary entry, July 14, 1927, ibid.
[45] Diary entry, September 16, 1927, ibid.
[46] Joshua Butler Wright to Frank B. Kellogg, March 9, 1928, 864.00 PR/4, Roll 10, M. 708, NARA.

of democracy," a crushing although not surprising judgment.[47] Following the same argument, he said of Bethlen that the prime minister "was following, however, not only the dictates of prudence—which it is unusual to find in such sustained degree in a Hungarian—and of calm, common sense, to which quality even his enemies pay tribute."[48] But the Hungarian experience of centuries—rebellion against authority—created a nation that needed a controlling hand, and the semi-democratic political setting in Hungary, a country of "anomalies and contradictions," proved, at least in Butler Wright's mind, that "Bethlen's method of approach is best."[49] He basically argued that a certain strict policy must be maintained in order to have relatively calm relations with the neighboring countries and within Hungary as well, and Bethlen delivered this task. These lines are a good snapshot of how official American diplomacy really viewed Hungary and Hungarian policy in the late 1920s.

Butler Wright was transfered to a new diplomatic post in 1930. Assistant Secretary of State William R. Castle, Jr. reassured him that if he were to be sent to Latin America, that was only because President Herbert Hoover wanted the more capable foreign service personnel in places where their work was cut out and were deemed important to Washington as opposed to comfortable European posts that were not vital from an American point of view.[50] Probably there was truth in Castle's opinion, that at the time of Butler Wright's transfer to Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1930, Budapest was "a delightful place. On the other hand, it does not get you anywhere in the Service."[51]

During the last weeks he spent in Budapest, naturally his hosts made sure that the farewell would be memorable. They held dinners in his honor and lots of praise flew around. He avoided politics, admitted that hard times were setting in (the first bites of the spreading depression were felt), but called on Hungarians to be more optimistic concerning the future. Hungarians were also immensely happy to hear that his two daughters had learned Hungarian fairly well. He said he had grown fond of the country and its people and expressed his wish to visit Hungary at least once a year in the future.[52] These words were just as professional as Butler Wright was a seasoned American diplomat.

With Butler Wright's departure another chapter of unfulfilled Hungarian hopes was closed. His being a career diplomat did not change an iota in the relationship between the two countries: on the Hungarian side it continued to

[47] Joshua Butler Wright to Frank B. Kellogg, December 16, 1927, 864.00/712, Roll 8, M. 708, NARA.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Joshua Butler Wright to Frank B. Kellogg, November 15, 1928, 764.00/16, Roll 1, M. 710, NARA.

[50] William R. Castle, Jr. to Joshua Butler Wright, November 15, 1929, William Castle, Jr. Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa, USA.

[51] William R. Castle, Jr. to Joshua Butler Wright, September 30, 1930, ibid.

[52] *Pesti Napló*, September 27, 1930; *Magyarország*, September 27, 1930; *Pesti Napló*, October 17, 1930.

be a hope, while it remained a comfortable disinterestedness on the part of America. Since the official relationship between the United States and Hungary was cordial but shallow, an American minister in those years was more of a symbol of the ties between the two countries than an active promoter of closer connections. The latter lacked any realistic basis: America did not think of Hungary as an important partner whether in the commercial or diplomatic field. At the time of his arrival, Hungary was still on an economic upswing, but when Butler Wright left Hungary, the economic woes were on everyone's mind. Astute Hungarians must have perceived this clearly, but up until the Great Depression, the hope in America as the possible savior never ceased. In the 1930s this hope was transferred into a pipedream. And such things always end in disillusionment.

Nicholas Roosevelt (1930–1933)

Nicholas Roosevelt came from a well-known family that gave two presidents to the United States in the first half of the twentieth century, and the name helped him throughout his storied career. His service as American minister (1930–1933) fell in the first years of the unfolding Great Depression, which defined the basic conditions for Hungary, as well as for the United States and Europe. Nicholas Roosevelt was an avid writer and he left behind a plethora of both private and official documents containing, among other things, his thoughts and opinions about Hungary and Hungarians.

Nicholas Roosevelt was born in New York City in 1893 into one of the most prominent and outstanding families in the United States. He was a member of the large American delegation at the Paris Peace Conference and traveled to Central Europe with the Coolidge Mission.[53] In this capacity he witnessed the establishment of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in March 1919, therefore he had first-hand experience regarding the country. After the Peace Conference he worked as a journalist, and from 1926 he regularly wrote books, mainly on questions of foreign policy. President Herbert Hoover nominated him minister to Hungary in the fall of 1930. When his distant cousin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, won the presidency in 1932, Nicholas Roosevelt resigned, following the long-held tradition of political appointees. He went back to journalism, while during World War II he served a period of eight months in the Office of War Information, the government's propaganda wing. In 1946 he retired and lived in California with his wife, Tirzah Gates. The couple had no children.

[53] The Coolidge Mission was an American information gathering group sent to Vienna. It visited and collected information from the greater region Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the future Yugoslavia, Romania, and Poland, as well as within Austria thereby trying to help the American Peace Delegation in making decisions.

Nicholas Roosevelt devoted the remaining time of his long life to writing about various topics, including a memoir, culinary activity, and natural conservation. He died in 1982.

When Nicholas Roosevelt returned to Europe in the fall of 1930, the times were already burdened with the unfolding economic and financial depression. Although it had not reached its ugly peak yet, it was already clear that countries that had relied to a large degree on foreign loans to finance their own economy and the gaping holes in their budgets could suddenly find no more money on the international markets. Hungary was a perfect example of such a country. As a largely agricultural country, Hungary could count on little more than the revenues from selling wheat on the international market. If the harvest was weak or the markets offered low prices, the Hungarian state was in trouble. Also, because of overborrowing, the Hungarian population had one of the biggest per capita foreign debt services in all of Europe.[54] Therefore, the gathering storm hit Hungary hard. This was the country that Nicholas Roosevelt arrived in as American minister.

Some Hungarian journalists insisted that good things were in store for the relationships between the two countries, partly because Nicholas Roosevelt was a good and well-known journalist, which would automatically mean greater publicity for Hungary. Supposedly, the freshly appointed minister even said to one of the Hungarian dailies that he was going to use American newspapers for the benefit of Hungary.[55] The bar was raised even higher when he was quoted as saying that "among the many East European races I see the Hungarian as the most valuable and outstanding."[56] No wonder the paper believed that "the service of America's new minister gives the highest hopes to Hungary."[57] These Hungarian newspaper contents reflect clearly the above-mentioned fact that many Hungarians lived, or wanted to live, in a make-believe world in which they could count on Americans and the United States to achieve their own goals.

Nicholas Roosevelt arrived in Hungary on November 9, 1930. Although he was a political appointee, he had some experience in the diplomatic world during and after World War I. Also, he spoke fluent French and German, which meant that he did not have to rely on others when discussing issues with Hungarians or other diplomats. Although Budapest did not count as an eminent diplomatic post, since the financial and economic troubles seemed to engulf more and more countries in the region, it made sense that the Department asked Roosevelt to focus on such issues both in Hungary and in the neighboring countries. In the first weeks he acquainted himself with the most important

[54] League of Nations, *The Financial Reconstruction of Hungary*, 150.
[55] *8 Órai Ujság*, September 28, 1930, 2; *Az Est*, October 12, 1930, 1.
[56] *Pesti Hírlap*, October 12, 1930, 34.
[57] Ibid.

people in Budapest and called on every major player: ministers of commerce and finance, people in the Foreign Office, and leading journalists. Roosevelt had the rare privilege to serve in Hungary while the country had three different prime ministers: Bethlen, Gyula Károlyi, and Gyula Gömbös.

Since Roosevelt was interested in the economic-financial dimension, and the State Department had also asked him to focus on this issue, he was busy monitoring and analyzing what he was witnessing in his host country. Amidst the brewing disaster—which would begin in full force in May 1931—Roosevelt relied both on some members of his staff, like the commercial attaché, who called attention to the misleading data in the monthly reports issued by the Ministry of Finance, and Hungarian experts such as Eugene Havas. The other person proving to be a great help was Royall Tyler. This American was a financial expert of his own making and had served as the League of Nations' man in Budapest between 1924 and 1929 concerned with the financial reconstruction, and needed to return in the fall of 1931 in the capacity of League adviser.

Roosevelt did not have a high opinion of Hungarians at that time—at least his initial diary entries after the first few months at his new post convey that much. He took issue with the Hungarians' "lament and façade. It is not well to look behind it, either, for it is disillusioning." Then he added that Hungarians were "keenly aware of their closeness on level to the more Eastern people, and this is why they make such a great hue and cry about the inferiority of the latter and their own superiority and thousand year history etc." These observations led him to the conclusion that "for the present I am less enthusiastic than I was."[58] One opinion though that remained constant throughout his life was the conviction that he found old feudalistic traits deeply imbedded in Hungarian society. "Here the Occident ended and the Orient began," he wrote, and "Budapest was the meeting place of two civilizations." He found that the capital was "outwardly modern and western. But the plains to the East sheltered a strange mixture of feudalism and the Orient—a people youthful and somewhat primitive, but bred in traditions that are alien to Western Europe."[59] Incidentally, this was an observation many of his compatriots shared.

On May 11, 1931, the Creditanstalt of Vienna, the largest Austrian bank, declared bankruptcy. The ramifications were very quick and equally grim. The panic soon reached neighboring Hungary and Germany, and later played a role in the collapse of the gold standard that was supposed to be the main pillar of the international financial system and stability. Nicholas Roosevelt's first reaction to the unfolding situation and his ensuing message were ominous: "This

[58] The quotes are from the diary entry for February 8, 1931, Hungary 1930–1933, Box 21, Nicholas Roosevelt Papers, Special Collections Research Center at Syracuse University Libraries, Syracuse, NY, USA.

[59] "Hungary," Box 45, Nicholas Roosevelt Papers. For the same views in his memoirs, see, Roosevelt, *A Front Row Seat*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), 189, 190.

part of the world has become a political cauldron in the last two weeks, and is about ready to boil over," he wrote to his mother, while in the official report to the State Department he opined that the circumstances "had gravely increased the unrest and uncertainty in this country," and it was likely "that the political as well as the economic situation in Hungary may at any moment become critical."[60] In this estimate he was not wrong. For the next two years—his remaining tenure as minister in Budapest—Hungary balanced on the threshold of total financial collapse.

Bethlen and his government resigned on August 24, because he realized that he was not able to turn things around and rather chose to pass on the reign to Gyula Károlyi. Under Károlyi's premiership Hungary reached the deepest stage of the crisis, and the austerity measures he introduced could not mollify the adverse conditions. Roosevelt found him a likeable character, but the general conclusion of the contemporaries and historians alike seems to have been that Károlyi was not a first-class politician.

Hungary's economic and financial situation remained a constant headache to the Hungarian government and the League of Nations, let alone the various creditors. As minister, the pace of Roosevelt's work was a regular standard: collecting data, sending reports and analyses based on these, recommending proposals of financial and economic nature, and describing the political situation inside and outside Hungary. Pessimism is the best word to describe the American minister's mood during these months. He was "frank to admit that I see no possible way other than a fairly rapid process of sliding back into social and economic conditions of several centuries ago."[61] Despite Roosevelt's gloomy predictions, the society itself did not crack under the pressure and no upheaval took place, but misery and hunger were indeed rife, and no end was in sight to such circumstances.

On the official surface, however, Roosevelt played the role of the American diplomat. It was an expected part of his job to be the contact person between the United States and Hungary, and, especially since he was a journalist, he put an emphasis on limited public appearance and a sensible cooperation with the Hungarian newspapers. Already at the beginning of his service in Hungary he tried to strike a friendly chord with the Hungarian journalists exactly on account of being colleagues.[62] From time to time he also gave interviews to Hungarian dailies. These are interesting from the aspect of how Nicholas Roosevelt, in an official capacity representing his government, informed the Hungarian newspaper-reading public on various issues concerning the United

[60] Nicholas Roosevelt to Mrs. J. West Roosevelt, May 14, 1931, Box 12; Nicholas Roosevelt to Henry L. Stimson, No. 101, May 15, 1931, Box 69, Nicholas Roosevelt Papers.
[61] Nicholas Roosevelt to Herbert Feis, February 10, 1932, Box 5, Nicholas Roosevelt Papers.
[62] Diary entry, March 25, 1931, Hungary 1930–1933, Box 21, Nicholas Roosevelt Papers.

States and Europe. Naturally, he always avoided politics, but was willing to confer about general issues of interest.

Concerning his official capacity, on occasions he had to be present at certain events. One was the annual Fourth of July celebration at the George Washington statue in the City Park of Budapest. This occasion was always a headache to American ministers in the interwar years. The Hungarian hosts, more often than not, made an attempt to use the commemoration as an opportunity to lament the Trianon Treaty and the loss Hungary suffered as a consequence. Since nearly all public speeches mentioned territorial revision in one form or another, appearing on the same stage with people embracing that view, the American ministers or other representatives were always on their guard and took immense care not to say anything that might show any agreement with irredentist politics. In the summer of 1931, for example, it was the 25th anniversary of the unveiling of George Washington's statue in Budapest City Park, and Roosevelt had to be present with most of the Legation's staff. On this occasion he made a speech that pleased Hungarians. In addition to praising Washington and his legacy, Roosevelt also had positive things to say about his hosts. He mentioned the beautiful Great Plains of Hungary and he found parallels between Americans and Hungarians. He spoke of similar historic movements and conquering the wilderness, self-reliance as a common trait in the two peoples, and of the highly developed culture that Hungarians made possible in the Carpathian Basin.[63] There was a clear contradiction between these words and his thoughts recorded in his diary entries, which were not so favorable to his host nation. This is not shocking. As an American minister, Roosevelt had to work on the best possible relationship between the two countries; as a private person he could have the luxury to form an opinion about Hungary and Hungarians that the hosts would not have liked to learn.

By the fall of 1932, when it was clear that Hungary was not going to recover quickly, if at all, from the tight grip of the depression, Gyula Gömbös succeeded Károlyi at the helm. The new prime minister appealed to Nicholas Roosevelt in many ways and he was "optimistic about him."[64] He liked Gömbös's "directness, vitality and obvious simplicity," and found him "immensely alive and refreshingly earthy."[65] What was even more appealing to Roosevelt's taste was the fact that Gömbös "always spoke to me with great freedom—even about Hungarian political affairs—and I enjoyed his racy bluntness."[66] Sometimes they had dinner together, and these occasions convinced the American minister that the incumbent prime minister may have been a simple soul but was

[63] *Budapesti Hírlap*, July 5, 1931, p. 5.
[64] Nicholas Roosevelt to Mrs. J. West Roosevelt, October 11, 1932, Box 12, Nicholas Roosevelt Papers.
[65] Nicholas Roosevelt, "Hungary," Box 45, Nicholas Roosevelt Papers.
[66] Ibid.

definitely shrewder than expected.[67] Gömbös indeed brought fresh blood to the politics of Hungary, and at the initial stages he was fairly successful. After Gömbös being in office for two months, Roosevelt reported to Washington that the new prime minister's popularity since October had only grown.[68] Another two months later, however, he detected signs that this trend was beginning to change and Gömbös's popularity was waning.[69] No doubt this was due to the fact that things were not turning quickly around in the country.

When Herbert Hoover lost the election to Franklin Delano Roosevelt in November 1932, Nicholas Roosevelt knew there would be no need for him by the new administration. On the one hand, this was normal and he would not want to accept favors from Franklin D. Roosevelt. On the other hand, though, he was convinced that only a weaker person could follow him, especially if the choice was left to the Democratic Party machine. He was bitter at being forced out of diplomacy, if not necessarily at having to leave the Hungarian post. He tried to secure some other government job for himself for the future, especially where his economic-financial expertise could count, but was unsuccessful despite energetic efforts.

Before leaving, he gave a few interviews to Hungarian dailies. He said that "Hungarians literally flooded me with their kindness, readiness to help, and hospitality in every part of the land. I do not know any other nation that so fervently desires to welcome foreigners so kindly."[70] During his farewell dinner to Hungarian journalists, his "colleagues," he struck a very friendly note, as was to be expected. He promised to remain a friend of Hungary, and he believed that Hungary was over the most difficult period and the way forward was encouraging.[71] In his very last interview to a Hungarian paper, he reiterated that Hungary would be on the right track, and that he liked Hungarians and admired their endurance.[72] When he left the Hungarian capital, some dignitaries paid their respects to him at the railway station, such as the Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kálmán Kánya, a representative of Prime Minister Gömbös, and the British and Italian ministers, among others.[73]

Nicholas Roosevelt's tenure in Hungary did little to deepen the relationship between the two countries. He arrived in Hungary at the worst possible time because the Great Depression was just setting in with all its calamitous effects. This in turn cast a long shadow on Roosevelt's years in Budapest as American minister. The already lukewarm relations, Hungary being a relatively

[67] Diary entry, November 30, 1931, Hungary 1930–1933, Box 21, Nicholas Roosevelt Papers.
[68] Nicholas Roosevelt to Henry L. Stimson, December 5, 1932, 864.00 P.R./60, M 1206, Roll 3, NARA.
[69] Nicholas Roosevelt to Henry L. Stimson, February 8, 1933, 864.00 P.R./62, Ibid.
[70] *Budapesti Hírlap*, April 30, 1933, p. 5.
[71] *Pesti Napló*, May 6, 1933, p. 5.
[72] *Pesti Napló*, May 7, 1933, p. 6.
[73] *Az Est*, May 10, 1933, p. 5.

unimportant country for the wide-range foreign affairs interests of the United States, did not become any more intense. The hoped-for American help, economic or political, that so many Hungarians wanted to believe in, did not materialize either. What is more, the United States turned away from the European continent even more as the domestic economic picture in America also soured to the point of the greatest depression it had ever experienced. Under such circumstances, an American minister was doomed to failure in satisfying Hungarian illusions about the country he represented and about his person—even if his name was Roosevelt.

John F. Montgomery (1933–1941)

John Flourney Montgomery was the longest serving American minister during the Horthy era and the most well-known as well. His tenure covered the turbulent years of the 1930s in Europe and the first years of World War II. Accordingly, he has been the subject of larger scholarly attention as opposed to his fellow ministers.[74] Montgomery was born in Missouri on September 20, 1878, and he published a book in which he presented his family tree all the way back to 912.[75] His life and outlook was defined by southern conservativism and restricted view. In 1904 he married Hedwig Wildi and through her he became wealthy in the condensed milk industry. His appointment was due to his financial support for the Democratic Party and Franklin Roosevelt's political career.[76] After World War II he financially supported the Horthys, who lived in exile in Portugal. Also, soon after the conclusion of the war, he published his memoirs regarding his years in Hungary, which was in many ways an apologia for the Horthy years but contained a lot of interesting information.[77] He died in 1954.

The 1930s did not produce any new element in the relationship between the United States and Hungary. The president's energy was spent mainly on the New Deal, and the European problems were far away while the general American government and public opinion alike did not wish to get entangled in them. The president also liked to send "friends" to various posts who would on occasions report to him directly and not the State Department. Roosevelt and the Secretary of State required more political reports and not economic

[74] Tibor Frank (ed.), *Discussing Hitler, Advisers of U.S. Diplomacy in Central Europe, 1934–1941*, (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2003).

