

# HSR

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*Hungarian Studies Review*

Vol. XXXII, Nos. 1-2 (Spring-Fall, 2005)

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Special Volume:

## **The United States and Hungary**

**in the Twentieth Century**

Part II

edited by  
**Nándor Dreisziger**

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# HUNGARIAN STUDIES REVIEW

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VOL. 32, NOS. 1-2 (SPRING-FALL 2005)

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**ISSN 0713-8083** (print, replacing 0317-204X); **ISSN 1705-8422** (online)

The *Hungarian Studies Review* is an interdisciplinary journal devoted to the publication of articles and book reviews relating to Hungary and Hungarians. Since its launching in 1974, the *Review* has been a forum for the scholarly discussion of issues in Hungarian history, politics and cultural affairs.

**Subscriptions** for individuals are \$15.00 per annum. Institutional subscriptions are \$25.00. Membership in either of the two Hungarian Studies Associations (of Canada or of the USA) includes a subscription. Visit: [www.hungarianstudies.org](http://www.hungarianstudies.org) and [www.oszk.hu/kiadvany/hsr/hsr.htm](http://www.oszk.hu/kiadvany/hsr/hsr.htm) (replacing: [www.cbsp.sfu.ca/calj.hsr](http://www.cbsp.sfu.ca/calj.hsr))

Statements and opinions expressed in the *HSR* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the journal's editors.

Desk-top typesetting by N. Dreisziger. Printed in Hungary. Distributed by the National Széchényi Library: Budavári Palota, F Épület, 1827 Budapest, Hungary.

**Special Volume:**

# **The United States and Hungary in the Twentieth Century**

Part II

edited by  
**Nándor Dreisziger**

**Articles and Review Articles by**

TIBOR GLANT  
GERGELY ROMSICS  
THOMAS SAKMYSTER  
KÁLMÁN DREISZIGER  
STEPHEN BESZEDITS  
NÁNDOR DREISZIGER  
J. EUGENE HORVATH  
and  
PETER PASTOR





## Contents

The United States and Hungary, Hungary and the United States A preface by NÁNDOR DREISZIGER .....	v
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### PART I. Articles

American–Hungarian Relations, 1900-1918 TIBOR GLANT .....	1
Hungary in the Journal <i>Foreign Affairs</i> , 1922-1939 GERGELY ROMSICS .....	15
A Communist Newspaper for Hungarian-Americans: The Strange World of the <i>Új Előre</i> THOMAS SAKMYSTER .....	41
Reality. Not Fantasy. The Connection to the Traditional Source in a Hungarian Folk Dance Camp in the USA KÁLMÁN DREISZIGER .....	71
Emery Roth: Architect of New York City's Grand Apartments STEPHEN BESZEDITS .....	87
Towards a History of the Hungarian Communities of America NÁNDOR DREISZIGER .....	97

### PART II. About Books — Old and New

Late Nineteenth Century Hungarian Tourists in America J. EUGENE HORVATH .....	115
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American Representation in Hungary from 1934 to 1941 PETER PASTOR .....	125
A Hungarian Liberal in American Exile: The Life of Oscar Jaszi NÁNDOR DREISZIGER .....	127
A letter to the editor: S. GLANTZ, É. KISS-NOVÁK, B. A. RACZ .....	135
OUR CONTRIBUTORS .....	147

Preface:

## **America and Hungary, Hungary and America**

**N. F. Dreisziger**

**The United States and Hungary**, Hungary and the United States, Americans and Hungarians, Hungarians and Americans: these might all be appropriate titles for this collection of essays. These words constituted the first sentence of Part I of our collection of papers dealing with the inter-relationship of the USA and Hungary, and with Hungarians in the United States. That volume appeared in 2003. Its first lines might well serve as the introduction to our new volume.

The present collection of papers is a sequel to our 2003 compendium. Some of the papers in this volume had come to us before 2003 but had not been finalized for publication at the time Part I went to print, while other studies reached us only later. The majority of the articles in this collection deal with themes that had been introduced in 2003 but a few introduce new subjects, all within the context of American-Hungarian relations and the evolution of the Hungarian presence in the USA.

The first paper in the volume, the essay by Tibor Glant, deals with American relations with Hungary during the early part of the twentieth century. This work is not exactly diplomatic history since Hungary was not an independent country until the end of 1918 and did not have, in fact could not have, regular diplomatic relations with outside powers. Never-the-less Professor Glant's essay fits into the discipline of international relations. The volume's second papers is also a study in international relations, as it is also an examination of the evolving image of Hungary in the United States as well as in the wider community of American and European international relations experts.

The following two papers deal with the world of Hungarian immigrants to the United States. Thomas Sakmyster's study is a historical

retrospective on the press and propaganda activities of Hungarian communist refugees to the United States in the interwar period. It discusses the ideologically-coloured world of Marxist-Leninist journalists functioning in American society that they had difficulty in understanding and a society that didn't understand them. While Professor Sakmyster's work was an examination of the world of our immigrant parents' and grandparents' generation, Kálmán Dreisziger's essay is a report on today's Hungarian-American (and, to a lesser extent, Hungarian-Canadian, etc.) youth in search of its cultural roots through the medium of Hungarian folk dancing. While most studies of the Hungarian presence in America in our days describe the processes of the decline of ethnic identity among Hungarian Americans and their increasing assimilation to American mainstream society, this report speaks of cultural persistence and even revival as second and third generation Hungarians, and even people with minimal affiliation to the Hungarian-American community, strive for achieving authenticity in their quest for mastering the ancient folk dances of the Hungarians of the Carpathian Basin.

The last two essays in Part I of the present volume also deal with the Hungarian-American heritage. Stephen Beszedits' essay belongs basically to the genre of "famous" Hungarian immigrants to America, especially of America the land of unlimited opportunity. In our 2003 volume we dealt with, among others, Joseph Pulitzer. This time the focus on someone nearly equally famous and successful, Emery Roth. Both of these remarkable individuals experienced the rags-to-riches (with a few detours) story of Jewish immigrants to America from Hungary. In the final essay in this part of our volume I review some recent developments in the evolution of historical writing on Hungarian Americans and their communities. This historiographical essay is a supplement and sequel to a similar essay that had appeared in our 2003 volume from the pen of András Csillag. It compliments Professor Csillag's essay by focusing in large part on veteran immigration historian Julianna Puskás's survey of Hungarian-American history.

Part II of our volume deals with books, old and new, that deal with Hungarian connections to the United States, or American relations with Hungary. In the first essay of this section noted collector of Hungarica Eugene Horvath reviews a little-known travelogue that was published well over a century ago. It is the story of the travels of three gentlemen

## *Preface*

adventurers from Hungary in the "wilds" and not so unknown parts of end-of-nineteenth century North America. The second piece in this section is a book review in which Peter Pastor comments on Tibor Frank's most recent book, the one that features American minister to Hungary John F. Montgomery's reports to Washington from Hungary during the late 1930s and very early 1940s. One conclusion that both Professor Frank and reviewer Professor Pastor emphasize, is that the new documentary evidence presented suggests that, contrary to what Montgomery said about Hungary in his later writings, the regime of Regent Miklós Horthy was not an "unwilling satellite" of Nazi Germany in the matter of the "Jewish Laws" passed in Hungary during Montgomery's tenure as US minister in Budapest. In the final section of this part of the volume I review at some length the recent biography of Oscar Jaszi, the Hungarian academic, publicist and political and then émigré activist who left Hungary in 1919 and lived in the United States for most of the rest of his long life. The Jaszi biography is by György Litván and it comes to the conclusion that Jaszi, this very controversial figure in Hungarian and Hungarian-American history, was a liberal in his thinking and a prophet in his predictions. Nearly hundred years ago he hinted at the coming of a united Europe and, in 1935, in talking about Hungary's future, he predicted the coming of a new war, of the post-war triumph of communism, the introduction of collective farming and, in general, the "rule of Asia" rather than of democracy and freedom in Hungary and East Central Europe.

The last item in our volume is largely unrelated to the "USA and Hungary" theme and deals precisely with the problem of Hungary's future — as seen from the perspective of the post-1989 period. In writing about the future of Hungary after the "rule of Asia" ended there over a decade ago, I had predicted in 2001 that a better age would be forthcoming for the Hungarian nation. Three scholars, Drs. Susan Glanz, Éva Kiss-Novák and Barnabas Racz, had taken exception to this and some other statements I had made. Their argument is contained in a letter to the editor. The letter is followed by my reply which in turn is followed by a final rebuttal by the authors of the original letter. Though the disagreement over Hungary's future might continue, we all admit that none of us have the proverbial crystal ball to help us see what will happen in the years and decades to come.

The final item of business to report in this volume is a promising development in regard to the future of our journal. This is the fact that the Hungarian Studies Association that has its headquarters in the United States\* and which used to be known for decades as the American Association for the Study of Hungarian History, has joined the National Library of Hungary and the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada as a supporter of our periodical. We hope that this additional endorsement and the financial assistance it means will help to solidify our position and assure the journal's future for some time to come.

\* As opposed to the association by the same name that functions in Europe.

## **American–Hungarian Relations, 1900-1918**

**Tibor Glant**

**The study of** American-Hungarian relations during the first two decades of the twentieth century has largely been neglected by Hungarian, Hungarian-American and American historians alike. Arguably the most important reason for this lies in the fact that there was no independent Hungary at the time. Thus, any study of American-Hungarian relations must be pursued with an ever narrowing focus, and this is indeed what the present paper proposes to do. Accordingly, a survey of relations between the United States and the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary will be followed by a review of American-Hungarian relations. Finally, a particular case study, Count Albert Apponyi's relations with America, certain prominent Americans, and the Hungarian-Americans, will be offered. And by way of conclusion the mutual images of the two nations will be summed up.

*The highest level: The United States and Austria-Hungary*

Relations between the United States and the Austro-Hungarian Empire before World War I were largely restricted to trade and immigration issues. Immigration was treated more seriously by the Americans: the "flood of low, unskilled, ignorant, foreign labor," as Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts put it in 1896,<sup>1</sup> represented a threat to the WASP values of the new world giant. Attempts were made to introduce federal restrictions on immigration — the Chinese were in fact banned for ten years as of 1882. Diplomatic efforts were also made to persuade the various source countries to discourage emigration. Meanwhile, acting against the wishes of their government, American agents continued to recruit workers for America's mines and factories in the Danube basin. Emigration presented problems for Vienna and dilemmas — as well as opportunities — for Budapest. Vienna did not want to see young men leaving the country, taking out American citizenship, returning home and settling down permanently in the land of the Habsburgs — and thus avoiding military service in the Imperial and Royal Army. Budapest



viewed emigration, in particular the departure of non-Magyar masses from Hungary, differently. The Hungarians, who made up barely half the population of the Kingdom of Hungary, saw in such emigration an excellent opportunity for the peaceful modification of their country's "ethnic balance" — and the partial solving of the problem of poverty. Washington and Vienna failed to find a satisfactory solution for the problem of overseas migration, although in 1906 and 1907 two acts of Congress made the withdrawal of American citizenship possible from individuals who took up permanent residence outside the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Trade proved to be a less important issue, since Austria-Hungary played a rather limited role in the transatlantic movement of commodities. Indicative not only of the volume and nature of trade but also of the general scope of relations between the United States and Austria-Hungary, the 1906 volume of the *Foreign Relations* series devotes nine pages to the relationship and lists the following four issues of concern: (1) Restrictions against the importation of beef from non-European countries; (2) the enforcement of "autonomous customs tariffs and commercial treaties;" (3) "franchise reform in Austria;" and (4) immigration related issues.<sup>3</sup> Prior to World War I neither side attached much significance to cultivating relations with the other. But the war changed all that.

Vienna continued to be a rather unpopular diplomatic post among American politicians in the 1910s, and it took President Wilson more than six months to find an Ambassador to Vienna in Frederick Courtland Penfield who spoke neither German nor Hungarian and was more interested in Turkey than in Central Europe. The Sarajevo assassination and the outbreak of the war shifted attention to Vienna for a while, and Wilson went as far as to offer, in vain, of course, mediation between Austria and Serbia. By early 1915 ordinary neutral-belligerent relations were established and the Americans were asked to supervise the treatment of prisoners of war in both camps.<sup>4</sup>

The lack of genuine American neutrality soon brought about the most serious diplomatic confrontation ever between the two countries. After calling for strikes among Austro-Hungarian subjects working in American factories, Ambassador Constantin T. Dumba was declared *persona non grata* and was recalled in November 1915. Out of hurt pride, the *Ballhausplatz* refused to send a replacement ambassador until early 1917, by which time the Wilson administration had made up its mind about going to war, and so the Polish aristocrat Count Adam Tarnowski was not allowed to present his credentials. Following the American declaration of war on Germany in April 1917, the US declared war on Austria-Hungary in December 1917. Normal relations were never resumed because the Austro-Hungarian Empire ceased to exist even before peace

was made. Thus the prewar lack of interest on both sides was replaced by desperate hostility only to end in American participation in the rearrangement of the Danube basin. By the early 1920s the prewar lack of interest on the American side had returned while Hungary looked upon the United States as one possible promoter of the revision of the Treaty of Trianon.<sup>5</sup>

### *Americans and Hungarians*

Before the war no formal diplomatic relations existed between Washington and Budapest, simply because Hungary was not fully independent. Under the circumstances American-Hungarian relations were conducted within the broader framework of American-Austro-Hungarian relations. Following the Compromise of 1867, the first American consulate was set up in Budapest in 1878, and in 1904 President Roosevelt raised it to the level of consulate general.<sup>6</sup> By the coming of the war other consulates were also opened, among others in Fiume, which monitored not only the sailing of ships for the United States but also ethnic unrest in the southern parts of the Monarchy. The only bilateral agreement we know of is an obscure copyright agreement from 1912, which was "[m]ade necessary by the requirements of Hungarian procedure and law."<sup>7</sup>

American-Hungarian relations before the war were thus confined to symbolic gestures, mutual visits, immigration issues, and a couple of strange diplomatic interludes, one involving a certain Marcus Braun and immigration abuses, the other featuring President Roosevelt and Count Apponyi and the Hungarian constitutional crisis of 1905-06.

Symbolic gestures included the unveiling of the first Kossuth statue in Cleveland in 1902 and the statue of Washington in Budapest in 1906. A minor Kossuth craze during the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century was followed by President Roosevelt's decision to sign the charter of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, and, in broader terms, by the revival of the freedom-fighting image of the Hungarians.<sup>8</sup>

Personal visits played an important role in shaping the mutual images of the two nations. In a comprehensive study of Hungarian travelogues of America between the Civil War and the turn of the century, Anna Katona argues that "admiration mixed with disillusionment" had come to replace the "admiration and wonder of early travelers."<sup>9</sup> This tendency was not apparent in the public statements of prominent Hungarians who visited the United States. In 1904, for example, a sizable Hungarian delegation, featuring not only Apponyi but also the future premier Count István Bethlen and his wife, attended the St. Louis conference of the Interparliamentary Union, and won recognition even in the

American press. Apponyi's next visit in 1911 was followed by two trips to the United States by Count Mihály Károlyi in 1914. Interestingly, this was by no means one-way traffic: in 1908 the prominent Democrat and three-time presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan paid a short visit to the Hungarian capital. Two years later, between a hunting trip in Africa and collecting the Nobel Peace Prize in Norway, former president Theodore Roosevelt paid a three-day visit to Hungary. This again was a major media event at the time, covered by Hungarian, American and Hungarian-American papers alike. One of Roosevelt's chief aims, of course, was to meet the dying Ferenc Kossuth, son of Lajos Kossuth, the foremost hero of the Hungarians living in America.<sup>10</sup>

Immigrants also influenced the American perception of Hungary and the Hungarians. It is common knowledge that during the "new immigration," between 400,000 to 600,000 Hungarians ended up in the United States. Actually many more were on the move, as re-migration figures were between 30 and 50 percent. This indicates that most Hungarians viewed the New World not as a possible new home but as an economic springboard: they intended to make some money and then return home, buy land, and live the rest of their lives back in Hungary. Consequently, they tried to make living in the United States as cheap as possible, often among appalling conditions, which, in turn, gave rise to strong nativist sentiments among the native-born Americans, who expected the immigrants to Americanize and become part of the melting pot. Securing proper working conditions and treatment for the immigrants gradually became a chief concern for the various Austro-Hungarian consulates in the United States.<sup>11</sup>

The first of the two diplomatic interludes, a rather delicate one from the Hungarian point of view, also concerned immigration matters. The American federal government had a tendency to employ foreign-born naturalized American citizens to monitor immigration and immigrants from their native country.<sup>12</sup> One such person was a German-speaking Hungarian turned US citizen, Marcus Braun, who supported Theodore Roosevelt in his 1900 election campaign as chairman of the Hungarian republican Club of New York. In return for his services, he was appointed immigration inspector, and he took his job seriously. The Hungarian government launched a three-pronged program, the so-called American Action, to secure the loyalty of Hungarian immigrants in the United States. Braun found out about the program and, not without justification, interpreted it as interference with the domestic affairs of his adopted land. In a 1904 report he made his findings known to American authorities. During his next visit to Hungary a year later, he was arrested on the rather ridiculous charge that he had assaulted a detective in a hotel. While

the American ambassador to Vienna, Bellamy Storer, denied him the support he was entitled to as an American citizen and government agent, President Roosevelt intervened in his behalf and forced his release. Upon returning to the United States, Braun resigned, but was re-appointed by Roosevelt, who, in the meantime, recalled Ambassador Storer.<sup>13</sup> In 1906 Braun published his own account of the affair as well as much of his report, highlighting one forgotten aspect of American-Hungarian relations:

Give no room to the immigrant — this is what I recommend in my reports — who, on settling here, is not absolutely free from the influences of his native land, ... and never forget that he probably never would have emigrated hither had his old home been willing to do for him as much as it does now, or attempts to do, or promises to do, for him now, when the danger of his expatriating himself for good stares into the face of the small peanut politicians of that native country of his.<sup>14</sup>

Of course, hurt feelings prompted Braun to make some more outspoken remarks. However shocking and harsh these words may seem from a Hungarian, we must understand that Braun was one of the few (together with Joseph Pulitzer and Alexander Konta) who placed his adopted country before the one he had come from. This was, in part, the result of disappointment with Hungarian politics and politicians. Here is another telling example:

It is true that the imbecility, the corruption, the inefficiency, the shortsightedness, the rottenness of this very government forced that Magyar immigrant to put a mortgage on his old farm and sent him to the usurer... All interference with the immigrant must stop with the very moment he enters upon our soil. If, on his own volition and free will, he decides to go back to Austria-Hungary, ...he can go... But if, by artificial means... there be kept alive, not in the individual, but in the Magyar immigration as a class, an agitation to remain Magyars and not to become Americans... then, I say, the Hungarian government is guilty of violating our immigration laws; then, I say, these immigrants must be classed among those whom our laws declare to be undesirable and they must be excluded.<sup>15</sup>

The overview of the other diplomatic interlude concerning the Hungarian constitutional crisis takes us into the third part of our survey, the case study of Count Apponyi and America.

*Apponyi and America*

Apponyi's relationship with America between his first contacts with Americans and the end of World War I breaks down into three periods. Between 1895, the first time he attended the annual conference of the Interparliamentary Union, and the outbreak of the Great War, he established and cultivated contacts with numerous Americans, visited the United States twice, organized the visits of prominent Americans to Hungary, and in his speeches in the States he courted the Hungarian-Americans. During the period of American neutrality, and especially in 1915, he functioned as the foremost spokesman of the Habsburg cause in America, and published four long articles in the *New York Times*. He was repeatedly rumoured as the new Habsburg ambassador to Washington, and the State Department sent a secret agent to seek his views of the war in late 1917. Finally, during the final stages of the war he lost contacts with America and his American friends, and returned as Hungary's international spokesman for territorial integrity in the immediate postwar period. In 1918, together with other prominent Hungarian politicians, he became the target of wild accusations and hate literature in the very medium he had used so successfully, on the pages of the *New York Times*.<sup>16</sup>

Apponyi first attended the Interparliamentary Union conference in Brussels in 1895 and soon became a regular Hungarian delegate. It was at these conferences that he met the first Americans, and his first real exposure to the New World was also the result of his work in the Union: he headed the Hungarian delegation to the St. Louis conference in 1904. By that time Apponyi had developed a pretty good command of English, helped by the fact that he had spent some of his holidays in London as a child and as a young man. In preparing for this trip he approached the American ambassador to Vienna, the aforementioned Bellamy Storer, to provide him with access to President Roosevelt. Storer and the Austrian ambassador in Washington, László Hengelmüller, did their best, and Roosevelt agreed to meet the Count. They were equally impressed by each other, and the president invited Apponyi for another visit before he left the States. This was the start of a long and interesting friendship that would only be terminated by the war. Indicative of Roosevelt's appreciation for Apponyi was the fact that both meetings took place in September, during the final stages of the 1904 presidential election campaign.<sup>17</sup>

Apponyi then took an active part in the events leading to the constitutional crisis of 1905-06, especially in the debate about military policy, and then served as Minister for Education and Religion in the Independent Coalition. It was during his tenure of office that the second

diplomatic interlude between the United States and Hungary took place. Roosevelt viewed the events in Hungary with some concern, and revived his contacts with Apponyi by writing him privately. He suggested that the Hungarians should work towards the maintenance of the unity of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and urged his friend to be patient and cautious.<sup>18</sup> In a six-page reply dated June 6, Apponyi argued that a temporary armistice existed between the Emperor and the nation, and that Hungary's growing economic independence was a thorn in the side of the Austrian government. He accused Hungary's enemies in Vienna with manipulating and misleading western diplomats, and asked Roosevelt to instruct his ambassador, Charles Spencer Francis, to contact him in secret. He also invited Roosevelt's daughter, Alice, and her husband, who then were in Europe, to Hungary.<sup>19</sup> The president first wrote to his daughter and advised her not to visit Austria-Hungary, or to visit both Vienna and Budapest, and "listen smilingly to anything that anyone, from an Austrian archduke to a Hungarian count, says about the politics of the dual empire, but, as I need hardly add, make no comment thereon yourselves."<sup>20</sup> He then instructed Francis to contact Apponyi and any other Hungarian politicians Apponyi recommends. He also issued a warning to his chief representative in Vienna: "Of course in talking to these Hungarians do not express any opinion yourself on the internal affairs of the dual empire, but listen attentively to what they have to say and write it to me... I need not say to you that this is a mission in which you will need to show great tact, judgment and discretion in doing what I have here outlined."<sup>21</sup> Finally, he wrote to Apponyi again. In this letter he told Apponyi of his decision to instruct Francis to get in touch with him. Roosevelt called himself a friend of both Austria and Hungary, and asked for caution and consideration again: "it is a very serious thing to jeopardize a sure though slow success for the sake of a possible increased rapidity of movement." Wait is the watchword, for

[T]he situation changes to your advantage. Surely under such conditions, no matter what may be the argument of abstract justice, it is worth while to pay some heed to an intelligent and proper expediency, and while hastening forward as far as possible the footsteps of Fate, which are now pointed in your direction, yet to strive to prevent any violent rupture; for aside from all other considerations there will always be the possibility of disaster in such rupture, no matter how small this possibility was.<sup>22</sup>

There is no way to measure Roosevelt's actual influence on Apponyi, but it is fair to say that the president of the United States was applying a lot of pressure on a member of the Hungarian cabinet in the conflict between Vienna and Budapest for the maintenance of the unity of the empire, without informing either the emperor or the *Ballhausplatz*.

The failure of the Independence Coalition prompted Apponyi to rejoin the opposition in Hungary's Parliament, but he was glad to welcome in Hungary first William Jennings Bryan, and then Roosevelt and his son, Kermit. En route from Vienna to Budapest, Roosevelt spent a whole day at the Apponyi estate in Éberhárd, before arriving in the Hungarian capital. In Éberhárd, and then a year later at the Roosevelt Family estate in New York, Oyster Bay, they discussed the rising international tensions and Apponyi proposed to publish articles in American papers to counteract the anti-Hungarian propaganda he encountered at the Union conferences and in the western papers.<sup>23</sup> The correspondence between the two men continued undisturbed even after the outbreak of the war, but Roosevelt cut it off, on June 1, 1915, in response to a *New York Times* article and private letter from Apponyi about the sinking, by a German submarine, of the British ocean-liner, the *Lusitania*.<sup>24</sup>

The outbreak of the Great War created an entirely new situation for Apponyi: he now hoped to win the support of the American public for Austria-Hungary at a time when the United States was gradually moving toward the abandonment of neutrality. Owing to the contacts he had established before the war, no less than four of his longer articles were printed by the *New York Times* in 1915, which made him the most successful of the Central Powers propagandists in the United States — without actually revisiting the New World.

The first two pieces were printed on the same day, January 17, 1915, in the Sunday magazine section. This was due to a strange coincidence: he sent an article to the Hungarian-American banker Alexander Konta for publication in the *Times*, and another one to Roosevelt for *The Outlook*, a weekly that the former president used to edit before the war. Since Roosevelt refused to help placing the second piece, Apponyi asked him to forward it to Konta.<sup>25</sup> The banker in turn used his considerable influence and placed both articles in the same issue. One of the two articles was actually an open letter addressed to Nicholas Murray Butler of New York, who later served as president of Columbia University. Apponyi argued that the war had long been planned by Russia against Austria-Hungary, and that Britain and France willingly joined in, using the German violation of Belgian neutrality as a cheap excuse.

On March 28, 1915, he published another open letter addressed to Butler. In this piece Apponyi discussed the lack of genuine American



neutrality in the conflict. He began with the contraband issue and pointed out in no uncertain words that it would destroy America's credibility as mediator in the long run. He then went on to discuss Butler's theory of a "war between democracy and autocracy," and challenged the American's perception of a uniformly democratic allied camp. In all fairness to both, Apponyi acknowledged the fact that Butler described Russia's presence in the allied camp as an "anomaly," but went on to repeat his earlier statement that this was a Russian war: "I must repeat it over and over again: it is in origin a Russian war, with a clearly outlined Russian program of conquest." Repeating in part one of his speeches from 1911, when he was invited to lecture in the United States by the Civic Forum of New York City, he cleverly raised the issue of a postwar "western coalition" including the Central Powers as well as the United States, but excluding Russia. Interestingly enough, he maintained that the "yellow peril" from China and Japan would sooner or later force Russia to seek admission into this western coalition." Apparently, a democratic Russia did have a place in Apponyi's vision of the postwar world.

His final piece in the *New York Times* came after his break with Roosevelt, on October 12, 1915, and was addressed to an unidentified Mr. Allen, a "member of the World Peace Foundation." He repeated many of his earlier arguments about Russia and the lack of American neutrality, but this time with surprising passion: "How on earth can you say that France and England are fighting for those principles which America upholds, when these two powers are in alliance with Russia?" His disappointment with America was also apparent: "... the manifest unfairness of her so-called neutrality has unfitted America to act as a peacemaker." These words were harsh enough, but he hit the wrong nerve in the crescendo:

What are the few hundred who went down with the Lusitania, deeply though we mourn their lot, in comparison to the hundreds of thousands who are killed by American bullets fired by Russians from American guns, by American explosives, a token of sympathy offered by a peace-loving democracy to the representative of darkest tyranny and wanton aggression?