[75] John Flournoy Montgomery, *The Descendants of James and Lydia Montgomery*, (Washington, D. C., 1933).

[76] Frank, *Discussing Hitler*, 13–15.

[77] John F. Montgomery, *Hungary, The Unwilling Satellite*, (New York: Devin-Adair Company, 1947).

ones per se; Nicholas Roosevelt and the president even expressed interest in reading more about the Hungarian aristocracy.[78]

As for Hungary and the neighboring region, Montgomery found a situation that was promising neither in the economic nor in the political field.[79] During Gömbös's premiership, Hungary's relationship with Germany became much closer, which was understandable. Hungary needed a great power to support a possible revision, and since neither the United States nor Great Britain showed commitment to this goal, a reorientation toward Germany was natural. Since his main job was to be an observer and to relay information to Washington, Montgomery tried to fulfill this role. He regularly traveled to countries surrounding Hungary plus Germany, and on such occasions he exchanged ideas and experiences with the American diplomats accredited there.

In Hungary, Montgomery enjoyed the high society and the entertainment it provided. The various afternoon teas, musical gatherings, and evening parties were a perfect place to gather information that would have been difficult to collect under other circumstances. No wonder that after eighteen months into his stay in Hungary, he wrote one of his friends that he and his wife "still like it very much. In fact, we feel quite at home here and will be sorry when we have to leave. It is really a lovely community and the people are very attractive."[80] Confined to this segment of society, however, inevitably meant that the cross section that he had the means to was a very narrow layer of the upper and upper middle class of Hungarian society, therefore his observations often lacked vital aspects to portray a faithful picture.

If one studies Montgomery's long diplomatic stint in Hungary, they will find three major points: Hungary's relationship with other countries, mainly with Germany; his relationship to the host country and the culture and politics thereof; and the minister's attitude toward the Hungarian Jewish population, this last one being more to the fore after 1938. It is worth taking a look at all three aspects.

When it came to the foreign affairs of Hungary, the most outstanding feature was territorial revision, which in the mid-1930s was still on the backburner. As Hungary gradually climbed out of the depression years and tied its economic political fortunes closer to Germany, this idea became a paramount feature. The Hungarian foreign minister reassured Montgomery that Hungary was not going to one-sidedly break the Trianon peace treaty, but was not willing to give up on

[78] Introduction, Personal and Confidential – Diaries, Montgomery Collection, Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár, Budapest, Hungary.

[79] John F. Montgomery to Cordell Hull, August 5, 1933, 864.00P.R./68, Roll 3, M. 1206, NARA.

[80] John F. Montgomery to Albert M. Reed, January 21, 1935, Folder 4: Reed, Albert M, Volume VIII - Personal correspondence, part two: 1933–1937, Montgomery Papers, Manuscript and Archives, Yale University Library, USA (hereafter mentioned as Montgomery Papers).

revision.[81] His overall impression was that the "revisionism I found in Hungary was a curious myth rather than a clear program," and the more responsible persons found it actually dangerous.[82] It must be noted that he on various occasions gave voice to his own uncertainty regarding how well he read the currents and whether he analyzed the situations correctly.[83] This confession can be understood as the symbol of the work of the various American ministers in the Interwar period. In any way, he expressed his conviction that Hungary wished to and would remain neutral in case of war, and would fight in the case of German aggression, which must have been received with a sigh of relief in Washington.[84] But not much time was needed into the war before the minister was forced to report that "the Government now wholeheartedly espouses the Axis cause," and thanks to the press, it was a widespread belief among Hungarians that the lost territories could be regained only with German help.[85]

As for Montgomery's relationship to Hungary and Hungarians, as was mentioned, he felt good and resisted any possible transfer to other places.[86] Still he often expressed disapproval of Hungarian offices, the press, and the Hungarian efforts in the field of propaganda.[87] When it came to overt or covert revisionist propaganda at ceremonies where the American minister was also invited, he almost always excused himself to avoid any possible attacks from the diplomacy of the successor states. But he grabbed at every opportunity to relay information to the president when Hungarians in general, but Horthy in particular, praised him and his policies. When after four years of stay he gave a longer interview to one of the Hungarian dailies, he described Budapest and the citizens of the country in positive terms.[88] He genuinely liked Horthy and protected the anti-democratic Hungarian state. In his view Horthy was not brilliant, "he had, however, an abundance of common sense, great

[81] Conversation with Mr. de Kánya Foreign Minister on March 27, 1935, in Frank, *Discussing Hitler*, 95–97.

[82] Montgomery, *Hungary, The Unwilling Satellite*, 52, 54–55.

[83] John F. Montgomery to János Pelényi, March 5, 1936, Folder 8: Pelenyi, John, Box 1, Volume I – Budapest Diplomatic Corps Exchanges, 1933–37; John F. Montgomery to Jenő Havas, April 27, 1938, Folder 13: Havas, Eugene, Box 1, Volume II - Correspondence with prominent Hungarians and diplomatic corps, 1938–39; and John F. Montgomery to Howard K. Travers, December 7, 1938, Box 3, Folder 8: Travers, Howard K., Volume V - Foreign Service personnel exchanges, part one: 1938–1939, Montgomery Papers.

[84] John F. Montgomery to Cordell Hull, March 21, 1939, *FRUS*, 1939, Vol. I, General, 86.

[85] Ibid.; John F. Montgomery to Cordell Hull, June 8, 1940, 864.00 P.R./184, June 24, 1940, 864.00 P.R./188, and September 24, 1940, 864.00 P.R./190, Roll 12, Roll 12, M. 1206, NARA.

[86] John F. Montgomery to George Creel, March 11, 1935, Strictly Personal Correspondence, 1933–1937; John F. Montgomery to George Creel, May 16, 1939, Strictly Personal Correspondence, 1938–1939, Montgomery Collection.

[87] John F. Montgomery to George Creel, December 8, 1936, Strictly Personal Correspondence, 1933–1937; Diary entry, February 1, 1935, Personal and Confidential – Diaries, Montgomery Collection; John F. Montgomery to George Creel, April 22, 1937, in Frank, *Discussing Hitler*, 64.

[88] *Pesti Hírlap*, December 25, 1937, 43.

patriotism, honesty and integrity. No one could truthfully deny that he did his best within the limits of his authority and according to his code".[89]

One of Montgomery's headaches over time became Hungarian immigration, mainly the Jews of Hungary. The phenomenon was not new, however, since Jewish immigration from Hungary had already started in the 1920s. After Hungary introduced the infamous *numerus clausus* law in 1920, which restricted the Jewish quota in Hungarian higher education, many Jewish Hungarians, most of them scientists, led by instinct, worsening conditions starting right after World War I, and later by legal enforcement, found a route to possible existence and freedom outside Hungary—both in the political and scientific senses. This route led from Budapest to post-World War I Weimar Republic as the typical initial step, first of all to Berlin. This was both due to the academic freedom there in the 1920s and the restricted American quotas beginning in 1921. From the 1930s, with the ever-stricter laws passed against the Jews in Germany, this group tried to find their way to the big cities of the United States, often via England. Leo Szilárd, John von Neumann, Theodore von Kármán, and Michael Polanyi were all such luminaries of Hungarian science that traveled this road.[90]

As the 1930s progressed, there was a steady uptick in the Hungarian Jewish community wishing to leave the country for fear of further repression of their rights, especially after Hitler's rise and Gömbös's close relationship with Germany. The first signs from Budapest that the workload started to overwhelm the staff at the Legation started to appear in 1937. Thanks to the various Jew Bills (1938, 1939, and 1941) and their increasingly restrictive measures, more and more Hungarian Jews wanted to leave the country, preferably for the United States. However, due to the strict Quota Laws of 1921 and 1924, only a few hundred persons could secure legal immigration status from Hungary to the United States. Montgomery's own anti-Semitism—which was not a unique phenomenon among upper class Americans—surfaced at the same time, sometimes with elemental force.

Montgomery was inclined to blame the Jews for their almost panicky reaction to the worsening Hungarian situation, which often took shape in trying to secure a visa to the United States. It is obvious that he was not on the same wavelength as these people, but probably subconsciously he saw the situation as one not calling for any desperate measures. He was of the opinion that Congress should suspend immigration to the United States altogether, partly

[89] Montgomery, *Hungary, The Unwilling Satellite*, 41–42.

[90] Frank, *Double Exile. Migrations of Jewish-Hungarian Professionals through Germany to the United States, 1919–1945*, (London: Peter Lang, 2009). Also see, George Marx, *The Voice of the Martians*, (Budapest: Loránd Eötvös Physical Society), 1994, and Kati Marton, *The Great Escape: Nine Jews Who Fled Hitler and Changed the World*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007).

because so many Jews wanted to get in. His vitriolic words well expressed his attitude: "It seems there are lots of political refugees who want to go to the Jewnited States of America, and our friends in Congress are very much excited about it."[91] It is worth quoting him longer about how he and another American official attacked this mass movement of Jews to the United States because it well reflects his real sentiments:

> If you could see the class of people coming to the United States you would be very disconsolate. The Consul from Vienna was here lately and we had a very violent argument because he claimed that the people they were sending to America were worse than or worseness (if there is such a word) of our emigrants, but I couldn't convince him. […] He said he signed over 5,000 visas for America for people whom he felt were a positive menace to the country, and it made him sick to think about it. If there was only some selection it wouldn't be so bad as there are high-type Jews in all these countries, but, unfortunately, the quota is filled up with the least desirable type.[92]

Since the larger percentage of those people trying to secure visa were Jewish, his anti-Semitism found an easy target, when he described his Legation in the following fashion: "the whole place looks and smells like Ellis Island."[93]

In early 1941, Montgomery resigned his post in Hungary mainly due to the illness of his wife, who needed constant medical supervision, but his usefulness—if any—had been used up by then. Hungary did not show any real detachment regarding Germany, and the few American interests were harder to defend and implement despite the overall hope throughout the years that the United States might come to Hungary's aid. Tibor Frank well summarized Montgomery's years in Hungary:

> Lacking the required diplomatic training and experience, and not possessed of a keen mind, he sometimes found himself at sea in an ever more complex world. A picturesque and remote country, a peaceful island seemingly calm and without a care in 1933, rushed towards the greatest catastrophe of her history in 1941. This deeply conservative, in many ways prejudiced American businessman accomplished much that was honest and important in the way of diplomacy in Budapest.[94]

[91] John F. Montgomery to James B. Stewart, April 12, 1938, Montgomery Papers.
[92] John F. Montgomery to George Creel, January 18, 1939, Folder: Creel, George, Strictly Personal Correspondence, 1933–1937, Montgomery Collection.
[93] John F. Montgomery to George S. Messersmith, May 5, 1938, Folder: Messersmith, George S., Montgomery Papers.
[94] Frank, *Discussing Hitler*, 70.

Herbert C. Pell (1941)

Herbert C. Pell's tenure as American minister to Hungary was by far the briefest among the five diplomats introduced here, but thanks to historical circumstances, his less than a year in Hungary proved to be the most dramatic concerning the relationship between the two countries. The long-standing friendship and the often-mentioned Hungarian hope and sometimes blind belief that Washington might come to the aid of Hungary disappeared once and for all. Hungary jumped on the German bandwagon, and the year 1941 ended with a Hungarian declaration of war on the United States, which brought the previous twenty years of diplomatic relationship to a halt.

Herbert Claiborne Pell was born in 1884 into a prominent and wealthy American family, but he was certainly not spoiled. He was encouraged at an early age to think for himself, which stood him in good stead. He was good at history and modern languages. He spoke fluent French and good German and Italian, largely thanks to frequent and extended European tours, the first in 1895. He spent one third of his first thirty years in Europe. He was conservative, but also sensitive to social injustice and therefore wished to see certain changes. He hated big business for its greed, in many ways he can be considered a real progressive, and, also, due to what was interpreted as a betrayal of his own class, he was often labelled a radical. Still, in many ways he remained upper class in his ways, which took form most conspicuously in his fondness for exclusive clubs, in this way he could avoid meeting people who were not members. He served one term in the House of Representatives as a Democrat, expressed internationalist views, and later became a real admirer of Franklin Roosevelt. He wrote articles in support of FDR's election, and later became involved in his reelection campaign in 1936. Pell was appointed as Minister to Portugal, holding that office from May 1937 until February 1941, when he was appointed Minister to Hungary. A few months after returning from Hungary to the United States in the spring of 1942, he submitted his resignation. He was a United States representative on the United Nations War Crimes Commission from August 1943 to January 1945. After that date he withdrew from active politics for the remainder of his life. He died in 1961.[95]

Pell's appointment to Portugal then to Hungary was rooted in the President's way of handling foreign policy: he needed intelligent men who knew Europe well and who could inform him about the changing situation in Europe directly, closing the State Department out. Pell was the embodiment of such intentions and showed good analytical skills toward European politics: he foresaw the

[95] On Pell's life, see Leonard Baker, *Brahmin in Revolt. A Biography of Herbert C. Pell*, (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1972), and Michael Steward Blayney, *Democracy's Aristocrat. The Life of Herbert C. Pell*, (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1986).

Anschluss, the fate of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Denmark, and Poland, and he predicted the showdown between Germany and Great Britain. He also forecast that Franco's Spain would not join the Axis. In addition, he professed his faith in the American potential and the responsibility this entailed.[96]

Hungary, which was still somewhat independent but with close ties to Germany and the Axis (Hungary joined the Axis Powers officially in November 1940), gained prominence in American thinking as the German juggernaut seemed unstoppable. And despite the government's positioning vis-à-vis Germany, the overwhelming sentiment in Hungary was pro-United States, similar to the previous decades. This was not attributed only to the world power status of America and the Hungarian mirage as to the role of American help in revision, but to various prominent Americans' helping the country in the past twenty years (Harry Hill Bandholtz, Jeremiah Smith, Jr., and Royall Tyler), and in the meantime the American cultural influence was very strong.

After a "difficult but not uncomfortable" journey through wartime Europe, Herbert Pell arrived in Hungary in late April, and he quickly thanked his President "for sending me to such an interesting post in such an attractive city."[97] He presented his credentials to Horthy in May 1941, and the two men became and remained friends. Pell found in the Regent many positive characteristics and described Horthy as "universally respected as a good honest man and a patriotic Hungarian who does what he can to preserve the dignity and independence of his country. I think this opinion is justified."[98] He understood the antipathy toward Germany on the part of many Hungarians, but sensed the general lack of faith in any real resistance: "[Hungarians do not like] the German domination of the country, but they feel that there is nothing whatsoever that they can do about it."[99]

Pell's athletic figure, state-of-the-art Buick, cordial personality, and being an American made him a conspicuous and soon beloved figure in Hungary. Pell liked Hungary and the Hungarians in return. His sympathy for Hungary partially stemmed from the Hungarian behavior toward Germany. The sometimes fervent show of sovereignty convinced Pell that the American Legation in Budapest meant hope for many Hungarians in dark days. He stated in addition that "of all the posts in German-dominated countries, Budapest is the

[96] Herbert C. Pell to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 31, 1938, Folder: General Correspondence Br-Ch, Container 3, Herbert Claiborne Papers (hereafter mentioned as Pell Papers), Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, USA.

[97] Herbert C. Pell to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 16, 1941, Folder: Roosevelt, Franklin D., Container 25, Pell Papers.

[98] Statement to the British Minister in Lisbon (by Pell, without date, but certainly in the early spring of 1942, Folder: Hungary, Container 10, Pell Papers. The Pells helped the Horthys in their exile in Portugal after the war. Baker, *Brahmin in Revolt*, 229.

[99] Herbert C. Pell to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 16, 1941, Folder: Roosevelt, Franklin D., Container 25, Pell Papers.

most independent, and the one from which it is most likely that any serious *ballon d'essai* will be sent up."[100] Thus, he thought there might be a chance for Hungary to turn away from Germany. Also, Pell soon realized how difficult a situation was for Hungary its geographical location because of the given constellation of the great powers. He informed the President that the country was following a German-dictated foreign policy and not one they would choose of their own will.[101]

In his messages to Washington, Pell kept stating that Hungarians, especially the upper classes, looked to the United States, after the British had left in April, as the possible guarantor of their independence. Such sentences as "these people look to the United States as their only possible source of salvation," or Hungarians "hope that we will be able to assist them in maintaining their independence" reveal more about the naivety of Hungarians than of Pell's realism.[102] Believing that his post was important and his and his nation's role could produce a change for the better, he was of the opinion that Hungarians having such feelings was an advantage to the United States and "they should be encouraged."[103] Accordingly, he listened to anyone willing to talk, even if this meant mainly only the anti-German section of the upper class. He passed around books that were otherwise unavailable in Hungary until "they were almost worn out."[104] As he confessed to his mother, his role in Hungary was that of a capable diplomat, doing "a certain amount of tactful undermining."[105]

The first problem and thorn between the United States and Hungary came when Hungary declared war on the Soviet Union on June 26, 1941. The somewhat unexpected German attack led to an alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union. Thus, it was a pivotal occasion for Hungary to decide whether to follow Germany and join the war effort against the Soviets or stay out of it and try to preserve its non-belligerent status, and by doing so maintaining American friendship. Despite Pell's confident reports to Roosevelt, which the President "read with careful attention," that he had been assured by official circles that Hungary would not attack the Soviet Union, the opposite happened.[106] A week after the Hungarian declaration of war against the Soviet

[100] Herbert C. Pell to Robert Pell, May 23, 1941, Folder: Addendum 1905–1963, Pell Papers.
[101] Herbert C. Pell to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 29, 1941, Folder: General Correspondence Br-Ch, Container 3, Pell Papers.
[102] Herbert C. Pell to Sumner Welles, May 27, 1941, Folder: Welles, Sumner, Container 29; Pell to Robert Pell, June 11, 1941. See also, Pell to his mother, June 24, 1941, Folder: Addendum 1905–1963, Pell Papers.
[103] Pell to Welles, May 27, 1941, Folder: Welles, Sumner, Container 29, Pell Papers.
[104] Herbert Pell, Trip to Hungary, Container 20, Pell Papers. This is an undated summary of Pell's experiences in Hungary.
[105] Pell to his mother, Mrs. Herbert Pell, September 25, 1941, Addendum 1905–1963, Pell Papers.
[106] The Minister in Hungary (Pell) to the Secretary of State, June 23, 1941. *FRUS*, 1941, vol. I. General, the Soviet Union, 317; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Herbert C. Pell, September 20, 1941, Folder: General Correspondence Br-Ch, Container 3, Pell Papers.

Union he soberly wrote, "Things seem to be getting tighter and tighter. Hungary is right under the German power and cannot do anything."[107]

Deteriorated relations led to the closing of the Hungarian Legation in the United States in the summer of 1941, and the freezing of the Hungarian bank account there. Pell tried everything to remain the friend of Hungary. When Dietrich von Jagow, the new German minister, arrived in Budapest, it gave the American new impetus and possibility. Since Jagow, who, according to Pell, was "apparently an uncultured man… in many ways a boorish little fellow," and was "apparently arrogant and rough in his dealings with the Hungarians," Pell made "a particular point of being just the opposite," which he thought was effective.[108] The Pells led a highly eventful social life, often gave dinners and luncheons to prominent guests and he could be said to be on good terms with the Hungarian Who's Who of the day. He was elected a member of the National Casino as his club in Hungary (the German minister was not), where he often talked openly to Hungarians, another thing that raised his popularity. As he informed the President in one of his letters, "You will be glad to hear that American stock is going up every day in Budapest. The Government here has a gun at its back and can do nothing. The vast mass of the people hate the Germans even more than they do the Russians… More and more the people are flocking around me. The conversation in the Club, and at most dinner parties, is openly anti-Hitler."[109] True, these people represented a very small section of Hungarian society, but these were the people that he could freely talk to in English, French or German, and who showed sympathy toward the United States, as well as anti-Nazi sentiments. Therefore, he drew the conclusion that Hungary was anti-Nazi.

Despite all his hopes and tactful behavior, soon the international situation had turned for the worse for Hungary with an inevitable outcome. The involvement in the military campaign against the Soviet Union was the beginning of the end. The British declaration of war came on December 5th. The British had severed diplomatic relations with Hungary back in the spring, and since then Pell had represented Great Britain in Hungary. Pell considered the decision of the British Government as his own defeat. The American Legation had tried everything within its power to prevent such a course, but to no avail. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, things heated up. After Germany's declaration of war on the United States, it was only a matter of time before Hungary did the same.

[107] Herbert C. Pell to Robert Pell, July 3, 1941, Folder: Addendum 1905–1963, Pell Papers.

[108] Herbert Pell, Trip to Hungary, Container 20; Herbert C. Pell to Sumner Welles, August 28, 1941, Folder: Welles, Sumner, Container 29, Pell Papers.

[109] Herbert C. Pell to Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 11, 1941, Folder: Roosevelt, Franklin D., Container 25, Pell Papers.

When Prime Minister László Bárdossy summoned Pell to his office on December 11, 1941 and told him the news of breaking off diplomatic relations, the premier "frankly expressed his regret, and was manifestly acting under *force majure* by the German Legation."[110] When the American asked "Does this mean war?," Bárdossy is reported to have answered "No!"[111] But due to outside pressure, Bárdossy had no choice but to take the last step and, acting in the same fashion as the country's allies, to declare war on the United States. Considering himself a true friend of Hungary, Pell already considered how he could lessen the damage. He wanted to make Bárdossy say that the declaration of war was only due to German pressure and this did not in any way mean "hostility on the part of the Hungarian people towards the people of the U.S.A."[112] The Prime Minister's answer was not tactful and it was not what Pell wished to hear: "Hungary is a sovereign and independent State and makes this intimation as such. Her Government and her people are entirely as one."[113] The next day, December 13, 1941, Bárdossy read the declaration of war on the United States in the National Assembly, making it an established fact.

Thus Pell's efforts to keep Hungary as a friend came to a sudden end. His eight months of trying to establish the friendliest relations with as many Hungarians as he could, in which he was very successful, bore no fruit. Despite being a popular man and representing a country liked by the majority of Hungarians, he could not prevent war, at least on paper, between the two countries. Naturally, this was not his failure or shortcoming; this was inevitable and almost expected. After closing the Legation, Pell stayed in Hungary for some time, a period that he described as "an unbelievable phantasmagoria."[114] The staff of the Legation could move around freely and were not restricted in any way. A friendly demonstration for the Pells was underway in Budapest. Their suite at the Ritz continued to be a place to meet for those who were anti-Nazi and against the declaration of war and the "Pells' apartment was like a tropical garden transformed by the innumerable floral hommages showered on them."[115] Wherever Pell went, people tended to "crowd around and express their regret as the enslavement of their country."[116]

On January 16, 1942, Herbert Pell and many members of the Legation left Hungary. The train station was packed with people bidding farewell to their friend. Horthy sent an aide "who on the platform before everybody saluted us

[110] Herbert Pell, Trip to Hungary, Container 20, Pell Papers.
[111] Quoted in Carlile Aylmer Macartney, *October Fifteenth: A History of Modern Hungary 1929–1945*. vol. 1–2. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc. 1956–1957), Vol. 2, 62. Interestingly enough, I found no reference to this sentence in the Pell Papers.
[112] Quoted in Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, Vol. 2, 63.
[113] Ibid., 64.
[114] Herbert Pell, Trip to Hungary, Container 20, Pell Papers.
[115] Diary of Dusa Teleki, 158–159, Folder: Hungary 1941, Container 55, Pell Papers.
[116] Herbert Pell, Trip to Hungary, Container 20, Pell Papers.

and presented my wife with an enormous bunch of orchids and announced in a loud voice for Her Excellency from His Highness the Regent."[117] For Horthy it was safe to do so, but he remembered later that such "a political demonstration… must have been ascribed to Hungarian unreliability."[118] Still, for the Regent it was also a "political show"; for others, however, being present at the railway station may have been risky. Considering the fact that the two countries were at war with each other and the obvious presence of the German and Hungarian secret police, this demonstration of sympathy was significant.

With the Hungarian declaration of war on the United States and Herbert C. Pell leaving Hungary, the last two decades of cordial diplomatic relationship came to a halt. The two countries found themselves on the opposing sides of the war. Although the two armies never came to face off against each other on the battlefield, Hungary's support of Germany against the Soviet Union inevitably meant that American diplomacy showed lukewarm interest toward Hungary, and when the war was finished, Washington acquiesced to Hungary slipping into the Soviet sphere of influence.

Conclusion

How should one value the American ministers and their work in Hungary between 1921 and 1941, and parallel with this assessment the American–Hungarian relations? The most important observation is that Hungary was never really important for Washington. Despite Woodrow Wilson's agenda after World War I, after the Paris Peace Conference the United States one more time concentrated mainly on its traditional spheres of influence: Latin America and Southeast Asia. It is enough to look at America's diplomatic actions in the international arena and it becomes clear that Eastern-Central Europe was out of the scope of American diplomatic and economic interest. Only private capital showed lukewarm attention in the region but the US government never assumed any responsibility for such private actions. After 1929, the economic downturn that turned into a grave depression consumed most of Washington's energies, and the New Deal and the public sentiment were both against getting involved in a dangerous world as the 1930s progressed. Only World War II forced the United States back to Europe, however belatedly, but aside from short periods of time, Eastern Europe never played a crucial role for the decision makers in the White House or the State Department.

The American–Hungarian relations and the work of the ministers in the interwar years must be evaluated in light of all this. These diplomats were

[117] Ibid.
[118] Admiral Nicholas Horthy, *Memoirs*. Safety Harbor, FL: Simon Publications, 2000, 234.

never important or in a decision-making capacity; they were sent to Hungary to serve and protect American interest—not the other way around. This aspect was lost on most of the Hungarian elite and the public; therefore the American ministers were always held in very high respect because they were the representatives of the country that many Hungarians hoped the help would come from for revision. Their symbolic power outweighed their real importance. Although the 1920s can be described as the Hungarian pipedream regarding the American aid—and in certain areas there was tangible American help—, from the 1930s, the disappointed Hungarian governments started a German orientation in their economic and foreign policy, because they realized that if no great western power came to support revision, only Germany might. With German help Hungary did regain large swaths of territories with many ethnic Hungarians living in them, but the price it had to pay for it in the end was tragically high. Hungary ended the war on the losing side one more time with devastated infrastructure and an occupying Soviet army; and suddenly belonging to the Soviet sphere of influence defined the political realities. The relations between a new socialist Hungary and the United States soon deteriorated, and throughout the Cold War they were very limited. Only after the sweeping changes in 1989 and 1990 did the diplomatic relations and other dimensions of contacts begin to become normal and friendly again. And today the two countries are members of the strongest military alliance in the world: NATO.

The American ministers left a legacy though in the 1920s and 1930s: they conveyed something of what it meant to be an American, what a pragmatic American approach entailed in the work of diplomacy and other areas, and they represented a distant but friendly country whose myths and influence were already strongly living among most Hungarians. This has not changed in the more than one hundred years that have passed since the arrival of the first American minister in Budapest.

FORGOTTEN LEGACY: THE LIFE AND PHILANTHROPY OF GLADYS VANDERBILT SZÉCHÉNYI[1] IN HUNGARY

Bella Beretzky

Introduction

Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi's charitable and philanthropic activities were deeply intertwined with the early-twentieth-century Hungarian society. Contrary to contemporary conventions, she was not content with only being the wife of László Széchényi, but also actively engaged in charity on her own throughout her life. Despite her substantial contributions to child welfare and wartime relief efforts, Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi remains a largely forgotten historical figure. This paper aims to fill that gap by examining her life and independent charitable work while also providing background analysis of her upbringing and her union with László Széchényi, and it also discusses how she navigated and redefined her role from an American heiress within Hungarian society to a Hungarian Countess. With the help of analysing her confidential letters and contemporary newspaper portrayals, this paper offers a reconstruction of her life, legacy, and philanthropic work in Hungary.

In Hungary, so far only Angelika Orgona has written extensively about Gladys Vanderbilt's life and work, in *The American Countess* (2022), using the materials donated to the Hungarian National Museum by the Countess's grandchildren, Gladys and Paul Szapáry. Her work provides invaluable insights and has been instrumental in shedding light on this much-overlooked historical figure. However, the proper source-reference is missing, and the precise origin of certain details remains unclear. This paper seeks to build upon Orgona's finding by engaging directly with primary sources to offer a more comprehensive and academically grounded exploration of Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi's philanthropic work and connections in Hungary. Additionally, a short chapter in Tünde Fruzsina Kertész's publication on Miklós Kállay briefly discusses Gladys's role as an aristocrat within the Hungarian American emigrant community. English-language publications such as Wayne Andrews' *The*

[1] Although many contemporary newspapers use the spelling "Széchenyi" for László's family name, they adhered to a different form. In a 1934 letter to her sister, Gertrude, Gladys Vanderbilt enclosed a name card, on which her name appeared as "Countess László Széchényi." In acknowledgment of this personal preference, this paper adopts the "Széchényi" spelling.

Vanderbilt Legend (1941), Arthur T. Vanderbilt II's *Fortune's Children* (1989), and Anderson Cooper and Katherine Howe's *The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty* (2021) mention Gladys Vanderbilt in the context of her family, focusing on the Vanderbilt legacy rather than her individual contributions. These works were particularly useful in providing background on her ancestry and the family's rise to wealth. However, they do not offer a detailed account of her life, nor do they explore her activities in Hungary or analyse her communication with her sister, Gertrude.

Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi's correspondence with her sister, Gertrude Vanderbilt, is preserved in the Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian Institution, within the Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney Papers.[2] These materials were donated in 1981 and 1991 by Gertrude's granddaughter, Flora Miller Irving. Their communication has not yet been thoroughly examined in any scholarly work, as these letters remained largely unknown to the public until recently.

Ancestry and Upbringing of Gladys Vanderbilt

The Gilded Age

Gladys Moore Vanderbilt came from one of the largest industrialist families of the United States, a background that shaped both her upbringing and financial circumstances. This subchapter provides an overview of the Gilded Age, which enabled Gladys's great-grandfather, "The Commodore", to build his fortune and secure his descendants' wealth. It explores the background of Gladys's parents and siblings, their relationships, and, finally, her childhood and upbringing. By exploring the complexities of her family background, the subchapter will offer an insight into how these dynamics influenced Gladys's personal development and shaped her later charitable activities.

The rise of the Vanderbilt family and their massive fortune was created by the opportunities of the Gilded Age, a period in the United States in the late nineteenth century. This era, spanning from the 1870s to the end of the century, was defined by exponential economic growth and the immense wealth of certain fortunate individuals. Entrepreneurs who became known as "robber barons," for their frequently exploitative business practices, grew rich through the empires they created by dominating the petroleum, steel, and transportation industries in the US market.[3] After the first transcontinental railroads were built in 1869, development accelerated in other industries across the

[2] I am deeply grateful to Prof. Susan Siggelakis of the University of New Hampshire, whose guidance led me to these letters, providing an essential source and foundation for this study.

[3] P. Scott Corbett, Volker Janssen, John M Lund et al., *U.S. History* (Open Stax Textbooks, 2021), 469–470, https://openstax.org/details/books/us-history.

States. The length of track grew from 35,000 miles to over 200,000 miles by the close of the century, funded through public subsidies and private investment. But as wealth became concentrated in the hands of a few, political power followed, often bought through patronage and bribery.[4]

The political landscape of the Gilded Age was plagued with corruption. Between 1876 and 1892, presidential elections were narrowly decided, with margins rarely exceeding 3%.[5] Presidents during this era lacked strong mandates and often catered to the interests of those who financed their campaigns. Much of their time in office was spent repaying political favours by supporting the agendas of businessmen and legislators. This resulted in minimal federal achievements, with most policies focused on tariffs, patronage, and the monetary system.[6] Corruption was systemic, as many legislators operated within a network of graft, bribery, and business interests. The often-used justification for corruption was that it was too widespread for a successful politician to resist.[7] One of the most notorious scandals was the 1873 Crédit Mobilier affair, tied to the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad (1865–1869). The construction company Crédit Mobilier systematically overcharged building costs and used the funds it received to buy Union Pacific Railroad bonds, reselling them at substantial profits, while bribing members of Congress, including the Vice President, to forestall investigation. This scandal exposed not only financial manipulation but also deeper flaws in the political system.[8] However, in contrast to many "robber barons," Cornelius Vanderbilt truly cared about the success of his railroad enterprise and its positive impact on the American economy.

The Vanderbilt Family Legacy

Gladys Vanderbilt's immense family fortune was built by her great-grandfather, Cornelius "Commodore" Vanderbilt (1794–1877), a self-made industrialist, who founded the New York Central Railroad Company, one of the largest corporations in nineteenth-century America. Often ranked among the wealthiest Americans in history, his fortune at death was estimated at $105 million.[9]

[4] Ibid., 469.

[5] Statista, "Popular Vote in US Elections 1860–2020," https://www.statista.com/statistics/1035521/popularvotes-republican-democratic-parties-since-1828/ (accessed 28 March 2025).

[6] Corbett et al. *U.S. History*, 522–528.

[7] Ibid., 523.

[8] Ibid., 428; Richard White, "Information, markets, and corruption: Transcontinental railroads in the Gilded Age," *The Journal of American History* 90, no. 1 (2003): 37, 41, https://doi.org/10.2307/3659790.

[9] Corbett, et al. *U.S. History*, 470; Michael M. Klepper, and Robert E. Gunther, *The Wealthy 100: From Benjamin Franklin to Bill Gates – A Ranking of the Richest Americans, Past and Present* (Carol Publishing Group, 1996), 9; Steve Hargreaves, "The Richest Americans in History," *CNN*

The Vanderbilt family emigrated in the seventeenth century from De Bilt, a town near Utrecht in the Netherlands. Cornelius came from humble beginnings, left school at eleven to help his father in his work by ferrying goods and passengers across New York Harbor and, by sixteen, had started his own boat service.[10] According to several anecdotes, his character can be described as determined, stubborn and willing to take significant risks to make money.[11] After his ferry business saw a decline in 1817, he joined the Gibbons family steamboat business and helped challenge the New York steamboat monopoly, winning a landmark Supreme Court case in 1824 that promoted a freer market economy.[12] Cornelius's success in steamboats led him to expand into transatlantic shipping, and during the California Gold Rush, offered a faster route to the West via Nicaragua. Later in the 1850s, he turned to railroads, recognizing their economic potential. Between 1863 and 1868, he acquired and consolidated several lines, including the New York and Harlem, Hudson River, and New York Central railroads, and later extended his reach toward Chicago, building an interconnected railroad network.[13] He had thirteen children but left most of his $100 million estate to his eldest son, William Henry Vanderbilt (1821–1885). William built upon his father's empire and managed to double his inheritance to 200 million dollars – before dying just eight years later. William's firstborn son, Gladys's father, Cornelius Vanderbilt II, was raised in this immense wealth, which shaped both his financial philosophy and the upbringing of his children.[14]

Cornelius Vanderbilt II (1843–1899), Gladys's father, was the eldest son of William Henry Vanderbilt. He inherited $67 million and the title as head of the Vanderbilt family. Though his father reduced the inheritance to distribute wealth more fairly among his children, Cornelius II remained deeply committed to the family's business legacy.[15] Contemporaries described him as a balanced individual – "courteous, considerate, and gentle" – noting that, unlike his ancestors, he never let his emotions take control of his actions or words and was known for his "blameless, upright life."[16] In contrast to his grandfather,

Business, June 2, 2014, https://money.cnn.com/gallery/luxury/2014/06/01/richest-americans-in-history/index.html (accessed 28 March 2025).

[10] Arthur T. Vanderbilt II, *Fortune's Children: The Fall of the House of Vanderbilt*, (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1989), 6.

[11] Anderson Cooper and Katherine Howe, *Vanderbilt: The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty*, (New York: Harper Collins Paperbacks, 2021), 24–25.

[12] Ibid., 48–50.

[13] Corbett, et al. *U.S. History*, 470.

[14] Cooper and Howe, *Vanderbilt,* 66.

[15] Vanderbilt, *Fortune's Children*, 139–140.

[16] Wayne Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend: The Story of the Vanderbilt Family*, (New York: Hardcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1941), 375.

Cornelius II was not controlled by his money; he viewed it as something he owned not for himself but for the benefit of others.[17]

He was the president of the New York Central Railroad and a director for both the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History.[18] A committed philanthropist, he co-founded the Vanderbilt Clinic at Columbia University and made generous donations to numerous hospitals, churches, and schools. His will reflected these values, leaving 10% of his nearly $72 million estate to charity, including large donations to Saint Bartholomew's Church, Vanderbilt University, Yale, and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). Through these contributions, he served as an exemplar, inspiring his children to engage in public service and charitable work. Among his children, his second son, Afred inherited the largest amount, while Gladys and her three elder siblings (except Cornelius III) inherited $20 million in trust and $5 million outright.[19]

Gladys's mother, Alice Claypoole Gwynne (1845–1934), came from an established Rhode Island family and met Cornelius II while they were both teaching Sunday School at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church. Known for her reserved manner and rigid discipline, she prioritized maintaining the Vanderbilt family's image and strict etiquette for her children. In 1903, Alice funded the construction of a new pavilion and four-story hospital ward in Newport in memory of her husband, estimated at $250,000.[20] Through their active engagement in philanthropy and public service, Gladys's parents set a strong example that would shape her own sense of duty and charity.

A Lifelong Sisterly Bond: Gertrude and Gladys

Gladys Vanderbilt was the youngest of seven children born to Cornelius Vanderbilt II and Alice Claypoole Gwynne. Among her siblings, she shared the closest bond with her sister, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1875–1942), a prominent sculptor, philanthropist, and founder of the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1931. This was the first museum to focus solely on American contemporary art and gave visibility to underrepresented artists. Gertrude also created several important public sculptures, including the Titanic Memorial in Washington, D.C.[21]

[17] Ibid., 352–53.
[18] Ibid., 349.
[19] Ibid., 350, 354–355, 380–381.
[20] "Vanderbilt Memorial Opened; New Pavilion Donated by Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Sr., Transferred to Trustees of Newport Hospital," *The New York Times*, (August 2, 1903): 7, https://www.nytimes.com/1903/08/02/archives/vanderbilt-memorial-opened-new-pavilion-donated-by-mrs-cornelius.html.
[21] Cooper and Howe, *Vanderbilt,* 219.