On occasion Apponyi was criticized for his pro-German views, but in September, 1916, he had no trouble making it to the front page of the *New York Times* with the telling headline, "America the Nation to Bring About Peace, Count Apponyi Tells Hungarian Parliament." He was "promoted" to the post of "former Hungarian prime minister," which he never was, and the article's American author seriously expected that he

would see to it that the disgraced Dumba would be replaced some time in 1916. The appearance of this article, and its tone, indicated that Apponyi's prestige in America, built up before the war, remained as high as ever, despite his break with Roosevelt, his many awkward remarks, and the occasional bad review.<sup>26</sup>

An abortive attempt by the State Department to contact him through a secret agent in November, 1917, sheds light not only on how highly the Americans continued to think of Apponyi but also on the very peculiar relationship that existed between President Wilson and Secretary of State Robert Lansing. As of February 1917, the official American policy was to try to negotiate Austria-Hungary out of the war, and thus break up the German *Mitteuropa* plan. The success of such negotiations would have doomed the war effort of the Central Powers, would have brought the war to an early end, and would have forestalled the possible loss of tens of thousands of American lives. To further these efforts, Lansing, without consulting his boss, sent a private representative, Frank E. Anderson, to meet Apponyi in Vienna and seek out the Count's views about a possible Austro-Hungarian defection from the war. However, the American declaration of war on Austria-Hungary in early December 1917, rendered Anderson's mission well-nigh impossible. Accordingly, Anderson was next instructed to stay in Bern and invite Apponyi there. Instead of proceeding to Switzerland and staying there, however, Anderson secured a safe conduct for himself and travelled to Vienna to consult Apponyi there, as well as Count Ottokar Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister. Neither Apponyi nor Czernin was willing to consider a separate peace. In the end then, Anderson managed to embarrass his boss without achieving anything. When in April of next year he returned to the United States, Lansing had to deny publicly any contact between Anderson and the State Department. This abortive peace overture, besides showing that the Americans mistakenly believed that Apponyi was among the key decision-makers in Vienna, indicates that Lansing tended to act without consulting his President and reveals the fact that Wilson failed to inform in advance his own Secretary of State of his plan to ask for a declaration of war on Austria-Hungary in his annual message to Congress in early December.<sup>27</sup>

The year 1918 brought mainly trouble for Apponyi and Hungary. This was the year when Apponyi lost his contacts with America. It was also the time when the fairly positive pre-war image of Hungary in the American press was reversed, mostly as the result of the successful propaganda of Czech and other Slav lobbyists such as Tomáš G. Masaryk. President Wilson's fourteen points, and especially the tenth, had given new hope and new energy to Masaryk and other propagandists favouring

the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. It was under these circumstances that, on February 10, 1918, the *New York Times* printed a lengthy interview with two Czech activists, G. H. Mika and Charles Pergler of the Czech-Slav Press Bureau, who openly challenged Wilson's decision to help maintain the unity of the Habsburg empire. They claimed that the Slavs of the Monarchy would refuse to settle for anything short of independence. On March 17, the paper printed the first open attack on the President's pro-Habsburg unity stance by a Rumanian lobbyist by the name of K. Bercovici. In a short piece titled "Hungarian Lust for World Power," he castigated Hungarian history as a never ending quest for domination in the Balkans and the Near East. His description of the I Hungarians was uniquely harsh even in terms of World War I hate literature:

The cruelty and intolerance of the Magyars is as proverbial in the Balkans as is their arrogance and stupidity. Long of arms, bow-legged, with fierce mouth and deep-seated, small eyes, the Magyar is the typical savage of history. Like his brother, the Teuton, he is an abject slave and a horrible master.

The growing anti-Habsburg and anti-Hungarian sentiments, together with Wilson's great turn-around in the matter of Austria-Hungary's dismemberment in the summer of 1918, brought about a revision of the American perception of Apponyi, too. A *New York Times* editorial bearing the headline "Arch-Magyars," dated October 28, 1918, had a go not only at the Hungarian statesmen István Tisza, Stefan (István) Burian and Gyula Andrassy, Jr.,<sup>28</sup> but also at Apponyi:

Apponyi is the too notorious Minister of Education who shut up the Serbian schools, who prohibited the reopening of the Rumanian teachers' training colleges, whose "aim is to strengthen everywhere the national Magyar State," who in ecclesiastical and educational questions seeks by all means and without scruple to Magyarize.

The unidentified author then summed up his views as follows: "Wild is the folly that sets up hunkers like Andrassy and Apponyi in the agony of decrepit states." Gone were the times when Apponyi was presented to the American public as a prominent elder statesman and Roosevelt called him "my dear Count Apponyi."

The break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the dismemberment of the Kingdom of Hungary in 1918-1919 presented Apponyi

with a new set of problems and responsibilities. Problems, since his Éberhárd estate had become part of the new Czecho-Slovak Republic, and responsibilities in the Hungarian Territorial Integrity League and in the peace preparations.<sup>29</sup> He then led the Hungarian peace delegation to Paris in 1920 but this is a different, and quite well-known, story.

*Conclusions: Evolving Mutual Images*

The traditional image of a freedom-fighting Hungary — inhabited by merry noblemen fond of wine, women and song — may not have been the only one in the United States before the war, but it was definitely the dominant one. Interestingly enough, lack of interest prevailed over Hungarian government interference in the domestic affairs of the United States and the arrest of Braun in Budapest. Nor did the way of life led by the Hungarians in America change American perceptions of Hungary. Unlike in Britain and France, the positive image of Hungary survived well into the final year of the war, when it became publicly challenged by Slav (as well as British and French) propagandists, who wanted to secure American support for their territorial ambitions in the Danube basin. American interest in Hungary died away after the signing of the separate peace in 1921, and this gave room for the Hungarians in America to revive the Kossuth image. This was done most successfully in 1928, when a Kossuth statue was erected on the Hudson River, on the campus of Columbia University.<sup>30</sup>

America's image as the "promised land" was never seriously challenged in Hungary between the turn-of-the-century and the end of the Great War. Initially, Hungarians migrated to America hoping to make a better living there, or afterwards back home, and Hungarian politicians developed a tendency to court not only the American public but also the Hungarian Americans. Count Albert Apponyi played an all-important part in this quest, and his letters to Roosevelt prove that it was a conscious effort on his part. Hungarian politicians grew more and more disappointed with America during the early stages of the war because of the lack of genuine American neutrality, but the underlying admiration of the Hungarian public for the greatest democratic experiment in human history prevailed over this disappointment. Apponyi, Károlyi, and in the final stages of the war, even Andrassy came to view the New World as the only possible source of a fair peace. And despite the emotional charges that Trianon was a joint Franco-American "attempt at genocide,"<sup>31</sup> it is more fair to say that American diplomats were simply unable to cope with the difficulties of peacemaking in Paris. After the war the United States became the target of a new Hungarian propaganda campaign, the

aim of which was to win international support, first for economic recovery and then for the revision of the Treaty of Trianon.

## NOTES

This paper was written for two Hungarian research projects: FKFP 0120/1999 and OTKA F025268. It is a revised and enlarged version of a lecture given at the conference "Hungary Through the Centuries: A Millennial Retrospection," held at the University of Toronto in September, 2000.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Shirley Blumenthal, *Coming to America. Immigrants from Eastern Europe* (New York: Delacone Press, 1981), 162.

<sup>2</sup> This account is based on: Gerald H. Davis, "The Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Austria-Hungary, 1913–1917" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1958); Julianna Puskás, *Kivándorló magyarok az Egyesült Államokban, 1880–1940* [Immigrant Hungarians in the United States] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1982); and Steven Bela Vardy, *The Hungarian-Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985).

<sup>3</sup> *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1906* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1909), 2: 43–51.

<sup>4</sup> This brief account is based on: Davis, "Diplomatic Relations," and Tibor Glant, *Through the Prism of the Habsburg Monarchy: Hungary in American Diplomacy and Public Opinion during World War I* (Boulder, Colorado: Social Science Monographs, Volume XXXVI in the series: War and Society in East Central Europe, Highland Lakes, NJ: Atlantic Research and Publications, Columbia U. P. distributor; 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Glant, *Through the Prism*, 7.

<sup>6</sup> George Barany, "The Magyars," in *The Immigrants' Influence on Wilson's Peace Policies*, ed. Joseph P. O'Grady (Louisville, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), 140–72.

<sup>7</sup> Glant, *Through the Prism*, 35.

<sup>8</sup> For details see: Géza Kende, *Magyarok Amerikában. Az amerikai magyarság története* [Hungarians in America. History of the Hungarians of America] (Cleveland: Szabadság, 1927), 2: Chapters 21–23, 28.

<sup>9</sup> Anna Katona, "Nineteenth-Century Hungarian Travelogues on the Post-Civil War United States," in *Hungarian Studies in English* 7 (1973): 35–52.

<sup>10</sup> This account is based on Glant, *Through the Prism*, and Tibor Glant, "Roosevelt, Apponyi és a Habsburg Monarchia" [Roosevelt, Apponyi and the Habsburg Monarchy], in *Századok* 131/6 (1997), 1386–1401. For details in English see the translation of the relevant *Pesti Hírlap* article on the internet: "Roosevelt at Budapest," [www2.tlct.ttu.edu/kelly/Archive/TR/PH42010.htm](http://www2.tlct.ttu.edu/kelly/Archive/TR/PH42010.htm).

<sup>11</sup> Puskás, *Kivándorló magyarok*, and Albert Tezla, ed., *The Hazardous Quest. Hungarian Immigrants in the United States 1895–1920* (Budapest: Corvina, 1993).

<sup>12</sup> Tibor Frank, "For the Information of the President: U.S. Government Surveillance of Austro-Hungarian Emigration, 1891-1907," in *Ethnicity, Propaganda, Myth-Making. Studies on Hungarian Connections to Britain and America 1848-1945*, ed. Tibor Frank (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1999), 108-131.

<sup>13</sup> Glant, *Through the Prism*, 32-33.

<sup>14</sup> Marcus Braun, *Immigration Abuses. Glimpses of Hungary and the Hungarians* (New York: Pearson Advertising Co., 1906), 132.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 133-34.

<sup>16</sup> The following survey is based on Glant, *Through the Prism* and "Apponyi, Roosevelt."

<sup>17</sup> Kende, *Magyarok Amerikában*, 2: 452-61; Count Albert Apponyi, *The Memoirs of Count Apponyi* (New York: Macmillan, 1935), 157-67; József Kerekesházy, *Apponyi* (Budapest: Singer és Wolfner, 1943), 117-32. All correspondence cited below is from the Roosevelt Papers in the Library of Congress (hereafter LC). Apponyi's papers were confiscated by communist authorities in the 1950s and we have not been able to locate them.

<sup>18</sup> Roosevelt to Apponyi, April 27, 1906, Roosevelt Papers, LC.

<sup>19</sup> Apponyi to Roosevelt, June 6, 1906, *loc. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Roosevelt to Alice Roosevelt Longworth, June 24, 1906, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt. Vols 5-6.*, ed., Elting E. Morrison (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 312-13.

<sup>21</sup> Roosevelt to Ambassador Charles Spencer Francis, June 25, 1906, in *Letters of Roosevelt*, 314-15.

<sup>22</sup> Roosevelt to Apponyi, July 10, 1906, Roosevelt Papers, LC.

<sup>23</sup> Apponyi, *Memoirs*, 167-68, 176-94, Kerekesházy, *Apponyi*, 198-206.

<sup>24</sup> Glant, "Apponyi, Roosevelt," 1393-95. After the break initiated by Roosevelt they never got to meet again, because Roosevelt died in January 1919. The article mentioned here was printed on October 12, and is discussed below.

<sup>25</sup> Apponyi to Roosevelt, September 17 and October 24, 1914, Roosevelt Papers, LC.

<sup>26</sup> Glant, *Through the Prism*, 108-09.

<sup>27</sup> Glant, *Through the Prism*, 71-72, and 57-58.

<sup>28</sup> Tisza (1861-1918) was arguably the most prominent Hungarian politician before and during the war. He served as prime minister of Hungary in 1903-05 and 1913-17. Burian (1851-1922) served as joint Austro-Hungarian foreign minister twice during the war, and was a close friend of Tisza. Andrassy (1860-1929) was the son of the man who forged the Austro-German alliance, and he too served as joint foreign minister during the final stages of the war.

<sup>29</sup> For details see: Tibor Glant, "Some Facts about Hungarian Territorial Integrity Propaganda Abroad, 1918-20," in *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* 2/1 (1996): 43-56.

<sup>30</sup> Glant, *Through the Prism*, 36-40.

<sup>31</sup> See for example: József Vecseklőy, *Nemzetgyilkossági kísérlet. Trianon (1919. Párizs)* [Attempt at genocide: Trianon (1919. Paris)], 3d ed. (Lakitelek: Antológia, 1993).

## **Hungary in the Journal *Foreign Affairs* 1922-1939**

**Gergely Romsics**

**What today is** in all likelihood the best-known periodical in international relations, *Foreign Affairs*, was first published in 1922 by a then-unknown informal body of foreign policy experts, academics, journalists, lawyers and bankers, the Council on Foreign Relations.<sup>1</sup> The review, as well as the Council itself, has since become known the world over. In this paper I use the first 16 volumes of *Foreign Affairs* as my primary source material, in the hope that these will offer an insight into the world of International Relations as politics and also as an academic discipline in the very moment it was about to be born. Yet the articles in *Foreign Affairs* themselves are as much a part of the history of mentalities — in fact, intellectual history — as they are of the history of international relations. Taking one country, Hungary, as a kind of prism, I will attempt to demonstrate how early International Relations discourse was shaped by diplomacy, home politics, ideologies and even philosophies of knowledge and science. In offering an overview of the articles dealing exclusively or partly with Hungary, and also supplying some background information, I would like to make a contribution towards understanding the difficulties involved in communicating across cultures and the socially conditioned differences of perspective<sup>2</sup> — demonstrated in this case by the incompatibility of the fundamentally Wilsonian, liberal internationalist discourse relied on by the American and British elite groups associated with the journal and the nationalist, state-centric and survival-oriented *Weltanschauung* behind the contributions of Central European politicians and intellectuals.

My hypothesis in the process of research has been that the two types of discourse have grown out of different sociological poetics in the



Bakhtinian sense of the word,<sup>3</sup> and as a result promote different agendas, attach contrary meaning or highly varied significance to events, in short: their incompatible symbolic universes lead to miscommunication and diverging interpretations. The interwar era saw Central European small states competing for the benevolence of various great power lobby groups and governments, making the Council in Foreign Relations and, more specifically, *Foreign Affairs* a prime ground for expounding their ideas on the future of the region, while trying to conform to the perceived liberal democratic expectations of the lobby group behind the journal. Thus it could be expected that Central European contributors would attempt to gain support for their countries policies by masking them as compatible with the general agenda of the Council, even if some of their designs would have made the East Coast intellectuals of the organization less than happy.

The research process confirmed the hypotheses summarised in the above paragraph. While far from being diachronically static, both discourses demonstrated significant homogeneity in a number of aspects, at the same time being very much at odds with each other in agenda and world-view. In the following, I will reconstruct the two discourses separately, propose an interpretation of their sociological poetics, and finally I will attempt to formulate some conclusions about the nature of communication between intellectuals assembled in a great power lobby and leading members of Central European elites.

It is common knowledge that in the United States interest in international relations receded after the signing of the Paris peace treaties, the election victory of President Harding and the death of Woodrow Wilson. Yet the ideology promoted by Wilson did not lose all support and all activists. In fact, the Council on Foreign Relations, founded on 29 July, 1921, was to become one of the places where adherents of an active foreign policy could meet and discuss events in the world, and also think of ways to influence the American government or the events themselves.<sup>4</sup>

The continuity between Wilsonian thinking and the CFR should not be overlooked: the greater half of the founding members, who assembled at a conference organised by future member Harry A. Garfield, President of Williamstown College and son of President Garfield, had either participated in the work of the *Inquiry* (the body of experts responsible for President Wilson's peace plan) or were known supporters of the Wilsonian agenda — either for reasons of faith or for reasons of profit.<sup>5</sup>

The Council on Foreign Relations has been publishing the journal *Foreign Affairs* since 1922. It is reputed to be one of the world's most informative and most boring journals. Whether boring or not, is not our concern; for the historian it is more important that a number of wealthy and influential Americans and many European politicians and leading intellectuals thought it important enough to read — and publish some of their writings on its pages. During the two world wars, for instance, French and German heads of governments or foreign ministers periodically stated their countries' positions on current matters in *Foreign Affairs*. Benedetto Croce published — under the title "Of Liberty" — in it a covert critique of all totalitarian systems when he became disillusioned with Mussolini's fascism.<sup>6</sup> John Dewey and Arnold J. Toynbee also contributed articles.<sup>7</sup> But the most significant part of the studies, position papers and short articles were submitted by members of CFR, like the 1921 Democratic presidential candidate John W. Davis or Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of State Elihu Root, alongside better or lesser known experts such as Walter Lippmann, Isaiah Bowman and John C. Campbell.

Of the articles that appeared in *Foreign Affairs* between 1922 and 1939, a surprisingly large number dealt with Central European issues. There are several explanations for this phenomenon. First, it should not be forgotten that apart from imposing a peace settlement on Germany, the Versailles system radically rearranged the map of Central and Eastern Europe. In consequence, the region attracted some degree of attention in the decades that followed. This attention was transformed, but also preserved, by Germany's rise in the thirties and the threat it posed to the sovereignty of Central European small states. Therefore it is safe to say that Central Europe was the most important of all secondary theatres of international relations in the period: its affairs remained intimately linked with what were judged as the most important developments in the world.

Another explanation for the fact that much attention was paid by *Foreign Affairs* to interwar Central Europe is the circumstance that many members of the Council on Foreign Relations, and more specifically the editors of *Foreign Affairs*, held a personal and a professional interest in the area. The first editor-in-chief, Archibald Cary Coolidge was a professor of "Near Eastern History" at Harvard University, a field of study that at the time referred to the Balkans and some of Central Europe as well.<sup>8</sup> His aide and successor, Hamilton Fish Armstrong was an expert on

Central Europe, and had personal ties with a number of politicians and even members of the royal families from the region.<sup>9</sup>

As a result of these factors, one finds in *Foreign Affairs* a fair number of articles dealing with Hungary. Their number is sufficient for an attempt to reconstruct the major discourses in which developments in the country were discussed and evaluated, especially as Central European governments were even more active than French or German ministries in making their positions known on the pages of the journal.

By the early 1920's the informed American public had already been supplied by the peacemakers' interpretations of the events of 1918-1920, and while some aspects of these explanations had been questioned, in general it can be said that certain key concepts remained unchallenged.<sup>10</sup> First and most importantly, it was generally agreed that in 1918 Central and Eastern Europe was freed from the grasp of three anachronistic and autocratic empires — those of the Hohenzollerns, the Habsburgs and the Romanovs — and the Paris peace treaties in essence provided new and old countries with a “ticket” to the free and democratic world. Of course, the details of the treaties were up for debate, but this was possible exactly because — from an American perspective — these were of secondary importance. It followed from the first assumption, that the political and economical “performance” of Central European states was evaluated using the litmus paper of Wilsonianism: being part of a democratic experiment in a part of the world that had not known democracy before, governments were expected to follow the ideals of liberal internationalism: advancement of free trade, open and peaceful diplomacy, conducted preferably at the League of Nations, and respect for human and political rights.<sup>11</sup>

Anyone acquainted with the interwar history of Central Europe will be aware that none of the countries in the region — except, perhaps, Czechoslovakia — came close to a passing grade, given the above expectations. Several of them, however, scored remarkable successes, lasting or temporary, in convincing the Atlantic democracies of their achievements. This was partly so because there of course were some actual results, alongside effective propaganda, and also because Western politicians and journalists sometimes believed what they desired to be true. Still, there existed undoubtedly a coherent set of expectations towards the participants of this great experiment, a set that provided the framework of values for the discourse on Hungary, and Central Europe in general.

*History and Identity: Central European Authors in Foreign Affairs 1922-1939*

In the time span analyzed here, seven articles dealing with Hungary and authored by Central European politicians or intellectuals appeared in the journal. The most significant texts of this group date from the 1920s and include two articles by Edvard Beneš, and one each by Josef Redlich, István Bethlen and Oscar Jaszi (known in Hungary as Jászi Oszkár).

Perhaps surprisingly, the very first issue of *Foreign Affairs* contained two important essays that dealt with Hungary. Edvard Beneš, the Czechoslovak foreign minister, contributed an article titled "The Little Entente" in which he tried to justify the existence of an alliance system which quite obviously was a political and military tool to restrain the Hungarian desire for revanche after the harsh conditions set by the 1920 Trianon Treaty.<sup>12</sup> Beneš's essay was followed by that of the one-time Austro-Hungarian minister of finance, Joseph Redlich. He, in contrast to Beneš, argued for a united Central Europe, confederated along economic lines. Redlich rejected the idea of national autarchy, and in addressing the problem posed by nationalist economic thinking in the region, did not fail to observe that the rise of this short-sighted doctrine was — in spite of desires to the contrary on the part of the promulgators of the peace — promoted by the inherent shortcomings of the peace settlements.<sup>13</sup>

The initial portrait of Hungary, provided by these articles, received depth and details a year later, when Oscar Jaszi's essay "Dis-membered Hungary and Peace in Central Europe" was published.<sup>14</sup> Jaszi was a prominent progressive intellectual of prewar Hungary who played a crucial role in the short-lived democratic experiment of 1918-1919 as minister without a portfolio in charge of national minorities. He left the country during the time of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, and did not return to counterrevolutionary Hungary later. The new right-wing regime considered him one of its chief adversaries, as Jaszi with his fellow émigrés was engaged in a relentless campaign to undermine its reputation in the Western world.<sup>15</sup> In his essay, the radical progressive émigré passed a summary verdict on the Hungary of Admiral Miklós Horthy, describing the country's elites as "neofeudal," and the political system as "authoritarian" and "dictatorial." This challenge was responded to by István Bethlen, Hungary's prime minister between 1921 and 1931, who of course defended the political system Jaszi had so scathingly attacked. Embedded in a long historical narrative, he put forward the favourite

thesis of Hungarian conservatives about gradual development in the country through thousand years of history, and asked for patience in the supposedly ongoing democratisation of the country. At the same time, he promised cooperation with neighbours, the League and the great powers, and tactfully said nothing about an eventual revision of the Trianon frontiers.<sup>16</sup>

Beneš's second contribution returned to the question of regional security. In reflecting on the Locarno Treaty, he noted the lack of similar safeguards and guarantees in Central and Eastern Europe. He called for the institutionalisation of security arrangements in the region, necessary in his opinion because of the revisionist danger posed by the defeated powers.<sup>17</sup>

Oscar Jaszi's second study to be published in *Foreign Affairs* was titled "Kossuth and the Treaty of Trianon". In this 1934 essay, Jaszi argued that Trianon was a result of very much organic forces, foretold at least in part by Lajos Kossuth and László Teleki, two prominent 19<sup>th</sup> century émigrés. The main argument that Jaszi drew from a survey of their correspondence was that Hungary's elites had reacted inappropriately to the events of 1918 and 1920, and should have accepted the situation that was in his view not simply the result of "a *vae victis* peace," but the consummation of an organic process — that became sanctioned by the Great Powers in 1920.<sup>18</sup> His second contribution in the decade was the 1938 essay titled "Agrarian Feudalism in Hungary," that reported on the misery of the rural population and on the movement of the Hungarian populists, or, as Jaszi called them, "*narodniki*".<sup>19</sup>

The wide range of topics and the timespan in which the essays were published, however, do not mean that a number of common features cannot be identified in the texts. In a sense, the range and the timespan being so wide only means that the test of the hypothesis is a hard one: if it can be shown that despite of the large variation in author background, political orientation, topic and time of publication, some homogeneity persists in the language of the articles, then it becomes so much more legitimate to make observations on the nature of American-Hungarian relationships in the interwar period based on the similarities.

The emphasis the authors place on conformity with liberal democratic ideas provides a practical starting point for the analysis. As already mentioned, the Wilsonian or "League" version of liberalism promoted open diplomacy, democracy, national self-determination, minority rights, great power abstinence from involvement in the affairs of

small states, international and regional cooperation and a liberal economic programme promoting free trade and fiscal stability. None of the contributors in the period under consideration here, with the possible exception of Josef Redlich, identified with every item on this agenda. Yet they very clearly sought to create the impression that they were conforming to it.

In 1922, Edvard Beneš undertook the difficult enterprise of depicting the Little Entente as a potential forum of regional cooperation. He emphasised the contribution the alliance had made to regional stability in making repeated references to the thwarted restoration attempts of the last Habsburg emperor, Karl, arguing that the Little Entente has proved itself to be:

a strong and permanent bulwark against the execution of the Hapsburg plans. ... It was against this bulwark that the attempts at a Hapsburg putsch twice came to a grief.... The alliance... successfully passed a practical test and proved itself a true guardian of the dearly-bought liberty of the nations that had been freed from the Austro-Hungarian yoke.<sup>20</sup>

In doing so, Beneš followed the official line of Czechoslovak foreign policy, which took credit for the failure of the legitimists in Hungary, even though the latter were defeated by their Hungarian political opponents and Regent Horthy's desire to conform to great power expectations.<sup>21</sup> Also, in complete contradiction to the purposes of the alliance — restraining Hungarian revisionism — the article asserted that "there is little doubt that [Hungary's] isolation cannot be permanent, and that Hungary too will one day take the place in the Central-European peace bloc that is hers both politically and economically."<sup>22</sup>

All of this was aimed at demonstrating that the Little Entente was not a perpetuator of hostilities in the region, but an alliance that had the potential to become the forum of cooperation, if only Hungary's political line would change. Thus a military alliance that was certain to draw negative response in the wake of the First World War, at the time generally thought to have been brought about by secret diplomacy and alliance-making, was presented as a "peace bloc" — with the obvious purpose of gaining approval and support, moral and potentially also financial.

Similarly to Beneš, István Bethlen made use of pro-League catch phrases in sketching a very different image of Hungary two and a half

years later. His short programme called for "1. Economic and financial reconstruction. 2. A democratic reorganization on the basis of the principle of a gradual and sound evolution. 3. The organic linking up of Hungary and all Hungarians with Western culture; and in connection herewith a settlement of the minority question."<sup>23</sup>

The programme, Bethlen argued, was aimed at making Hungary into an "intellectual, political and economic link between East and West." He also acknowledged, choosing to face up to, rather than ignore the international criticism directed at the country's political system, that "Hungary, judged by the standard which we may apply to the great democracies of the West, cannot yet be called perfect or complete," an implicit promise of future democratisation under suitable circumstances.<sup>24</sup> Clearly, Bethlen was following the course he had chosen in 1922-23: one of cooperation with the victorious powers, and building international prestige through the adoption of a discourse compatible with that of democratic powers, which also explains the conspicuous omission of any references to a rectification of the Trianon borders.<sup>25</sup>

The other Central European contributors, on the other hand, were real federalists and democrats, and used the journal to promote their views concerning the region and Hungary. Understandably, they also embraced the Wilsonian discourse of liberty, progress and cooperation. Josef Redlich pleaded for tolerance, as "Hungary, witnessing the destruction of all she had possessed, of international seaborne trade, is not able to recover and to disarm either morally or materially and thus forms a block in the way of all endeavours for reconciliation in Eastern Europe."<sup>26</sup> In this sense, the fault lay with the peace settlements themselves, which "abandoned once and for all the idea of replacing the large free-trade area of pre-war Austria-Hungary by some kind of confederation or permanent economic association between the new political units."<sup>27</sup>

This argumentation is in a way an inversion of Beneš' line of thought, who defended the settlement. According to him "the substitution of new and independent states for the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was not only an act of historic justice, but at the time the interest of Europe generally,"<sup>28</sup> since it defeated militarist imperialism and created peaceful nation-states. Whether the journal's contributors praised or criticised the peace settlement, they did so with reference to some liberal democratic principles.

The same discursive strategy can be observed in Jaszi's texts. He also "measures" any phenomenon or institution he discusses against the



principles of democracy and international cooperation. His goal is for Hungary to follow the “democratic and pacific way”, based on the twin ideas of “free economic and cultural intercourse.”<sup>29</sup> Also, he never challenges the Paris treaties, which merely sanctioned the fact that “national units took their natural course”, and argued instead that

... the solution of the Danubian problem today can be found neither in the maintenance of the present situation nor in the restoration of the old frontiers of Hungary. It must be found in two things – in a reasonable readjustment of boundaries, and in a tariff union between Hungary and adjacent countries which would restore the economic advantages possessed by the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, without the Hapsburgs and without domination by any one race.<sup>30</sup>

Yet the texts of Central European authors differ significantly from the American and British contributions analyzed in the next section. One reason for this is obvious: all Central European contributors were partial to their state, their policies and political parties, present or past. *Foreign Affairs* was a forum for propaganda, and publishing in it was seen as a chance to present views in front of an interested and influential audience. This explanation is supported by — and also accounts for — the efforts the Hungarian government made to publish Bethlen’s article in response to Jaszi’s 1923 attack on the Horthy regime, as well as to Beneš’s constant presence on the pages of *Foreign Affairs* over the years.<sup>31</sup> All the more interesting is the fact that, despite the very different goals and hopes the authors were following, there are some common elements in their writing. All of the essays examined here contain long sections on history, something entirely atypical of the American and British contributions to *Foreign Affairs*. According to Central European authors, history in many ways explains the present: it bequeaths duties and enmities, in short: identity, on the authors, whose rationale for action is ultimately rooted in their interpretation of the past.

The most obvious example is Bethlen who devoted about half of his essay to a concise history of Hungary, in which he emphasised, above all, continuity and organic development. Bethlen has been quoted above as admitting the “incomplete” nature of the Hungarian political system, yet he also defended the country’s monarchical traditions, with reference to “the role played in the public law and constitutional life of Hungary by the Holy Crown and the political dogma relating thereto based on a

certain mystic tradition.”<sup>32</sup> For the political misery of the post-war years, Bethlen attempted to convey the received narrative in Hungarian interwar politics, which rests on a loose socio-psychological causation and makes use of biological metaphor typical of German neo-conservatism:

Military defeat threw the older and established classes of Hungary, together with the bourgeoisie, into a state of torpid lethargy. ... The Károlyi-Revolution with its own particular *défaitism*, which infected the whole living organism of the nation ... [was] followed by its logical consequence — the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat.’<sup>33</sup>

What the “organism of the nation”, the continuity of the state and the Holy Crown were to Bethlen, the fiction of centuries of subjugation to the House of Habsburg was to Beneš. While he was trying to depict the Little Entente as a “peace bloc”, he also incorporated into his argument elements of the Czechoslovak national narrative of the eternal conflict between peace-loving Slavs and their Germanic and Hungarian oppressors, stating that “the Danubian monarchy was the aider, abettor and tool of Hohenzollern imperialism. It was, moreover, by its very constitution, the outward expression of a German-Magyar system of violence.”<sup>34</sup> Its break-up, therefore, constituted a major achievement by the forces of freedom, and its restoration would have simultaneously meant a resurgence of the Germanic threat to the peace of the continent and a new era of bondage to [the small Central-European peoples].

For Redlich, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy represented, unlike for Beneš, the realization of a large economic union, with all its benefits, whose disappearance explained much of the crisis of the postwar period. The idea that, in the realm of economics, the empire of the Habsburgs represented an ideal mode of coexistence for the nations of the region looms large everywhere in his article, as he repeatedly proposes “the idea of replacing the large free-trade area of pre-war Austria-Hungary by some kind of confederation or permanent economic association between the new political units.”<sup>35</sup> And, although he never says so explicitly, one can easily hypothesize that it is the legitimization of the Empire as a whole that he is aiming at — an assumption corroborated by his other writings.

As for Oscar Jaszi, the unsolved problems of prewar Hungary lived on after 1918. To Jaszi, the Horthy regime represented a radicalisation of the neofeudal tendencies in the country,<sup>36</sup> that, through the gentry, preserved social and economic inequality, yielding, according to

him, "a picture so dark that the present writer has not found anything comparable to it, even in the gloomiest descriptions of Tsarist Russia."<sup>37</sup> To Jaszi, Hungarian revisionism was rooted in the desire of the political elite to reassert its feudalistic superiority over the multiethnic territory it once ruled. His view of interwar Hungary is captured in the observation that in the years after 1920 "the agrarian reform was emasculated and the feudal aristocracy retained their economic monopolies, while the political life of the country became the booty of the new Fascist elements."<sup>38</sup>

In essence, a historical experience or a culture of history conditioned the mentality of the Central European contributors to *Foreign Affairs*. They were all conscious of the audience they were writing for, and made efforts to adopt a style of writing compatible with the political-ideological preferences of the readers. Yet in all of the texts, references abound that did not fit into the Wilsonian or, simply, into a liberal democratic world view. All of the authors were conditioned by specific cultures of politics that used history to legitimise political action and explain the present. For Bethlen, it was the historical myth of the continued existence of the Kingdom of Hungary through the centuries, for Beneš the *grand récit* or master narrative<sup>39</sup> of the Czech-Czechoslovak struggle for freedom in the shadow of an eternal "German-Magyar" menace, for Redlich the idealised memory of the multiethnic Danubian empire, and for Jaszi the prewar years of struggle against all versions and shades of "gentry neofeudalism" that had kept the Hungarian society enchained for too long. History, through these powerful cultures of memory and remembering, severely limited for them the realm of the possible. Beneš would have never believed in a peaceful Hungary, Jaszi thought democratisation under the Horthy-elite inconceivable, while Bethlen was staunchly opposed to full democracy, and Redlich's memories of the Monarchy were — even if he was a perceptive critic of its problems — very much different from those of Beneš. Given these limitations, the sphere of rational action was constrained, and history virtually prescribed the preferences for the present. Defending these preferences included presenting them as compatible with the views of those whose benevolence seemed to matter, yet these preferences are not to be understood in the context of the periodical where they appeared, but in their own ideological homeland, the various political and ideological currents of Central Europe.

The different secondary — institutional — socialisation of these politicians mirrored the problem-ridden legacy of the *Vielvölkerreich* and

the Paris peace system. The experiences of the critical first two decades of the century imprinted clear priorities and also perceptions of the enemy into their thinking. Their exposure to Wilsonianism did not produce a change in their identities — those had been shaped by the realities of Central Europe, and while they did their best to learn its language or *Sprachspiel*, it was a conscious effort to cover up incompatibilities, not a real internationalization of the ideology. One is tempted to call the phenomenon linguistic isomorphism, as what the authors did was covering up the incompatible contents of their thought with the cloak of a discourse of cooperation, and it is, consequently, also through the examination of this language that this “cloak” can be removed, and the sociological poetics of their discourse can be analyzed.

*Escaping the Prisoner's Dilemma: The Liberal Internationalist Discourse*

Authors with British and American backgrounds did not deal directly with Hungary prior to 1926. From the perspective of the Council on Foreign Relations, one of its main goal being the popularisation of the League of Nations, Central Europe received added importance after 1924.<sup>40</sup> Austria and Hungary both managed to achieve an economic turnaround with the assistance of the League, and gained considerable propaganda potential. This development directly affected the tone of the articles that appeared in the journal. The change in perspective, which meant by and large a shift from questions of security to questions of economic development, was heralded by a long article titled “The Reconstruction of Hungary” by Sir Arthur Salter, former Chairman of the Financial Committee of the League of Nations.<sup>41</sup> Salter praised at length the efforts of the “strong, competent and strict government” and the success of the Bethlen government’s consolidation plan. As far as politics were concerned, he showed the same tact as Bethlen had before: he avoided any mention of Hungarian revisionism that had remained virulent and loud, in spite of having been dropped from the official government agenda.

The same laudatory tone characterised the chronicle of Royall Tyler, a junior official to Salter, in 1930.<sup>42</sup> A remarkable feature of this article was the place devoted to prime minister Bethlen who was portrayed as a man working indefatigably for compromises in Central Europe. His role in working out a joint deal on reparations due to the members of the Little Entente and the question of the disowned Hunga-

rian landlords in Transylvania was especially emphasized in the study. This was understandable, as the issue had seemed to prove the League of Nations to be a powerless and ineffective organization during the previous seven years of arbitration. As Salter had done before, Tyler also omitted mention of the shadier aspects of Hungarian politics, for instance the franc forgery scandal, a conspiracy to ruin the French currency by flooding the market with forged bills, in which prominent Hungarian politicians and other public figures had been implicated.<sup>43</sup>

Some shorter articles published in the period 1926-1931 complemented the positive image of Hungary by adding information on smaller issues. A young expert by the name of Erdmann D. Beynon seized the recurring issue of flood peril in the country to show how the Trianon borders placed a responsibility not only on Hungary but also on the neighbouring states, and argued that these have failed to make the necessary efforts in keeping the Hungarian Great Plain safe from periodical flooding.<sup>44</sup> Even the by no means Magyar-friendly Hamilton Fish Armstrong expressed some recognition for the work of Bethlen and — completely misinterpreting Hungarian intentions — in 1927 he expressed his hope that Hungary will cooperate with Yugoslavia in gaining access to the sea.<sup>45</sup> Armstrong assumed that Yugoslavs would be very forthcoming in the matter, and it only depended on Hungary to make it work. In reality, the overtures towards Yugoslavia were aimed at driving a wedge between the member states of the Little Entente, and Bethlen was preparing to approach not the Yugoslavs but Mussolini in the matter, but even when he did so, no overt criticism was put forward on the pages of *Foreign Affairs*. A third short article by László Ecker addressed the economic woes of Hungary in the wake of the 1931 crisis, and proposed classical liberalist recipes for a trade-oriented therapy based on the exploitation of the comparative advantages Hungary enjoyed in certain sectors of the economy.<sup>46</sup>

Potentially even more informative, however, is the only essay from the five-year period which was overtly critical with respect to Hungary. Its author, Harold W. V. Temperley had been an expert assigned to the British peace delegation in 1919-1920. He was also the editor of the multi-volume *History of the Paris Peace Conference*.<sup>47</sup> A member of the Royal Institute for International Affairs, he fiercely criticised the press offensive launched in 1927 by British newspaper publisher Lord Rothermere for a partial revision of the Trianon frontiers. He refrained, however, from overtly accusing Bethlen of similar intentions

— he found him culpable only in not acting with sufficient vigour to discredit and distance himself from the “troublemakers.”<sup>48</sup> The prime minister’s speech in Debrecen was to prove Temperley wrong a few months after the publication of the article in early 1928: in March of the same year, Bethlen did openly embrace revisionism, albeit without making specific demands. Temperley’s remarks nevertheless demonstrate how successfully Bethlen had built up his international legitimacy and prestige in the previous years.

After 1931, the activation of German foreign policy in Central and Eastern Europe increased the freedom of action enjoyed by the Hungarian government. Berlin, suffering from the effects of the Great Depression, opted for economic expansion and the creation of an economic zone in Central Europe. This was complemented with a much more assertive diplomatic posture, which immediately alarmed France. In such a situation, with the Germans having reappeared as mighty rivals on the international scene, much more could be expected to be tolerated by even the French government. Even the long discredited question of the return of the Habsburgs to Hungary and/or Austria was brought up once more, if only informally: some French and Swiss newspapers wrote — in reaction to the 1931 plan of a German-Austrian customs union — about the possible consequences of the dynasty’s return for the region. A further French reaction was the unveiling of the Tardieu-plan the next year, named after the French foreign minister. The plan foresaw the creation of a Central-European customs union, and would have secured privileged access to the zone for Paris and London, or, as a minimum, would have ensured equal terms of trade for the great powers.<sup>49</sup>

Hamilton Fish Armstrong was among the first in the United States to react to the Italian and German expansionist desire, and already in 1932 vehemently argued for the increased necessity of cooperation between the small states under the aegis of the League and/or Western powers. For Armstrong, German diplomatic activity could only signal one thing: a return to regional imperialism in Berlin. Embracing the Tardieu-plan that the Quai d’Orsay had put forward in March of that year, he made it no secret that economic integration would pay first and foremost political dividends. He did not entertain unrealistic hopes about the chances of the plan, yet he saw no viable alternative.<sup>50</sup>

The most unrealistic of the alternatives advanced at the time must have been John Gunther’s article from the winter of 1933/1934, titled “Hapsburgs again?”<sup>51</sup> While Gunther was a member of CFR and a

prominent and travelled, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, he was no foreign policy expert. But his ideas on the possible return of the Habsburgs to either Hungary or Austria are not of interest because there was any chance for their success. Rather, these ideas demonstrate how desperately believers of liberal internationalism searched for a way to prevent what they perceived as history repeating itself in the form of the *Drang nach Osten*, and what concessions they were ready to make in the process. The return of the despised authoritarian rulers, support for whom on the part of the Hungarian political elite had been deemed by both Beneš and Temperley as a serious offence, was suddenly being contemplated to prevent a greater wrong from happening.

In the autumn of 1938, the Munich accord granted Germany much of the Sudetenland, and in the subsequent First Vienna Award, German and Italian arbitrators returned approximately 12,000 sq kilometres of land to Hungary from Czechoslovakia on 2 November, 1938. In reflecting on Munich and its consequences, Hamilton Fish Armstrong limited his vehement critique to Nazi Germany, and held that "Rumania, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria, even Hungary, have a good deal of will and some ability to resist" a potential Nazi drive to the Southeast.<sup>52</sup> Armstrong's partner in the debate, the Royal Institute of International Affairs-scholar Arnold J. Toynbee went even further, explicitly praising the Vienna Award as a compromise solution that had "defused a time bomb in the region."<sup>53</sup>

It was not until the publication of George Katona's "Hungary in German Orbit" in 1939 that a contributor to *Foreign Affairs* drew the inevitable conclusion from the events in Central Europe and in Hungary. Katona, who became known as a socio-psychologist and analyst of consumer societies after the Second World War, observed in his chronicle of the events of the past few years that little by little Hungary has abandoned its policies of conservative parliamentarism at home and pragmatism in foreign affairs, becoming, for all practical purposes, a German satellite.<sup>54</sup>

It seems very much justified to consider all of the articles as being part of the same discourse. The tone was set by the long essays by Salter, Temperley, and Tyler, and the programme formulated therein enjoyed a hegemonic position in the paper until the time when Munich and Katona's analysis questioned the basic premises of the discourse about Hungary. This discourse was intimately linked to the belief that sound economics and diplomatic moderation could defuse tensions in Central Europe. Compliment and criticism was meted out to Hungary and

her government based on the level of compliance with the Wilsonian programme and the principles of the League of Nations. Salter, for instance, commented on the early attempts at stabilising the economy by acknowledging that “the courageous, but misguided Finance Minister, Hegedüs, made a really heroic attempt to balance the budget and restore the currency”, which of course alluded to the “necessity” of cooperation with the international community in achieving this laudable aim.<sup>55</sup> Given this cooperation, “the reparative effect of stabilization in disorganized countries has largely exceeded the hopes of the most sanguine experts, whose optimism was greeted with general scepticism three years ago.”<sup>56</sup>

Tyler’s approach was no different in evaluating Bethlen’s conciliatory policy at The Hague in 1929-1930 in settling the controversy of the Hungarian optants:<sup>57</sup>

It was fitting that the man who, in the face of much opposition at home, took Hungary to the League and executed the League’s reconstruction program, should have negotiated a settlement... which had for years baffled the Reparation Commission, the League and the chief Powers. All the parties to the settlement are to be congratulated on it, and most of all the country which had most at stake.<sup>58</sup>

Once more, moderation and cooperation with international organisations was posited as the key to success, and Bethlen received praise for his diplomatic skill and conciliatory stance employed in the framework of these organisations.

Commenting on the most sensitive issue of the day, the question of frontiers, even Temperley, who had a not very flattering opinion of pre-1914 Magyar attitudes to the nationalities question and of the post-war heritage of these attitudes, praised Bethlen’s realism in connection with the Rothermere campaign of 1927-28, observing with appreciation that “Count Bethlen himself clearly deprecates the raising of the question”.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, he too subscribed to the simple recipe that time and mutual confidence-building in the region will solve the problem, in stating that “[t]en years hence things may be different. The Successor States will be more stable, more assured of their power, and therefore more conciliatory, both to Hungarian pleas and in their attitude toward their Magyar minority populations.”<sup>60</sup>

A different kind of rationalism permeated Ecker’s article devoted to the effects of the Great Depression on Hungary. In this context, it was



proposed that “the Hungarians must divert their wheatfields and vineyards to vegetable gardens and grazing fields”, but, more importantly, the prescriptions of classical liberal economics were to be followed, in turning “energies to the specialized production of those commodities in which she has a comparative advantage.”<sup>61</sup> Given the system of protective tariffs in the region, however, the functioning of such trade-intensive national economies had to be facilitated by “tariff concessions ... induced by the League.”<sup>62</sup> Once more, rational thinking, trust-building and international pressure and monitoring were to rescue the country from its troubles.

Other short articles that appeared from authors with British and American background between 1922 and 1932 do little to change this image. Erdmann D. Beynon’s warning about the periodically recurring flood peril in Hungary indicted Little Entente states for not doing their best to prevent the flooding of the Hungarian Great Plains, and suggested that investments in the protection of the neighbour’s assets would pay political dividends by building confidence in the region. It also did away with any kind of war-guilt reasoning, observing that in the post-1920 order, all states had responsibilities vis-à-vis each other.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, Armstrong argued in 1927 for Yugoslav-Hungarian cooperation on the basis that a Hungarian outlet to the sea would strengthen the Hungarian economy, but also bring the Magyar elite to a more conciliatory position towards Successor States by proving that the latter were not intent on destroying Hungary.<sup>64</sup>

As is well known, Hungary gradually climbed out of the economic slump in the thirties through export guarantees granted by Italy and Germany, and by launching massive public procurement programs, i.e. in ways that were the very opposite of what the experts around the Council on Foreign Relations would have preferred for reasons both economic and political. Hungary’s fate was by no means untypical for East Central European small states, and the economic penetration of Germany into the region alarmed some of the observers as early as 1931-32. A reaction to Germany’s increased economic, later also political, activity in the region triggered the alarm in the Council quite early, and caused a radical reorientation of the discourse. After 1932, the discussion on East Central Europe, and more specifically on Hungary, revolved around the issue of whether German penetration in the country could be forestalled.

The shift of the discourse was signalled by the relatively long paper published in early 1933 by the editor-in-chief, Hamilton Fish

Armstrong, titled "Danubia: Relief or Ruin." Armstrong made no secret of the reason for his vehement support for regional economic integration schemes, stating that these "would be the death-knell of the *Anschluss* and any future revival of the *Drang nach Osten*."<sup>65</sup> Yet it is equally telling, how he thought such a bloc might come to exist in the end: "To the Danubian governments it must be said frankly that though the lowering of tariffs will entail immediate loss and suffering to certain groups of their citizens, they have no choice but to accept the fact stoically and get through the subsequent readjustments as best they can."<sup>66</sup>

In a sense, Armstrong's prescriptions — although different in their inspiration — echoed Ecker's suggestions from a year before. He too argued for integration by alluding to long-term economic gains, never really discussing at any length how this turnabout in economic policy was to be achieved. In short, Ecker and Armstrong both believed that economic rationality could foster cooperation among distrustful partners, he too was promoting a cooperation solution for what was very reminiscent of a Prisoner's Dilemma game.

The German danger reshuffled the stock of "permissible" scenarios considerably. German economic diplomacy in itself was perceived as a threat, as the establishment of an economic zone of influence in the region was seen as a prelude to a German *Mittleuropa*. Hitler's rise to power, understandably, only exacerbated these fears. This shift in the perception of the international balance of power — tilting towards Germany despite the recession it was suffering from — induced a reevaluation of a number of factors. This included, as mentioned before, consideration of the restoration of the Habsburg dynasty as an unlikely, yet legitimate scenario.<sup>67</sup> Gunther's essay on the possibility of the return of the imperial family in Austria and Hungary would have been impossible a decade, or even five years prior. Temperley had fiercely attacked Hungarian legitimacy in 1928, taking it to be synonymous with revisionism — attesting to the success of Czechoslovak propaganda, which sought to protect the new state from the two perceived dangers by depicting them as one and the same phenomenon. Yet the speculations on the return of the Habsburgs did not, in the new context, signify as radical a change in perspective as it might seem. At stake was still the stability and consolidation of the new states, and Gunther was not unsympathetic to the idea of restoration because he correctly perceived in legitimacy an anti-Third Reich force.

The fundamental correction of the discourse on Hungary as part of Central Europe, virtually a new-born region in quest of stability and peace, came only with George M. Katona's 1939 article, "Hungary in the German Orbit." It was this article that, for the first time, communicated the ideas and political factors to the readers of *Foreign Affairs* that had guided Hungarian politics in the interwar period. The essay, in this respect, represents the closure of the discourse: it unmaskes the language used by contributors prior to 1939 as inadequate for an analysis of the political situation in Hungary. Katona looks at both Hungary's political aims (revision of borders and the achievement of security) and her economic position (trade-dependent and not fully competitive) in preparation for the concluding observation which is the crux of his analysis. According to him, foreign and home critics of the subsequent Hungarian governments — that had simultaneously sought to bandwagon with, and balance against, Germany — "cannot attack the basic reason why that policy is what it is; namely, Hungary's dependence on Germany."<sup>68</sup>

Throughout his examination of Hungary's past decade, Katona carefully avoided reducing the country's image to that of a puppet state, emphasising that "Hungary was not a mere pawn in the German game."<sup>69</sup> Hungarian politicians, in his reading, were pursuing goals that required, as a result of international power relations and the disinterest of Western powers, an alliance with Germany. Giving up these goals was unthinkable, either because it would have caused economic disaster or because they were the direct and logical consequences of the impact of the Trianon Treaty on the country. Katona's text thus brought the intrusion of a number of notions into the discourse on Hungary, which in the language of modern social sciences could be summarised as path-dependency, identity, group perceptions, and self-preservation/survival. These, while he obviously does not use these terms, make up the core of his reasoning, an explanation of Hungary's drift into German orbit that very much foreshadows contemporary academic narratives of the process. As Katona observed, Hungarians had not chosen to become satellites of Hitler's Germany, yet "given the injustices of the peace treaty, the disinterest of Western powers in ameliorating them, and finally their passivity in the face of the German *Drang nach Osten*" left Hungary with little choice as to its alignment.

The language these authors relied on, with the exception of Katona, was one that was heavily indebted to a poetics of rationalism.

Actors were assumed to be profit-maximizers, and profit was understood in the context of the political economy of security, growth, wealth and welfare. Security was to be achieved through internal stability and international trust-building, welfare through economic integration. What this discourse failed to capture were the ideational, i.e. cultural factors, often rooted in identity, that imposed restrictions on the workability of a rationalist model for Central Europe in general, and eminently so for Hungary. Hungary's single most important political aim of the interwar period, the revision of the Trianon treaty, and the most fundamental characteristic of the region, distrust towards neighbouring states, was simply ignored. The *Sprachspiel* of liberal internationalism, as it appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, tended to ignore history and socialisation — in short, political identity. Out of this grew a discourse unsuitable for an analysis of Hungary's politics and position in the international system. Its correction came only in 1939, when the factors constraining the policies of Hungary's political elite were finally brought to light in Katona's perceptive analysis.

*Conclusion: Communication across Discourses*

The years between 1922 and 1939 represent an interesting chapter in the history of American foreign policy thinking. In the context of Central Europe, this can be summarised as the period when significant parts of the American elite, intellectual and political, stood under President Wilson's influence. For a number of reasons, American isolationism being the foremost one, US attempts at involvement in the region had to be modest and indirect, and often manifested themselves merely in pressure through press and informal channels. The members of the Council on Foreign Relations and the editors of *Foreign Affairs* watched with considerable interest as a new Central Europe, composed of several nation states, replaced the old, imperial order in the region. While conscious of the weaknesses inherent in the Paris peace treaties, they did not consider these shortcomings as necessarily fatal, and therefore interpreted the actions of the governments in Budapest, Prague or Bucharest in the context of what they perceived to be a great experiment of self-determination and parliamentarism. In the thirties, perceiving the threat posed by the expansive, and, eventually, totalitarian regimes in Germany and Italy, their expectations became more limited. The question was

simply whether at least some small states would be able to withstand pressure, and thus prevent the total failure of the experiment.

The debate over East Central Europe in *Foreign Affairs* can be usefully analyzed from several perspectives. The discourse-analytic approach chosen here served the purpose of illustrating the cultural and ideological barriers separating American and Central European elites. The latter thought of Hungary in terms of conflicts between old and new, oppressor and oppressed, dictators and democrats – in any case, in terms of threats to security and identity. For its members, depending on their nationality and political preferences, interwar Hungary was either a rogue nation, a menace to the stability of the region that had to be neutralised, a feudal relic, or a victim of historical forces seeking to remedy its situation. In either case, the perspective was one of a self-help world permeated with security dilemmas where the East Coast elite, the CFR, the publishers of *Foreign Affairs*, were potential allies to be won for the respective cause. For this reason, the Central European contributors attempted to conform to the discourse of the journal, yet did not give up their world view, which could be described as a historically conditioned realism.<sup>70</sup>

The Anglo-Saxon contributors — subsuming under this label those authors of Central European origin who were active in the United States and shared the perspective of liberal internationalism — represented a different discourse, one that was not plagued by the prejudices burdening the Central European authors. Their rationalism yielded a sound pragmatic approach to the problems of Hungary, which they viewed in the context of regional stability and trade. Their propositions were simple, and usually moderate. A step-by-step programme of economic liberalisation and regional confidence-building were perceived as the recipe for stabilising the new, small economies and reducing the level of perceived or real security threats of which Hungary was the source or the object — depending on the national perspective. The authors accorded to the League of Nations a significant role in the process, typically portraying it as the benevolent enabling and monitoring institution that provided both blueprints and supervision for the regional actors to realize the programme of peaceful development and cooperation. This discourse of liberal internationalism, however, failed to capture the forces at work in Hungary, which led to her increasing economic and political attachment to Nazi Germany. It failed, in the end, to conceptualize and understand the

real priorities of Hungary's political elite, and realize the increasing difficulties inherent in the attainment of their goals for Hungary.

The articles in the first sixteen volumes of *Foreign Affairs* tell an interesting story about international relations in the interwar period. They show a Central European small state, Hungary in two rather different lights. In the discourse of liberal internationalism, a struggling small state is portrayed, and its main goal is assumed to be the overcoming of the Prisoner's Dilemma in its regional web of relationships. In the other, Central European discourse, states or elites are fighting an intellectual war, with the imminent threat of real war as a sword of Damocles above the region. Here, the main goal is assumed to be relative power gains — achieving superiority — against historically predetermined foes, conditioning the propaganda in *Foreign Affairs* (and other media of the international community), as well as the regional agendas. Redlich is no exception to this, even if his fight is a purely intellectual one, for the rehabilitation and partial resurrection of the Habsburg legacy. In the years between 1922 and 1939, one discourse provided a blueprint for the region for overcoming its security dilemmas and the conditions hampering economic growth, while the other covertly reported on the origins and cultural roots of latent or not-so-latent conflict. That neither the liberal internationalist Anglo-Saxon elites, nor the feuding Central-European politicians succeeded in gaining a full perspective was on the one hand a natural consequence of their positions and socialisation. On the other hand, one cannot help but also see in this dualism one of the symbolic aspects of the tragedy of Central Europe that unfolded in the late thirties.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Peter Grose, *Continuing the Inquiry: The Council on Foreign Relations from 1921-1996* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1996), 13.