Gladys and Gertrude's close relationship was reflected in their lifelong correspondence, spanning from 1896 – shortly after Gertrude's marriage, when Gladys was ten years old – until 1941. The letters preserved in the Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney Papers offer vital insights into their relationship and the broader context of Gladys's life. A significant portion of their letters appears to have been lost, leaving only approximately 80 remaining, with notable gaps in their correspondence. The largest surviving collection dates from 1935, during which they exchanged letters roughly every two weeks. Given this frequency, it is reasonable to assume they wrote more often in other years too, but the loss of these letters leaves much of their communication unknown. The surviving letters are an invaluable resource on the social, familial, and personal dynamics of the Vanderbilt sisters, with many of the details discussed in the following subchapters drawing directly on this correspondence. A couple of letters reveal Gladys's reclusiveness; for example, some correspondence from 1934 ends with the phrase "please burn this," likely due to the sensitive nature of their content, hinting at some tension in the relationship of Gladys and László.[22] After the death of their mother, Alice, in 1934, both sisters were devastated by grief. Their mutual support is evident in Gladys's writing: "You must know without my telling you what being with you at this very sad time has meant to me."[23] A day later in a telegram, she expressed her gratitude and affection towards Gertrude: "Thank you for everything and especially for being the most wonderful sister and aunt in all the wide world."[24] Their correspondence reveals the closeness of their relationship, showing how Gertrude remained a constant presence in Gladys's life, offering guidance, reassurance, and a shared understanding that endured despite distance and time.

Gladys Moore Vanderbilt's Childhood

On August 27th, 1886, Gladys Moore Vanderbilt was born into one of the wealthiest and most influential families of the Gilded Age, in Newport, Rhode Island. As the youngest child of Cornelius Vanderbilt II and Alice Claypoole Gwynne, she grew up surrounded by grandeur, being raised up in the largest private residence in New York City, the Vanderbilt family mansion on Fifth Avenue, as well as their summer "cottage", a three-story, 70-room grand palace known as The Breakers, located in Newport, Rhode Island. Her education reflected the expectations placed on young women of her class: she attended Miss Chapin's School, an elite institution for girls in New York. From an early

[22] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, July 17, 1934.*
[23] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, June 27, 1934.*
[24] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, June 28, 1934.*

age, her letters to Gertrude reveal an engagement with the arts, mentioning music lessons by the age of ten, and later, vocal training with Jean de Reszke, a renowned Polish opera singer.[25]

Gladys's childhood letters reveal her early awareness of the importance of charity. During Christmas 1896, at the age of 10, she wrote about her cousins, Maude and Willie Shepard, who hung up their stockings on Christmas Eve but found them empty. Moved by this, Gladys wrote: "So I got 2 stockings and bought some things for them, and I am going to send them to them, and on New Year's morning they will have them."[26] Another example of her charity is that in 1897, a new periodical titled *Spring Blooms* was published, edited by 10-year-old Gladys and two of her cousins. This paper was created to raise funds for the Eastern Offering for the Sunday School of St. John's Church. In the opening issue, Gladys shares her first impressions of Washington D.C., expressing a preference for it over New York due to its warmer weather and pleasant parks, and concludes with: "I should call Washington a very nice place." The paper was quite successful, with 216 copies it generated a revenue of $20.[27]

Since the parents got to know each other at Saint Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, religion played a central role in their family life. Cornelius's defining characteristic was his profound religious devotion, which shaped his character and sustained his faith throughout his life.[28] The couple raised their children in the Episcopal faith, with daily worship being an integral aspect of the Vanderbilt household. They attended Saint Bartholomew's Church services daily and, when their schedules allowed, even twice a day.[29] Gladys followed the family's strict religious routine but enjoyed pastime activities such as riding her pony to the coast and socializing with locals. On Sundays, she spent the day until midday reading the Bible and spent the afternoon visiting the stables with her father.[30]

In the summer of 1896, Glady's father suffered a severe stroke that left him partially paralyzed. A letter from Gladys to Gertude reveals that his paralysis persisted for several months, and it was not until October that he could manage to lift his arm or walk short distances, such as from one room to another.[31] In 1898, he experienced another stroke, attributed to his overwork in charitable

[25] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, October 7–11, 1896*; Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend*, 358.

[26] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, December 30, 1896.*

[27] "She Likes Washington; Miss Gladys Vanderbilt Writes Her Impressions for 'Spring Blossoms.'" *The Times*, (April 5, 1987): 5, https://www.loc.gov/item/sn85054468/1897-04-05/ed-1/.

[28] Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend*, 353.

[29] Vanderbilt, *Fortune's Children*, 181.

[30] Angelika Orgona, *The American Countess: The Memories of the Szápáry and Széchényi Families,* trans. Leslie A. Kery, Andrew C. Rouse, (Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian National Museum, 2022), 46–47.

[31] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, October 7-11, 1896*; Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, October 15, 1896.*

activities. Shortly thereafter, in September 1899, he passed away from cerebral haemorrhage, in the presence of his wife and daughter Gladys at the family estate in New York. At the age of 13, Gladys inherited one-quarter of a $20 million trust fund shared with her siblings, along with an additional $5 million outright.[32]

Gladys had a simple, straightforward temperament; she was devoted and compassionate to both of her parents, whose demands she viewed as natural and reasonable. Growing up she witnessed the family's hardships, including the death of her brother Will, her father's conflict with Neily and his fiancée, and the passing away of her father. Her shy and quiet nature, however, proved to be a blessing during these difficult times, providing considerable relief to her sister Gertrude and their mother.[33] The sisters shared a deep connection, with Gertrude considering Gladys the only person who loved and cared for her unconditionally.[34]

Gladys provided comfort to her mother, Alice, after the death of her husband. Following Cornelius's passing, Alice mourned for the remainder of her life, stopped attending social events, and wore only black for the next thirty-five years.[35] Mother and the youngest daughter were very close, sharing a similar temperament. Alice chaperoned Gladys everywhere, a practice Gladys did not mind, and, in return, Gladys remained fiercely loyal to her mother.[36]

The first social gathering after the death of Cornelius II was the Vanderbilt Ball in 1905, which was organized to introduce the 19-year-old Gladys to the Newport society and held in the Breakers.[37] Mihály Károlyi – who later became a Hungarian politician and president – attended the event and described the Vanderbilt Ball as a modest event compared to the extravagant gatherings hosted by other millionaires. It lacked the typical publicity and ostentation, emphasizing instead a beautiful display of flowers and a "very timid girl, who whispered rather than talked, as if trying to apologize for being an heiress."[38]

At the age of 21 Gladys was among the wealthiest young ladies in the United States as she received $12,500,000 for her twenty-first birthday from her father's estate.[39] In 1906 and 1907, Gladys and her mother went on multiple trips abroad, spending large time of their year in Europe. Gladys corresponded with her sister Gertrude about these experiences. While she appreciated the social opportunities, including dinners and dances, she expressed a sense of dissatisfaction, noting that she lacked genuine friendships abroad and had become "thoroughly

[32] Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend*, 352–355.
[33] Clarice Stasz, *The Vanderbilt Women: Dynasty of Wealth, Glamour, and Tragedy* (New York, USA: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 151.
[34] Ibid., 141.
[35] Vanderbilt, *Fortune's Children*, 222.
[36] Stasz, *The Vanderbilt Women*, 167-168.
[37] Ibid., 168.
[38] Károlyi, Mihály, *Memoirs of Michael Karolyi: Faith without Illusion, trans. Catherine Karolyi*, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1957), 36.
[39] "Romantic Wooing of Miss Gladys Vanderbilt," *The New York Times* (October 6, 1907), 5, https://www.nytimes.com/1907/10/06/archives/romantic-wooing-of-miss-gladys-vanderbilt-bethrothal-recalling-the.html.

sick of" the constant social engagements.[40] Returning from one such journey in September of 1907, vague rumours started to solidify that Gladys had fallen in love with a European nobleman, Count László Széchényi.

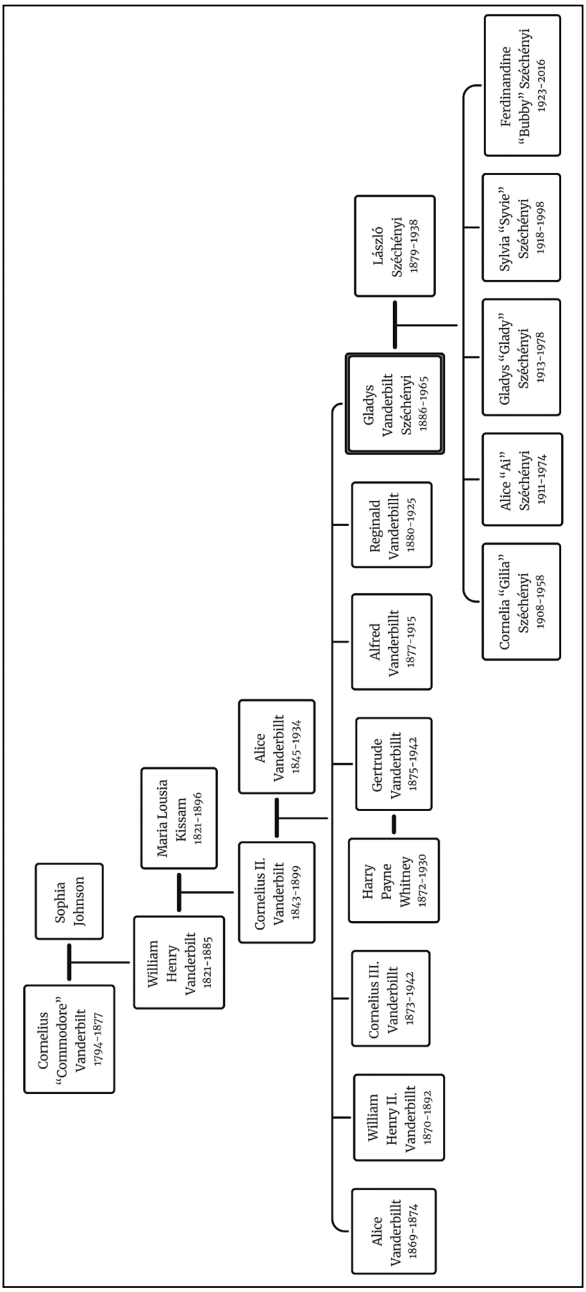

Figure 1. Simplified Vanderbilt Family Tree showing only Gladys's branch.

[40] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, June 16, 1907.*

The Engagement and Wedding of Gladys Vanderbilt and Count László Széchényi

The engagement and marriage of Gladys Vanderbilt and Count László Széchényi attracted widespread attention in both the American and Hungarian press, sparking speculation about their motivations. This subchapter explores László's background and his family's status in nineteenth-century Hungary, the couple's courtship and engagement – including public speculation, family tensions, and contemporary reactions – and their wedding. By analysing newly rediscovered letters and newspaper reports, it offers a nuanced view of how their union was shaped by the complex interplay of affection, familial and media tensions, and personal struggles.

Gladys Vanderbilt's suitor, Count László Széchényi, came from one of Hungary's oldest and most prestigious noble families, with roots stretching back to the fourteenth century. Marrying into the Széchényi family meant Gladys was entering a culturally and historically rich aristocratic world. The Hungarian reception of the engagement was largely positive, as the Széchényi name was one of the most highly esteemed in the country, and the Vanderbilt family could take pride in this distinguished connection.[41] Count Ferenc Széchényi (1754–1820), László's great-grandfather, founded both the Hungarian National Museum and the National Library; while his son, Count István Széchenyi (1791–1860), known as the "Greatest Hungarian," played an instrumental role in Hungary's liberal transformation in the nineteenth century. His legacy reinforced the Széchényi family's status as one of Hungary's most influential noble families, further elevating the significance of László's marriage to Gladys Vanderbilt.[42]

Count Imre Széchényi (1825–1898), László's father, was a diplomat, Member of the Hungarian Parliament, and composer. A highly educated individual, fluent in five languages, raised at the Viennese Court alongside future Emperor Franz Joseph, he held diplomatic posts in major European cities, later serving as Austro-Hungarian Minister to Berlin until 1892. He was honoured with the Orders of the Golden Fleece and the Black Eagle by Kaiser Wilhelm II.[43] In 1865, he married Countess Alexandra Sztáray-Szirmay (1843–1914), a noblewoman and member of the Order of the Starry Cross.[44] Both were passionate

[41] "Amerikai levél" [American Letter], *Pesti Hírlap* 29, no. 245 (October 16, 1907): 8–9, https://adt.arcanum.com/en/view/PestiHirlap_1907_10/.

[42] "Szechenyi Very Wealthy," *The New York Times*, (October 4, 1907): 11, https://www.nytimes.com/1907/10/04/archives/szechenyi-very-wealthy-count-is-a-good-sportsman-and-a-court.html.

[43] Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend,* 356; Orgona, *The American Countess,* 49–51, "Gróf Széchényi Imre halála" [Death of Count Imre Széchényi], *Pesti Hírlap* 20, no. 71 (March 12, 1898): 5, https://adt.arcanum.com/en/view/PestiHirlap_1898_03/.

[44] Szirmay, Gábor, *A Szirmai és Szirmabesnyői Szirmay Család Története* [The History of the

about music, performing piano duets and forming close relationships with composers such as Liszt and Strauss.[45]

Imre and Alexandra Széchényi had four sons: Dénes, Péter, István, and László. All the Széchényi brothers served as Reserve Lieutenants in the Imperial and Royal Hussars and held the honorary title of Chamberlain at the Austro-Hungarian Court.[46] Count Dénes Széchényi (1866–1934) followed his father into diplomacy, serving in Athens, Brussels, St. Petersburg, and later as Austro-Hungarian Minister to Denmark (1908–1917). He may have attended the same Berlin ball where Gladys met László.[47]

The youngest son, who became engaged to Miss Gladys in the autumn of 1907, was László Széchényi (1879–1938), whose full name was László Jenő Mária Henrik Simon Széchényi of Sárvár-Felsővidék. He attended a business school in Kassa [Košice, Slovakia], and it is likely that he pursued studies in diplomacy.[48] In January 1905, he was serving in the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic service and was assigned to the Monarchy's mission to Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia) as a sub-consul, aiming to establish diplomatic ties between the Habsburg Empire and Emperor Menelik II of Abyssinia.[49]

László Széchényi was a talented sportsman, frequently praised in the press for his marksmanship, polo skills, and participation in aristocratic hunts. He won several shooting competitions and played in the junior match at the International Polo Meeting in Ostend.[50] Beyond his athletic achievements, László was also passionate about card games. One anecdote recounts his attempt to prove telepathy to his fellow magnates through a bet. Blindfolded, he successfully navigated from the National Casino to the Park Club's card room by following a randomly chosen "medium" who focused on the intended destination.[51] While the spectacle impressed some, a professor in attendance sarcastically remarked: "I have no doubt that the Count could find his way blindfolded

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Szirmay Family of Szirma and Szirmabesenyő], (Debrecen, Hungary: Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Múzeumok Igazgatóság, 2005), 66–67, https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/MEGY_HAJB_Saa_20_Rmcs_04/.

[45] Orgona, *The American Countess*, 50.

[46] "Romantic Wooing of Miss Gladys Vanderbilt."

[47] "Count Szechenyi's Family Delighted with His Betrothal to Miss Vanderbilt," *The New York Times*, (October 9, 1907): 7, https://www.nytimes.com/1907/10/27/archives/count-szechenyis-family-delighted-with-his-betrothal-to-miss.html; Orgona, *The American Countess,* 51–52.

[48] "Gróf Széchényi Imre halála."

[49] Orgona, *The American Countess,* 51, 55; "Hivatalos misszió Abesszíniába" [Official Mission to Abyssinia], *Pesti Napló* 56, no. 11 (January 17, 1905): 11, https://adt.arcanum.com/en/view/PestiNaplo_1905_01/.

[50] "Atlétika: Gömblövészeti verseny" [Athletics: Trap Shooting Competition], *Magyar Nemzet* 20, no. 217 (August 31, 1901): 6, https://adt.arcanum.com/en/view/MagyarNemzetJokaiBeksicsUgron_1901_08/; "Vadászat" [Hunting], *Pesti Hírlap* 17, no. 1 (January 1, 1895): 8, https://adt.arcanum.com/en/view/PestiHirlap_1895_01/; "Polo," *Pesti Hírlap* 27, no. 192 (July 13, 1905): 8, https://adt.arcanum.com/en/view/PestiHirlap_1905_07/.

[51] The Park Club was located on the site of present-day Stefánia Palace, while the National Casino

to the Park Club's card room. But he should have attempted to reach the University Library in the same manner – now that would have been true clairvoyance!"[52]

In September 1907, before the official announcement of their engagement, Gladys's sister, Gertrude, corresponded with László. Although her original letter is lost, László's response makes it clear that Gertrude had trusted him and believed he could make the "dearest person in this world" – Gladys – happy. In his reply, he reassured her that he would do everything to achieve this while also expressing his delight at earning her trust, which shows that he could count on Gertrude's friendship. He ended his letter to Gertrude by recalling his initial nervousness upon meeting her, fearing he might not make a good impression on her, but expressed relief that this fear quickly disappeared. He concluded by expressing his hope to thank her in person while, in the meantime, conveying his deep gratitude and happiness.[53]

was in District V, near what is now Astoria. This means the Count's walk would have taken at least an hour.

[52] "Tarka krónika: A távolbalátás" [Varied Chronicle: Second Sight], *Pesti Napló* 53, no. 154 (June 1902): 9, https://adt.arcanum.com/en/view/PestiNaplo_1902_06/.