<sup>2</sup> Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Mikhail M. Bakhtin and P. N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 10-11 and 30. Bakhtin defined "sociological poetics" as "the question of the reflection of the ideological horizon in the content of the work and of the functions of this reflection in the whole structure." In other words, he was trying to uncover the structuring ideas of a

text, as well as investigate how these structuring ideas "govern" the way the text is constructed, both in terms of the plot and the choice of vocabulary.

<sup>4</sup> As were the CFR members connected to the banking houses Kuehn-Loeb and Morgan. Robert D. Schulzinger, *The Wise Men of Foreign Relations: The History of the Council on Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 8-11, 19; Whitney Shepardson, *The Early History of the Council of Foreign Relations* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1960).

<sup>5</sup> Grose, 9-14.

<sup>6</sup> Benedetto Croce, "Of Liberty," *Foreign Affairs*, 11 (1932/33): 1-8.

<sup>7</sup> John Dewey, "Ethics and International Relations," *Foreign Affairs* 1 (1922/23): vol. 3, 85-95.; Arnold J. Toynbee, "The East After Lausanne," *Foreign Affairs* 2 (1923/24): 84-99.

<sup>8</sup> "Coolidge, Archibald Cary," in *Who Was Who 1916-1928*, Vol. 2:223.

<sup>9</sup> "Hamilton Fish Armstrong," *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography: Being the History of the United States*, ed. Ainsworth R. Spofford (New York: J. J. White, 1898-1984) vol. H: 244.

<sup>10</sup> A case in point is the memoir of the disenchanted American expert at Versailles, Charles Seymour, a Yale historian. Seymour, like many American experts, realized the gap between Wilsonian principles and the actual boundaries. (On this subject see Tibor Glant, *Through the Prism of the Habsburg Monarchy: Hungary in American Diplomacy and Public Opinion during World War I* [Boulder, CO – Highland Lakes, NJ, Social Science Monographs – Atlantic Research and Publications: 1998] p. 279.) Yet Seymour never questioned the fundamental principle of replacing authoritarian empires with small nation-states, even if he was cognizant of the economic advantages of large territorial units. Charles Seymour, *American Diplomacy during the World War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press: 1934).

<sup>11</sup> Hamilton Fish Armstrong, *Peace and Counterpeace: From Wilson to Hitler: Memoirs of Hamilton Fish Armstrong* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 87-109; John Morton Blum, ed., *Public Philosopher: Selected Letters of Walter Lippmann* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1985), 97-105; Malbone W. Graham, *New Governments of Central Europe* (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1924), 239-268.; Isaiah Bowman, *The New World: Problems in Political Geography* (Yonkers, N.Y.: New World Press, 1921), 225-230.

<sup>12</sup> Eduard Beneš, "The Little Entente," *Foreign Affairs* 1 (1922/23): 66-73.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Redlich, "Reconstruction in the Danube Countries," *Foreign Affairs* 1 (1922/23): 73-85.

<sup>14</sup> Oscar Jaszi, "Dismembered Hungary and Peace in Central Europe," *Foreign Affairs* 2 (1923/24): 270-281.

<sup>15</sup> György Litván, "Magyar gondolat – szabad gondolat:" *Nacionalizmus és progresszió a század eleji Magyarországon* ["Hungarian thought – free thought:" Nationalism and progress in early (20<sup>th</sup>) century Hungary] (Budapest: Magvető, 1978), 148.

<sup>16</sup> Count Stephen Bethlen, "Hungary in the New Europe," *Foreign Affairs* 3 (1924/25): 445-458.

<sup>17</sup> Eduard Beneš, "After Locarno: The Security Problem Today," *Foreign Affairs* 4 (1925/26): 195-211.

<sup>18</sup> Oscar Jaszi, "Kossuth and the Treaty of Trianon," *Foreign Affairs* 12 (1933/34): 86-97.

<sup>19</sup> Oscar Jaszi, "Feudal Agrarianism in Hungary," *Foreign Affairs* 16 (1937/38): 714-718.

<sup>20</sup> Beneš, "Little Entente," 68-69.

<sup>21</sup> Magda Ádám, *A kisantant és Europa 1920-1929* [The Little Entente and Europe] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1989), 103; Mária Ormos, „*Soha amíg élek*” — *Az utolsó koronás Habsburg puccskísérletei 1921-ben* ["Never while I am alive" — the attempted *coup-d'états* of the last crowned Habsburg in 1921] (Pécs: Pannonia könyvek, 1990), 134-146.

<sup>22</sup> Beneš, "Little Entente," 73.

<sup>23</sup> Bethlen, 454.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 454-456.

<sup>25</sup> Mária Ormos, *Az 1924. évi magyar államkölcsön megszerzése* [The obtaining of the state loan of 1924] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1964), 81.

<sup>26</sup> Redlich, 80.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>28</sup> Beneš, "Little Entente," 66.

<sup>29</sup> Jaszi, "Dismembered Hungary," 278-279.

<sup>30</sup> Jaszi, "Kossuth," 97.

<sup>31</sup> Armstrong, *Peace and Counterpeace*, 278-280.

<sup>32</sup> Bethlen, 449.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 452.

<sup>34</sup> Beneš, "Little Entente," 66. The works by T. G. Masaryk and Beneš give different versions of this narrative. A standard version may be found in the opening chapters of semi-official historian Jan Opočenský's book about the birth of Czechoslovakia. Jean Opočenský, *La genèse de la Tchécoslovaquie* (Prague: Orbis, 1926).

<sup>35</sup> Redlich, 78.

<sup>36</sup> Under "neo-feudalism" Jaszi understood a socio-political system aimed at keeping the rural population powerless and unemancipated, permitting the peasants' political oppression and economic exploitation by the symbiotic political and landholder elites. Péter Hanák, *Jászi Oszkár dunai patriotizmusa* [The Danubian patriotism of Oscar Jaszi] (Budapest: Magvető, 1984), 135-39.

<sup>37</sup> Jaszi, "Feudal Agrarianism," 716.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 714.

<sup>39</sup> *Grand récit* or master narrative is used here to refer to the common elements of the sum of reflections on a given subject (i.e. Czechoslovak history). It is therefore an analytic construction, rather than a real existing text, a kind of proxy model for what we perceive as the shared characteristics of various texts.

<sup>40</sup> Schulzinger, 14-59.



<sup>41</sup> Arthur Salter, "The Reconstruction of Hungary," *Foreign Affairs* 5 (1926/27): 91-102.

<sup>42</sup> Royall Tyler, "The Eastern Reparations Settlement," *Foreign Affairs*, 9 (1930/31): 106-17.

<sup>43</sup> Similarly, no mention was made in the journal of the 1928 arms trade controversy, or any other alleged or real violation of stipulations of the Trianon treaty.

<sup>44</sup> Erdmann D. Beynon, "The Flood Peril in Hungary," *Foreign Affairs* 4 (1925/26): 682-85.

<sup>45</sup> Hamilton Fish Armstrong, "Hungary's Access to the Sea," *Foreign Affairs* 5 (1926/27): 675-77.

<sup>46</sup> Laszlo L. Ecker, "Obstacles to Hungarian Reconstruction," *Foreign Affairs* 10 (1931/32): 505-09.

<sup>47</sup> Harold W. V. Temperley, ed., *A History of the Paris Peace Conference*: Vol. 1-6 (London: Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton, 1920-22).

<sup>48</sup> Harold W. V. Temperley, "How the Hungarian Frontiers Were Drawn," *Foreign Affairs* 6 (1927/28): 431-447.

<sup>49</sup> Gyula Juhász, *Magyarország külpolitikája 1919-1945* [Hungary's foreign policies, 1919-1945] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1988), 124-126.

<sup>50</sup> Hamilton Fish Armstrong, "Danubia: Relief or Ruin," *Foreign Affairs* 10 (1933/32): 600-616.

<sup>51</sup> John Gunther, "Hapsburgs Again?" *Foreign Affairs* 12 (1933-34): 579-591.

<sup>52</sup> Hamilton Fish Armstrong, "Armistice at Munich," *Foreign Affairs* 17 (1938/39): 197-290. esp. 274.

<sup>53</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, "A Turning Point in History," *Foreign Affairs* 17 (1938/39): 305-320.

<sup>54</sup> George M. Katona. "Hungary in the German Orbit," *Foreign Affairs* 17 (1938/39): 599-610.

<sup>55</sup> Salter, "Reconstruction," 94.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 98-100.

<sup>57</sup> The "optant case" baffled international law experts for years. It revolved around Hungarian landholders applying for indemnities to Rumania after the expropriation of their estates, a right guaranteed in Article 250 of the Trianon treaty. Bethlen managed to tie up the issue with that of Hungarian reparations payments, realising a kind of synergistic issue linkage after seven years of debate in The Hague. Francis Deak, *The Hungarian – Rumanian Land Dispute: A Study of Hungarian Property Rights in Transylvania under the Treaty of Trianon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928) Two Council members also gave expert opinions on the matter: George W. Wickersham, *Opinion Regarding the Rights of Hungary and Certain Hungarian Nationals under the Treaty of Trianon* (s.l. et a. [1928]); Edwin M. Borchard, *Opinion on the Roumanian-Hungarian Dispute before the Council of the League of Nations, Arising out of the Application to Hungarian Nationals in Transylvania of the Roumanian Agrarian Law of 1921* (New Haven, Conn.: s.a. [1927])

<sup>58</sup> Tyler, 117.

<sup>59</sup> Temperley, "Hungarian Frontiers," 432.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 446.

<sup>61</sup> Ecker, 507-509.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 509.

<sup>63</sup> Beynon.

<sup>64</sup> Armstrong, "Hungary's Access," 676.

<sup>65</sup> Armstrong, "Danubia," 605.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 614.

<sup>67</sup> Gunther, 587-588.

<sup>68</sup> Katona, 610.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 606.

<sup>70</sup> The term "realist" is justified, as these politicians were clearly security-maximizers and survival-oriented. Even the émigré Jaszi framed his discourse around the issue of how Hungary could cease to be a menace to the region. The qualifier "historically conditioned" refers to the naturalness with which these contributors defined their adversaries on the basis of their view of the past and of collective political memory.

## **A Communist Newspaper for Hungarian-Americans: The Strange World of the *Új Előre***

**Thomas L. Sakmyster**

**On November 6, 1921** the first issue of a newspaper called the *Új Előre* (New Forward) appeared in New York City.<sup>1</sup> This paper, which was published by the Hungarian Language Federation of the American Communist Party (then known as the Workers Party), was to appear daily until its demise in 1937. With a circulation ranging between 6,000 and 10,000, the *Új Előre* was the third largest newspaper serving the Hungarian-American community.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the *Új Előre* was, as its editors often boasted, the only daily Hungarian Communist newspaper in the world. Copies of the paper were regularly sent to Hungarian subscribers in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Moscow, Buenos Aires, and, on occasion, even smuggled into Budapest. The editors and journalists who produced the *Új Előre* were a band of fervent ideologues who presented and interpreted news in a highly partisan and utterly dogmatic manner. Indeed, this publication was quite unlike most American newspapers of the time, which, though often oriented toward a particular ideology or political party, by and large attempted to maintain some level of objectivity. The main purpose of *Új Előre*, as later recalled by one of its editors, was "not the dissemination of news but agitation and propaganda."<sup>3</sup> The world as depicted by writers for the *Új Előre* was a strange and distorted one, filled with often unintended ironies and paradoxes. Readers of the newspaper were provided, in issue after issue, with sensational and repetitive stories about the horrors of capitalism and fascism (especially in Hungary and the United States), the constant threat of political terror and oppression in all countries of the world except the Soviet Union, and the misery and suffering of Hungarian-American workers.

A study of the *Új Előre* can provide insights into the experiences and attitudes of a significant part of the Hungarian-American community in the United States in the interwar period. This article will offer a

general overview of the history of this newspaper, including a discussion of its origins, editorial staff, coverage of news events, circulation, literary and cultural aspirations, internal and external rivalries, and finances. Several broad themes dealing with the content of the *Új Előre* will be treated: the portrayal of the regime of Regent Miklós Horthy; the image of the Soviet Union; the attitude toward American democracy and the experience of Hungarian-American immigrants in the United States. Finally, an attempt will be made to explain how and why the paper was transformed in the mid-1930's and to determine the reasons for its demise in 1937.

As the name *Új Előre* (New Forward) suggests, the newspaper was a successor to a previous Hungarian-American publication. *Előre* was a socialist newspaper that was founded in 1905, became a daily in 1912, and by World War I had reached an impressive circulation of around 10,000.<sup>4</sup> However, the entry of the United States into the war created severe problems for *Előre*. Because of its strong socialist orientation, the paper, unlike all other Hungarian-American publications, refused to stop its criticism of the war and its condemnation of America's participation. As a result *Előre* was subjected to censorship and lost its second class mailing privilege. The latter was a financial blow from which the newspaper never recovered. After the war *Előre* greeted the Communist regimes in Russia and, briefly, in Hungary with great enthusiasm. As a result during the "Red Scare" of 1919-1920 the government banned several issues, raided the paper's offices, and confiscated equipment. Some of the editors were briefly imprisoned and all were threatened with deportation. In the face of this police harassment and a huge, insurmountable deficit, the *Előre* declared bankruptcy and ceased publication on October 26, 1921.<sup>5</sup>

A week later, on November 6, the newspaper reappeared as the *Új Előre*, with a new editorial staff and free of the financial burdens of its predecessor. In its reincarnation the paper had an even more radically leftwing orientation. It was sponsored by the Hungarian Federation of the Communist Party (then known as the Workers Party), and the leaders of the Hungarian Federation were typically also editors of the *Új Előre*. The newspaper was launched in a difficult time for the left-wing press in the United States, but it benefited from the energy and zeal of a cadre of Hungarian Communist activists who arrived in the country in the early 1920's. The world view and political ideology of these émigrés were shaped by the Great War and the momentous revolutionary events in the

Soviet Union and Hungary. They were particularly embittered by and hostile toward the regime of Admiral Miklós Horthy that they blamed for the "White Terror" that had spread throughout Hungary after the "Red Terror" and the collapse of the Béla Kun regime. Indeed, the triumph of the "Counter-Revolution" resulted in the imprisonment of thousands — almost all prominent members of the Hungarian Soviet Republic were either executed, imprisoned, or were forced into exile.

Among the exiles who would play important roles in the publication of *Új Előre* was Lajos Kövess, who was the paper's first editor. During the 1920s Kövess wrote most of the lead editorials and many articles on the social and economic plight of Hungarian-American workers. Also important in the development of the paper was János Lelkai (known as John Lassen), who had a literary bent and worked to make the *Új Előre* an important creator and transmitter of working class literature and culture.<sup>6</sup> The final impetus to the launching of *Új Előre* was provided by the arrival in 1922 of József Pogány (who took the name John Pepper), a prominent member of the Hungarian Soviet Republic who was dispatched by the Comintern to the United States to assist the fledgling Hungarian-American Communist movement.<sup>7</sup> Pogány, who had long years of experience as a journalist in Hungary, mainly with the socialist newspaper *Népszava*, insisted that the *Új Előre* had a "historic calling." It was the only Hungarian Communist daily newspaper in the world, and was destined to serve as a "beacon of light" for Hungarians everywhere, "from Moscow to Vienna, from Milan to Bucharest."<sup>8</sup> Pogány also gave the newspaper an aura of internationalism by arranging for the creation of an editorial advisory board in Moscow, consisting of himself, Béla Kun, and Lajos Magyar. At the same time, relying on his extensive contacts with Hungarian Communists throughout Europe, he had the paper announce the appointment of "special *Új Előre* correspondents" based in Vienna, Moscow, Berlin, and Paris. Through its entire existence the *Új Előre* would thus give the appearance of having a full stable of "foreign correspondents," although the reality was that the articles written by these correspondents were typically simply translated versions of outdated material that had appeared in European Communist newspapers.

The editors and writers for the *Új Előre* in its sixteen year existence seldom had any formal training in journalism, and as a result the paper typically had an amateurish appearance, with occasional misspellings and irregular grammar. Equally lacking was any sense of how to run an efficient business. With some exceptions (such as Sándor

Vörös and József Péter), the editors of *Új Előre* were poor business managers. Two other complicating factors help explain why the *Új Előre* seemed always on the verge of bankruptcy. One was the constant threat that members of the editorial board would be arrested and deported. Although for the most part the F.B.I. and local police forces paid little attention to this minor Communist newspaper,<sup>9</sup> there was always the danger that immigration officials would question the status of the leaders of the Hungarian Federation. In fact, many of the Communist émigrés, having entered the country with false documentation and adopted pseudonyms, were illegal aliens who were subject to deportation. In the early 1930s two *Új Előre* editors, Lajos Kövess and Lajos Bebrits, were imprisoned and Bebrits was in fact deported.

Another problem that complicated the journalistic efforts in the offices of the *Új Előre* was the inability of the editors to work harmoniously together, whether on the board of the newspaper or in the leadership of the Hungarian Federation. For some reason Hungarian Communist émigrés, whether in Moscow, Vienna, Berlin, New York, or Cleveland, were unusually prone to the dreaded Communist sin of factionalism. The surviving files of the Hungarian Federation deal in large part with the vicious infighting that occurred through most of the 1920s. Originally this seems to have been an ideological clash between the Social Democratic "veterans" from the days of the *Előre* and the "newcomers" who arrived in the early 1920s and prided themselves on being "true Bolsheviks."<sup>10</sup> But in time personal jealousies and animosities blurred these lines, and the persisting factionalism was simply a power struggle to gain or maintain control of the Hungarian Federation. Each faction accused the other of a variety of misdeeds, including right-wing deviationism, mismanagement of the *Új Előre*, and even embezzlement of funds, though the latter probably had not occurred. The Central Executive Committee of the American Communist Party had to intervene on several occasions in the 1920s to try to identify and punish those responsible for the divisiveness and "opportunism." In 1928 the Committee finally imposed a solution whereby the leader of the so-called opportunists, Lajos Basky, was expelled. This brought a temporary harmony to the offices of the *Új Előre*, but new personal rivalries appeared once again in the early 1930s.

For its coverage of American news, *Új Előre* relied on a staff of only four or five editors, most of whom seldom travelled outside of New York (or later Cleveland) to gather news. Thus, very few of the articles that appeared in the paper were actually original pieces based on firsthand

reporting or observation. After 1924, when the *Daily Worker* began publication, many articles in the *Új Előre* were simply Hungarian translations of articles that first appeared in that English-language Communist daily. In later years *Új Előre* was also able to use *Daily Worker* political cartoons at minimal cost, although on occasion the prominent Hungarian-American artist, Hugo Gellért, provided cartoons. For other articles on national events, especially those with some connection to Hungarian-Americans, the editors assumed that the correctness of their ideology gave them the creative license to shape, distort, and even invent the news. One frequent method of composing a news story, which Sándor Vörös later related in his memoirs, was to take from the *New York Times* a minor story with some Hungarian angle and rework it in the *Új Előre* style.<sup>11</sup> Thus in the 1920s there appeared on the interior pages of the *Times* a short story about an explosion in a West Virginia mine that killed two coal miners, whose names, though garbled by the *Times* writer, were clearly Hungarian. It was added that an investigation had been initiated to determine the cause of the explosion. Several days later this became a sensational page one story in the *Új Előre*. A bold headline stated: "BLOOD FEEDS COAL BARONS' GREED," and a subhead added: "Fresh orphans and Widows for Wall Street Molochs." The long story that followed was introduced as follows:

The grinning death skulls of the Coal Barons, those blood brothers of the Wall Street imperialist finance capitalists, are again licking their greasy chops in glee They have just fed anew on miners' flesh, on minors' steaming blood to satisfy their blood-bloated bellies. Those vampires chose for their latest victims unfortunate Hungarian workers who had fled the brutal, torturing, Fascist hyenas of Horthy Hungary only to die in agony on the profit-slippery altars of American plutocracy.<sup>12</sup>

As this example suggests, the *Új Előre* was above all else a typical Communist Party newspaper of the period. On its masthead was the slogan "All power to the workers!" Its writers employed all the usual jargon about the class enemy and slavishly followed the party line as dictated by the Communist Party of the United States and, ultimately, by the Comintern. Some of the causes espoused by American Communists were progressive ones that Americans committed to justice and true democracy could also support. Thus, the *Új Előre* consistently condemned the racist treatment of Black Americans, and reported frequently on the

lynching of Negroes and the repugnant activities of the Ku Klux Klan. *Új Előre* editorials advocated the end of segregation and other discriminatory laws.<sup>13</sup> Lip service was also paid to gender equality, although in practice the *Új Előre* was male-dominated, and only one woman, Antonia Wechsler, ever had a role in the production of the paper. In a similar vein, the paper was critical of Hungarian chauvinism and tried to promote solidarity among workers of all national origins. Much space in the *Új Előre* was also devoted to coverage of some of the favoured causes of the Communist Party, including the Sacco-Vanzetti case, the Gastonia textile strike, and the Scottsboro Boys trial.

Hungarian-American Communists, like their counterparts throughout the world, were hostile to religion and especially to the hierarchy of the churches. Yet Hungarian-American workers remained for the most part devout members of their churches, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps in recognition of this "deplorable" fact, the *Új Előre* seldom contained direct and blatant attacks on the Churches or those immigrants who clung to their faith. Rather it was frequently pointed out that many priests and ministers collaborated with the hated Horthy regime, and that in general the churches were conservative and unsympathetic to the real needs of the workers. In addition, *Új Előre* writers would frequently try to weaken the workers' ties to religious holidays (such as Christmas and Easter). Typical of this approach was a column during the Christmas season of 1926 by József Péter.<sup>15</sup> The author asserted that at a time when Wall Street newspapers were announcing the arrival of an age of prosperity for all Americans, the truth could be found if one took a Christmas stroll through the slums of New York. There one encountered destitution, poorly nourished and clothed children, and rampant prostitution.

As was the case with most Communist papers, *Új Előre* writers seemed to take a special delight in finding ever more frightening ways to describe the class enemy. They were termed "Cossacks," "beasts of prey," "bloodthirsty vampires," "hyenas," and so on. Because so many of the *Új Előre* editors had experienced first hand the repressive actions of Admiral Horthy's "White Army" in Hungary, they gave an emphasis to the phenomenon of "white terror" that was perhaps unique among Communist papers of the day. Virtually every issue of the *Új Előre* reported on the eruption of "white terror" somewhere in the world. Typical headlines reflect this obsessive emphasis: "Mindenütt terror" (Terror Everywhere), "Mozgósítanak világszerte a fehér gárdisták" (The White Guards Are



Mobilizing Worldwide), and "Dühöng a nemzetközi terror" (International Terror Rages On).<sup>16</sup> Ironically, the only country deemed to be free of government-imposed terror was the Soviet Union.

Despite the emphasis on the ubiquity of "white terror" and the implication that most of the workers of the world were enslaved and denied all rights, the *Új Előre* always gave hope that revolutionary change was not only possible but perhaps imminent. Nascent uprisings against colonial powers were from time to time reported in India, Ireland, or South Africa. Stories would tell of repressed workers in Warsaw or Milan who were demonstrating or striking. Rallies in support of the Soviet Union and in opposition to war were being held in all the major cities of the world. From its earliest issues in 1921 and well into the 1930s, the pages of the *Új Előre* seemed to brim over with anticipation of the imminent collapse of the capitalist and imperialist world order and the triumph of Communism. This was particularly evident in the first years of the Great Depression, when the Western Democracies were truly put to the test by widespread poverty and unemployment.

One subject that particularly interested the editors of the *Új Előre* and filled many pages over the years were strikes that involved Hungarian-American workers. In 1922, for example, a strike by workers (most of them Hungarian-American women) in a large cigar factory in South Bethlehem received first-hand coverage.<sup>17</sup> But the biggest and most significant strike involving Hungarian-Americans involved textile workers in Passaic, New Jersey.<sup>18</sup> The strike, which began in 1925 and lasted for over a year, was one of the most important in interwar American history. The work force in the Passaic textile plant consisted primarily of East European immigrants, of whom Hungarians represented the plurality. Several of the strike leaders, including the president of the strikers council, were Hungarians. Furthermore, the strike was inspired and led primarily by the Communist Party, since the American Federation of Labor refused to promote strikes in situations where success was unlikely. The Hungarian Language Federation, which was centred in nearby New York City, and had some of its largest branches in New Jersey cities close to Passaic, played a leading role in what became one of the Communist Party's most important labour actions of the 1920s.

In these circumstances the *Új Előre* was able to provide extensive, and often first-hand, coverage of the Passaic Textile Strike, which began in late 1925. For more than a year the paper offered stories about the strike in every issue. Almost surely the *Új Előre* covered the story more

thoroughly than any other American newspaper.<sup>19</sup> Of course, the perspective of the *Új Előre* writers was blatantly one-sided: the courageous, oppressed, impoverished, and malnourished strikers were being brutally repressed by the rapacious capitalist owners who employed gangsters, gunmen, and corrupt priests as strikebreakers. Police who broke up picket lines were called "blue-coated beasts" (kékkabátos bestiák) or "blood-thirsty Cossacks." A sampling of headlines reflects these biases: "Új terror uralom a passaiciak ellen" (New Wave of Terror Against the Passaic Strikers), "Még egy orvtámadás a passaiciak ellen" (Another Ambush of the Passaic Strikers), and "A passaic szövőők Amerika munkásosztályának hősei" (The Passaic Textile Workers: Heroes of the American Working Class).<sup>20</sup> Many photographs were published, with an emphasis on illustrating the horrible slum housing of the workers and the older women who were forced to endure serf-like conditions in the factories.

Numerous articles that today would be labelled "human interest" stories were printed, most of them written by Lajos Kövess, who joined the picket lines and visited the workers in their homes. Despite their clear ideological slant, these articles provide insights into the mentality and life of the workers and reflect the author's earnest sympathy for fellow Hungarian-Americans engaged in such a difficult struggle against enormous odds.<sup>21</sup> Kövess and the other *Új Előre* writers always eschewed any hint of Hungarian nationalism in their stories, which emphasized that all the strikers, whether Hungarian, Polish, Slovak, or Italian, were brothers united in the noble struggle against the rapacious factory owners. Throughout 1926 the *Új Előre* suggested that the workers would never give in and that their example of heroism was sparking a "wave of strikes" in other factories. This, however, was not the case, and when the strike was finally ended in December, 1926, most of the strikers' demands were not met, although a previous wage cut was rescinded and the owners pledged that there would be no retaliation against the strikers. Yet far from acknowledging defeat, the *Új Előre* claimed a victory.<sup>22</sup>

One of the most remarkable things about the *Új Előre* as a paper directed to presumably the poorest and least educated segment of the Hungarian-American community was the high level of interest its writers evinced in literary and cultural topics. It is one of the paradoxes of this Hungarian Communist newspaper that most issues contained, side by side with articles of ideological ranting as described above, excerpts from short stories and novels of some of the finest writers of the time. Almost from the first issue in 1921, the *Új Előre* had a section devoted to "szép-

iradalom" (refined literature, or "belles lettres") and a "vasárnapi melléklet" (Sunday Supplement). In the latter there were essays not only on broad political and philosophical questions, but also on literary and artistic topics. Even a partial list of writers who, over the years, had their works printed in *Új Előre* is most impressive. All of them, of course, were for various reasons ideologically acceptable, though few were Communists. There were short stories by Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Jaroslav Hašek, Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, and Maxim Gorki; poetry by Walt Whitman and Ilya Ehrenburg; excerpts from novels by Upton Sinclair, Andre Malraux, Henri Barbusse, and Jaroslav Hašek (including a serialization of *The Good Soldier Svejk*).<sup>23</sup> Among Hungarian writers who found a place on the pages of *Új Előre* were Frigyes Karinthy, Lajos Kassák, József Lengyel, Béla Illés, and János Lékaï. Several of these Hungarian writers had originally published their work only in a German language edition, because of the impossibility of finding a publisher in Horthy's Hungary. The best example is János Lékaï's novel *A másik Amerika* (The Other America), which at first was published in German and Russian, but in Hungarian for the first time only in *Új Előre*.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the publishing of fiction and frequent book reviews, the *Új Előre* also took a lively interest in theatre and film. New York plays were reviewed, with special focus given to the actor Béla Lugosi, who was held in high regard not only because he was a Hungarian but also because he was sympathetic to the Communist cause. Hollywood films were generally ignored as being ideologically bankrupt, but Soviet film production was closely followed and films like *Battleship Potemkin* were accorded the highest accolades. The editors of *Új Előre* never explained why they placed such a heavy emphasis on cultural affairs in a newspaper aimed at the proletariat. Presumably they were acting on the principle that even the humblest worker could develop a refined taste and appreciate great works of art. One can only wonder if ordinary Hungarian-American workers, struggling to make ends meet economically, had the time or inclination to struggle through a short story by József Lengyel or a novel by Andre Malraux.