[53] László Széchényi, *Letter to Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, September 14, 1907.*

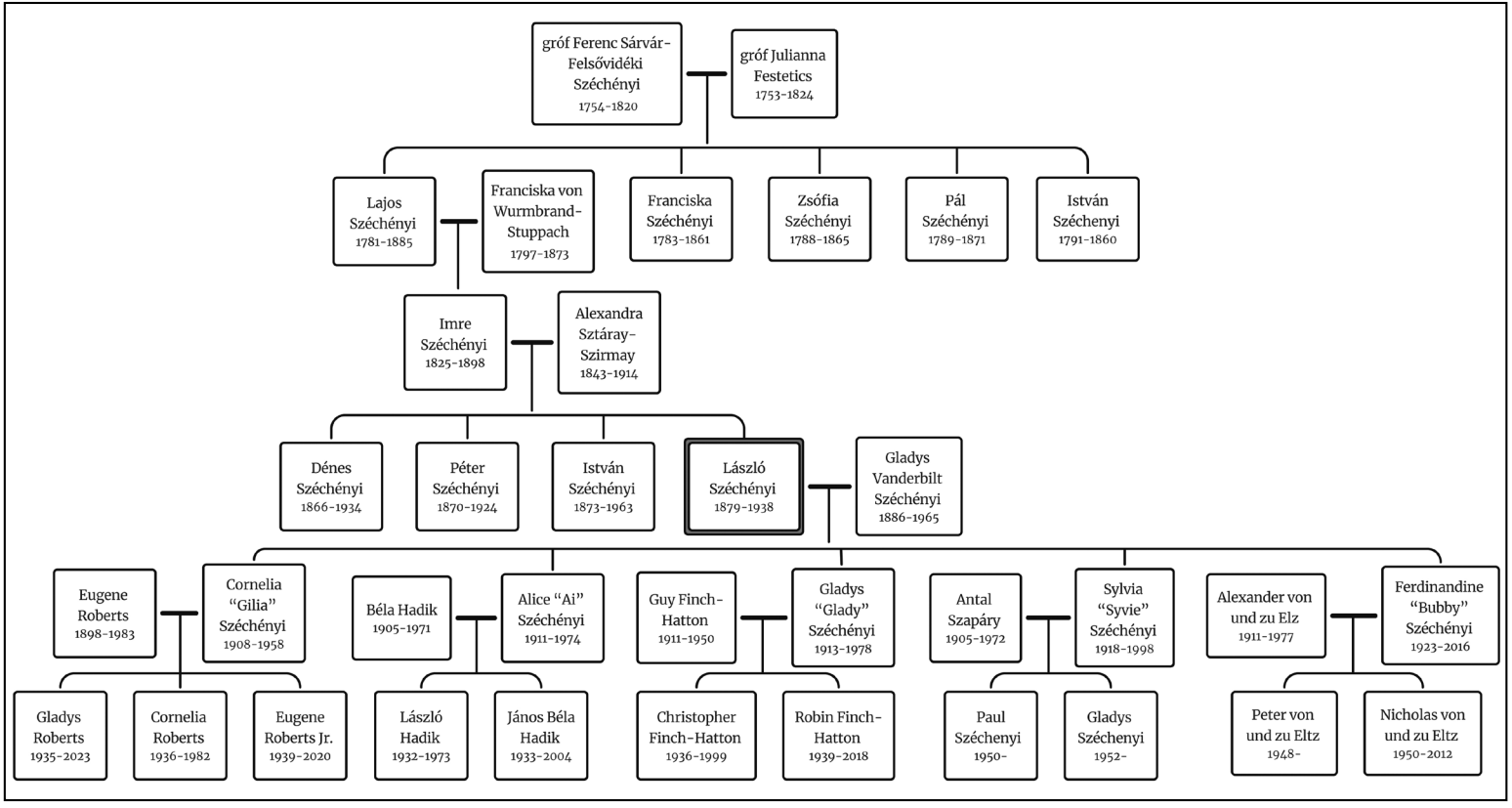

Figure 2. Simplified Széchényi Family Tree focusing on László Széchényi.

Prior to the departure of Mrs. Alice Vanderbilt and Miss Gladys Vanderbilt for Europe in April 1907, drawing room conversations frequently linked Miss Vanderbilt's name with several young men considered potential suitors. Among them was Robert Walton Goelet, while another speculation involved a younger member of the Gerard family, yet whenever these rumours appeared in print, they were firmly denied. However, following their return from Europe to the States in September, rumours solidified suggesting that Miss Gladys Vanderbilt might have fallen in love with László Széchényi, a Hungarian nobleman.[54]

The couple had previously been introduced at a social event in London hosted by US Minister to the United Kingdom, Whitelaw Reid and his wife, though their acquaintance at the time was superficial. It was during the winter of 1906, at a ball hosted by Charlemagne Tower Jr., the US Minister to Germany, that Gladys and László developed a closer connection and were believed to have fallen in love. In October, following her engagement to László Széchényi, Gladys Vanderbilt expressed her gratitude to Minister Tower's wife, Nellie Smith, writing: "My engagement (...) was so much due to your invitation to Berlin last winter that I want you to hear of it from me. We knew each other before but very slightly, and had it not been for those three wonderful weeks in Germany, this would probably never have happened (...) we are both very grateful to you."[55]

In the summer of 1907, Mrs. Vanderbilt, her daughter Gladys, and László were frequently seen together. Their travels included a visit to the renowned spa town, Marienbad [Mariánské Lázně], as well as an extended stay at the Hotel Bristol in Vienna.[56] During their time in Vienna, László served as their constant companion, acting as their chaperone and guide. He continued to accompany them when they later travelled to Karlsbad [Karlovy Vary].[57]

In October 1907, Mrs. Alice Vanderbilt and her daughter, Gladys, travelled to the Széchényi family estate located in Horpács (today Sopronhorpács – in Sopron County) This visit provided an opportunity for the Vanderbilts to become acquainted with the Széchényi family, during which the engagement may have been settled.[58] The official announcement of the engagement of

[54] "Romantic Wooing of Miss Gladys Vanderbilt."

[55] Helen Brunet Tower, *Nellie and Charlie: A Family Memoir of the Gilded Age*, (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2005), 153.

[56] "Széchényi László Gróf és menyasszonya" [Count László Széchényi and his Fiancée], *Budapesti Hírlap* vol. 27, no. 237 (October 5, 1907): 8–9, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/BudapestiHirlap_1907_10/.

[57] "Vanderbilt leányból – magyar grófné" [From Vanderbilt's Daughter to Hungarian Countess], *Pesti Napló* vol. 58, no. 236 (October 4, 1907): 9, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiNaplo_1907_10/.

[58] "Count Szechenyi's Family Delighted with His Betrothal to Miss Vanderbilt."

Gladys Moore Vanderbilt and Count László Széchényi was made by Mrs. Vanderbilt in the papers on October 8, 1907.[59]

Contemporary newspaper discussions frequently portrayed the young, betrothed couple, offering varied portrayals. Regarding Gladys, most accounts emphasized her resemblance to her mother, describing her as "petite and unassuming in manner, simple in her gowning, reserved and quiet." Additionally, reports highlighted her exceptional singing abilities, confident driving skills, and proficiency across various sports.[60] Similarly, László was frequently characterized as a skilled sportsman and a "charming type of Hungarian cavalier," embodying the archetype of masculinity.[61]

However, shortly after the announcement of their engagement, speculations and doubts emerged regarding the true intentions behind the betrothal. During the Gilded Age, it was common for wealthy American women to marry into the European aristocracy. Such alliances provided the increasingly impoverished aristocratic families with much-needed financial support, while American heiresses acquired noble titles and elevated social status. Gladys Vanderbilt's engagement to Count László Széchényi was compared to that of her cousin, Consuelo Vanderbilt, who had separated from Charles Spencer-Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough, just a year earlier, in October 1906. Consuelo's marriage was widely perceived as a failed marriage of convenience, which did not successfully unite wealth, prestige, and genuine affection.[62]

Among Hungarians, the engagement was generally met with less suspicion regarding the couple's intentions and was instead warmly celebrated and supported.[63] For instance, the Hungarian writer Jenő Heltai found inspiration in this betrothal and, in January 1908, published a poem titled *Szerelmi Házasság* [Marriage of Love] in *Pesti Hírlap* under the pseudonym *Elta*. The poem explores the exchange of titles and wealth characteristic of transatlantic marriages of the period. However, both its recurring lines and its dedication suggest that the poet considered the Hungarian count, László Széchényi, as marrying for love.[64]

Family disagreements further deepened divisions within the Vanderbilt family. Gladys's brother, Reginald Claypoole Vanderbilt, vehemently opposed her engagement, expressing strong disapproval of marriages between American

[59] "Miss Vanderbilt Will Wed a Count: Gladys, Youngest Daughter of Mrs. Vanderbilt, to Marry Count Szechenyi of Hungary," *The New York Times*, (October 4, 1907): 11, https://www.nytimes.com/1907/10/04/archives/miss-vanderbilt-will-wed-a-count-gladys-youngest-daughter-of-mrs.html.

[60] "Széchényi László Gróf és menyasszonya"; "Miss Vanderbilt"; "Romantic Wooing of Miss Gladys Vanderbilt".

[61] "Széchényi very wealthy"; "Amerikai levél".

[62] Orgona, *The American Countess*, 40, 50.

[63] "Amerikai levél".

[64] Heltai, Jenő, "Kis Komédiák: Szerelmi Házasság" [Short Comedies: A Marriage of Love], *Pesti Hírlap* 30, no. 17 (January 19, 1908): 9. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiHirlap_1908_01/.

ladies and foreign aristocrats.[65] Her brothers – Cornelius III, Alfred, and Reginald – expressed concerns that Gladys might not be welcomed in the exclusive aristocratic circles of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy. Therefore, Count László Széchényi would have had to arrange his wife's court reception before their marriage, but this was impossible, as the Viennese Court remained rigidly hierarchical, and wealth could not compensate for her lack of noble rank.[66]

In an interview Count Dénes Széchényi, the brother of László, refuted these concerns by asserting that the entire family was delighted by Miss Gladys's arrival and that she would be well received in all social circles. He later remarked to the press that "when she becomes Countess, she will be received by the best families in Hungary. She will be the Queen of the Hour."[67] Although he acknowledged that the only concern was that having been raised in an environment of unparalleled luxury and privilege, she might find their simpler lifestyle disappointing, he emphasized that the family would do everything within their power to ensure her experience in Hungary was as pleasant as possible. Nevertheless, if his perspective is to be trusted, Dénes regarded their engagement as "purely of love," recounting that he had "repeatedly seen the young couple together… and their affection for each other was easily noticeable."[68]

Letters written in the summer of 1907 from Gladys to her sister Gertrude reveal that she experienced considerable anxiety regarding her upcoming marriage. Activities such as social outings and dancing, which she once found enjoyable, no longer brought her the same amusement.[69] In a letter dated late August, Gladys honestly expressed her emotional struggles, revealing that when she was alone, it was terrible, leaving her in an "awful state of blues" an unexpected sentiment for someone newly engaged.[70] However, she felt reassured when László was present, though in his absence, she was once again overwhelmed by "the mere idea" of what the future held.[71] Gladys's worries seem to be rooted in the prospect of leaving her home, family, and life in America to live in Hungary following her marriage. She expressed her intent to visit home annually and maintain her interests in the US, revealing her desire to stay connected to her roots despite the challenges. Additionally, she also anticipated disapproval from her family and friends, acknowledging that they will be "terribly down on me," likely due to concerns about her marriage

[65] "One Vanderbilt an American," *The Spokane Press* (October 17, 1907): 1, https://www.loc.gov/item/sn88085947/1907-10-17/ed-1/.

[66] "A Széchényi–Vanderbilt-házasság" [The Széchényi–Vanderbilt marriage], *Pesti Napló* 58, no. 245 (October 16, 1907): 7, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiNaplo_1907_10/.

[67] Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend*, 357.

[68] "Count Szechenyi's Family Delighted with His Betrothal to Miss Vanderbilt".

[69] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, June 16, 1907.*

[70] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, August 25, 1907.*

[71] Ibid.

to a foreign aristocrat and the significant changes it would entail.[72] Nevertheless, she was determined to persevere and try as hard as she could, so that the distance would not ultimately make a difference.[73]

Gladys and László's marriage represented the union of two distinct worlds, bridging American high society and European aristocracy. Both their engagement and wedding became major spectacles in the press, capturing widespread public fascination. The wedding ceremony took place on January 27, 1908, at the Vanderbilt residence at 1 West Fifty-Seventh Street in New York City. Approximately five thousand spectators gathered in the surrounding streets, eager to witness what was considered the most extravagant wedding in New York at the time, while over one hundred policemen were stationed to maintain order.[74]

Despite the intense public interest, the ceremony itself was intentionally simple, in accordance with the bride's wishes. Everything from the floral arrangements to the bridal attire was deliberately understated to avoid extravagance. The reception salon and drawing room – where the ceremony was held – were elegantly decorated with mauve and white orchids, white roses, and palms. A sixty-five-piece orchestra, concealed among towering palm leaves, performed classical compositions by Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Beethoven, and Rubinstein. The groom, László, wore his traditional Hussar lieutenant uniform, complete with a sword at his side, embodying his noble heritage. The bride, Gladys, chose to wear her mother's wedding dress, which had been modified in a Parisian salon. The gown, a soft white satin princess robe with an elaborate court train, was paired with a silver-embroidered veil. Her bouquet consisted of white orchids and natural orange blossoms, while her jewellery was simple yet exquisite, featuring a single large diamond pendant and a string of pearls.[75]

Because of the couple's differing religious affiliations, their wedding could not take place in a church or be officiated by an archbishop, as Gladys Vanderbilt was a member of the Episcopal Church – a mainline US denomination of the time, very much in line with Anglicanism – while László Széchényi was Roman Catholic. Just a year prior to their union, Pope Pius X issued the *Ne Temere* decree (1907), which imposed stricter regulations on Catholic marriages. Under this decree, a marriage was considered valid in the eyes of the Church only if conducted before a Catholic priest, and the Catholic spouse was required to ensure that any children born of the union would be raised in

[72] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, August 25, 1907.*
[73] Ibid.
[74] Orgona, *The American Countess*, 61.
[75] "Miss Vanderbilt Now a Countess," *New York Times* (January 28, 1908): 1, https://www.nytimes.com/1908/01/28/archives/miss-vanderbilt-now-a-countess-she-becomes-the-bride-of-count.html; "A Széchényi–Vanderbilt násznagy" [The Széchényi–Vanderbilt Nuptial], *Budapesti Hírlap* 28, no. 25 (January 29, 1908): 9, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/BudapestiHirlap_1908_01/.

the Catholic faith.[76] Therefore, Gladys submitted a formal letter of reversal, affirming that their children would be raised as Catholics. In response, the Pope sent his blessing via cable telegram, expressing his hope that he would soon welcome and bless the couple in person at the Vatican. As a result, the wedding itself was a brief, ten-minute ceremony conducted by Vicar Monsignor Lavelle of Saint Patrick's Cathedral assisted by Reverend Father Byrne at an improvised altar in the Louis XIV Drawing Room of the Vanderbilts' New York residence.[77]

Over four hundred relatives and friends from both families were invited to the wedding, including prominent figures from the Vanderbilt and Széchényi families and their close associates. Notable guests included the Austro-Hungarian Minister to the United States, Baron von Hengelmüller; the British Minister, James Bryce; and László's best man, Count Antal Sigray. Several members of the American plutocracy and Hungarian nobility were also in attendance, reflecting the transnational and elite nature of the occasion.[78]

The newlyweds received various exceptionally valuable gifts. Among the presents from Vanderbilt family members were a rope of pearls, an elaborate diamond chain, a necklace adorned with pearls and diamonds, a sapphire and diamond stomacher, and a tiara and collar of solitaire diamonds – collectively estimated to be worth over one million dollars.[79] In contrast, one Hungarian supporter opted for a more practical approach, gifting the new countess a traditional goulash cauldron and a bag of paprika – perhaps a gentle initiation into her new homeland's culinary traditions. Gladys expressed her appreciation in a public letter written in Hungarian, which she had been diligently studying in the weeks prior.[80]

After the wedding breakfast, the newlyweds cleverly departed in a limousine touring car. The bride's brother, Albert Vanderbilt, arranged for an automobile to be placed in front of one of the mansion's gates. As the crowd eagerly watched – anticipating the couple's departure in that car – the newlyweds discreetly exited through another gate, unnoticed. They went to the Grand Central Terminal to leave for Newport, where they spent their honeymoon in seclusion until the 4th of February, when they departed for Europe.[81]

[76] Pope Pius X, *Ne Temere* (1907).

[77] Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend*, 358; Orgona, *The American Countess*, 63.

[78] "Miss Vanderbilt Now a Countess,"; Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend,* 358.

[79] Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend*, 357–358.

[80] "A Széchényi–Vanderbilt nász," *Budapesti Hírlap* 28, no. 24 (January 27, 1908), 7, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/BudapestiHirlap_1908_01/.

[81] "Miss Vanderbilt Now a Countess"; Orgona, *The American Countess,* 63; "A Széchényi–Vanderbilt nász".

The Life of Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi in Hungary

Adaptation to Life in Hungary: Early Years and Acquisition of Estates

In Hungary, Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi faced the challenges of isolation and unfamiliarity with social circles, yet she navigated them with resilience. This subchapter explores her transition to life in Hungary, examining how she adapted, embraced her new role, and actively shaped and invested in her surroundings. While the process was not without difficulty, her letters reveal a woman determined to integrate into her new home, overcoming personal and social challenges. Her ability to do so solidified her place in Hungarian aristocracy and laid the foundation for her later youth-focused philanthropic work.

After their honeymoon, Gladys and László set sail for Europe, arriving in Budapest on April 1, 1908. Then they travelled to the Széchényi family's estate in Őrmező [Strážske, Slovakia], a village in Zemplén County, where they spent their first year. They were received with a warm welcome: the village was beautifully decorated from the station to the castle, and the streets were lined with festively dressed villagers and residents from the surrounding area. Following local tradition, a little girl dressed in white stepped forward and presented the Countess with a gingerbread heart on a small pillow adorned with folk embroidery, symbolizing wishes for a happy marriage.[82]

Soon after their arrival, strange rumours about Hungary and the living conditions there began circulating in some US newspapers, namely the *Pittsburgh Gazette Times*. One particularly sensationalized report claimed that the Széchényi family's only possessions were their castle in Őrmező, six horses, and a handful of servants who never bathed, as bathing was supposedly reserved for the nobility, who only did so once a month. According to this account, Miss Gladys could only bathe in a large wooden barrel when it rained, and until their new home in Budapest was completed, she would reside in three sparsely furnished rooms, dimly lit by tallow candles.[83] While adjusting to a simpler lifestyle in the Hungarian countryside may have posed challenges for Gladys, given her upbringing in luxury, these reports were exaggerated and far from the truth. She was not only able to adapt to her new way of life but also actively invested her wealth meaningfully by enhancing her surroundings. The Széchényi estate was improved with a hydroelectric power plant designed to

[82] "A Széchényi-Vanderbilt nász"; "A Széchenyi házaspár Őrmezőn" [The Széchenyi couple in Őrmező], *Vasárnapi Ujság* 16, no. 55 (April 19, 1908): 322–23, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/VasarnapiUjsag_1908/.

[83] "Strange Home Awaits Coming of Countess Szechenyi," *The Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, (March 8, 1908): 3; "Gróf Széchenyi László és neje, Vanderbilt Gladys," *Pesti Hírlap* 80, no. 30 (April 1, 1908): 13, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiHirlap_1908_04/.

generate electricity from the nearby waterfall, many of the peasants' cottages were renovated and modernized, and advanced agricultural implements were imported to increase the harvest.[84]

The Széchényis also acquired a hunting lodge in the village of Remetevasgyár [Remetské Hámre, Slovakia] near Kassa along with its surrounding vast 4,000-hectare forest, breathtaking views of the mountains, and a nearby mountain lake. Understandably, this place held a special place in the couple's hearts, and they spent many holidays there.[85] In her letters to her sister Gertrude, Gladys said that she was thrilled by the news that Gertrude and her husband, Harry, would be staying with them. However, she cautioned them not to have high expectations, describing the house as "unattractive," though "quite a big one and perfectly well built," but located "right in the village."[86] To create a more secluded retreat, they planned to build a log cabin in the woods.[87] Gladys also encouraged Gertrude to bring her children, assuring her that there was "heaps of room for all of them" as the previous owner had many children, besides they "could be outdoors all day – swim in the lake and fish", and she was certain that "the mountain air would do them good."[88] The hunting lodge was destroyed in an accidental fire in 1931, but it was later rebuilt. In the winters that followed, László and Gladys's children spent their days skiing, enjoying the favourable weather and the snow, and were, as Gladys described, "thrilled to be here."[89]

In February 1909, Gladys and László purchased the Erdődy-Semsey Villa at 104 Andrássy Road, Budapest. The original building was constructed in the 1880s in a neo-Renaissance style by Count István Erdődy (1813–1896), a high-ranking Hungarian nobleman and Privy Councillor, and was later significantly expanded in the 1890s by its second owner, László Semsey, a wealthy landowner, who doubled its original size and added slight neo-Baroque influences. László and Gladys acquired the villa from Semsey for 450,000 crowns, a substantial sum that reflected its prestigious location in Budapest, which would amount to approximately 3 million US dollars today.[90] The purchase was a wedding gift from Gladys's mother; therefore, the property was registered solely in Gladys's name, and it became known as the Vanderbilt Palace. However, the

[84] "The Szechenyis at Home," *The New York Times*, (June 21, 1908): 3, https://www.nytimes.com/1908/06/21/archives/the-szechenyis-at-home-countess-gladys-living-the-life-of-a.html.