Although stories about strikes, the "horrors" of the Horthy regime, and ubiquitous examples of "white terror" provided the most sensational headlines in the *Új Előre*, and significant attention was given to cultural and literary topics, much of the space in the typical issue of six pages was taken up with reports on the fairly humdrum local activities of branches

of the Hungarian Language Federation, which were located in all of the major Hungarian-American communities. A present-day reader perusing the pages of the *Új Előre* in its sixteen year existence could easily gain the impression that the Communist movement had taken strong hold among Hungarian-American workers. There were constant reports of a whole range of Party activities that suggested a dynamic movement with enthusiastic public support. One city with a large number of Hungarian-Americans, Perth Amboy, might serve as an illustration. Almost every edition of *Új Előre* reported on newsworthy Communist-related happenings in that New Jersey city, including lectures, rallies, picnics, workers' schools, and even "evening teas" (sponsored by the Perth Amboy Workers Gymnastic Club). Children of Perth Amboy workers attended meetings of the "pioneer csoport" (pioneer group). Workers could spend their free time attending a meeting of the "Szovjet Barátok Szövetsége" (Society of Friends of the Soviet Union). Women had their own "Munkásnők köre" (Women Workers Circle). Readers of the paper in Perth Amboy sometimes wrote letters to the editor. Invariably such "letters to the editor," supposedly sent from the major centres of Hungarian-American life, praised the wonderful service provided by the *Új Előre*. On the frequent occasions when workers were called on to hold rallies for one or another cause, the diligent Communist workers of Perth Amboy seemed always eager to comply. Yet internal records of the American Communist Party tell a much different story. The number of dues-paying members of the Hungarian Language Federation in 1921, the year of the founding of *Új Előre*, was a mere 84. This increased to 311 by 1923 and to a peak of 550 in 1925. Thereafter the membership total dropped steadily and reached a low point of 205 in 1929.<sup>25</sup> Since the majority of these dues-paying members resided in New York City and Cleveland, the number in a city like Perth Amboy could not have exceeded ten or twelve. Thus, the feverish activity reported in the *Új Előre*, if not simply invented out of thin air, was conducted by a handful of hardcore Party members. The harsh reality, which of course was never hinted at in the newspaper and was probably never even acknowledged privately by members of the editorial board, was that the Communist movement had little appeal to most Hungarian-American workers, let alone to those who were making their way into the middle class. Whether because of devotion to their Church, Hungarian patriotism (often expressed through support for the revision of the Treaty of Trianon), loyalty to their new homeland, or belief that their children would benefit from the "American dream" even

though they themselves had to endure hardship, most Hungarian-Americans remained indifferent if not hostile to those who were advocating the overthrow of the American government and a radical reordering of society. For many workers the *Új Előre* was at best a curiosity; for the better educated it was a wretched publication that "had no serious following here [New York] and even less in the countryside."<sup>26</sup>

The failure of the Communist Party to become anything approaching a mass movement was one of the reasons for the constant financial problems confronting the editors of the *Új Előre*. Of course, most newspapers published for immigrant communities had a difficult time surviving in the United States during the interwar period. In most cases, income from sales of the paper had to be supplemented by profits from the *Új Előre* Book Store in New York, advertising revenue, and subsidies or gifts received from other sources. The *Új Előre*'s two main rivals, which also appeared daily, were *Szabadság* (a liberal nationalist paper with a circulation of over 30,000) and *Amerikai Magyar Népszava* (a mildly socialist paper with a similar circulation). Both papers struggled to survive, but each had special advantages: *Szabadság* had the support of a wide array of church and civic organizations, and *Népszava* received substantial subsidies from the Horthy government.<sup>27</sup> *Új Előre* did receive a kind of subsidy from the American Communist Party: a proportion of all dues collected from members of the Hungarian Federation were used to pay the salary of the members of the central committee of the Federation. Since these individuals were usually also members of the editorial board of the newspaper, a portion of the normal expenses of publishing the paper was met. However, income from sales of the newspaper covered only one quarter of the budget.<sup>28</sup> Most readers of the newspaper obtained their copies by mail subscription, some from as far away as Moscow.<sup>29</sup> Newsstand sales were significant only in certain parts of New York City and Cleveland. Elsewhere, candy stores and newsstands generally refused to sell what the owners considered a disreputable or marginal newspaper.<sup>30</sup> The circulation figures that the *Új Előre* editor provided in its annual reports to the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party generally ranged from 8,000 to 10,000, although this figure fell as low as 6,200 in 1931.<sup>31</sup> However, these data were misleading, since many thousands of copies of the newspaper were apparently distributed free of charge. In fact, the paid circulation (subscriptions and newsstand sales) probably amounted to only 3,000 or 4,000.

To meet the paper's annual budget of roughly \$80,000, the editors relied heavily on various cost-cutting measures, fundraising events, paid advertisements, and donations. Among the cost-cutting measures was the reduction of the size of the paper from the original eight pages to six, and the later decision to discontinue publication of the Sunday Supplement. Some savings were achieved in the late 1920s when, at the urging of József Péter, an agreement was reached for the Daily Worker to move from Chicago to New York and to make use of the *Új Előre* printing press. The subsequent move in 1931 by the *Új Előre* to Cleveland was also based partly on financial factors, although the argument was also made that Cleveland was more centrally located in terms of the Hungarian-American communities of Detroit, Chicago, and Pittsburgh.

As for fundraising activities, the most popular were the annual *Új Előre* picnic, held in the 1920s on Long Island, and the annual "Új Előre days" in a number of Hungarian-American communities.<sup>32</sup> Despite the strident anti-capitalist orientation of the *Új Előre*, ads were accepted from major companies such as Chesterfields cigarettes and Borden milk. However, apparently few major companies regarded this Communist newspaper aimed at the poorest workers as a profitable place to advertise their product. Most of the ads in *Új Előre* were for bakeries, restaurants, banks, and travel agents that catered to Hungarian-American communities. The form of income that was most critical to the survival of *Új Előre* was donations, which typically represented some 25% to 30% of the budget. These sometimes came as \$1.00 or \$2.00 gifts from ordinary workers, but much more important were the more substantial gifts from wealthier people (not always of Hungarian origin) who were willing to support what they regarded as a worthy publication promoting progressive causes. But such donations did not come in a steady flow, and the result was that the newspaper was in a continuing financial crisis throughout its sixteen year existence. The annual deficit reached as high as \$10,000 in 1926.<sup>33</sup> Every two or three years huge headlines in the paper would declare that the very survival of *Új Előre* was in doubt: "Veszélyben az Új Előre!" (The *Új Előre* is in Danger) or "A megszűnés veszélye előtt a lap!" (The Paper Stands in Danger of Disappearing). Periodic subscription and donation campaigns were launched to ensure the survival of the paper. Daily counts of new subscriptions appeared in the paper. Occasionally prominent Americans with left-wing sympathies were asked to give their moral support.<sup>34</sup> In addition prize competitions were held to reward those who brought in the most new subscriptions. In the 1926 competition first

prize was a round-trip ticket to Moscow. The budget crisis was at times so severe that the size of the paper had to be reduced. In the late 1920s the Sunday supplement was discontinued. In 1923 and again in 1930 and 1931 the paper appeared for a few days in a 2-page edition.

These fundraising drives always ended with the good news that the *Új Előre* had been saved, but invariably donations soon fell off again, new subscribers failed to re-subscribe, and the budget crisis reappeared. Two other factors contributed to the financial problems and made it difficult for the *Új Előre* to become an efficiently operated business. In its sixteen year existence the paper had to defend itself against a number of lawsuits filed by individuals who claimed that articles in the *Új Előre* were libelous. In some cases these were frivolous actions taken by ideological enemies to embarrass the *Új Előre* editors and to weaken the paper financially. Some lawsuits, however, were fully justified. The writers for the *Új Előre* were fiercely combative and felt no compunction about making wild and scurrilous statements about their enemies. The result was that articles in the *Új Előre* routinely contained personal invectives and vile accusations aimed at a whole range of individuals and groups, since virtually all non-Communist American groups were regarded as ruthless and despicable enemies. Thus, the American Federation of Labor was declared to be pro-fascist and those who espoused a social democratic program were "social fascists." The favourite targets of abuse were the two major Hungarian-American newspapers, *Szabadság* and *Népszava*. They were accused of having sold out to the Horthy regime and having become "tools of the capitalists and bourgeoisie."<sup>35</sup> Writers for these rival newspapers were typically liberal and democratic in their ideological orientation, but were nonetheless described in the *Új Előre* as "lackeys of Horthy" or worse. Such individuals were frequently accused of fraudulent activity, financial chicanery, or being on the payroll of fascist groups or countries.<sup>36</sup> When several of the lawsuits against *Új Előre* in the 1920s were successful, the paper had to make court-ordered payments of \$1000 or \$2000. The most serious lawsuits, however, came in the early 1930s when a Catholic monk residing in Detroit claimed he had been libelled and demanded \$100,000 in compensation. A concurrent lawsuit for defamation of character was launched by an individual named Vassas, whom the *Új Előre* called a "Rákóczi-Horthy fascist."<sup>37</sup> These cases dragged on for years and finally, confronted by the prospect of a long and costly court battle and possible loss of the case, the editors successfully filed for bankruptcy in 1934,<sup>38</sup> avoided financial disaster, and

ensured the survival of the paper for several more years. Court records at the time showed that *Új Előre* had liabilities of \$124,782, and assets of only \$1,660.<sup>39</sup>

In surveying the broader themes dealt with on a regular basis in the sixteen year existence of the *Új Előre*, three stand out as offering particularly useful insights into the psychological and ideological perspectives of the paper's editors and writers. These are the images presented in the paper of three countries of most concern to the publishers and readers of the *Új Előre*: Hungary, the Soviet Union, and the United States.

The attitude toward Hungary expressed by the writers for *Új Előre* was in some ways ambivalent. On the one hand, Communist ideology made it impossible for them to think or write in nationalistic terms. They vehemently condemned the nationalist spirit that prevailed in most Hungarian-American associations and press organs, and that found its most frequent expression in the campaign for revision of the Treaty of Trianon. For the Hungarian Communists the campaign for treaty revisionism was a "fascist plot" that was designed merely to solidify Horthy's counter-revolutionary regime. Once Communism triumphed in Hungary and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, border problems would in some way dissipate.<sup>40</sup> However, the unspoken assumption of most of the Hungarian-Americans who wrote for the *Új Előre* was that they would return some day to Hungary, once the evil Horthy regime had been toppled and a progressive government had been installed. Few of them seemed to have any special attachment to America. One finds in the pages of *Új Előre* hints that these Communists living in the United States still retained a kind of patriotism and a respect for certain Hungarian cultural and historical traditions. Thus, although the Hungarian Soviet Republic of Béla Kun was constantly discussed and described as the key event in Hungarian history, some attention and respect was accorded Sándor Petőfi and the achievements of the 1848-49 revolutionaries.

Since it was Regent Horthy who had forced them into exile in the first place, and prevented them from returning to their native land because of the dictatorship he had established, the writers and editors of the *Új Előre* had a special loathing for the "bloodthirsty admiral." Indeed, hatred for Miklós Horthy was a kind of "*raison d'être*" for these frustrated and embittered émigrés. They expressed their contempt for him and his regime in a constant stream of vitriolic articles from the first days of the *Új Előre* in 1921 to the very end in 1937. Every possible term of abuse to ridicule



Horthy and his collaborators was employed. Horthy was the original and most despicable practitioner of "white terror." He was a "butcher," a "murderer," an "assassin," and a "bloodsucking vampire." As early as 1922 he was already deemed a "fascist," indeed a far more sinister figure than Mussolini himself. Conditions in Hungary, which was routinely called "Horthyország" (Horthy's Land), were described as horrible beyond belief. As one *Új Előre* headline put it: "Horthyország: Nyomor, Nyomor, Nyomor" (Horthy's Land: Misery, Misery, Misery). The Horthy regime exemplified all of the worst and most debased evils of capitalism and fascism: persecution of the proletariat; exploitation of the poor by the rich and powerful ("élősdiség"); hatred, but also, fear of Soviet power; base corruption. The *Új Előre* regularly predicted catastrophe for Hungarian workers and farm labourers: "Egyetlen nagy börtön lesz Horthyország" (Horthy Land Will Become One Huge Prison), "Horthyék két és fél millió embert ítéltek halálra" (The Horthyites Have Condemned Two and a Half Million People to Death); "Négy millió éhező paraszt" (Four Million Starving Peasants).<sup>42</sup> When conventional language did not suffice, *Új Előre* writers turned to poetry:

Édes földem, Magyarország  
De megült a szomorúság.  
Fejünk felett fehér átok.

Sadness has engulfed Hungary,  
My dear native country,  
Over our heads hangs a white curse.<sup>43</sup>

All signs of more moderate or liberal policy initiatives on the part of the Horthy government were quickly dismissed by the *Új Előre*. Thus, when Regent Horthy issued a "Christmas amnesty" to many political prisoners in December, 1921, the response in the *Új Előre* was that this was just another duplicitous move and in reality an intensification of class warfare. The response was similar when Horthy issued another more wide-ranging amnesty in 1930 on the tenth anniversary of his election to the regency.<sup>44</sup>

Since the Hungarian-American Communists could not strike a direct blow against the Horthy government in their native land, they took every opportunity to attempt to mobilize American and world opinion against the hated regime. Rallies and demonstrations were frequently organized in Washington and New York City. In the late 1920s and early 1930s these drew sizable crowds, and the Communist backed

"Anti-Horthy League" attracted members from democratic and socialist groups. When Hungarian delegations were sent to the United States to gain support for the regime in Budapest and for the campaign to revise the Treaty of Trianon, the *Új Előre* attempted to ridicule and embarrass them. On occasion they were successful in their efforts. For example, in 1927 a number of nationalistic American-Hungarian groups, in cooperation with the Hungarian government, began plans to erect a statue of Lajos Kossuth in New York. It was asserted that no city with a Hungarian community as large as that of New York should be without a memorial to the great Hungarian statesman and national hero. From the start the writers of *Új Előre* condemned this plan as a way of strengthening the Horthy regime by stoking the fires of chauvinism and treaty revisionism. When the official ceremony dedicating the statue took place on March 15, 1928, the foremost Hungarian national holiday, hecklers dispatched by the Hungarian Federation were on hand to disrupt the festivities. Then, in the middle of the ceremony, came the crowning touch: an airplane appeared overhead and dropped thousands of leaflets that denounced the "Horthy-ites" and described all those who collaborated with the Hungarian dictator in erecting the Kossuth statue as "Horthy lackeys." All of this was described in gleeful and triumphal articles in *Új Előre* over the following several days.<sup>45</sup> To the delight of the *Új Előre* editors, there was even a story about the "successful" demonstration in the *New York Times*. Years later Hungarian Communists who had participated in this demonstration recalled it as one of the great triumphs of their careers, the one notable victory (albeit symbolic) over the hated Horthy regime.<sup>46</sup>

The image of the Soviet Union presented to the readers of *Új Előre* was in very stark contrast to the depiction of Horthy's Hungary. Here was a country where the interests of the proletariat were truly paramount. Workers and peasants were treated with dignity and all the evil remnants of capitalism and imperialism were being eliminated. In the process age-old problems of human society were being solved by the application of "Soviet power." Prostitution had been eliminated and former prostitutes were being trained in new jobs. Invalids and retired people who had suffered under the tsarist regime were now being treated with dignity, whereas in capitalist countries they would be forced into panhandling.<sup>47</sup> Perhaps to contradict the stories that sometimes appeared in the non-Communist American press about political oppression, starvation, and primitive conditions in the Soviet Union, frequent photos

were printed showing happy, smiling workers, heroic pilots, well nourished and healthy children, and attractive female athletes.

In terms of economic development, the glories of Communist central planning and the five year plans were constantly extolled in the *Új Előre*. The Soviet Union was depicted as the richest country in the world, one that was reaching new heights of economic and agricultural production. It was argued that because Soviet workers were treated so well, they gave their all, unlike workers in capitalist countries who had no incentive to work hard. As a result the first five year plan was achieved in only three years. Soviet science and industry were said to be marching ahead of that of other industrialized countries, including the United States. In 1930 the remarkable and totally implausible assertion was made that eight million automobiles would soon be produced annually in the Soviet Union, twice that of the United States.<sup>48</sup> The superior achievements of Soviet science and engineering were often cited, including the Moscow subway, Soviet zeppelins (which, unlike their American counterparts, never crashed), and splendid new fighter planes, which were designed solely for defensive purposes, since the Soviet Union was a peace-loving country. The editors of *Új Előre* were so confident of their position that in 1936 they even cited a report published in *Szabadság* about the existence of secret Soviet labour camps in Siberia. This accusation, they asserted, was an obvious fabrication and showed how reactionary and fascist the *Szabadság* had become.<sup>49</sup>

Frequent testimonies about the good life now available to workers in Soviet Russia appeared in the *Új Előre*. Hungarian-Americans who visited the USSR wrote glowing accounts of the workers' paradise that was being created. They described the ample food, clean housing, and dignified treatment of workers, who responded by working hard because they knew they were the real owners of their factories and not the rapacious capitalists. Some visitors could hardly hold in their admiration and excitement. One declared that he wanted to burst out in song about the wondrous Communist city of Moscow, for it embodied "the future, love, happiness, and prosperity."<sup>50</sup>

Hungarian-American workers were encouraged to emigrate to and settle in the Soviet Union. Those who did so also sent reports to the *Új Előre* that sang the praises of their new home. A Hungarian engineer reported that he was given a warm welcome in his new homeland and that he had been assigned a four room apartment with a constant supply of hot water. He encouraged other engineers and scientists to join him.<sup>51</sup>

Ordinary factory workers also joined this chorus of praise. The *Új Előre* even reported that Hungarian-American workers in the Soviet Union were so quickly integrated into the Soviet work force that some had become model workers, Stakhanovites.<sup>52</sup> Even the children of emigrants to the Soviet Union had their say. One, Joe Fejés, wrote to the English-language "Youth Page" and offered an exuberant account of his comfortable life in Soviet Russia. A writer for the "Youth Page" of *Új Előre* added that Soviet young people were "the happiest in the world." They were well fed and received an education that turned them "away from the flippancy and emptiness of capitalism to the seriousness and purposefulness of Socialism."<sup>53</sup>

If Miklós Horthy was depicted in the *Új Előre* as the devil incarnate, the Soviet leaders were treated as saintly or even divine figures. Special reverence and adulation was accorded Lenin, the wise leader and hero of the Revolution. His date of death was commemorated each year with articles and poems and rallies were organized in New York to honour his memory.<sup>54</sup> By the 1930s the cult of Stalin already prevalent in the Soviet Union began to take hold in American Communist publications. In *Új Előre* Stalin was called "the great teacher" and the "standard-bearer of Leninism." Flattering photographs of Stalin suggesting a wise and just leader appeared frequently. By 1937 Stalin was being depicted in the same sycophantic and obsequious manner as had become the practice in Soviet Russia at the time.<sup>55</sup>

Although the images of Horthy's Hungary and the Soviet Union in *Új Előre* were clearly defined and delineated, the image of the United States of America was a good deal more ambiguous. In retrospect this can be attributed to a huge gulf between the perceptions and assumptions of ordinary Hungarian Americans, almost all of whom had arrived in the country before 1914, and the Hungarian Communists in the Communist Party leadership, most of whom had arrived only after 1919. The Hungarian immigrants before 1914 had made the difficult journey from the heart of Europe to the New World because they had come to believe that America was the "land of opportunity." For a variety of reasons a number had subsequently returned to Hungary, but the vast majority chose to settle in the United States permanently. Though they had discovered that in fact American streets were not "paved in gold," most had faith in American democracy and believed that by hard work and education they, and above all their children, had a good chance to prosper and move up in society.<sup>56</sup>

Confident in the correctness of Communist ideology, the editors of the *Új Előre* took on as one of their primary missions the task of disabusing Hungarian-Americans of what they regarded as their fundamentally flawed ideas about America. They believed that though the United States was undoubtedly a rich country that had developed truly efficient methods of industrial production, the only ones who truly benefited were the capitalists and bourgeoisie, who greedily hoarded all the profits. Writers for the *Új Előre* wished to show "the other America" (a másik Amerika), the land of grinding poverty, hopelessness, police oppression, and discrimination.<sup>57</sup> John Lassen (János Lékai), the author of a novel with the title *A másik Amerika*, employed both fiction and non-fiction to persuade his readers. He argued, for example, that just as the Hungarians had arrived as third-class passengers on the giant steamships, so they remained third-class citizens in their new country.<sup>58</sup> In America, especially in the large cities like New York, prospects for the Hungarian-Americans were depicted as bleak and futile. Their lives, according to one *Új Előre* writer, were a litany of monotonous and dreadful conditions: slum housing, tuberculosis, the breadline, the time clock, and the lunch bag. Indeed, New York was "an open wound of the proletariat."<sup>59</sup>

The editors and writers of the *Új Előre* had no faith in American democracy. To them it was a complete sham, a confidence trick worked by the Wall Street capitalists who controlled the country. The only people who truly had freedom of speech in the United States were those "who represented the interests of the bourgeoisie." When the workers tried to act on their own behalf, by striking in factories or holding protest meetings, they were suppressed by fascist-style police forces.<sup>60</sup> In truth, the arbiters of the so-called American democracy were such groups as the Ku Klux Klan, Wall Street, the American Legion, and the corrupt FBI. They, the true "wire-pullers" of the American government, constantly resorted to terror to smash the workers and suppress all truly democratic and progressive movements.<sup>61</sup> In the *Új Előre* one also finds frequent attempts to debunk respected figures and national heroes in American history. Thus, there were frequent articles designed to contradict the traditional, reverential portrayals of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln in American school books. Washington, for example, was said to be a poorly educated man who fought purely to advance bourgeois and capitalist goals. He was indifferent to, indeed even hostile towards, the interests of ordinary American workers.<sup>62</sup>

In the 1920s, and especially the 1930s, one issue that confronted all the East European immigrant groups in the United States was to what extent the English language should be incorporated into their newspapers and other publications.<sup>63</sup> The underlying assumption of the editors of *Új Előre* was that Hungarian-American workers would in time merge with other immigrant groups and form just another part of the American proletariat. Despite the fact that *Új Előre* published the works of many Hungarian poets and novelists, in fact, as one historian has put it, they "did not see their tasks as safeguarding and preserving the consciousness of being Hungarian for the future."<sup>64</sup> In the early 1920s József Pogány (John Pepper) was a strong advocate of the need to learn English. Writing in 1922, he pointed out that only 46% of Hungarian-Americans had learned to speak English. He argued that the Communist movement could never succeed in America as long as it was regarded as a European phenomenon. Thus, the immigrants (and not just Hungarians) needed to make the effort to learn to speak English.<sup>65</sup>

Nonetheless, the *Új Előre* remained until its demise in 1937 almost entirely a Hungarian language newspaper. Though the editors and writers of the paper all learned English and could have written acceptable articles in English, the reality was that most of their readers were members of the first generation of Hungarian-Americans who knew little or no English. To cater to the second generation who were learning English in the schools, the *Új Előre* introduced in 1929 a "Pioneer Youth" page. This continued, off and on, for several years, but seems not to have been a success in attracting Hungarian-American youth. The articles on the "Pioneer Youth" page, which were reprints of pieces originally published elsewhere, were aimed at American young people of all ethnic origins, not specifically Hungarian. Moreover, they were essentially just simplified versions of the heavily ideological articles that appeared in all American Communist publications of that era. However, after the move of the *Új Előre* to Cleveland in 1931, a new "Youth Page" was introduced. The articles were written for the most part by amateur journalists from the Cleveland area, probably the children of Communist functionaries. Although the writers of the "Youth Page," like their predecessors, used the usual Communist formulae and jargon, in time they introduced features that probably were of greater interest to young people. There were frequent updates on youth baseball, basketball, and soccer leagues, as well as announcements for dances, excursions, and high school events. By 1937 there must have been doubts in the minds of at least some of the

editors of the *Új Előre* that the Hungarian-American youth at which the "Youth Page" was directed were actually going to become the kind of "true believers" who had founded the newspaper.

The writers for the *Új Előre*, who throughout the 1920s had predicted that the American capitalist system contained the seeds of its own destruction and that before long the workers would rise up and seize power, must have felt vindicated when, beginning in 1929, what became known as the Great Depression began. Now the *Új Előre* could depict, without the usual exaggeration, the grave economic problems of capitalist America, since strikes, breadlines, unemployment, and wage-cuts were a reality for millions of Americans. *Új Előre's* accounts of massive labour unrest, the misery of the workers, and the imminent collapse of capitalism reached a crescendo in 1934 and 1935. Yet a curious thing then happened. Just as it seemed that all of the impossible dreams about the collapse of the capitalist system might come true, the *Új Előre* underwent a remarkable, indeed startling, transformation. To a certain extent in 1935, but more noticeably in 1936, most of the hardline positions that the *Új Előre* had clung to stubbornly for over a decade, were softened and, in some cases, simply abandoned. Suddenly it became possible to envision an acceptable reforming government in Washington. The socialists, long vilified as "social fascists," were now deemed suitable political partners. Moderate Hungarian political figures who had always been mocked and ridiculed now were treated respectfully and even allowed to voice their opinions in the pages of the *Új Előre*.