[85] "Riport a Vihorlátról," *8 Órai Ujság* 25, no. 62 (April 19, 1939): 8, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/8OraiUjsag_1939_04/. ; Orgona, *The American Countess,* 71, 83.

[86] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, May 29, 1911.*

[87] Interestingly, the log cabin they built is now known as Kaštielik Morské Oko and is available for rent as accommodation.

[88] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, May 29, 1911.*

[89] Orgona, *The American Countess*, 71; Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, January 6, 1937.*

[90] Gábor, Eszter, "Az Erdődy-, Semsey-, Vanderbilt Gladys-palota," in her *Az Andrássy út körül* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2010), 339, https://www.szaktars.hu/osiris/view/gabor-eszter-az-andrassy-ut-korul-2010/.

building was still inadequate for their needs, so they commissioned a renowned New York architect, Ernest Flagg, who transformed the 1,540 m² villa into a 4,000 m² mansion, making it the largest residence on Andrássy Avenue at the time. The extensive renovations took three years to complete, now in neoclassical style, and it was only in 1911 that László and Gladys were able to move into their new home.[91]

Adjusting to life in a foreign country presented significant challenges for Gladys. One of the difficulties was the great distance separating her from her home country and family. While she and her family relied on the telegraph for urgent matters, even this relatively fast method required several hours for a reply. In 1911, she expressed her frustration to her sister when an initial telegram provided little context, leaving her with limited information and a lengthy wait for further clarification: "You have no idea how awful it is to be so hopelessly far away when things are happening at home – and yesterday I had to wait 16 hours for the answer to a telegram."[92] Another obstacle she had to face was her unfamiliarity with Hungarian social circles. Even after residing in Hungary for three years, she still felt isolated, disclosing to her sister Gertude that she had "no friends."[93] With László occupied with work and their Andrássy Avenue residence still unfinished, she admitted feeling "rather discouraged."[94] She expressed a desire to "go home or at least back to Paris," a city which she was more familiar with; but she remained optimistic, adding, "hope this mood will change as they always do!"[95]

Building Bridges: Family and Social Connections

Gladys was determined to meet societal expectations and integrate into her new environment. The earlier concerns following their engagement – particularly the fear that the Hungarian aristocracy would not welcome her – were proven wrong, as she was delighted by the attention and warm reception she received from the women of the aristocracy. She was universally popular in society and enjoyed the Hungarian environment, speaking Magyar very well.[96] Not long after their arrival, she declared that she would not be discouraged by

[91] Gábor, "Az Erdődy-, Semsey-, Vanderbilt Gladys-palota," 339.
[92] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, December 18, 1911.*
[93] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, April 22, 1911.*
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] "Countess Szechenyi Happy," *The New York Times*, (May 26, 1908): 4, https://www.nytimes.com/1908/05/26/archives/countess-szechenyi-happy-delighted-with-the-attentions-shown-her-by.html; "Countess Szechenyi Liked," *The New York Times*, (May 16, 1909): 3, https://www.nytimes.com/1909/05/16/archives/countess-szechenyi-liked-expected-to-become-a-leader-in.html.

those who judged or laughed at her pronunciation: "I will speak Hungarian nonetheless, and I must learn this language as perfectly as if it were my own mother tongue."[97] Endre Nagy, a writer and "Father of the Hungarian Cabaret," met Gladys in the early 1910s when she was already a mother of two. He formed a highly favourable impression of her, later writing:

> The daughter of the great Wanderbilt [*sic*] family, who brought a dowry of fifty-million-dollars [*sic; actually, fifteen million*], was a puritanical wife and mother. She had simple manners, a charitable spirit, and proudly insisted on speaking Hungarian at all times […] I could see that, out of love for her husband, she sincerely tried to adapt to the Hungarian way of life.[98]

Gladys's relationship with László, like any other marriage, was not without difficulties. One source of tension was their differing personalities – Gladys was more introverted, whereas László was more socially active. In 1912, while they were in Paris, she noted that because it was Easter week, "most of the people were away," which she found "rather a relief."[99] However, she expressed frustration with László's tireless socializing, writing, "His one idea is to sit up all night and rush around all day, and any suggestion of going home is treated as unnecessary and absurd," and admitted feeling "completely discouraged" when he "gets among a certain set of his friends," adding, "I shall be glad to get away."[100] At a later stage of their lives when László retired from his position as Minister to London in 1935, Gladys complained that "this city is too exhausting" and expressed relief at the prospect of "a little quiet." She stated that she was "fed up with worrying" and that this change "will be an enormous relief." Even though it required a complete readjustment of their lives, she wrote, "I am awfully glad that it probably means more time at home."[101]

Although Gladys valued solitude and preferred to be unbothered, her move to Hungary necessitated an expansion of her social circle. She organized social events, yet she felt most at ease within the confines of her home. While

[97] "A Széchenyi házaspár Őrmezőn." In the original: „Nem is törődöm azzal – mondotta a grófné –, ha kiejtésemért ki találnak nevetni, azért én beszélni fogok magyarul és meg kell tanulnom ezt a nyelvet oly tökéletesen, mintha édes anyanyelvem volna." (All translations from Hungarian are mine – B.B.)

[98] Endre Nagy, "A kabaré regénye" [The Novel of Cabaret], *Új Kelet* 54, no. 7510, (March 25, 1973): 4, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/UjKelet_1973_03/. „A hatalmas Wanderbilt-család [*sic*] leánya, aki ötvenmillió dollár [*sic; valójában tizenöt*] hozományt hozott magával, puritán hitves és családanya volt. Egyszerű modorú, jótékonylelkű és büszke tüntetéssel mindvégig magyarul beszélt. (...) megállapíthattam, hogy férje iránti szerelmében valóban őszinte érdeklődéssel iparkodott a magyar élethez alkalmazkodni."

[99] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, April 22, 1912*.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, November 1, 1935*; Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, August 26, 1935*.

relatively few surviving letters explicitly detail her relationships, their content suggests a strong connection with other members of the Széchényi family. She held deep affection for her mother-in-law, Alexandra Széchényi, as evidenced by her response to Alexandra's illness in 1911 due to arterial disease. She wrote, "we all feel terribly," and reinforced her fondness by describing her as "such an angel."[102] Gladys also noted that Alexandra's four sons were in an "awful state," as they deeply adored their mother and could not bear the thought that "anything could happen to her."[103]

László and Gladys maintained a close relationship with Antal Sigray (1879–1947), a legitimist politician, hussar lieutenant, and a prominent figure of the Anti-Bolshevik Committee in Vienna, who served as the Commissioner General of West Hungary and later held a diplomatic position in Switzerland. Sigray's personal connection to the couple, but especially to László, was also evident in their wedding in 1908, where – as mentioned before – he was the one who gave László away. It was at this event that Sigray met his future wife, Harriot Holmes Daly (1887–1948). Later in 1911, when Gladys expressed her lack of friends, she wrote, "I only hope the Sigrays will come soon," suggesting that she considered them among her closest companions.[104]

Beyond their social life, they were also engaged in patronizing various sciences. In 1910. the newlyweds donated 120,000 dollars to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to promote the teaching of Hungarian language abroad. In 1912, László supported physicists Jenő Klupathy and Krisztián Berger in improving their earlier development of electrical long-distance communication via sound. Utilizing the water's capacity to conduct sound waves, Klupathy and Berger developed a technology that enabled warships to communicate and navigate torpedoes more effectively. This innovation led to the establishment of the Submarine Wireless Company in the United States. Given the Vanderbilt-Széchényi families' own technological advancements, they possessed some of the most advanced military instruments of the period, intending to sell this technology to the US Navy. However, with the outbreak of World War I, the United States declined the offer, as Hungary, part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, became the enemy of the States, and there were also concerns that the Széchényi family might sell the technology to Vienna, leading to the invention's exclusion from military operations.[105]

[102] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, November 22, 1911.*

[103] Ibid.

[104] Kenyeres, Ágnes (ed.), "Sigray Antal," in *Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon I–IV.*, 1967–1994, https://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC13280/13795.htm; "Count Sigray and Miss Daly Wedded," *The New York Times* (March 30, 1910): 11, https://www.nytimes.com/1910/03/30/archives/court-sigray-and-miss-daly-wedded-bridegroom-hungarian-statesman.html; Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, April 22, 1911.*

[105] "Gift of the Szechenyis," *The New York Times*, (April 12, 1910): 1, https://www.nytimes.

Gladys and László Széchényi had five daughters. Their eldest, Cornelia "Gilia" (1908–1958), was born at the Széchényi Castle in Őrmező exactly nine months after their wedding. Their second and fourth daughters, Alice "Ai" (1911–1974) and Sylvia "Syvie" (1918–1998), were born in Remetevasgyár, while their third daughter, Gladys "Glady" (1913–1978), was born in the United Kingdom. Their youngest child, Ferdinandine "Bubby" (1923–2016), was born in the United States during László's diplomatic service in Washington. Despite his official responsibilities, Gladys and László remained committed to raising their children with a strong connection to Hungarian language and customs. Even during their decade in Washington, they prioritized Hungarian cultural education. At the age of fifteen, the girls were sent to foreign boarding and music schools, and upon turning eighteen, they were formally introduced to society in balls. All five daughters were multilingual, with Hungarian as their native language, English acquired from their mother, and French learned from their parents, who primarily communicated with each other in French. Their education also included piano and French lessons as part of their cultural upbringing. The daughters' marriages reflected their aristocratic and multinational backgrounds. Alice was the first to marry, wedding Count Béla Hadik, a Hungarian politician, in 1931. Cornelia followed in 1933, marrying Eugene Bowie Roberts, an American businessman. In 1935, Gladys became the wife of Christopher Finch-Hatton, the 16th Earl of Winchilsea. The youngest two daughters married in 1946: Sylvia wed Count Antal Szapáry, recognized for his efforts in aiding Polish refugees during World War II, while Ferdinandine married Austrian Count Alexander von und zu Eltz.[106] Despite initial challenges, Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi was able to successfully integrate into Hungarian society, create her own social circle, and even contribute to social causes.

Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi's Contributions to Child Welfare, Wartime Philanthropy, and Legacy

"Mother Gladys": The Countess's Devotion to Child Welfare

Another defining aspect of Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi's legacy was her remarkable generosity in philanthropy and charitable activities. Her philanthropic efforts can be divided into two main categories: those related to the

com/1910/04/12/archives/gift-of-the-szechenyis-120000-to-promote-the-study-of-hungarian.html; Orgona, *The American Countess*, 73–74.

[106] "Daughter to Szechenyis," *The New York Times*, (October 28, 1908): 1, https://www.nytimes.com/1908/10/28/archives/daughter-to-szechenyis-former-miss-gladys-vanderbilt-becomes-a.html; Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, November 15, 1935*; Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, September 27, 1934*; Orgona, *The American Countess*, 83–84.

World Wars and their associated relief efforts, and those focused on children and youth support. This subchapter examines the latter, which encompasses a range of initiatives that sometimes overlap with war relief efforts; however, I have sought to distinguish the two for greater clarity. A journal of Hungarians in the USA, *Amerikai Magyar Népszava*, accurately summarized the extent of her charitable work:

> Even if Count László Széchenyi [*sic*] had done nothing else for his homeland but win Gladys Vanderbilt's heart for the Hungarian cause, he would still have accomplished a great deal, because Gladys Vanderbilt was able to achieve much, and the fruits of her efforts were enjoyed by Hungarian families in need.[107]

Among many contributions, Gladys and László actively supported the establishment of educational and childcare facilities in Őrmező and Remetevasgyár. Their first major donation, made in honour of their wedding, was the establishment of a 25,000-crown foundation, which funded the construction of a kindergarten in Őrmező. In the following years, Gladys contributed 3,500 crowns to the construction of a Roman Catholic school in Remetevasgyár and made a substantial 56,000-crown donation for the development of another kindergarten. Additionally, she provided gifts valued at 500 crowns, directly to the children.[108]

The couple made numerous charitable contributions, primarily through the National Child Protection League (Országos Gyermekvédő Liga), a non-profit organization founded in 1906, which they consistently supported. For some time László was the president of the league and later both László and Gladys Széchényi were given the title of honorary president emeritus in recognition of their dedication. During World War I, they repurposed their residence on Andrássy Avenue to establish an orphanage for children who had lost their fathers in the war. The facility accommodated 300 orphans under the age of ten, providing daily schooling for those over six – under the countess's supervision – while younger children received kindergarten instruction from an educator. The palace garden was often filled with the sounds of children at play, and whenever Gladys appeared, they would gather around and call her

[107] "Széchényi László," *Amerikai Magyar Népszava* 39, no. 188 (July 7, 1938): 4, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AmerikaiMagyarNepszava_1938_07/, „Ha Széchenyi László gróf semmi egyebet nem tett volna hazájáért, minthogy megnyerte a magyar ügynek Gladys Vanderbilt szivét, akkor is sokat tett volna, mert Gladys Vanderbilt sokat tudott elérni s amit elért, annak gyümölcseit ínséges magyar családok élvezték."

[108] "A Széchenyi házaspár Őrmezőn"; "Iskolaszentelés," *Ung* 48, no. 61, (October 2, 1910): 4, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/Ung_1910_07-12/; "Az őrmezői óvoda ünnepe" [The Celebration of the Kindergarten in Őrmező], *Felvidéki Újság* 6, no. 256, (November 9, 1911): 2, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/FelvidekiUjsagKassa1907_1911-4/.

"Mother Gladys."[109] She also supported the children in Őrmező after the local school building became unusable due to the war. To ensure they could continue their education, the Countess fully equipped two rooms in their mansion for use as classrooms and personally covered the costs of hiring a substitute teacher to replace one who had been drafted into the army.[110]

Gladys Széchényi made significant contributions to various initiatives through her donations, most notably giving 10,000 crowns to support the establishment of works by the National Child Protection League.[111] The 1922 annual general meeting of the National Child Protection League, which reviewed the previous year's activities, helps put the Countess's donations into perspective. In 1921 alone, Gladys personally contributed aid worth more than 40 million crowns, compared to the total contributions from all other Hungarian individuals, which amounted to "just" 6 million crowns.[112] For the 1932 Children's Day fundraising, she donated 5,000 Swiss francs, equivalent to approximately 5,000 US dollars at today's exchange rate.[113]

Several facilities were established through the Countess's donations, including the Daycare Centre on Izabella Street in Budapest. This centre, which provided housing and care for up to 100 children at a time, was made possible by Gladys's continuous financial support. Every year, it hosted a Christmas aid celebration, during which 100 children from unemployed families received clothing, underwear, and shoes – all funded by the Countess. She supported both the event and the centre for at least twenty consecutive years.[114]

When the National Child Protection League faced severe financial difficulties in the 1930s due to the war – the withdrawal of state support, and a decline in foreign donations – Gladys Széchényi remained their sole patron. The Countess continued to support the organization with great dedication and generosity, contributing 33,000 *pengő* annually, an amount equivalent to

[109] Orgona, *The American Countess,* 77, "Gladys Vanderbilt Mothers 300 Orphans," *The New York Times*, (November 25, 1915): 1, https://www.nytimes.com/1915/11/25/archives/gladys-vanderbilt-mothers-300-orphans-has-turned-szechenyi-palace.html; "Vanderbilt Gladys a háború árváiért," [Vanderbilt Gladys for War Orphans], *Pesti Napló* 66, no. 315, (November 11, 1915): 11, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiNaplo_1915_11/.

[110] "Vanderbilt Gladys az őrmezői iskoláért" [Vanderbilt Gladys for the School in Őrmező], *Pesti Napló* 66, no. 231 (August 20, 1915): 14, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiNaplo_1915_08/.

[111] "Beszámolás a gyermekmentésről" [Report on Child Relief Efforts], *Somogyi Hírlap* 9, no. 120, (May 30, 1912): 5, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/SomogyiHirlap1904_1912_05/.

[112] "Negyvenmilliós adomány és tizenkétezer magyar gyermek külföldi nyaralása" [A Forty-Million Donation and the Foreign Holiday of Twelve Thousand Hungarian Children], *Az Est* 13, no. 13, (January 17, 1922): 6, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AzEst_1922_01/.

[113] "A Gyermeknap" [Children's Day], *Pesti Hírlap* 54, no. 101, (May 5, 1932): 8, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiHirlap_1932_05/.

[114] "60,000 gyermek, akin segítettek" [60,000 Children Helped], *Pesti Hírlap* 55, no. 56, (March 9, 1933): 4, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiHirlap_1933_03/; "Karácsonyfaünnepségek" [Christmas Celebrations], *Nemzeti Ujság* 16, no. 290, (December 23, 1934): 8, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/NemzetiUjsag_1934_12/.

between $120,000 and $150,000 US in today's value. Additionally, Gladys played a crucial role in raising awareness and securing the necessary funds for the US President Herbert Hoover's humanitarian program, which provided a daily meal for 8,000 impoverished children in Budapest. In recognition of her selfless commitment to child welfare, the National Child Protection League honoured Gladys Széchényi in 1934.[115]

Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi's transition to life in Hungary was not without challenges, yet she adapted and embraced her new environment. She acquired estates both in the countryside and in the capital, expanded her social circle, became fluent in Hungarian, and raised her children in the Hungarian spirit. Her philanthropic work, particularly her collaboration with the National Child Protection League, demonstrated her deep sense of social responsibility and commitment to those in need.

Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi's Wartime Contributions and Post-War Philanthropy (1914–1920)

As World War I broke out in Europe, Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi faced the complexities of wartime Hungary, where she navigated shortages, uncertainty, and the rising needs of a society in crisis. This subchapter examines how the war reshaped her daily life, testing her resilience and commitment to philanthropy. Through her experiences, Gladys's determination to support those in need became even more evident, solidifying her role as a philanthropist. This subchapter also explores her life after the war, in Washington and London during László Széchényi's ministership, and the impact of their work and legacy.

Europe's so-called *Belle Époque* – a period often romanticized as an era of peace and prosperity – ended abruptly when the Great War broke out on July 28, 1914, following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary. The conflict divided Europe between the Central Powers – Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria – and the Triple Entente – United Kingdom, Russia, France, later joined by the United States, Italy, and Japan. Many believed the war would be a swift victory for either side, but its four years' duration drastically altered the daily life, affecting especially those who lived near the frontlines. Gladys Vanderbilt and László Széchényi were no

[115] "1.200.000 pengő adóssága van a Gyermekvédő Ligának" [Child Protection League Faces a Debt of 1,200,000 Pengő], *Pesti Napló* 81, no. 265, (November 21, 1930): 5, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiNaplo_1930_11/; "Az amerikai magyar gyermekakció" [The Hungarian-American Child Relief Campaign], *Pesti Hírlap* 42, no. 58, (March 7, 1920): 8, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiHirlap_1920_03/; "Gróf Széchenyi Lászlóné kitüntetése" [Award for Countess Széchenyi Lászlóné], *Amerikai Magyar Népszava* 35, no. 166 (June 15, 1934): 1, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AmerikaiMagyarNepszava_1934_06/.

exceptions: László, who was in America when the war broke out, swiftly returned to Hungary, enlisted, and served as Aide-de-Camp to the Commander of the First Austro-Hungarian Army, while Gladys Vanderbilt's wartime activities can be reconstructed through her surviving letters to her sister Gertrude and contemporary newspaper reports.[116]

In August 1914, just a month after the war broke out, Gladys and László offered their Andrássy Avenue house to the Hungarian army. The 600 reservists housed there were given comfortable beds and plenty of food, and Gladys, who had now become "fully Hungarian," personally checked several times a day to make sure there were no shortages of supplies.[117] By October, the impact of the war was already evident, as Gladys wrote to her sister Gertrude that "hardly anyone between 19 and 42 is left," explaining that "all the men who have not been soldiers were called in" for military service.[118] Shortly thereafter, the Andrássy Avenue palace was converted into a hospital and made available to the Hungarian Red Cross. Gladys herself served as a volunteer both there and at the Lendvay Street hospital, actively tending to the ill and injured and fulfilling all the responsibilities of a voluntary nurse.[119] During her service at the Lendvay Street hospital, she contracted chickenpox; luckily, the illness was mild, and after a brief two-week hiatus, she was able to resume her self-sacrificing work.[120] According to *The New York Times*, one woman described Gladys as "the most ambitious and industrious of them all," noting that she had "acquired a thorough knowledge of tending the sick and wounded, as well as first aid and wound dressing."[121] The same account further emphasized her dedication, stating, "She has an open heart and an open hand for all [...] and never was there a more admired nurse doing duty in the cause of suffering humanity than Countess Szechenyi [*sic*]."[122]

In one of her letters, Gladys wrote that "fewer wounded have been arriving lately," seeing this as a hopeful sign with a "good effect" on the public.[123] However,

[116] Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend,* 359; "Örökösnők és a háború," [Heiresses and War], *Előre* 13, no.1820 (December 12, 1917): 1, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/EloreUSA_1917_12/.

[117] "Tartalékosok a Széchenyi-palotában" [Reserves in the Széchenyi Palace], *Pesti Hírlap* 36, no. 181, (Augusztus 1, 1914): 4–5, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiHirlap_1914_08/, "A teljesen magyarrá lett grófné" [The Countess Who Became Truly Hungarian].

[118] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, October 24, 1914.*

[119] Orgona, *The American Countess,* 74; "Countess Szechenyi May Be War Nurse," *The New York Times*, (August 5, 1914): 13, https://www.nytimes.com/1914/08/05/archives/countess-szechenyi-may-be-war-nurse-former-gladys-vanderbilt-said.html.

[120] "Vanderbilt Gladys meggyógyult" [Vanderbilt Gladys has Recovered], *Pesti Napló* 66, no. 62 (March 3, 1915): 9, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiNaplo_1915_03/.

[121] "American Countess Wins Austrian Love," *The New York Times*, (April 15, 1915): 4, https://www.nytimes.com/1915/04/15/archives/american-countess-wins-austrian-love-recovered-from-illness.html.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, October 24, 1914.*

she worried that this may only be because "they are being held in quarantine" due to a cholera outbreak, a severe and often fatal disease transmitted through contaminated food or water.[124] Gladys became acquainted with Dr. MacDonald, an American doctor with a "lot of experience with cholera" and other infectious diseases, who was in charge of the American Red Cross Hospital in Budapest, Hungary.[125] He advised her to get the typhoid vaccine for herself and at least her two eldest daughters, as it "renders one practically immune to cholera too."[126] Though Gladys was hesitant about "having the kids done," she ultimately decided to get the vaccine for them too as "it takes one worry off one's mind," adding that the outbreak "seems to have been handled and diminishing."[127]

Nevertheless, the situation remained serious, with 600 new cases of cholera reported between late July and early August 1915, many of which were civilians, resulting in 292 deaths. Count József Mailáth, who oversaw the patient monitoring station in Sátoraljaújhely (Zemplén County), compiled detailed records from these stations between late 1914 and the spring of 1916. According to his data, 715,000 sick and wounded soldiers passed through these stations, including 67,000 suffering from illness rather than injury. Of these, 34,000 had typhoid fever, 25,000 had dysentery, and "only" 4,000 were diagnosed with cholera. However, while typhoid fever had a mortality rate of around ten percent, cholera remained the deadliest, with a fifty percent fatality rate.[128] Later, Gladys asked her sister to send her a supply of typhoid serum from the United States for the next round of vaccinations, as "over here they don't understand it properly" – though vaccination was available in Hungary – she noted that it was not as advantageous, as "it makes people desperately ill."[129] Fortunately in 1916, after compulsory vaccination against cholera was introduced in the army, the number of new cases decreased significantly.[130]

Because of the war, prices in Hungary rose rapidly. Gladys noted the rising cost of essential goods, and as "everything has stopped working", she could not imagine "what will happen to the unemployed" predicting that "poverty is going to do something frightful before long."[131] While she admitted that, for the time being, "one does not feel the lack of anything," as the price of "personal treats" had already risen by 40-50%, while the price of bread had nearly doubled; many

[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Molnár, Zoltán, "A járványos megbetegedések elleni harc Magyarországon a Nagy Háború időszakában, 1914–1918" [Fight Against Infectious Diseases in Hungary During the Great War, 1914–1918], *Hadtudományi Szemle* 14 (2021): 128, 131, https://doi.org/10.32563/hsz.2021.1.9.
[129] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, July 8, 1916*.
[130] Molnár, "A járványos megbetegedések elleni harc," 128.
[131] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, October 24, 1914*.

necessities had "gone up terribly so that one wonders how people who aren't very well off manage at all – not to speak of the poor."[132] Despite these rising costs, Gladys found it "extraordinary" that "the public still has money to spend on theatres, movies & cafés," a reaction perhaps influenced by her Puritan upbringing, which valued modesty and a sense of moral responsibility over indulgence.[133] Yet, while she recognized the worsening situation, she did not remain a passive observer and consistently provided financial support. She donated 20,000 crowns in the years 1914, 1916, and 1917 to the Hungarian Red Cross, to aid those wounded in the war.[134] In 1915, she also contributed 1,000 crowns to Gábor Sztáray, the archbishop in Ung county, for the relief of those affected by the war.[135] In recognition of her nursing services, Archduke Franz Salvator of Austria awarded her the Red Cross Decorative Badge Class II in 1916.[136] The following year, she received the First Class Order of Elizabeth for her exceptional contributions to philanthropy and public health during the war.[137]

Beyond the war, their daily lives had additional challenges. Communicating with Gertrude was difficult due to wartime restrictions, as letters could not be sent directly from the United States and had to be routed through Italy or Switzerland.[138] Many of their letters experienced significant delays – sometimes for months – and in some cases, were returned to the sender. Gladys expressed her frustration over the lack of news, writing that it was "awful when so much is going on," and complained about the censorship, adding, "goodness knows no correspondence is unimportant and unpolitical enough to be let through."[139]

Interestingly, Gladys observed that for her sister Gertrude, who witnessed "all this slaughter" from a distance, the war might feel even more distressing than it did for herself, as Gertrude could "judge the awful wrongness of it" without the influence of her immediate surroundings.[140] In contrast, Gladys

[132] Ibid.; Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, September 22, 1915*.

[133] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, September 22, 1915*.

[134] "Jótékonysági akciók" [Charity campaigns], *Pesti Napló* 65, no. 184 (August 4, 1914): 6, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiNaplo_1914_08/; "A Vörös Kereszt gyűjtésének eredménye," [Results of the Red Cross Fundraiser], *Budapesti Hírlap* 36, no. 182 (July 2, 1914): 13, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/BudapestiHirlap_1916_07-08/; "A Vörös Keresztből" [From the Red Cross], *Budapest Hírlap* 37, no. 263 (October 24, 1917): 10, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/BudapestiHirlap_1917_10-12/. The 1917 *Budapesti Hírlap* article indicates that this was her fifth donation for such a purpose, suggesting earlier, undocumented donations.

[135] "Nemeslelkű adományozó" [Generous Donor], *Ung* 53, no. 47 (November 21, 1915): 2, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/Ung_1915_07-12/.

[136] Orgona, *The American Countess,* 75–76; "Vöröskeresztes kitüntetés" [Red Cross Award], *Budapesti Hírlap* 36, no. 65 (March 5, 1916): 12, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/BudapestiHirlap_1916_03-04/.

[137] "Erzsébet-rend" [Order of Elizabeth], *Pesti Hírlap* 39, no. 158 (June 23, 1917): 10, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiHirlap_1917_06/.

[138] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, October 24, 1914*.

[139] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, July 8, 1916*.

[140] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, October 24, 1914*.

found herself "surrounded by the extraordinary patriotism" of Hungarian society, which restricted her ability to express her true opinion on the war. She revealed that she could only speak openly among her closest friends, and that if she dared to express a wish for peace or make any other "natural and timid statement," she was immediately made to feel as though she had said "something perfectly abominable" so she tried to change the subject – quite a difficult task in wartime Hungary.[141] Despite her efforts to avoid discussions about the war, she found it nearly impossible, even among friends, as the topic inevitably resurfaced. Following the United States' decision to sell ammunition and provide loans to the Allies, anti-American sentiment intensified in Hungary, and Gladys found herself in "awkward situations" during conversations, noting that "many, including L. [László], simply cannot see our point of view," though she acknowledged that there were some exceptions.[142]

In the summer of 1916, when the Countess resided in Remetevasgyár, Gladys wrote that one could "hear the firing quite clearly now" from Kolomea [Kolomyia, Ukraine].[143] Despite the town being over 200 kilometres away, Gladys described a distinct "sort of continual rumble with now and then a more accentuated beat," which became more perceptible as one's ears adjusted to the sound, illustrating how the war remained an audible and tangible presence in their daily lives despite the physical distance.[144] To cope with the war's depressing presence, Gladys wrote, "I shall try to settle down to some routine," and besides "trying to help," she wanted to continue with her other interests to distract herself from the impossible reality of the war.[145] Later, she listed everything she was doing – "keeping the schools going, teaching the children" – but ultimately admitted that these distractions "don't seem to help much."[146] In 1919, the hunting lodge in Remetevasgyár was attacked by the Czechs, but the estate's forestry staff managed to repel them with rifle fire. Despite this, Gladys had to flee with her children.[147]

Shortly after the peace treaty ending the First World War was signed, Gladys left Hungary with her four daughters to visit her relatives in the United States.[148] After her arrival, she was initially reluctant to speak about her experiences during the war, but in December 1919, she gave an extensive interview,

[141] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, October 24, 1914.*
[142] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, September 22, 1915*.
[143] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, July 8, 1916*.
[144] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, July 8, 1916.*
[145] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, October 24, 1914*.
[146] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, July 8, 1916*.
[147] "A csehek" [The Czechs], *Budapesti Hírlap* 19, no. 39 (January 22, 1919): 3, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/BudapestiHirlap_1919_01/.
[148] "Countess Szechenyi Here," *The New York Times*, (September 18, 1919): 4, https://www.nytimes.com/1919/09/18/archives/countess-szechenyi-here-arrives-with-four-children-after-five-years.html.

describing the hardships she had witnessed in Hungary. She recounted how even in the middle of winter, there was no coal, leaving people unable to heat their homes. Gladys herself went from store to store trying to buy warm clothes for children, only to be told repeatedly that there were none. By the end of the day, she had managed to collect just twenty pairs of stockings and a dozen woollen petticoats – but she needed hundreds. The food situation was just as dire, as the pre-war abundance had been replaced with rationing, forcing people to rely on food cards and stand in line for hours just to get bread, potatoes, or coal. Gladys urged Americans to recognize that the horrors of war did not end at the front lines, asking:

> How many of you have realized or even tried to understand the petty miseries of these last five years – petty if taken one by one, but when accumulating and increasing from day to day, week to week, month to month, and year to year, no longer petty, but tremendous, heavy, all-pervading, and making life a long sacrifice?[149]

She was shocked by the stark contrast between the starvation in Hungary and the abundance in America, writing that people in the US "eat more than they ever need, or ever want."[150] She encouraged generosity and charity for those who were "actually hungry," emphasizing that even small contributions could make a real difference, "a dollar here is so little, and there it means food for twenty days."[151]

Gladys's fundraising efforts proved to be immensely successful. In 1920, with the help of the American Relief Committee, the "Szeretethajó" ("Ship of Love") was sent to Hungary – a massive shipment of aid, valued at $2 million, or approximately 700 million Hungarian crowns. The 16,261 packages, consisting of clothing and food, weighed more than 14,000 tons and were to be distributed among 100,000 individually addressed Hungarian families in need. Countess Széchényi personally covered all associated costs, including transportation and insurance costs, which amounted to $125,000, while her own donation to the suffering Hungarian children was nearly $140,000, equating to about 90 million Hungarian crowns.[152] Her generosity was widely admired,

[149] "Countess Szechenyi's Story," *The New York Times*, (December 7, 1919): 1, 8, https://www.nytimes.com/1919/12/07/archives/countess-szechenyis-story-former-gladys-vanderbilt-describes.html.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid.

[152] "Gróf Széchényi Lászlóné újabb szeretetadománya" [Another Charitable Donation from Countess Széchényi Lászlóné], *8 Órai Ujság* 6, no. 248. (October 20, 1920): 3, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/8OraiUjsag_1920_10/; "A szeretethajó útja Magyarország felé" [Ship of Love's Journey to Hungary], *Ruszinszkói Magyar Hírlap* 1, no. 103, (December 11, 1920): 3, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/RuszinszkoiKarpatiMagyarHirlap_1920/; "A dollárkirálynő s az éhező magyarok" [The Dollar Queen and the Starving Hungarians], *Vásárhelyi Reggeli*

with one paper stating, "neither the Hungarians in America nor those in Hungary will ever be able to repay her kindness."[153]

Diplomacy, War, and Philanthropy: The Later Years of Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi

After the Great War, Gladys and László spent the majority of their time abroad, largely due to László's diplomatic career. In 1919, he transitioned from serving as a secretary in Cairo, Egypt to being appointed minister there. Later, in December 1921, Miklós Horthy appointed him Minister Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United States, beginning his work in January of the following year. His suitability for this role was reinforced by his fluency in English and the prominent social standing of his wife, Gladys, within Washington's social circles. Despite these advantages, László faced significant challenges, including the issue of seized Hungarian property and the need to counter the wave of anti-Hungarian propaganda that emerged in the aftermath of the First World War.[154]

Even during this period, the family regularly spent their summers in Hungary. On one such visit in 1927, László was injured in an automobile accident. After an evening gathering at the Park Club, he offered to drive several aristocratic guests home. As they were driving, the strong headlights of an oncoming vehicle momentarily blinded the chauffeur, who accidentally steered the car into a ditch. While the other passengers sustained only minor injuries, all were transported to the Fasor Sanatorium. Gladys remained by László's side throughout the day. A shard of glass from a broken window had severely injured László's eye, requiring its removal. Despite the severity of the situation, László remained calm and repeatedly stated "it could have been worse."[155]

Ujság 16, no. 309. (October 10, 1920): 1, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/VasarhelyiReggeliUjsag_1920_10/.

[153] „Az ő jóságát meghálálni sem amerikai, sem a magyarországi magyarság nem lesz képes soha," "A szeretethajó útja Magyarország felé."

[154] Balogh, János Mátyás, "Az amerikai–magyar diplomáciai kapcsolatok felvétele" [Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Hungary], *Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár*, May 14, 2012, https://mnl.gov.hu/a_het_dokumentuma/az_amerikaimagyar_diplomaciai_kapcsolatok_felvetele.html; Orgona, *The American Countess,* 78; "Gróf Széchényi László volt washingtoni magyar követ 59 éves korában meghalt" [Count László Széchényi, former Hungarian ambassador to Washington, died at the age of 59], *Amerikai Magyar Népszava* 39, no.188 (July 7, 1938): 3, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AmerikaiMagyarNepszava_1938_07/.

[155] Orgona, *The American Countess,* 80–83; In Hungarian: „lehetett volna ez még rosszabb is", see the *Pesti Hírlap* article "Gróf Széchenyi László washingtoni követünk autószerencsétlenség következtében bal szemét vesztette," [Count László Széchenyi, our ambassador to Washington, lost his left eye in a car accident], *Pest Hírlap* 49, no. 179 (August 9, 1927): 3, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/PestiHirlap_1927_08/?pg=194&layout=s&query=washingtoni

László Széchényi was Hungary's first Minister to the United States and served until 1933. At their farewell event, István Csernitzky, the parish priest of Bridgeport, described him as "never one of those diplomats who sought to work through loud publicity, but rather, he carried out his work quietly, with even greater intensity and effectiveness."[156] In his grateful response, László remarked: "I have never been a man of banquets or loud fanfare, but I felt that even without these, I could fulfill the duties that awaited me."[157] Even newspapers took notice of Gladys's flawless command of Hungarian, remarking that she "conversed in clear, resonant Hungarian [...] She had kind words for everyone, winning over all with her charm, gracious openness, and simplicity."[158]

In 1935, László Széchényi was forced to retire due to health issues, bringing his diplomatic career to an early conclusion. Following a year-long illness, he passed away in July 1938 at the Svábhegy Sanatorium and was laid to rest in the Nagycenk Cemetery. He was remembered as a diplomat who "rebuilt and strengthened Hungarian–American friendship with his heart and soul," remaining both "a loyal Hungarian and a devoted friend of America."[159]

By the summer of 1939, now a widow, Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi sensed the growing tensions that would soon lead to the outbreak of World War II. She described the political situation as "unsatisfactory with dictatorial tendencies resented by all" and repeatedly observed that "people here don't seem in the least worried."[160] Even her daughters dismissed her concerns, believing their mother was "crazy to worry," as "no one else seems to."[161] That summer, she received a troubling letter from her sister Gertrude, who had been informed that officials were "sure that a crisis was expected in the immediate future and perhaps over the weekend."[162] Later, János Pelényi, Hungary's Minister to the

[156] „Széchenyi gróf – mondotta – sohasem tartozott azok közé a diplomaták közé, akik hangos reklámmal akarnak dolgozni, de csendben annál intenzívebb és hatásosabb munkát fejtett ki." In: „Egyházi és társadalmi vezetők bucsuztatták el Gróf Széchényit," [Church and Community Leaders Bid Farewell to Count Széchenyi], *Amerikai Magyar Népszava* 34, no. 88 (March 29, 1933): 1, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AmerikaiMagyarNepszava_1933_03/.

[157] „Soha sem voltam sem bankettek, sem hangos hűhók embere, de úgy éreztem, hogy ezek nélkül is meg tudok felelni azoknak a feladatoknak, amelyek reám vártak." In: "Egyházi és társadalmi vezetők bucsuztatták el Gróf Széchényit".