This dramatic transformation occurred not because of a change of heart among the editors of *Új Előre*, but because of a major policy reversal proclaimed by the Comintern in Moscow. In 1935 Communists worldwide were being called on to support "popular fronts," that is to cooperate with all political and ideological groups and parties that were hostile to Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. In similar situations in the past the Hungarian-American Communists had always managed to make the necessary adjustments, even when the shifts in the party line were puzzling or embarrassing.<sup>66</sup> But the call for a "popular front" was a particularly difficult pill to swallow. Some of the changes thought desirable were fairly cosmetic in nature. For example, on February 6, 1936, without any explanation, the masthead of the paper was changed from "All Power to the Workers!" to "For the Struggle Against War and Fascism! For the Defense of Immigrants!" Much more difficult to accept and to implement were changes into fundamental ideological positions

that had always been the trademark of the *Új Előre*. The paper had always taken a very hostile position against the two traditional American political parties, Democratic and Republican. No exception had been made for Franklin Roosevelt, though many Americans regarded his New Deal legislation as quite radical. In the pages of the *Új Előre* from 1933 to 1935, Roosevelt's New Deal was depicted as just a new way to perpetuate "the brutal oppression of the workers and push for a new war." Roosevelt's "rosy promises" merely resulted in continued suppression of workers, assassination of strikers, and pampering of the Wall Street moguls. Indeed, Roosevelt had made a pact with Wall Street to pave the way for a purely fascist system. In short, Roosevelt was "the working-man's greatest enemy."<sup>67</sup>

Having taken such outrageous positions, it is understandable that the paper's editors would be a bit puzzled about how to develop a new image of Roosevelt in accordance with the new Comintern directives. But they proceeded to do so, step by step. The focus of the *Új Előre*'s invective gradually shifted to certain critics of Roosevelt, such as the extreme right-winger Father Coughlin. Notice was taken when Roosevelt made a cautious condemnation of Italian aggression in Ethiopia. Flattering photos of the president now appeared, without the caustic descriptive notes that had always accompanied such photos in the past. In the election campaign of 1936, although the American Communist Party fielded a candidate, Earl Browder, the *Új Előre* actually printed a guest column that suggested that Communists might be wiser to vote for Roosevelt than Browder, because the main objective was to defeat the Republican candidate.<sup>68</sup> By 1937 the transformation was complete. An editorial in *March* criticized the reactionary forces in Congress that were opposing the president's democratic policies. It was even conceded that "public opinion approved Roosevelt's plans, as a step in the right direction."<sup>69</sup>

When Earl Browder, in the spirit of the Popular Front movement, declared that "Communism is 20th Century Americanism," this too seemed to require some adjustments by Communist newspapers. For *Új Előre* this meant, among other things, that certain previous interpretations of American history had to be completely altered. American national heroes now were presented in a new, much more positive, light. Abraham Lincoln was described as "one of the greatest representatives of the American revolutionary tradition." In fact, he had much in common with Communist leaders such as Karl Marx and Earl Browder. George Washington was also rehabilitated. Now he was declared to be "an



American revolutionary whose example should be followed in the 1930s."<sup>70</sup>

It was apparently a desire to demonstrate the "Americanism" of the *Új Előre* and to make it appear more like a typical American newspaper that prompted the editors to introduce certain new columns and features that must have startled, and perhaps even alarmed, its long-time readers. There was a much greater emphasis on sports reporting, with special attention to Hungarian-Americans, like the boxer Bob Pastor, who were successful on the national scene. Photographs of Hollywood movie stars, including women in skimpy outfits, now became regular fare. Even more jarring was the increasing coverage of the activities of European royalty. Various dukes, duchesses, and heirs to the throne were treated in a sympathetic way, the stories often accompanied by flattering photographs.

In 1936 and 1937 perhaps the most difficult assignment for the editors and writers of the *Új Előre* was to find a way to embrace former ideological enemies who now had to be depicted as suitable partners for cooperation in a Popular Front coalition. Yet this too was accomplished. Oszkár Jászi, a scholar with a liberal and democratic political orientation, had often been vilified in the pages of *Új Előre* in the 1920s. In 1937 an article by Jászi on the dangers of fascism appeared in the paper. When another former enemy, János Hock, a colleague of Mihály Károlyi, died in 1936 after having returned to Hungary, the obituary in the *Új Előre* praised him as a valiant fighter against fascism.<sup>71</sup> And although right up to the end in 1937 the *Új Előre* continued to portray Horthy's Hungary in the harshest light,<sup>72</sup> even here a slightly more conciliatory position can be detected. Count István Bethlen had always been depicted as one of the diabolical masterminds of fascist "Horthy Land." But in September, 1937 the paper reported, in a very respectful manner, on a speech that Bethlen had made in which he warned against the threat posed by Nazi Germany.<sup>73</sup>

One news story that appeared in the final months of life of the *Új Előre* provides a poignant perspective on the strange, and now dying, world of the *Új Előre*. In the early summer of 1937 rumours had begun to spread that Béla Kun had been arrested by Stalin's secret police and had been executed. An official denial was issued by the Soviet government, but the non-Communist Hungarian-American press nonetheless suggested that the rumours were true. The *Új Előre* immediately labelled such stories as complete fabrications, for the Soviet government would

certainly not lie about such a grave matter.<sup>74</sup> The truth, of course, was that Kun had indeed been arrested, though not yet executed. Perhaps even some of the editors of the *Új Előre* may have had the uneasy feeling that the Stalinist regime was more oppressive than they could have ever suspected. If so, they might have reasoned that the *Új Előre* had fulfilled its historical purpose and no longer had a role to play in a greatly transformed world.

Whatever the precise reasoning, on October 25, 1937 it was announced in the *Új Előre* that the editors and writers of the paper had decided to "join in a united front to publish a new newspaper for Hungarian-Americans, the *Amerikai Magyar Világ*." This was being done because democracy was threatened all over the world by international fascism, and only cooperation with "all freedom-loving and anti-fascist groups would ensure ultimate victory." In retrospect, once the American Communist Party embraced the Popular Front policy, the *Új Előre* in its traditional format could not survive. The issue of October 25 was the last in the sixteen year existence of the *Új Előre*.

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This study of a Hungarian-American Communist newspaper offers insights into both the mentality of a certain group of émigré Hungarians and the experiences of Hungarian-American workers in the interwar period. As has been seen, the pages of the *Új Előre* over the years were filled with lies and distortions, yet they did reflect the fears and hopes of the cadre of editors and writers who were true believers in the Communist ideology. Their hatred of Miklós Horthy was fuelled by personal resentments, for they had been forced to leave their homeland and become in effect professional émigrés. They portrayed the Soviet Union as a paradise, because it was gratifying to believe that the ideology they professed was actually being implemented. They found it impossible to see anything progressive in American society or political life, and were perplexed that most Hungarian-Americans did not share this view.

Given this mentality, one can see why the world of the *Új Előre* was a strange one indeed. In effect, this newspaper practiced an early version of what later would be called socialist realism, that is the depiction of society or the world as it should be or was moving toward, but not necessarily as it actually was. The paper reported extensively on

the many Communist-sponsored activities in Hungarian-American communities, yet party membership was actually negligible. The paper accused its political and press rivals of lies and corruption, yet the *Új Előre's* basic approach to the news was predicated on lies, deceptions, and distortions. Because of the ideological blinders that they unconsciously wore, the editors could not even imagine that the true land of terror in the interwar period was not Hungary but Soviet Russia, and that the atrocities committed by the Horthy regime were relatively minor compared to what Stalin carried out.

Reading through the entire run of the *Új Előre*, it must be conceded, can be a laborious task. Yet that newspaper offers a window into not only a strange but, in many ways, a fascinating world. The historian will find much that could be considered untapped primary sources, including interesting accounts of labour strikes in which Hungarian-Americans participated (most notably the Passaic Textile Strike), memoirs of participants in World War I and the Hungarian Soviet Republic, immigrant accounts of the journey to the United States, and a large body of largely unknown fiction by Hungarian authors.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Only one North American repository, the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago, owns a set of the complete run of the *Új Előre*, although there are occasional gaps in its holding. On the other hand, apparently no library has preserved copies of the annual almanacs published by *Új Előre*.

<sup>2</sup> For a general discussion of the Hungarian-American press in the twentieth century, see Steven Bela Vardy, *The Hungarian-Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 70-78; Julianna Puskás, *Ties That Bind, Ties That Divide* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 2000), 227-233; and Bela Vassady, "Hungarian-American Mutual Aid Associations and their 'Official' Newspapers: A Symbiotic Relationship," *Hungarian Studies Review*, 29, 1-2 (1992): 7-27.

<sup>3</sup> Sándor Vörös, *American Commisar* (Philadelphia: Chilton Company, 1961), p. 186. Vörös, who eventually broke off from the Communist Party, was the only individual closely associated with the *Új Előre* who later published an objective memoir.

<sup>4</sup> For a brief history of the *Előre*, see a report produced by an individual named Ulmer, May 10, 1921, 515/1/75, Records of the Communist Party of the United States of America, a microfilm reproduction of fond 515, opis 1 of the

records of the Communist Party of the United States of America from the Comintern archive held by the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History in Moscow, Russia. These records will hereafter be cited as "RCPUSA." See also Vardy, p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> József Kovács, *A szocialista magyar irodalom dokumentumai az amerikai magyar sajtóban* [Documents of Socialist Hungarian Literature in the Hungarian-American Press] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977), 26-27. See also Emil Gárdos, "Az amerikai magyar munkásmozgalom történetéhez (1919-1929) [On the History of the Hungarian-American Workers Movement]," *Párttörténeti Közlemények*, (1963): 87-88.

<sup>6</sup> Kovács, pp., 27-28, 62.

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed sketch of Pogány/Pepper as a Comintern agent, see Thomas Sakmyster, "A Hungarian Communist in the Comintern: József Pogány/John Pepper," in *Agents of the Revolution: New Biographical Approaches to the History of International Communism in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Kenneth Morgan et al. (Peter Lang: London, 2005), 57-72.

<sup>8</sup> József Pogány, "Az Új Előre történelmi hivatása," *Új Előre* (hereafter cited as *ÚE*), November 8, 1922.

<sup>9</sup> The FBI never established a file on the *Új Előre*, as I discovered when requesting materials on *Új Előre* under terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

<sup>10</sup> The wrangle over factionalism in the Hungarian Federation is fully documented in RCPUSA, 515/1/499, 560, 697, 897, 1049, 2752. See also the first-hand account given by József Péter in his unpublished memoir: Péter József visszsemlékezése, Országos Levéltár (Budapest), 867f, 11p, 235. Hereafter cited as Péter Memoir.

<sup>11</sup> Vörös, pp. 187.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 188-89. Another example of this sort of creative journalism occurred in 1928 during the presidential campaign. The vice presidential candidate of the Communist Party, Benjamin Gitlow, was campaigning in Arizona when contact was lost with him for a few days. Urged on by József Pogány/John Pepper, the *Új Előre* printed a fanciful story suggesting that Gitlow had been kidnapped by the Ku Klux Klan and the American Legion. See "Veszélyben Gitlow kommunista alelnökjelölt élete" (The Life of Gitlow, the Communist Party Candidate for the Vice Presidency, is in Danger), October 16, 1928. Gitlow showed up unharmed a few days later, having simply taken off a few days from his grueling schedule, and the incident was never mentioned again in the *Új Előre*.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, an article by Lajos Kövess in December 25, 1930: "A néger és fehér munkások egységéért" (For the Unity of Negro and White Workers).

<sup>14</sup> Puskás, pp. 151-163.

<sup>15</sup> "Karácsony hetében" (During Christmas Week), *ÚE*, December, 26, 1926.

<sup>16</sup> These stories appeared in the issues of January 11, 1926, April 27, 1933, and January 11, 1935.

<sup>17</sup> See Gárdos, p. 82.

<sup>18</sup> There is no full-scale scholarly treatment of the Passaic textile strike, but see Paul L. Murphy, *The Passaic Textile Strike of 1926* (Wadsworth: Belmont, CA, 1974).

<sup>19</sup> In this respect the issues of *Új Előre* for late 1925 and through 1926 are a rich, untapped historical source for historians of this important American labor action.

<sup>20</sup> From *ÚE* issues of March 30, July 2, and July 9, 1926.

<sup>21</sup> Among the articles by Kövess were the following: "Piket-szolgálaton a passaicai szövökkel" (On the Picket Line with the Passaic Textile Workers), February 2, 1926; and "A sztrákoló szövök között" (With the Striking Textile Workers), April 6, 1926.

<sup>22</sup> See the editorial of December 16, 1926: "Győzelmet arattak a Passaiciaiak" (The Passaic Textile Workers Gain a Victory), and the article by Kövess on December 17, 1926: "Győztünk Passaicion – föl a további harcra" (We Won in Passaic – On to Other Struggles).

<sup>23</sup> Could there have been any other American newspaper of the interwar period, in any language, that tried to serialize Hašek's novel? As it turned out, *Új Előre* ceased publication before it completed publishing that very long novel.

<sup>24</sup> For a thorough study of the literary orientation of the *Új Előre*, see Kovács, *op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> Hungarian Federation questionnaire, February 3, 1925, RCPUSA, 515/1/560; and report by Kövess, late 1929, RCPUSA, 515/1/1810.

<sup>26</sup> Letter of Miklós Fülöp to Mihály Károlyi, November 2, 1929, in Tibor Hajdu (ed.), *Károlyi Mihály levelezése III., 1925-1930* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1991), 639.

<sup>27</sup> Vardy, pp. 72-75; Puskás, p. 229.

<sup>28</sup> The clearest picture of the financial side of production of *Új Előre* is found in a Hungarian Federation report in 1930. See, RCPUSA, 515/1/2155.

<sup>29</sup> *Új Előre* had some 50 to 60 subscribers in the Soviet Union. Kovács, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> The editors of *Új Előre* attributed this to a conspiracy organized by other Hungarian-American newspapers, since "the white press hyenas would do anything to thwart the true voice of the American-Hungarian worker." See "A fehér sajtó hiénák aknamunkát folytatnak az *Új Előre* ellen" (The Hyenas of the White Press Continue Their Intrigues Against the *Új Előre*), *ÚE*, June 6, 1928.

<sup>31</sup> See RCPUSA, 515/1/560, 2337.

<sup>32</sup> See József Péter's report of March 26, 1927 on the fundraising activities in 1927. RCPUSA, 515/1/1179.

<sup>33</sup> Hungarian Federation report of July 20, 1926, RCPUSA, 515/1/897.

<sup>34</sup> For example, during the fundraising campaign of 1926 a hand-written letter from the writer Upton Sinclair appeared in the paper. Sinclair asked Hungarian workers to "keep the torch alight here, and the fire will spread back to the old country." See "Upton Sinclair üzenetet küld az *Új Előre* olvasó táborához" (Upton Sinclair Sends a Message to the Camp of *Új Előre* Readers), *ÚE*, October 4, 1926.

<sup>35</sup> Occasionally *Új Előre* writers were able to use humor in a sophisticated way to ridicule their opponents. The best example of this approach was a 1933 spoof edition of *Népszava* (The People's Voice), which was here called "Nincsszava" (No Voice). Among the articles was one declaring that the first president of the United States was actually of Hungarian origin.

<sup>36</sup> In 1928 *Új Előre* even claimed to have documentary evidence that *Népszava* received funding from the Pilsudski regime in Poland. "Az Amerikai Magyar Népszava leleplezte önmagát!" (The Amerikai Magyar Népszava Exposes Itself), May 30, 1928.

<sup>37</sup> "Csáky csuhás frame upja *Új Előre* ellen" (Frame-Up by the Monk Csuhas Against the *Új Előre*), *ÚE*, August 12, 1931. See also articles in the issue of September 15, 1931.

<sup>38</sup> For the discussion on the possibility of declaring bankruptcy, see the minutes of the Hungarian Buro (formerly Federation), November 14, 1933 and December 11, 1933, RCPUSA, 515/1/3175.

<sup>39</sup> See the report on *Új Előre* and its successors by Jesse MacKnight, Foreign Agents Registration Section of the Department of Justice, February 6, 1945. Records of the Foreign Nationalities Branch of the Office of Strategic Services, United States National Archives. I am grateful to Nandor Dreisziger for drawing my attention to this document.

<sup>40</sup> For the *Új Előre* position on treaty revision, see "Hogyan oldható meg Trianon?" (How Can the Trianon Problem Be Resolved?), August 9, 1931, and "Milyen revíziót akarunk?" (What Kind of Revision Do We Want?), May 23, 1935.

<sup>41</sup> *ÚE*, July 19, 1935.

<sup>42</sup> From *ÚE* issues of December 20, 1922; May 18, 1932; and August 29, 1933.

<sup>43</sup> From a poem by Antal Hidas, *ÚE*, February 19, 1928.

<sup>44</sup> Endre Rudnyánszki, "A karácsonyi amnestia" (The Christmas Amnesty), *ÚE*, January 26, 1922; and "Újabb amnesztia-paktum készül" (New Amnesty Pact Being Prepared), March 13, 1930.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, "Csődbe jutott Horthyék amerikai akciója" (Horthy's American Action Fails), March 16, 1928; and "Horthyellenes tüntetés a

szoborleplezésnél" (Anti-Horthy Demonstration at the Unveiling of the Statue), March 17, 1928. See also Gárdos, pp. 98-99.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, the unpublished memoirs of József Péter, who clearly had very fond memories of the event. Péter memoir.

<sup>47</sup> Anna Berena, "A volt prostituáltak otthona" (A Home for Former Prostitutes), March 29, 1929; Rozsi Lengyel, "Invalidus otthon a szovjeteknél" (A Home for Invalids Among the Soviets), *ÚE*, September 7, 1928.

<sup>48</sup> "Az USSR a szocializmus útján"(The USSR On the Road to Socialism), September 28, 1928; "Három év alatt fejezik be az Öt Éves tervet" (The Five Year Plan to be Completed in Three Years), May 24, 1930; "8,000,000 autót gyárt a Szovjet Unió munkássága egy év alatt" (Workers of the Soviet Union Build 8 Million Autos in One Year), July 14, 1930.

<sup>49</sup> "Titkos börtönök Szibériában. Néhány őszinte kérdés a Szabadsághoz"(Secret Prisons in Siberia. Some Straightforward Questions for Szabadság), February 15, 1935.

<sup>50</sup> Károly Ács, "Mit láttam Moszkvában" (What I Saw in Moscow), November 23, 1935.

<sup>51</sup> Jack Scott, "Magyar mérnök élete a Szovjet Unióban" (The Life of a Hungarian Engineer in the Soviet Union), September 2, 1936. Naturally Scott makes no mention in this article of the recent trials of engineers accused of being "wreckers."

<sup>52</sup> Endre Nagy, "Magyar Stachanovisták a szocialista építésben" (Magyar Stachanovites in the Building of Socialism), June 4, 1936.

<sup>53</sup> *ÚE*, January 16, 1936 and November 12, 1936.

<sup>54</sup> See the poems entitled "Lenin" in March 2, 1924 and November 14, 1926.

<sup>55</sup> "Stalin," March 14, 1937.

<sup>56</sup> For the sentiments of Hungarian immigrants, see Julianna Puskas, "Hungarian Images of America: The Sirens' Song of Tinkling Dollars," in *Distant Magnets: Expectations and Realities in the Immigrant Experience, 1840-1930*, ed. Dirk Hoerder and Horst Rössler (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1993), 180-198.

<sup>57</sup> For a fuller discussion of this point, see Kovács, p. 63.

<sup>58</sup> John Lassen, "Ideértünk Amerikába" (We Arrived in America), July 15, 1923.

<sup>59</sup> Lajos Kövess, "A metropolis szomorú éneke" (The Sad Song of the Metropolis), June 22, 1924; Péter Moór, "New York," October 10, 1926.

<sup>60</sup> "A demokráciáról" (Of Democracy), November 15, 1922; "'Demokrácia' Bethlehem, Pa.-ban" ("Democracy" in Bethlehem, Pa.).

<sup>61</sup> Péter Csont, "Fehér terror Amerikában" (White Terror in America), August 12, 1922.

<sup>62</sup> "George Washington és a Munkásság" (George Washington and the Workers), February 24, 1929.

<sup>63</sup> For an enlightening discussion of this issue as it applied to the Slovak immigrant community, see June Granatir Alexander, *Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism: Slovaks and Other New Immigrants in the Interwar Era* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 132-143.

<sup>64</sup> Puskás, *Ties That Bind*, pp. 230-231.

<sup>65</sup> *ÚE*, November 17, 1922.

<sup>66</sup> For example, in 1929 József Pogány (John Pepper) was condemned by the Comintern as a right-wing deviationist, was stripped of his party membership, and was made a "non-person." Pogány had been one of the most influential figures in the early development of the *Új Előre* and over the years wrote more than one hundred articles for the paper, some as recently as late 1928. Yet the editors accepted the decision of the Comintern and, without any explanation, Pogány's name never again was mentioned in the newspaper.

<sup>67</sup> See, for example, "Roosevelt New Deal-je és a fascizmus" (Roosevelt's New Deal and Fascism), November 15, 1933; "Titkos Roosevelt-Wall Street diktátori csoport alakult" (A Secret Roosevelt-Wall Street Dictatorial Group is Formed), January 30, 1935; "Roosevelt a munkáság legnagyobb ellensége" (Roosevelt, the Greatest Enemy of the Working Class), March 18, 1935.

<sup>68</sup> "Roosevelt vagy Browder?" (Roosevelt or Browder), September 1, 1936.

<sup>69</sup> "Követeljük a Roosevelt terv végrehajtását" (We Demand the Carrying Out of Roosevelt's Plan), March 5, 1937.

<sup>70</sup> "Ábrahám Lincoln igazi utódai" (Abraham Lincoln's True Successors), February 12, 1936; and "Washington – amerikai forradalmár" (Washington – The American Revolutionary), February 27, 1937.

<sup>71</sup> *ÚE*, August 20, 1937 and October 15, 1936.

<sup>72</sup> See "Terror-hullám Magyarországon" (Wave of Terror in Hungary); and "863 öngyilkosság a Magyar fővárosban" (863 Suicides in the Hungarian Capital City), April 3, 1937.

<sup>73</sup> "Bethlen gróf nyilatkozik" (A Statement by Count Bethlen), September 18, 1937.

<sup>74</sup> *ÚE*, June 24, 1937.



## **Reality. Not Fantasy. The Connection to the Traditional Source in a Hungarian Folk Dance Camp in the USA.**

**Kálmán Dreisziger**

**About forty years ago** in the Niagara Peninsula I saw a solo "Hungarian" dance performed by a short-skirted, sequined girl who did cartwheels to a recording of a Brahms' Hungarian Dance. In sharp contrast, in 2002 at the Hungarian Folk Dance and Music Symposium in rural Pennsylvania, I saw a barn full of the camp's participants dancing the authentic dances of an obscure Hungarian village in Slovakia to the music of an amazing revival band.

The difference in attitudes to tradition could hardly be greater. The first example provides an excellent instance of fantasy at work. The sequined girl's dance was an imaginary projection, framed in "national" terms. The second example comes much closer to the reality of authentic, village tradition.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the connection of the aforementioned Symposium participants to the source of their dance and music traditions. (Because this camp was the tip of the iceberg for a large network of dancers and musicians on the east coast of the USA and Canada, I was confident that their attitudes would be reflective of a broader movement.) To expedite my investigation I constructed a questionnaire that dealt with several aspects from identity to practice, performing, music and costuming. (For the text of the questionnaire see the Appendix to this paper.) But most of all, I was interested in the campers' connection to the source of their dance. In other words, in their views on authenticity. The questionnaire was favourably received and elicited 40 responses.

Authenticity is not an easy topic. For example, the connection to authenticity seems to present a substantial problem for many Americans, especially for academics concerned with folk traditions.

Defining authenticity is indeed a challenge. What is authentic tradition? What is the source of authenticity? Which segment or stratum of society? Which period of history? There are academics who claim that authenticity in folk traditions is not only undefinable, perhaps it doesn't even exist. I happen to have a different point of view, because I come from a different tradition, the tradition of Hungarian folkdance research.

Hungarian folkdance experts have concerned themselves intensely with authenticity. Unlike the somewhat self-indulgent, intellectualising attitude of many Western academics, Hungarian researchers have a relatively no-nonsense approach to the subject. Their confidence comes from the fortunate historical circumstances that enabled them to study folkdance in its working environment, the village community, which was still vibrant until recent times in parts of Transylvania and within living memory even in Hungary. Their work is hallmarked by rigorous, disciplined field research and an ability to identify with village traditions as part of their own past. Their attitude has some of the flavour and fervour of the Russian *narodnik* movement. Among the best of the Hungarian researchers there is a strong tendency towards an attitude of loving care, a feeling of responsibility for these traditions. György Martin formulated it well:

The first goal should be a thorough understanding and knowledge of traditional art. What to do with it, how to use it, will emerge out of this process. Without that initial identification, without that deep knowledge, artistic aspirations in the field of folkdance have often resulted in purposelessness and stylistic superficiality which, in turn, has deepened the prevailing attitude of irresponsibility towards traditional art.<sup>2</sup>

It is with this point of view in mind that I will examine the campers' responses.

### **Personal Statistics, Background, Experience**

The first part of the questionnaire asked for personal information to help establish a basic statistical snapshot of the camp. In addition, one of my goals was to examine the respondents' concept of personal identity.

There were only 15 males among the 40 respondents. The explanation for the disproportionate number of responses from female dancers is only partly to be found in the male reluctance to fill out questionnaires. There were, in fact, fewer male than female dancers at the camp. Generally speaking, in the American milieu guys just don't dance, and this cultural non-validation probably has a lot to do with the inequality of male attendance at the Symposium.

Most of the respondents had been involved with their dance form for many years. In fact, only 16 respondents had less than 10 years of experience. Despite this, only one respondent listed herself as a professional dancer. This may be a function of the fact that in the Hungarian folk dance movement amateur dance groups are the norm and, of course, *táncház*-style dancing is done primarily for its own enjoyment.

Interesting facts came to light in answer to the question "What is your ethnic origin?" More than half (23 of 40) of the respondents described their ethnic origin as Hungarian or partly Hungarian. Evidently the camp is not primarily an American phenomenon. Most respondents gave a specific description of their ethnicity, many citing descent from two or more national origins. Even when only one ethnic origin was given, the respondents tended to be specific: 16 of the 19 citing their origin as Hungarian or Transylvanian or, for example, not just Jewish but Ashkenazi.

This degree of specificity is somewhat unusual in the USA where the expected standard answer to the question of ethnicity is a vast generalization such as "Caucasian." Clearly there was a higher than average awareness of roots or belonging among the camp participants.

### Primary Motivation

I asked dancers to list their main motivations for getting involved with their chosen form of dance. I offered a list of possibilities plus space for a write-in "other" choice. Here is what their choices looked like:

Main Motivation	
Recreational/Social	34
Performing	8
Health/ Exercise	10
Teaching	6
Other	10

We can safely assume that it is easier to choose some of the offered possibilities than to write in one's own choice. In that light, the spontaneously supplied answers may be considered disproportionately more important. These "other" answers had to do with Cultural Preservation/Folklore (3 mentions) and Love of /Addiction to Folkdance (2 mentions).

The write-in answers seem to point to these respondents' primary motivation being the need to preserve tradition.

### **History of Involvement**

I was interested in finding out how and from what sources the dancers learned their material. Respondents listed professional instructors, camps and workshops as their first choice. "Informally/From Friends" ranked second as a learning source, with 20 mentions. Learning from videos came next. Learning from the original source, the traditional community or original informants was also listed by some camp respondents, attesting to the highly developed connection to authenticity among some of the Symposium participants. Among the large number of "other " responses there was a wide variety, including "learned from relatives".

The answers regarding time spent dancing per week indicated that all respondents danced less than 10 hours per week. As to how this time was spent, practicing topped the list. Some respondents spent more time teaching than performing. Dancing with friends was also important for Symposium participants.

The picture that emerges tends to show that preserving or passing on tradition has a high priority for some of the respondents. We can also see the influence of the *táncház* movement here in the emphasis on dancing with friends.<sup>3</sup>

### **Connection to Source**

I asked the question "Have you ever visited the country or countries that are the source of the dances you do?" The majority of the respondents answered yes. Based on this, one could speculate that, for people involved in Hungarian dance, it probably serves as some sort of bridge to broader, real, personal contact with that culture.

Visiting the land of one's ancestors is one thing. Does it lead to a deeper immersion in the chosen tradition? I wanted to know how many of the respondents had had an opportunity to experience their art form in an authentic, original community setting. It was a complex question because "authentic setting" is a complicated issue. And I got a complex set of answers. To simplify and make sense of them I generally divided them into "yes" and "no". In the "yes" column I included what I call secondary events such as seeing traditional village dancers or musicians in a camp or on stage. In the "no" column I decided to also include having watched the art form on video or having seen stage shows of various touring professional and national companies.

Here's what the chart looked like:

Yes	Authentic setting	12
	Secondary setting	11
No	Straight no	12
	On video	3
	In show	2

One could conclude that among the camp respondents there was a general feeling that a source of tradition exists and it is of value to be connected to it.