[158] „Tiszta, csengő, magyar beszéddel társalgott. […] Mindenkihez voltak szíves szavai, mindenkit meghódított kedvességével, bájos közvetlenségével és egyszerűségével." In: "Ma este hagyja el Amerikát Gróf Széchényi László és felesége" [Count László Széchényi and his Wife are Leaving America Tonight], *Amerikai Magyar Népszava* 34, no. 89 (March 30, 1933): 1, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AmerikaiMagyarNepszava_1933_03/.

[159] „A magyar–amerikai barátság újjáépítésének megerősítésének ügyét szívvel és lélekkel szolgálta Széchenyi László gróf, aki élete végéig jó magyar maradt s lelkes barátja Amerikának." In: „Gróf Széchényi László volt washingtoni magyar követ 59 éves korában meghalt," 1, 3.

[160] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, April 24, 1935*; Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, June 23, 1939*.

[161] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, June 23, 1939*.

[162] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, July 3, 1939*.

United States at the time, also advised them to leave Hungary; Gladys acknowledged, "I dare say he is right," yet she struggled with the decision, reluctant to depart without first visiting Remetevasgyár.[163] Although she admitted that "it is pretty sure that the summer will be disturbed and unsatisfactory" and that it would be in their best interest to leave Hungary, she ultimately decided to retreat to Remetevasgyár, hoping to find some peace and quiet and to "forget about the shadows around."[164] In early August, after spending several weeks there, she expressed a desire to stay but ultimately concluded that remaining was "too risky."[165] Just weeks before the outbreak of World War II, Gladys permanently returned to the United States with her two unmarried daughters, Sylvia and Ferdinandine.[166]

In New York City Gladys resided at 1 East Sixty-Seventh Street while also establishing a residence in Washington D.C. Following her mother's death in 1934, she inherited The Breakers in Newport, which she maintained as her summer residence for many years. In 1948, she opened the mansion to the public and leased it to the Preservation Society of Newport County for a nominal fee of one dollar per year.[167]

During World War II, Gladys actively volunteered with the American Red Cross in Newport. In the 1940s, she continued to provide aid for Hungary, assisting both individuals and relief organizations. In 1940, the Countess donated $5,000 for the nationwide collection for the reorganization of the Hungarian Red Cross.[168] For the "Amerikai Magyar Segélyakció" [American Hungarian Relief Program], Gladys donated $10,000 to alleviate the suffering in war-torn Hungary, making it the largest individual contribution to that fundraiser and establishing her as the movement's greatest benefactor.[169] More

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid.; Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, July 11, 1939.*

[165] Vanderbilt Széchényi, *Letter to Whitney, August 9, 1939.*

[166] Orgona, *The American Countess*, 85.

[167] Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend,* 360; Preservation Society of Newport County. "History of The Breakers," *Newport Mansions*; In 1972, the Preservation Society officially acquired the property from her heirs, and in 1994, The Breakers was designated a National Historic Landmark, https://www.newportmansions.org/mansions-and-gardens/the-breakers/history/.

[168] Kertész, Tünde Fruzsina, "Az arisztokrácia szerepe az amerikai magyar emigráció életében a 20. században Kállay Miklós kapcsolati hálóján keresztül" [The role of the aristocracy in the life of Hungarian emigrants in the United States in the 20th century through the network of Miklós Kállay], in Klára Papp, Levente Püski, and Ádám Novák (eds.), *A magyar arisztokrácia társadalmi helyzete és szerepe a két világháború között* [The Social Status and Role of the Hungarian Aristocracy between the Two World Wars], (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Történelmi Intézet), 293–295, https://tortenelem.unideb.hu/sites/default/files/upload_documents/26_a_magyar_arisztokracia.pdf

[169] Orgona, *The American Countess,* 85; "10,000 dollárt adományozott Széchenyi gróf özvegye a segélyakciónak" [Widow of Count Széchenyi Donated $10,000 to the Relief Effort], *Délamerikai Magyarság* 18, no. 2477 (March 21, 1946): 3, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/DelamerikaiMagyarsag_1946_01-03/; American Hungarian Federation, "Hungarian Relief Efforts of the American Hungarian Federation during and after World War II," *American Hungarian*

than a decade later – despite residing in the United States – amid another period of Hungarian national crisis, Gladys once again demonstrated her enduring commitment to Hungary. In late October 1956, following the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution, First Aid for Hungary Inc. was established as a privately initiated organization dedicated to collecting medicine and supporting refugees after their departure from Hungary. The organization's president was former US President Herbert Hoover, with Gladys Vanderbilt among its notable members.[170]

On January 29, 1965, Gladys Moore Vanderbilt Széchényi passed away from a heart attack at the age of 78. *The New York Times* described her as a "shy, quiet person of true democratic habits" and noted that, unlike many figures of Newport society, "no scandal ever touched her life."[171] The Hungarian-American newspaper *Amerikai Magyar Világ* ranked her nineteenth among the "greatest Hungarian Americans of the past 200 years," referring to her as "the American woman who became a great Hungarian lady, the generous and selfless benefactor of those suffering due to the war."[172]

Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi's contributions to Hungary went far beyond what was expected of an American heiress in Hungary. Through her philanthropic efforts, particularly in child welfare and wartime relief, she acted as an active benefactor to the Hungarian people. Her work was not merely a reflection of social duty but a testament to her personal dedication to the country she made her home. Despite this, her legacy has largely faded from public memory, making it even more important to recognize and document her impact.

While this study has aimed to reconstruct her role in Hungary through available correspondence and press coverage, there remains much to explore. One particularly promising direction would be to examine her life during László Széchényi's diplomatic career in Washington and London. Researching archives in the United States and Britain could provide new insights into her involvement in diplomatic and charitable circles abroad. Another worthwhile path would be a deeper investigation into her transatlantic social connections, which could offer a more comprehensive understanding of her influence.

Federation, https://americanhungarianfederation.org/news_AHFHistory_WWIIRelief.htm (accessed 1 April 2025).

[170] "Első segítség Magyarországnak" [First Aid for Hungary], *Délamerikai Magyarság* 28, no. 3819 (December 14, 1956): 8, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/DelamerikaiMagyarsag_1956/.

[171] "Countess Laszlo Szechenyi, 78, Former Gladys Vanderbilt, Dies," *The New York Times* (January 29, 1965): 27, https://www.nytimes.com/1965/01/30/archives/countess-laszlo-zechenyi-78-former-gladys-vanderbilt-dies-widow-of.html.

[172] In Hungarian: „magyar nagyasszonnyá lett amerikai nő, a háború okozta magyar nyomorúság bőkezű, önzetlen segítője". In: „200 év legnagyobb amerikai magyarjai," *Amerikai Magyar Világ* 13, no. 46 (November 14, 1976): 11, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AmerikaiMagyarVilag_1976_11/; "200 év legnagyobb amerikai magyarjai," *Amerikai Magyar Világ* 13, no. 47 (November 21, 1976): 6, https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/AmerikaiMagyarVilag_1976_11/.

Mapping out her network – both within aristocratic circles and beyond – could help reconstruct the broader social environment in which she operated and reveal the full extent of her personal and philanthropic relationships. As more sources emerge and overlooked lives are revisited, Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi's story reminds us how influential figures can quietly shape the world around them – not through grand gestures alone, but through steady, continuous acts of generosity.

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REZÜMÉK

Tanulmányok a brit–magyar kapcsolatok történetéből

Diglics Ákos: Túl a diplomácián: Pulszky Ferenc londoni „küldetése" (1849–1851)

A tanulmány Pulszky Ferenc „önjelölt" londoni diplomáciai küldetését vizsgálja, 1849-től 1851-ig, Kossuth Lajos angliai megérkezéséig. Pulszky a magyar politikai és kulturális élet kiemelkedő alakja volt, aki aktívan részt vett a Reformkor után kialakuló függetlenségi törekvésekben. A tanulmány bevezeti Pulszky korai karrierjét és karakterét, amelyek együttesen tették lehetővé angliai sikereit. Nem túlzás azt állítani, hogy bár Pulszky nem rendelkezett hivatalos megbízással, komoly eredményeket ért el kapcsolatai és fáradhatatlan munkája révén. A tanulmány bemutatja a diplomatának és lelkes segítőinek munkásságát Angliában: a londoni magyar propaganda működését. A társaság elsődleges célja a magyar ügy népszerűsítése volt, illetve a fennálló, egyoldalú és elfogult osztrák sajtó ellensúlyozása. A megvizsgált források segítségével a tanulmány igyekszik pontos és objektív képet adni Pulszkyról és londoni tevékenységéről.

Gulyás Adrienn: A 19. századi tábori ápolás kérdése Kossuth Zsuzsanna és Florence Nightingale ápolásszervezői tevékenységének tükrében

A tanulmány célja a két nem mindennapi nő életútjának, legmeghatározóbb időszakainak bemutatása, úttörő tevékenységük összehasonlítása. Míg Florence Nightingale-t a krími háborúban – a Törökországi Angol Katonai (köz)kórházak Ápolónői Intézetének Főfelügyelőjeként – nyújtott ápolásszervezői tevékenysége, addig Kossuth Zsuzsannát a magyar szabadságharc során – az Összes Tábori Kórházak Főápolónőjeként – végzett szolgálatai tették döntő jelentőségűvé a modern sebesültápolás megteremtésében. Florence Nightingale és a nála csupán három évvel idősebb Kossuth Zsuzsanna egyazon korban éltek,

és hasonló elhivatottsággal végezték munkájukat, megítélésük, elismertségük között szakadék tátong: míg előbbit a szigetországban, sőt azon túl is mint a nemzetközi tábori ápolás úttörőjét és szaktekintélyét ünneplik, másikuk tevékenysége ezzel szemben mind a mai napig szinte ismeretlen, Magyarországon és külföldön egyaránt. Vajon mi húzódik meg a „A lámpás hölgy" kultusza mögött, és mennyiben hasonlítható össze a jómódú Florence, illetve a hányattatott sorsú legkisebb Kossuth lány, Zsuzsanna főápolónői pályája?

Tóth Renáta: Egy magyarbarát angol úr: Arthur J. Patterson és fő műve *(The Magyars)* a magyar sajtóban (1862–1870)

Az 1848-1849-es forradalom és szabadságharc, majd az 1867-es kiegyezés fontos mérföldkő volt a 19. századi magyar történelemben. Ezeket az eseményeket azonban Nyugat-Európában is nagy figyelemmel kísérték, nemcsak Magyarországon – a magyaroknak pedig, ahogy Jeszenszky Géza is írja *Az elveszett presztízs* című könyvében (2020), sokat jelentett a Nyugat, különösen Nagy-Britannia, véleménye, támogatása. Így nem csoda, hogy a magyarok kitüntetett figyelemben részesítettek egy brit úriembert, Arthur J. Pattersont, aki az 1860-as években látogatott ide, és különös érdeklődéssel és rokonszenvvel fordult feléjük: angol lapokban írt róluk cikkeket, megtanult magyarul, és Jókai-regényt fordított angolra (*Az új földesúr*), aztán egy komoly, kétkötetes művet is írt róluk és országukól, *The Magyars: their Country and Institutions* címmel (1869). Ez utóbbival már részletesebben foglalkozott korábban Frank Tibor, amikor azt vizsgálta, hogy Magyarország hogyan jelent meg az angol publicisztikában a kiegyezés körüli években. Jelen tanulmány azonban Patterson magyarországi látogatásainak és az országgal kapcsolatos írásainak magyar sajtóvisszhangját kívánja bemutatni, rámutatva arra, hogy „a hires tudós" magyarbarát véleménye igazolhatta az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchiában a korabeli magyar közvélemény egyre nacionalistábbá váló, a nemzetiségek autonómiájával szemben a magyar szupremáciát hirdető álláspontját.

Perger Míra: James Bryce és Magyarország: szimpátia és politikai támogatás a trianoni békediktátum idején

A tanulmány James Bryce történész, politikus és az Egyesült Államokba delegált brit követ életrajzát elemzi, különös tekintettel arra, hogyan vált az első világháború utáni Magyarország elkötelezett szószólójává és védelmezőjévé. Bryce támogatása és védelmezői szerepe szoros összefüggésben állt humanitárius és liberális világnézetével, amely az igazságosságot és a nemzeti önrendelkezést helyezte előtérbe, mindenféle személyes érdek, politikai elfogultság

vagy ideológiai kötődés nélkül. Őszinte és feddhetetlen hozzáállása írásaiban és politikai beszédeiben is egyértelműen megmutatkozott, amelyeket a tanulmány részletesen elemez, főleg elsődleges források alapján – ideértve Bryce saját könyveit, útinaplóit, leveleit, valamint az alsó- és felsőházi felszólalásait –, amelyek hiteles képet nyújtanak arról, miként vált a magyar ügy megrendíthetetlen támogatójává. Bryce Magyarország iránti érdeklődése és tisztelete már az országban tett korai látogatásai során kibontakozott, mély benyomást gyakorolt rá a magyar nép kultúrája, történelme és a függetlenségért vívott küzdelme. Ezt világosan megfogalmazta 1878-ban megjelent *Memories of Travel* című művében, amely egyúttal megalapozta későbbi elkötelezett támogatását is. Különösen a trianoni békediktátum időszakában vált Magyarország egyik legerősebb szószólójává a Lordok Házában, ahol következetesen felszólalt a szerződés igazságtalan és káros feltételei ellen, amelyek súlyosan sértették az önrendelkezés elvét és a magyar nemzet jogait. E történelmi körülmények között Bryce tevékenysége nemcsak politikai jelentőséggel bírt, hanem olyan erkölcsi mércét is felállított, amely példaként szolgált kortársai számára.

Beretzky Ágnes: Eyre Crowe a brit külügyminisztériumban: német- és magyarellenessége a dokumentumok tükrében (1906–1925)

Az anyai ágon német származású Eyre Crowe 1907 és 1925 között fontos szerepet játszott a brit külpolitika alakításában. Ellenségesen szemlélte a militarista, antiliberális Német Császárságot, 1907-es Memorandumát pedig általában úgy tartják számon, mint a brit–német viszonyt meghatározó dokumentumot. Jelen tanulmány nemcsak árnyalja Crowe-ról mint a brit diplomácia németellenes élharcosáról kialakult képet, hanem a diplomata a békekonferencia alatt (és után) végzett tevékenységére is külön hangsúlyt helyez, hiszen 1919-től ténylegesen jelentős hatást gyakorolt mind a brit politikára, mind a háború utáni Európára.

Magyarországról Crowe Robert William Seton-Watson könyveiből és elképzeléseiből szerzett ismeretei alapján alkotott véleményt. Bár az elsők között volt, akik hangsúlyozták, hogy Nagy-Britanniának hatékonyan kell fellépnie Németország agresszív gyarmati törekvései ellen, Versailles-ban, a megállapodás jövőbeli életképességét szem előtt tartva, szülőhazájának kortársai többségénél méltányosabb megállapodást javasolt. A tény, hogy a brit küldöttség *de facto* vezetőjévé avanzsált Crowe – betegsége miatt – 1920 januárjában hazatért Londonba, valószínűsíthetően nem vált a Magyarországgal végül megkötött béke javára.

Dobos Boglárka: Sir Owen O'Malley brit követ tevékenysége Budapesten (1939–1941)

Sir Owen O'Malley brit követ budapesti diplomáciai tevékenysége (1939–1941) jelentős mértékben eltért az elődei által képviselt politikai irányvonaltól: míg a Külügyminisztériumban inkább távolságtartó, sőt gyakran ellenszenvező nézetek uralkodtak Magyarország bel- és külpolitikáját illetően, addig O'Malley megértően viseltetett az ország helyzete iránt. A brit követ elismerte a trianoni békerendszerrel szembeni etnikai alapú revíziós igényeket, valamint szorgalmazta a magyarellenes propaganda felszámolását Nagy-Britanniában. Ugyancsak nem titkolta, hogy ír családi gyökerei révén rokonszenvet érez a magyarok iránt, és emiatt maga kérte, hogy helyezzék Budapestre 1939 májusában, a brit–magyar kapcsolatok szempontjából kulcsfontosságú időszakban. Kelet-Közép-Európában ekkorra egyre erőteljesebbé vált a német befolyás, így a brit követ határozott fellépése a magyarok mellett fontos diplomáciai lépésnek számított. Jelen írás Sir Owen O'Malley magyarbarát politikai szemléletének kialakulását a *National Library of Ireland* gyűjteményében őrzött személyes levelezése és emlékiratai alapján vizsgálja, valamint feltárja az etnikai identitás és a más nemzetek iránti szimpátia közötti összefüggéseket. A tanulmány ezáltal új értelmezést kínál az egyéni identitás külpolitikai döntéshozatalban betöltött szerepének megértéséhez.

Tanulmányok az amerikai–magyar kapcsolatok történetéből

Peterecz Zoltán: A magyar–amerikai diplomácia a Horthy-korszakban: az amerikai követek munkája Magyarországon (1922–1941)

Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok és Magyarország között 1921-ben létesült első ízben diplomácia kapcsolat, amely húsz évvel később, az USA-nak szóló hadüzenettel szakadt meg. A kérdéses két évtized alatt a Budapestre akkreditált öt amerikai követ különös jelentőséggel bírt: Theodore Brentano (1922–1927), Joshua Butler Wright (1927–1930), Nicholas Roosevelt (1930–1933), John F. Mongtomery (1933–1941) és Herbert C. Pell (1941). A tanulmány ennek az öt követnek a személyiségén és munkáján keresztül kívánja bemutatni az Egyesült Államok és Magyarország kapcsolatainak fejlődését és változásait a tárgyalt időszakban, ugyanakkor segít képet formálni arról is, mit gondoltak hazánkról nem csupán az amerikai külügyminisztériumban és az egymást váltó kormányzatokban, de általánosságban a felsőbb rétegekhez tartozó körökben is. A téma,

illetve a tanulmány újszerűsége elsősorban a komparatív megközelítésben ölt testet; az öt és néha eltérő hátterű és felfogású Budapestre akkreditált diplomata szolgálati ideje alatt végzett munkájának az összevetése eddig még nem vált vizsgálódás tárgyává. A tanulmány részben már korábban megjelent, részben eddig nem publikált elsődleges forrásokra épít, melyek az Egyesült Államok Nemzeti Levéltárában (NARA), valamint a különböző követek magánarchívumaiban találhatók.

Beretzky Bella: Elfeledett örökség: Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi élete és jótékonysági tevékenysége Magyarországon

A tanulmány az amerikai milliárdos örökösnőből magyar grófnővé vált Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi jótékonysági tevékenységét vizsgálja, aki a huszadik század eleji magyar társadalomban jelentős, ám mára már nagyrészt elfeledett szerepet játszott. A kor szokásaival ellentétben Gladys nemcsak férje, Széchényi László diplomáciai és társadalmi kötelezettségeit támogatta, hanem önálló, különösen a gyermekvédelem és a háborús segélyezés területén végzett jótékonysági tevékenysége révén újra is értelmezte identitását. A tanulmány négy fejezetre tagolódik: neveltetése és családi háttere; eljegyzése és házassága; magyarországi beilleszkedése és családi élete; valamint a gyermekvédelemben és az első világháború alatt végzett jótékonysági tevékenysége, illetve emlékezete. Életét, hagyatékát és jótékonysági tevékenységét a nővérének Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitneynek írt, a washingtoni *Smithsonian Institution Archives of American Art* gyűjteményben őrzött, bizalmas levelei, egyes korabeli újságcikkek és válogatott másodlagos források alapján rekonstruálja a tanulmány.

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