### Styles, Variants, Preferences

The respondents' choices in listing the types of dance with which they are involved may be reflective of the preferences of a larger movement. I believe that no such preference measurement has ever been attempted before. This may be the primary value of this part of the survey.

To make the results of the survey meaningful, I will attempt to provide a brief background of the basic historical and ethnographic contexts of Hungarian folkdance.

Hungarian folkdance is generally classified two ways.<sup>4</sup> The first is as historical types of dance, for example Old Style (girls' circle dances, weapons dances, *ugrós* or jumping dances, etc.) or New Style (*verbunk* and *csárdás*). The second way is as geographical or regional styles or dance dialects. Because virtually all the respondents chose to state their

preferences in this latter way, (the reasons for this are too complex to examine here) it may be useful to provide further information about Hungarian regional dance dialects. Ethnographers divide Hungarian (or, rather, Carpathian Basin) dance styles into three large regional dialects: Transdanubian (west of the Danube), Central (roughly from the Danube east to Transylvania), and finally, Transylvanian.

Each of these large dialects can be further subdivided into smaller regional styles. These can be substantially and visibly different in Transylvania even from one district to the next, whereas in Hungary proper, the regional differences are more subtle. The current tendency of research and teaching in Hungarian folkdance is increasingly micro-centric. So, for example, the Mezőség sub-dialect of the Transylvanian dialect is now being analyzed village by village and, to some extent, by individual dancer.

With this background as a guide, we may better understand the responses to the question "What kinds/styles, regional variants are you involved with." (To reflect the order of preference requested in the questionnaire, I gave a weighting of three for a first choice, two for a second and third choice and one for subsequent entries.)

Transylvanian dialects turned out to be the overwhelming favourites of Symposium respondents. Within Transylvania the Mezőség sub-dialect got the largest number of mentions and included individual villages like Bonchida, Magyarpalatka and Mezőkeszü. The region of Kalotaszeg got the second largest score including specific mentions for the village of Méra. The generic term Transylvanian/*erdélyi* came third and included mentions for Romanian dances. The Székely sub-dialect came next with a larger than usual village or district list: Vajdaszentivány, the Sóvidék district, Mezőkölpény, the Nyárádmente district and Maros-sárpatak. The Küküllőmente/Délmezőség sub-dialect was next with citations that included Gypsy dances from Szászcsovás and Hungarian dances from Magyarszentbenedek and Lőrincréve. Finally, the dances of Gyimes, a small and rather distinct group of Csángó villages in Eastern Transylvania, were also listed.

What is surprising here is the richness of village-specific mentions. In contrast, the dances belonging to the Central dialect were mainly cited not as village styles but as regional sub-dialects. Dances from the region of Szatmár, for example, were the favourites. The district of Gömör in Slovakia was mentioned next most often. Palóc (a common designation of one of Hungary's northern peoples) was also cited, as was

the Délalföld area. Only one specific village was mentioned, that being Magyarböd in eastern Slovakia, the source of one of the dialects taught at the camp that year. A generic *felvidéki* (upland) label garnered some mentions, as did the district of Zemplén in Slovakia.

A similar pattern applied to the Transdanubian regional dialect. In fact, here the winner was the label *dunántuli* (meaning Transdanubian). The Somogy county sub-dialect came second. The Rábaköz district was next and then the village of Kalocsa.<sup>5</sup> The village of Madocsa got one mention.

There were very few citations outside these three large dialects: Moldvai (the Romanian-style dances of Hungarian Csángó villagers east of Transylvania) got three mentions. There were several mentions of "all" or "a wide variety of dialects." And finally Palotás, the set-pattern dance artificially created or, rather, reconstructed for the balls and celebrations of the Hungarian gentry, got one mention.

Summing up, the choices among the respondents at the Symposium were almost exclusively regional dialects of Carpathian basin folk-dances, with a pronounced preference for Transylvanian styles and a surprising number of specific, single-village mentions.

This provides important and interesting insights about the respondents' attitudes to authenticity.

Take the question of site-specific or village-specific mentions. Bearing in mind that dance is a community-based culture, in the pre-modern world one would naturally expect to find at least nuances of difference between the dances of any given village and its closest neighbour. One could also expect the differences to intensify with distance. Given also that throughout history most of the world has been characterized by a mixing of cultures rather than by vast monocultural areas, the picture we get is one of regional rather than ethnic differences. In light of this, reference to dances in national terms is largely inappropriate. So, for example, the Symposium respondent who claims to be doing Hungarian dances from Transylvania should be aware that these dances resemble the local Romanian dances a lot more than they do dances from Hungary proper. Conversely, of course. Romanian dances from Transylvania are a lot closer to Hungarian dances from Transylvania than they are to Romanian dances from, say, Oltenia. In this sense, the respondents' village or site-specific mentions (rather than a "national" designation of dances) points to a well-developed understanding of the concept of

authenticity in folk dance. At the same time, it shows a certain connectedness to the source communities.

### Connection to Music

Because music and dance are inextricably connected, my thesis was that authenticity in dance could also be profitably elucidated by the dancers' connection to music. The first question I asked had to do with direct musical experience. "Do you play a musical instrument?" The camp respondents were evenly divided (20 yes, 20 no). For those who played, the violin was the most popular instrument (8). The next question "What kind of music do you normally dance to: live or recorded?" received 11 "live" and 30 "recorded" answers, suggesting a lack of availability of live music in the movement. When it comes to preference, all the camp respondents said they would prefer to dance to live music. One could speculate that the *táncház* movement has brought Hungarian dancers closer to an appreciation of the pleasures of interaction between dancer and musician.

The music portion of the questionnaire also asked respondents about the styles of music they preferred as well as their favourite musicians or musical groups. Music from Kalotaszeg was the winner with seven mentions, followed by the generic "Transylvanian" designation with six votes. Music from the village of Magyarpalatka was third with five mentions while the generic term "Hungarian" scored four votes.

When it came to naming their favourite musicians or groups, the camp respondents mentioned exclusively revival groups working only with authentic acoustic instruments in regional or village styles, or actual village bands. Thus, of the most popular four groups cited, two are revival bands (Tükrös and Ökrös) and two are village bands (the band from Szászcsávás and the band from Magyarpalatka).

Other popular revival bands receiving multiple mentions were Téka, Muzsikás, Dűvő and Csík. The grand old *primás* or fiddler from Kalotaszeg, Sándor Fodor "Neti" received five mentions. The only band from this side of the Atlantic to receive votes was Életfa from New York, the standard backup band at Symposium who often plays on the East coast *táncház* circuit.

This degree of sophistication in appreciating authentic music is no accident. Part of the answer lies in the fact that Kálmán Magyar, the



organiser of Symposium, regularly brings the best revival bands from Hungary and has even featured the band from Szászcsovás, giving the campers a keen appreciation for village music.

## **Costumes**

I included a section on costuming in the questionnaire, thinking that not only was it really important for some dancers but that it also provided another possible way to shed light on the connection to authenticity.

The initial question had to do with whether the dancers considered tradition when dressing for practice. This did not seem to be an important consideration for respondents.

When it comes to dressing for performance the picture changes. The vast majority of camp respondents said they wore traditional folk costumes for performance.

Part of the explanation lies in the fact that a lot of Hungarian dancers belong to performing groups, where being on stage in appropriate costumes is generally the rule.

As to how many costumes the dancers have, the majority own one to four but nine in the camp said they own no costumes. Part of the seeming 'disconnect' between the respondents not owning costumes but performing in them can be explained by the fact that it is very often the performing groups, not the dancers, who own the costumes.

The last question on costumes had to do with how the dancers obtained them. The choices were: 1, bought them from original wearers (20 mentions); 2, bought from commercial sources (14 mentions); 3, a mix of the above two (12 mentions); 4, sewed them yourself from traditional patterns (7 mentions); 5, made them up using your own imagination (1 mention).

The recognition that authenticity is important shows up in costuming as well. The fact that many costumes were bought from original wearers attests also to the camp participants' substantial connectedness to the traditional source communities.

## **Tradition, Transmission and Authenticity**

This part of the questionnaire was at the heart of my investigation. I wanted to discover how the dancers thought of tradition, what was their

connection to it, what was their concept of authenticity or, more specifically, how they viewed their own dancing in relation to "authentic" tradition.

This section began gently with the question "Do you see your dancing as a continuation of an older cultural tradition?" 25 respondents answered "yes", ten "partly" and five "no".

"How important is it to maintain or foster this tradition?" was the next question. 34 respondents said "very" and six answered "somewhat". Measuring how this maintenance should be achieved was the intent of the next question. "Are you involved in the maintenance of this tradition?" The primary form of involvement for the respondents was teaching (17 responses).

Other ways of involvement cited included a range of support activities: organizing camps, community events, sponsoring performances, etc. (4 responses), doing field research (2 responses) and finally, dancing or learning the dance (4 responses).

There seemed to be a feeling among some of the respondents that for a tradition to be maintained it is enough that they perform or just dance or merely learn the material. It could be the subject of speculation that the "learning it is enough" attitude could be an outsider's viewpoint, since learning could be viewed as the door into a tradition or the key to belonging. For those who already consider themselves part of a culture, on the other hand, the vital question becomes maintenance or preservation, hence the importance of teaching.

In the next question I set up a spectrum with innovation at one end and tradition at the other. I was interested in where the respondents would place themselves on this spectrum.

Five of the respondents chose "not applicable" as the answer. Plotting the rest of the responses yields a curve that tends steadily towards tradition. One could conclude that the goal for respondents is to be as close to tradition as possible.

The next question was "Is your dancing authentic?" (I gave a dictionary definition of authentic.) The distribution of the answers was 11 "yes", 26 "somewhat" and 2 "no". The relatively low number of "yes" responses to this question presents one of the anomalies in the survey. The answer probably lies in the heightened realization among some of these respondents of what it means to be authentic and, therefore, the respondents' reluctance to equate themselves with it. (In fact, most of the

"yes" responses came from people with relatively little experience or exposure to authentic tradition.)

The reality of the moment may be different from the ultimate goal. That is why the next question dealt with whether the respondent thought it was important to be authentic. 29 said "very", while nine answered "somewhat" and none said "no".

The final question was purposefully contentious. I proposed: "To be really authentic, you have to be from the place the dance is from." Two respondents agreed strongly, while 15 agreed somewhat and 13 disagreed, while eight disagreed strongly. I found the answers rather surprising. I had expected more disagreement. After all, American culture includes an aspect that says: "you can be anything you want to be; you can do anything you put your mind to." Among those who agreed with the question, there were more with experience, especially with first hand experience. Agreement was also not primarily a function of origin. The issue gels around Roma dances with several comments about having to be gypsy to be really authentic in dancing gypsy dances. Others commented on the fact that being a descendant of the source community is no assurance of authenticity, or that an informed non-native can be more authentic than an uninformed native.

## **Conclusion**

My primary goal in this survey was to examine the connection to authenticity in the camp. Moreover, as I pointed out in the introduction, because of my particular background I have an ideal in mind, an ideal connection to tradition that was so well framed by the quote from György Martin.

According to this point of view, the vital aspect of the connection to tradition is to start out with a rigorous examination of what is, or was. Not what I imagine it to be. Let me use an example about gypsies to illuminate the difference. John Paskievich, a Canadian film-maker, shot a documentary in Eastern Slovakia called "The Gypsies of Svinia". The film is a bone-chillingly accurate account of conditions in Svinia's gypsy ghetto and of the hate-filled relationship between the gypsies and the town's "white" population. The film is as real a picture of "what is" as one can get. On the other hand, Tony Gatlif made a beautiful but largely imaginary film about gypsies which paints a somewhat idyllic picture of gypsy lore from Rajasthan to Spain and includes Slovakia. "Latcho Drom"

is a great example of how people generally imagine gypsy life. (Hence its resounding box office success.)

My point is that Paskievch's work would be a good source if one were to want to know about the reality of gypsy life, whereas Gatlif's film would actually be rather unhelpful.

This brings me to the first important difference between the two examples I cited at the beginning of this paper. While the Symposium respondents generally tended to be connected to real traditions, the sequined girl suffered either from a lack of knowledge of the reality of Hungarian folkdance tradition or had an actual preference for the imaginary, or both.

Any movement which is heavily involved in performance acts as a mirror for its chosen or inherited culture. Needless to say, in this context the difference between the real and the imaginary is projected outwards and magnified: the first allowing a measure of true insight into a given tradition, the second establishing or reinforcing cultural misconceptions. For example, a person visiting a *táncház* may get a fair idea of what a Saturday night dance might have been like in a Transylvanian village. On the other hand, people watching our sequined soloist will have been substantially misled about the nature of Hungarian dance traditions.

There is a lesson to be learned from the contrast between these two examples. Views of authenticity can change and develop. But there are conditions necessary for this change. They seem to include the existence of dedicated researchers and ethnographers, of teachers and experts who can disseminate the fruit of this research, and of a wide spectrum of people involved in the movement who have a reverent, diligent attitude to tradition.

I'd like to end by expressing the debt of gratitude which the Hungarian folkdance movement owes its researchers, people like György Martin and his colleagues. Because of their immense achievement, the Hungarian folkdance movement is now firmly grounded in the reality of tradition rather than in the facile realm of fantasy.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For papers discussing or touching on this topic see L. Felföldi and T. J. Buckland, eds., *Authenticity: Whose Tradition?* (Budapest: European Folklore Institute, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> János Szász, "Beszélgetés Martin Györggyel az új folklorhullám és néptáncmozgalom előzményeiről" [A conversation with György Martin about the antecedents of the new wave in our folklore and folk-dance movements], *Kultura és Közösség*, 1981. (My translation.)

<sup>3</sup> An aspect of the *táncház* [literally: dance-house] movement in Canada is discussed in Stephen Satory, "Táncház: Improvisatory Folk-dancing and String Playing in Toronto's Hungarian Community," *Hungarian Studies Review* 8, 2 (Fall, 1986): 53-62.

<sup>4</sup> The seminal work on this subject is György Martin, *Magyar tánc típusok és táncdialektusok* [Hungarian dance types and dance dialects] (Budapest: Néptáncpedagógusok könyvtára, 1970). See also László Felföldi and E. Pesvár, eds., *A magyar nép és nemzetiségeinek tánc hagyományai* [The dance legacy of the Hungarian people and its nationalities] (Budapest: Planétás, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> Though it is located east of the Danube river, the dances of this village, famous for its colourful embroidery and delicious paprika, belong to the Transdanubian dialect.

## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

I'm preparing a paper on dancers' attitudes to Hungarian dance. Please help me by answering the following questions. The questionnaire should take about 10 to 20 minutes of your time. Thank you for your help.

### ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND

- 1) Age:
- 2) Sex: female \_\_\_ male \_\_\_
- 3) Ethnic origin or nationality:
- 4) Are you a dancer who is primarily: amateur \_\_\_ professional \_\_\_
- 5) Do you also teach dancing? Often \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ never \_\_\_
- 6) What is your primary motivation for dancing?

Recreational, social, fun \_\_\_  
 Performing \_\_\_  
 Financial \_\_\_  
 Health, aerobics, exercise \_\_\_  
 Teaching \_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

## DANCE

- 1) How long have you been involved with Hungarian dance? \_\_\_\_\_ years  
 2) What kinds, styles, regional variants of Hungarian dance are you involved with? (List in order of preference, please.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) How did you first learn Hungarian dance? (please feel free to check more than one, or to number according to importance)

From professional instructors at courses, camps or workshops \_\_\_  
 Informally from friends, other dancers \_\_\_  
 From instructional videos \_\_\_  
 At the source \_\_\_ (from native informants in the traditional community)  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) How much time do you spend dancing per week? \_\_\_\_\_ hours

- 5) How is most of this time spent?

Practicing \_\_\_  
 Dancing with friends \_\_\_  
 Teaching \_\_\_  
 Performing \_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

- 6) Have you ever visited the country or countries that are the source of the dances you do? Often or for a long time \_\_\_

Sometimes \_\_\_

Never \_\_\_

- 6) Have you ever seen your dances danced in their traditional setting? (Please describe briefly where, when, who was dancing, what were they dancing, to what kind of music, what were the costumes, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

DANCING AND MUSIC

1) Do you play any musical instruments?

No \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_

Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

2) What kind of music do you usually dance to?

Live \_\_\_ Recorded \_\_\_

3) What kind of music do you prefer?

Live \_\_\_ Recorded \_\_\_ It does not matter \_\_\_

4) What styles of music do you prefer?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5) Which are your preferred musical groups or musicians?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DANCING AND COSTUMES

1) What do you normally wear when you dance Hungarian dances with your friends or group in a non-performance setting?

\_\_\_\_\_

2) What do you normally wear for a public performance? How does it differ from the above?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3) Where and how do you obtain your costumes?

Buy them from various commercial sources \_\_\_

Sew them yourself following authentic patterns \_\_\_

Make them yourself using your own imagination \_\_\_

Obtain them from native wearers from the original community \_\_\_

A mix of the above \_\_\_

4) Approximately how many dance costumes do you own?





## **Emery Roth: Architect of New York City's Grand Apartments**

**Stephen Beszedits**

**New York City** has long been famous for its architecture. While the skyscrapers constitute the quintessential symbol of the city, no other place in the United States has so many buildings in such a variety of historic styles. The Empire State Building, Metropolitan Museum of Art, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and Rockefeller Center, to name but a few, evoke instant recognition throughout the world.

New York is also renowned for its numerous grand and luxurious apartment houses and hotels. Many of the most noteworthy of these were designed by Hungarian-born Emery Roth, the city's premier residential architect during a career that spanned more than 40 years. As a matter of fact, no other architect in the city's history is responsible for more distinguished residences than Roth. His wonderful creations abound on New York's most fashionable thoroughfares: Central Park West, Riverside Drive, Broadway, and Fifth and Park Avenues. Roth was, said his biographer Steven Rutenbaum, "a master who could combine eclectic architectural elements into romantic compositions of dignity and grace."<sup>1</sup>

Roth was born in the small town of Gálszécs, Zemplén County, in 1871, one of eight children. Despite its modest size, it was an ancient town with a history dating back to the 13th century. Its heterogeneous population included several hundred Jewish families, among them the Roths.

Young Emery was a very bright boy and was particularly fond of drawing. Since his parents owned the town's inn, which also served as the centre of the town's social life, the family was relatively prosperous. However, they were reduced to poverty when his father died in 1884. Given the dire circumstances, it was decided that it would be best for 13-year old Emery to seek his fortune in America, the land of opportunity. Therefore, he left home in the company of a certain Aladár Kiss, who was returning to Chicago where he had settled some years previously.

Upon arriving in New York City, they disembarked at Castle Garden, at the southern tip of Manhattan Island, where some three decades earlier another Hungarian, the great patriot Lajos Kossuth, first set foot in America. While Kossuth had been welcomed by all of the city's dignitaries and a frenzied mob numbering hundreds of thousands, there was no one to greet Roth.

Kiss gave money to the boy for a railroad ticket and told him to follow him to Chicago. During the trip Roth lost Kiss's address and found himself completely alone in the Windy City. Despite his bleak prospects, Roth was not discouraged. Extremely resourceful and ambitious, he managed to earn a living by doing a variety of odd jobs. While apprenticing in an architect's office, he found his vocation and pursued it relentlessly.

His dream began to take shape when he was hired by Burnham & Root as a draftsman on the architectural staff of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Daniel H. Burnham and John W. Root were two of Chicago's most distinguished architects with a long line of impressive commissions behind them. Working for them on the massive project gave Roth an opportunity to hone and showcase his artistic skills and meet Richard M. Hunt of New York City, the dean of American architects. Hunt was deeply impressed by the largely self-taught youth's abilities. When Roth mentioned that he intended to move to New York at the conclusion of the fair, Hunt assured him that there would be a place for him in his office.

Relocating to New York, Roth worked for Hunt, but upon his untimely death in 1895 he joined Ogden Codman Jr., a noted society interior decorator with a large clientele among the rich. The association with these two prominent figures gave Roth an invaluable insight into the housing aspirations of the wealthy who were beginning to move, albeit reluctantly, into apartments.

In 1898 Roth decided to strike out on his own. Shortly afterwards he married Ella Grossman. Four children were born of their union: Julian, Richard, Elizabeth, and Kathrin.

As with most new enterprises, the beginning was difficult. Many of his early commissions, rather modest ones at that, came from the city's Hungarian community. Indeed, his first job involved the remodelling of the Cafe Boulevard, a popular Hungarian restaurant on lower First Avenue. Throughout his life Roth maintained close ties with his fellow countrymen, and they, in turn, looked upon him not only as a successful and talented architect but the very personification of the American Dream.

As his reputation grew so did his business and he began to concentrate on designing apartment houses, hotels, and apartment hotels. Apartment hotels were much in vogue at the time for a variety of reasons. One publication succinctly summarized its attractions in the following words: "...the city dweller finds combined in the apartment hotel the quiet, the permanence and, to a certain extent, at least, the personality, of his own house with the conveniences and freedom from responsibility supplied by hotel service, brought to its present perfection."<sup>2</sup>

One of Roth's earliest major undertakings was the Hotel Belleclaire at Broadway and 77th Street.<sup>3</sup> Called an "unusual jewel" by Christopher Gray, it is one of New York City's best surviving Art Nouveau buildings.<sup>4</sup> Supported by a skeleton frame rising 10-stories and executed in red brick with limestone, terra-cotta and metal detailing, the building was regarded a skyscraper. When the Belleclaire opened on January 12, 1903, it was among the city's most luxuriously appointed hotels. Its roof garden offered guests a spectacular view four or five miles up the Hudson River. The ground floor contained sumptuous dining rooms, a Flemish café, and sundry other amenities.

In 1906 the great Russian proletarian novelist Maxim Gorky, on a lecture tour of the United States, took rooms at the Belleclaire with his companion, who was registered as his wife.<sup>5</sup> When it was found out that she was not his lawful wife but Madame Andreieva, an actress, Milton Roblee, the hotel's manager, indignantly threw them out, declaring: "My hotel is a family hotel, and in justice to other guests I cannot possibly tolerate the presence of any persons whose characters are questioned in the slightest manner."<sup>6</sup> Gorky was ejected from two other hotels, the Lafayette-Breevort and the Rhinelander, for the same reason. His prestige sank at once to the lowest depths, and he was promptly ostracized. In retaliation Gorky wrote *The City of the Yellow Devil*, a vitriolic attack on the American way of life.

With the eruption of World War I, American residential construction slowed down and came to a virtual standstill after the United States entered the conflict. However, financial setbacks were not the only problems confronting Roth. In 1918 he was diagnosed with glaucoma.<sup>7</sup> Fortunately the operation he underwent was successful and he lost vision in only one eye. No sooner had he recovered from this ordeal when he was stricken with influenza that nearly claimed his life.

The prosperity of the 1920s allowed his business to flourish and his practice became one of the largest in the city. Roth's genius was his ability to adapt the details of classicism to modern building form. He was also a pragmatic and practical-minded businessman, quick to grasp the principles of building costs and operating expenses and established himself as an expert in real estate. Clients engaged Roth because of his reputation as a proficient architect who could maximize the return on their investment. Though keenly conscious of the business side of architecture, "he possessed a sense of architectural composition that, while intuitive, was nevertheless so strong that it allowed his work to transcend the limits of ordinary commercial architecture."<sup>8</sup>

It was the Ritz Tower that cemented Roth's reputation as one of New York's foremost architects for it not only established a precedent in high-rise construction but also changed the direction of residential architecture. Erected at 57th Street and Park Avenue in collaboration with Thomas Hastings, the surviving partner of the renowned firm of Carrere & Hastings, the 41-story neo-Renaissance style apartment hotel was the city's first residential skyscraper and the tallest such structure in the world. Some suites were inordinately large, with up to 18 rooms. The main restaurant was lavishly decorated with several murals painted by Hungarian-born Willy Pogány, one of the era's most commercially successful artists.<sup>9</sup>

Completion of the building was marked with much fanfare; the opening banquet on November 15, 1926, was attended by Mayor Jimmy Walker and a host of prominent city officials and leading businessmen.<sup>10</sup> The Ritz Tower became a symbol of a new way to live for affluent New Yorkers and inspired a new generation of hotels and apartment hotels.

Not everyone, however, was enthralled with the gigantic edifice. Fellow architect Arthur T. North questioned certain design aspects and referred to the building somewhat disparagingly as a "skypuncture,"<sup>11</sup> while the respected critic Lewis Mumford, best remembered for his perceptive essays on architecture and passionate concern with problems of metropolitan development, wondered that while the "Ritz Tower now dominates 57th Street, how will it appear when surrounded by other skyscrapers?"<sup>12</sup>

Replying to North's comments, Roth stated: "After a few studies I discarded the obvious solution and attempted, how well or how poorly I am not able to say, to express in the design a type of architecture suitable for domestic buildings. I did not feel that I was primarily designing a

tower facade but did the necessary dressing up of a large number of liveable rooms containing many windows so placed as to provide good lighting and good furniture space within the rooms."<sup>13</sup>

Even though today the Ritz Tower is surrounded by other massive skyscrapers, its stepped spire remains a unique mark in the skyline.

In 1927 Roth bequeathed another gem to the city, the Oliver Cromwell, 12 West 72nd Street.<sup>14</sup> One contemporary writer described it as "sumptuously furnished and ideally located in one of New York's most desirable home sections... this magnificent hotel has a strong appeal to those who appreciate the most their money can secure in the matter of living quarters."<sup>15</sup>

The exterior of the building was faced with light coloured brick. The first three stories were finished in artificial stone of granite-like effect above a granite base course. The trim in the upper stories was also of similar artificial stone. The entrance foyer was walled with marble and the flooring throughout the foyer and the lobby was of patterned ceramic tile. The interior decorations of the public rooms of the first story exerted a very colourful effect and their furnishings and lighting combined with the decorations to give a very rich interior.

Roth himself was especially proud of the Oliver Cromwell and regarded it as the finest building designed by his office.

When the authoritative *American Apartment Houses of Today* was published in 1926, it listed two of Roth's works, 47 West 96th Street and 310 West End Avenue.<sup>16</sup> However, his best and most memorable creations — the San Remo, the Beresford, the Ardsley and the Normandy — were yet to come.

Considered to be one of Roth's masterpieces, the Beresford, 211 Central Park West, remains to this very day one of the prominent elements of Central Park West's distinctive skyline. Created at the pinnacle of his career in 1929, the massive apartment house was executed in brick, with limestone and terra-cotta trim, and ornamented with sculpture derived from late Renaissance precedents. Entrance was provided through several separate lobbies handsomely detailed in marble and bronze. On September 15, 1987, the Beresford was designated a landmark by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.<sup>17</sup>

Among the apartment houses he designed along the western edge of Central Park, Roth's favourite was the San Remo, the city's first twin-towered building, which he fondly called "The Aristocrat of Central Park

West." Completed in 1930, the building typifies his adaptation of Italian Renaissance forms to high-rise residential design.

The principal block of the building rises 17-stories high, with terraced setbacks from the 14th to the 17th floors. The tops of the towers, which actually conceal water tanks, were modelled on the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates. The tower apartments were laid out to occupy entire floors. An ad for the San Remo called it "as modern as a flying boat, as luxurious as the Ile de France and designed for people who are at home on both. Birds in the sky are your only neighbors."

Prominent residents have included a galaxy of motion picture and TV stars: Dustin Hoffman, Diane Keaton, Mary Tyler Moore, Faye Dunaway, Eddie Cantor, Zero Mostel, and Tony Randall.<sup>18</sup> Two fictional tenants of the building were Oscar Madison and Felix Unger of the popular *Odd Couple* TV series. Felix Unger was played by Tony Randall, himself an actual resident. It was at the San Remo that the beautiful Rita Hayworth died from Alzheimer's disease. Another long-time resident was boxing champion Jack Dempsey.

In conferring landmark status upon the building on March 31, 1987, the Landmarks Preservation Commission called it an urbane amalgam of luxury and convenience, decorum and drama.<sup>19</sup> In the opinion of numerous architects and architectural historians, the Beresford and San Remo are among the city's very finest classically inspired apartment houses. According to his biographer: "No one ever built anything like them again, not even Roth."<sup>20</sup>

Near the Beresford and San Remo is another one of Roth's superb creations, the Ardsley. Completed in 1931, it has been described by one writer as "a Mayan-influenced pile that is, in terms of facade decoration, Central Park West's most elaborate Art Deco work."<sup>21</sup>

Collaborating with the firm of Margon & Holder, Roth became involved in the design of an enormous luxury apartment house at 300 Central Park West, named the Eldorado. Completed in 1930, it was, like the San Remo, a twin-towered structure and remains to this very day "one of the finest and most dramatically massed Art Deco residential buildings in the city."<sup>22</sup>

Among the famous tenants of the Eldorado was Sinclair Lewis, who lived there during the winters of 1943 to 1946.<sup>23</sup> The author of such classics as *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, *Arrowsmith*, and *Elmer Gantry*, and the first American to win the Nobel Prize for literature, rented a showy penthouse duplex. He called the building "Intolerable Towers," but

nevertheless spent almost \$10,000 on furniture, drapes, and rugs. Writing to a friend, Lewis described the huge apartment with its panoramic view of the Hudson and East Rivers as "a cross between Elizabeth Arden's Beauty Salon and the horse-stables at Ringling Circus Winter headquarters: 29 floors up in the air,..." 300 Central Park West was also the fictional address of "Marjorie Morningstar," the heroine of Herman Wouk's popular 1955 novel.

The stock market crash of 1929 did not instantly affect architects and construction. But as the Depression took a firm grip on the nation, commissions became scarcer with each passing year. Architects, draftsmen, and their colleagues joined the growing number of unemployed. Roth too laid off most of his employees, albeit reluctantly. He wrote in his memoirs: "It is not easy to discharge men who have worked for one for years and then too I assumed, like many others, that after a stagnation of a year or two, building would start up again. Prosperity was just around the corner. I could afford to carry what I viewed as a temporary burden and so I reduced my office force very slowly."<sup>24</sup>

Forced to economize, Roth and his wife in 1932 moved into a small suite in the Alden Hotel, a building he himself designed five years before. In 1935 he took his two sons in with him, changing the name of his firm to Emery Roth & Sons.

When the grim effects of the Depression started to fade away and demand for residential construction picked up, Roth resumed his activities in earnest.

Overlooking the Hudson River at 140 Riverside Drive, the twin-towered Normandy, built in 1938-39, was the last of his grand pre-World War II apartment houses.<sup>25</sup> Deemed by many architects and critics as among his very best, it combines Italian Renaissance forms with new Moderne features. Andrew Alpern's *Historic Manhattan Apartment Houses* describes it as: "Highly visible, beautifully designed and still largely intact, the building symbolizes the grand era of twentieth-century urbanism, and is a true landmark of the Upper West Side."<sup>26</sup>

Even though Roth's name will be forever linked to luxury apartment houses, he also designed accommodations for the less wealthy of New York. His Goldhill Court Apartments, completed in 1909 on Union Avenue in the Bronx, were intended for middle-income earners.<sup>27</sup>

Roth was one of the jury at the competition held in 1921 by the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, the Merchants' Association of New York, the Advisory Council of Real Estate Interests, and the

Real Estate Board of New York, with the cooperation of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, aimed at stimulating the development of better and more economical types of tenement houses.<sup>28</sup> He also served on the jury of the competition held by the Phelps-Stokes Fund in April 1933 for plans involving the proposed development of a typical New York City block (200 ft by 400 ft) of "improved" tenements.

When Julius Miller, president of the Borough of Manhattan, called together a committee of builders in 1931 to consider the problem of providing adequate housing at moderate rates for the average wage earner, Roth's submission was one of two deemed having the greatest possibilities.<sup>29</sup> His design of the typical floor contained 2 three-room suites, 6 two-room apartments, and 2 one-room suites, each with its own foyer, kitchen or kitchenette, and bath. Living rooms were generally 11 ft by 19 ft and smaller, while bedrooms varied from 9 ft by 12 ft to 9 ft by 16 ft.

Given that Roth's reputation rests on his vast array of apartment buildings and hotels, it is often forgotten that he designed a number of fine houses of worship.<sup>30</sup> Erected in 1903 for Congregation Adath Jeshurun of Jassy, the Erste Warshawer, 60 Rivington Street, was one of the great synagogues of the Lower East Side. Mixing Vienna Secessionist motifs with Hungarian vernacular style, the First Hungarian Reformed Church, 344 East 69th Street, dates from 1915. The diminutive edifice is on the US Department of the Interior's National Register of Historic Places. Now housing the Gospel Mission of Baptist Church, Temple B'nai Israel, 610 West 149th Street, boasting a sanctuary covered by a massive dome and capable of accommodating 1,300 worshippers, was constructed from 1921 to 1923. The Baptist Tabernacle, built in 1928-30 at 168 Second Ave., was home to a variety of ethnic — Italian, Polish and Russian — congregations. The Labor Temple, 214 East 14th Street, the city's most radical church, was completed in 1924, and the Chelsea Presbyterian Church, 214 West 23rd Street, two years later. Roth also designed a temple for the Congregation of the Sons of Israel<sup>31</sup> and the Synagogue Ahavith Achem,<sup>32</sup> both in Brooklyn.

Despite his busy work schedule, Roth found time to socialize and participate in professional and civic affairs; he was a member of the American Institute of Architects, National Democratic Club, City Athletic Club, Metropolis Club, and the Central Synagogue.<sup>33</sup>

Throughout his long and fruitful career Roth was often honoured by his peers and various groups. He won first prize of the Brooklyn



Chamber of Commerce for the apartment house at 35 Prospect Park West. Early in 1948 the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects awarded Roth its Apartment House Medal for his design of 300 East 57th Street.<sup>34</sup> Already in poor health, he didn't live long to enjoy this latest honour; he died on August 20, 1948. His wife had passed away five years earlier.

After his death his sons Julian and Richard and grandson Richard Roth II carried on his practice as Emery Roth & Sons. Today, the firm known as Emery Roth & Partners LLC maintains its offices at 1841 Broadway. While Emery Roth's practice was concentrated on residential buildings, his descendants have acquired an enviable reputation for designing office towers. Their creations in Manhattan include the Look Building, General Motors Building, Colgate-Palmolive Building, Pan Am Building, Sperry Rand Building, the ill-fated World Trade Center, and the Merchandise Mart along with the Bronx High School of Science and an array of luxury hotels and apartment complexes. Equally impressive is their work in other parts of the country and abroad.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Steven Ruttenbaum, *Mansions in the Clouds: The Skyscraper Palazzi of Emery Roth* (New York: Balsam Press, 1986), 191.

<sup>2</sup> "The Modern Apartment Hotel," *The American Architect* 131 (January 5, 1927): 37.

<sup>3</sup> New York (N.Y.) Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Hotel Belleclaire* (New York: The Commission, 1987).

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Gray, *New York Streetscapes: Tales of Manhattan's Significant Buildings and Landmarks* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003), 346.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Kaun, *Maxim Gorky and His Russia* (New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, 1931), 572-573.

<sup>6</sup> "Gorky and Actress Asked to Quit Hotels," *The New York Times* (April 15, 1906): 1.

<sup>7</sup> From an unpublished manuscript titled *Emery Roth: Autobiographical Notes*, by Emery Roth. Avery Architectural Library, Columbia University, New York, New York.

<sup>8</sup> Ruttenbaum, 11.

<sup>9</sup> Born in Szeged, Pogány (1882-1955) studied in Budapest, Munich, and Paris. He illustrated more than 150 books, and was also engaged as a stage decorator and costume designer, mural painter, sculptor, and art director of motion pictures. A recipient of numerous awards during his lifetime, he was a member of the Architectural League, New York, and the Beaux Arts Institute of Design.

- <sup>10</sup> "Ritz Tower Gives Dinner," *The New York Times* (November 16, 1926): 47.
- <sup>11</sup> Arthur T. North, "The Passing Show," *The Western Architect* 35 (November 1926): 142-144.
- <sup>12</sup> Lewis Mumford, "Is the Skyscraper Tolerable?" *Architecture* 55 (February 1927): 68.
- <sup>13</sup> Emery Roth, "The Ritz Tower Design," *The Western Architect* 36 (January 1927): 8.
- <sup>14</sup> "The Oliver Cromwell, New York City," *Architecture and Building* 59 (December 1927): 388.
- <sup>15</sup> W. Parker Chase, *New York: The Wonder City* (New York: Wonder City Publishing Co., 1931), 146.
- <sup>16</sup> Randolph W. Sexton, *American Apartment Houses of Today* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1926), 55-58.
- <sup>17</sup> New York (N.Y.) Landmarks Preservation Commission, *The Beresford Apartments* (New York: The Commission, 1987).
- <sup>18</sup> Peter Salmen, *Upper West Side Story* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1989), 245.
- <sup>19</sup> New York (N.Y.) Landmarks Preservation Commission, *San Remo Apartments* (New York: The Commission, 1987).
- <sup>20</sup> Ruttenbaum, 143.
- <sup>21</sup> Paul Goldberger, *The City Observed, New York* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 203.
- <sup>22</sup> Barbaralee Diamonstein, *The Landmarks of New York III* (New York: Abrams, 1998), 358.
- <sup>23</sup> Richard R. Lingeman, *Sinclair Lewis: Rebel from Main Street* (New York: Random House, 2002), 469-470.
- <sup>24</sup> From an unpublished manuscript titled *Emery Roth: Autobiographical Notes*, by Emery Roth. Avery Architectural Library, Columbia University, New York, New York.
- <sup>25</sup> Diamonstein, 375.
- <sup>26</sup> Andrew Alpern, *Historic Manhattan Apartment Houses* (New York, Dover, 1996), 76.
- <sup>27</sup> Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 133.
- <sup>28</sup> James Ford with Katherine Morrow and George N. Thompson, *Slums and Housing, with Special Reference to New York City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), 915-920.
- <sup>29</sup> "Apartments for the Average Wage Earner," *Architectural Record* 70 (July 1931): 49-50.
- <sup>30</sup> David W. Dunlap, *From Abyssian to Zion: A Guide to Manhattan's Houses of Worship* (New York: Columbia University, 2004), 41, 66, 75, 87, 128.
- <sup>31</sup> "Synagogue Planned for Brooklyn," *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide* 101 (January 19, 1918), 86.
- <sup>32</sup> "Example of Synagogue Architecture," *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide* 82 (August 1, 1908), 226.
- <sup>33</sup> "Emery Roth Dies; Noted Architect," *The New York Times* (August 21, 1948): 16.
- <sup>34</sup> "Emery Roth, A.I.A.," *Architectural Record* 104 (October 1948): 164.

## Towards a History of the Hungarian Communities of America

N. F. Dreisziger

**The publication** of two books dealing with the Hungarian-American experience in recent times — in fact, in the year 2000 — is certainly an event that ought to be celebrated. One of these books is Steven Béla Várdy's *Magyarok az Újvilágban* [Hungarians in the New World], that has been reviewed in detail by Professor András Csillag in the 2003 volume of our journal. The other is Julianna Puskás, *Ties that Bind, Ties that Divide: One Hundred Years of Hungarian Experience in the United States*.<sup>1</sup> The appearance of these works should be cherished not only because never before in the centuries-old history of Hungarian presence in the United States have such substantial historical studies seen the light of day in the course of a single year, but also because monographs of this kind had not really appeared before, at any time.

This is not to say that there had not been many books, as well as shorter studies, written on the subject of Hungarian immigration to — and Hungarian life in — “*Amerika*,” as Hungarians have traditionally referred to the United States and, at times, the whole of the New World. The primary purpose of this historiographical essay is to survey this literature and to place the two works referred to above into the wider context of a century of Hungarian-American (as well as Hungarian-Canadian, etc.) historical writing.

Because the history of the Hungarian-American experience is to a large degree inseparable from the phenomena of Hungarian emigration to and settlement in other parts of the Americas, and also because Várdy's book is, in fact, entitled *Hungarians in the New World*, this survey will look at the wider historiographical context and will examine literature dealing with the Hungarian experience not only in the United States but also in other countries of the Western hemisphere.

In a somewhat arbitrary fashion, I will begin my survey with a book that has the same title as Várdy's book. This is László Juhász's *Magyarok az Újvilágban* [Hungarians in the New World] (Munich: Nemzetőr, 1979). Although a pioneering work at the time of its writing, Juhász's book has two major shortcomings. Like Várdy's book, it concentrates mainly on Hungarians in the United States, but unlike Várdy's volume, it is a very cursory treatment of its subject — in fact, it hardly deals with the developments and personalities of the twentieth century.

If there had been no satisfactory overviews of the Hungarians of the New World that present-day historical researchers could use as an introduction to their subject, we might wonder if there have been such studies of the entire Hungarian diaspora. Unfortunately, there are no surveys of this kind either. Several books have been published in Hungary, especially during the early decades of the country's "communist era," but most of these are polemical and have only marginal scholarly value. Not even Miklós Szántó's book, *Magyarok a nagyvilágban* [Hungarians in the wide world] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1970) constitutes much of an exception to this generalization, nor does Samu Imre's similarly entitled essay in *Tanulmányok Magyarországról, magyarokról* [Studies about Hungary, Hungarians] ed. László Jablonszky (Budapest: Magyarok Világszövetsége, n.d. [1989 ?]), pp. 239-80. There is at least one useful work however. It was written in the West by one of the Hungarian emigration's preeminent scholars, Gyula Borbándi: *A magyar emigráció életrajza, 1945-1985* [The biography of the Hungarian emigration, 1945-1985] (Munich: published by the author, 1985). Unfortunately, as the title suggests, that work deals only with the post-1945 decades.

### *Literature on Hungarians in Latin America*

Reliable and substantial works on the history of the Hungarian communities in Latin America are few. Evidently very little research has been done in this large field by either social scientists or journalists, either in Hungarian or in Spanish or Portuguese. Alternately, if there has been such research done, its results have not come to the attention of North American historians who have an interest in the subject. Nevertheless, there are a handful of relevant works. One of these is László Szabó, *A magyar mult Dél-Amerikában* [Hungarian past in South America] (Budapest: Európa, 1982), and another is Tivadar Ács, *Magyarok Latin Amerikában* [Hungari-

ans in Latin-America] (Budapest, 1944). On the subject of Hungarians in Argentina we have the good fortune of having a recent monograph available in Judit Kesserű Némethy, *Az argentinai magyar emigráció, 1948-1968* [The Hungarian emigre community of Argentina, 1948-1968], based on a doctoral dissertation, completed in 1999. An expanded version of this work is now available in book form.<sup>2</sup> On the Hungarians of Brazil, there is Szeverin J. Kögl, *Magyarok Braziliában* (São Paulo: Könyves Kálmán Szabadegyetem, 1992).

The periodical literature on this subject is somewhat meagre. Agnes J. Szilágyi has published on the subject, including an article in our journal: "The One Who Could Photograph the Soul: Hungarian Filmmakers in Brazil," *Hungarian Studies Review*, 21, 1-2 (1994): 77-90. Agnes Kaczur-Bató's article, "Magyarok Braziliában [Hungarians in Brazil]," *Világtörténet* 1, 3-4 (1990): 64-75, covers its subject only to the 1930s, but does offer a useful bibliographic note (which refers to a few more articles dealing with Hungarians in Brazil before 1939) as well as some information on the research going on regarding Hungarians in Latin America at Szeged University (formerly József Attila University) in Hungary.<sup>3</sup>

### *Studies on the Hungarians of Canada*

While Professor Várdy might be excused for not exploring the subject of Hungarians in Latin America in his book, on the grounds that too little information is available on the subject to write of a work of synthesis, he can be absolved for not covering the Hungarians of Canada because that subject has been explored in fair amount of detail in books that are readily available to the reading public. I have in mind first and foremost my own book, *Struggle and Hope: The Hungarian-Canadian Experience* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), produced in collaboration with three other scholars.<sup>4</sup>

Like Várdy's book, this work too, is in part based on already existing historical literature, which is outlined in detail in the book's bibliographical essay (pp. 232-39). A shorter and more recent synthesis, based mainly on my own writings, can be found in the entry "Hungarians" in the *Encyclopedia of Canadian Ethnic Groups* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 660-674.<sup>5</sup> Still another such overview is Carmela Patrias, *The Hungarians in Canada* (Ottawa: the Canadian

Historical Association, 1999). This booklet, designed mainly for secondary school students, also has a useful bibliography (see pages 31-33). The history of some of the early Hungarian settlements of the Canadian West is told in detail mainly in the works of Martin L. Kovacs,<sup>6</sup> while the interwar immigration and settlement have been dealt with by John Kosa,<sup>7</sup> Professor Patrias,<sup>8</sup> and myself.<sup>9</sup>

### *Earlier Histories of the Hungarians in the United States*

If we were to say that much has been written on the history of Magyars in the United States even before the year 2000, we would be making an accurate statement. If we were to argue that the history of Hungarians has not been adequately covered before the two major works that were published in 2000, we would also be truthful. The fact is that the history of the Hungarian ethnic group in the USA is such a large subject that it cannot be considered adequately explored even though scores of publications have tried to cover it — or at least, have claimed to do so. This is not to say that some specific aspects of this story have not been researched in a systematic and competent manner.

In the introduction to his book, Béla Várdy himself refers to four major works of synthesis that had been published prior to the year 2000 on the history of Hungarians in the United States. One of these is Várdy's own earlier English-language studies: *The Hungarian Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985). The second one is Géza Kende's *Magyarok Amerikában* (Cleveland, 1927, 2 vols.), and the third is Emil Lengyel's *Americans from Hungary* (Philadelphia and New York: Lippincott, 1948). It might be added that Lengyel's book is a quite informative and highly readable work, but evidently it is now quite dated.

The fourth and last book mentioned by Várdy is Julianna Puskás' *Kivándorló magyarok az Egyesült Államokban, 1880-1940* [Emigrant Hungarians in the United States] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1982) which is a scholarly work based on a great deal of painstaking research and represents the culmination of its author's decades-long work on Hungarian emigration to and settlement in the United States. Puskás has published other, shorter works on the subject as well, including a volume in English. Most of these deal with the pre-1914 period, although in some of them (in particular in *Kivándorló magyarok*) she adds some

information on the fate of the communities of the pre-1914 immigrants in the post-World War I decades.<sup>10</sup>

Of course, there have been many other attempts to offer a comprehensive or a partial overview of the history of the Hungarian-American ethnic group. In breadth of coverage or in the quality of research, however, these are not on par with the above-listed works. Not surprisingly, they do not earn a mention in Várdy's introduction in his *Magyarok az Újvilágban*, though they are listed in the book's bibliography. One of these is the above-mentioned book by Miklós Szántó. Another is Leslie Könnnyü's *Hungarians in the U.S.A.: An Immigration Study* (St. Louis, MO: *American Hungarian Review*, 1967), and there is also the recently-published (more exactly, re-issued in a different incarnation) Elemér Bakó's *Magyarok az Amerikai Egyesült Államokban* [Hungarians in the United States of America], ed. László Papp (Budapest: Magyarok Világszövetsége, 1998). A more scholarly but shorter overview is offered in Paula Benkart, "Hungarians" in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, 462-471. An excellent demographical and sociological survey of Hungarian-American society in the 1980s is offered in Zoltán Fejős, "Magyarok az Egyesült Államokban az 1980-as években: Demográfia, társadalmi adatok, fogalmi problémák" [Hungarians in the United States in the 1980s: Demography, social characteristics, and problems of definitions], in *Magyarságkutatás*, (the yearbook of the Magyarságkutató Intézet) (Budapest: Magyarságkutató Intézet, 1988), 177-216.

There are also other relevant works, some of which are difficult to categorize either as popular or scholarly literature. One that belongs to the former category is Aladár Komjáthy, *A kitántorgott egyház* [The Church that staggered out (i.e. overseas)] (Budapest: Református Zsinati Iroda, 1984). Additionally, there are collections of very informative and interesting documents. Perhaps the most remarkable and useful of such works is Albert Tezla (with K. E. Tezla), eds., "*Valahol túl, meseországban...*" *Az amerikai magyarok, 1895-1920* ["Somewhere beyond, in Fairy-tale Land...": American Hungarians, 1895-1920], 2 vols. (Budapest: Európa könyvkiadó, 1987), which has been published in English as well: *The Hazardous Quest. Hungarian Immigrants in the United States, 1895-1920* (Budapest: Corvina, 1993), in one massive volume.

There have also been a handful of "local histories" written about particular Hungarian-American communities. Perhaps the most scholarly and best-researched of these is Zoltán Fejős, *A chikagói magyarok két nemzedéke, 1890-1940: Az etnikai örökség megőrzése és változása* [Two

generations of the Hungarians of Chicago, 1890-1940: The preservation and transformation of the ethnic heritage] (Budapest: Közép-Európa Intézet, 1993).<sup>11</sup> There are also excellent case studies of particular aspects of Hungarian-American society, or a specific development in Magyar-American history, some by Fejős, others by Professors Béla Vassady, Béla Várdy, Stephen Beszedits, and myself.<sup>12</sup>

On a few subjects then, the author of a synthesis on Hungarian-American history is confronted by an abundance of literature, not all of which is reliably researched. However, on most other aspects of this large subject the writer of a general overview is plagued by the scarcity of information. The most praiseworthy feature of Dr. Várdy's new book is his attempt to gather and integrate in one comprehensive volume all the disparate parts of this large and many-faceted story. Inevitably, such work has to be selective and even eclectic (*rendhagyó* as we would say in Magyar) in the treatment of its subject.

### *Béla Várdy's Synthesis*

But first, we should introduce the author, even though for most readers of our journal, he needs no introduction. Professor S. B. Várdy is a prolific Hungarian-American historian who has devoted himself to writing on subjects such as the historiography of Hungary and the history of Hungarians in the United States. This is what he says about himself in his book: "... Steven Bela Várdy (known in Hungary as Béla Várdy), is McAnulty Distinguished Professor of European History at Duquesne University (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), and a member of the International P.E.N. as well as of the Hungarian Writers' Federation. He is the recipient of Hungary's "Berzsenyi-Prize", the Árpád Academy's Gold Medal, and of his University's "Distinguished Presidential Award for Excellence in Scholarship." He is likewise the author or co-author of sixteen books and about four-hundred-fifty chapters, articles, essays, and reviews."<sup>13</sup>

Béla Várdy's *Magyarok az Újvilágban*, as András Csillag points out in his review of this work in our journal's 2003 volume, is actually a history of the Hungarians of the United States of America. Most of the book focuses on the twentieth century, the time of substantial Magyar presence in that country. The book is the most extensive and exhaustive treatment of the history of Magyar-America in the Hungarian language and, as a matter of fact, in any language. It is an unusual work, as the author himself ac-



knowledges in the book's subtitle. It dispenses with certain academic conventions, a fact that detracts little from a work that is intended primarily for the Hungarian general reading public. Professional historians might quarrel with, for example, the discussions of speculative aspects of ancient Hungarian-American connections, but it is probably these parts of the book that the non-academic Hungarian reader will find the most interesting.<sup>14</sup>

Várdy explores such themes, for example, as Captain John Smith's (of Jamestown fame) sometimes disputed Hungarian patent of nobility, and George Washington's rather doubtful claim to Hungarian ancestry.<sup>15</sup> More appropriate from the scholarly point of view is Várdy's discussion of the work, travels and various exploits of Hungarian priests, military officers, and travellers in the North America of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Next, Várdy discusses the coming of the refugees of the abortive 1848-1849 Hungarian War of Independence against the House of Habsburg. The central theme in this connection is the visit of Louis Kossuth to the American Republic in 1851-52, as well as the attempts by some of Kossuth's followers to establish colonies of Hungarian 48-ers in America. As is well known, Kossuth's visit started as a triumph for the Hungarian statesman, but ended as a disaster as it contributed nothing to the dream of Hungary's liberation from Habsburg rule. The colonies Kossuth's followers established, fared hardly any better. Still, the American adventures of the Hungarian 48-ers, especially those who took part in the Civil War, make interesting reading.

After describing the fate of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian political emigration, Várdy turns to the story of the economic migrants of the last decades of the century. In fact, the next 250 pages of his book describe the origins and history of the immigrant ethnic communities that these migrants had created from the 1880s to the 1920s, when immigration of Hungarians to the US was reduced to a trickle by the so-called "quota laws" of the post-World War I period.

The scale of this "new immigration" dwarfed that which had existed before. By the turn of the century, the previously existing Hungarian-American community, was swamped by the newcomers. There was another change as well. The pre-1880 arrivals had been ex-officers, gentlemen adventurers, and people looking for commercial opportunities. The post-1880 newcomers were predominantly agricultural labourers.

With their arrival, the American public's image of Hungarian immigrants would start to change to the detriment of the latter.

What drove people from Hungary, according to Várdy, was poverty in their homeland and the hopelessness associated with it. In this connection the reader might wish that Várdy had explained why mass emigration from Hungary took place exactly at a time when the country was making rapid progress toward modernization and industrialization. Perhaps emigration took place not so much because of poverty throughout the country, but because economic progress by-passed many regions and many social groups. Emigrants were "pushed" not so much by "country-wide poverty" but by dislocations caused by rapid economic change. Added to these economic factors, as Várdy observes, were the sociological and psychological ones, such as the existence of an outdated social order in Hungary which denigrated the labouring classes to the bottom ranks of the social ladder.

Among the "pull factors" that played a role in attracting Hungarian to the US was the American Republic's rapidly expanding economy as well as an image of the US in Hungary as a "land of plenty." For many newcomers, these inflated expectations were often quickly deflated. Still, in the new country they were more likely to be able to save some money and be treated with more respect than they had been used to in the old. Responding to the claim that the members of many of Hungary's nationalities left their land of birth because of the "oppression of the minorities," Várdy cites trends, as well as data on re-migration to minority-inhabited areas of Hungary, that suggest other, mainly economic reasons for the emigration of Hungary's non-Magyar ethnic groups.

The chapters describing the pre-1914 influx of Hungarians to the US are followed by the stories of the myriad economic, social and religious institutions that they established. Although it is possible to categorize these immigrant organizations along these lines, most of them served several purposes. This is especially the case with ethnic churches as they catered not only to the spiritual requirements of the immigrants but also to their social and cultural needs. The churches also reinforced the newcomers' ethnic identities, while at the same time they facilitated their adjustment to American society.

Next Várdy describes the political activities of the Hungarian American immigrants, as well as those of more recent "professional emigres" of the World War II years. He then devotes chapters to subjects such as Hungarian-American literature and theatre. There is even an

account of the swindlers and con-men who inhabited America's Magyar colonies and preyed upon inexperienced and vulnerable fellow ethnics — especially, women. In the following chapters Várdy describes the post-World War II wave of immigrants and the impact of their arrival on Hungarian-American community life. This part of the book is mainly political history, although here too, we find chapters devoted to such cultural activities as publishing ventures, the arts and the fine arts, the ethnic theatre, folk-dancing, and so on. Among the concluding chapters we find one dealing with Hungarian-American reactions to the 1989 regime change in Hungary, and another devoted to outstanding Hungarian Americans. The book is supplemented by an extensive bibliography (pp. 651-715), a chronology of important events (pp. 716-729) as well as an English-language summary (pp. 733-765). There is also a detailed index.

Stephen Béla Várdy's *Magyarok az Újvilágban* is a work of synthesis in that it uses information gathered by previous students of Hungarian-American history, as well as his (and Ágnes Huszár Várdy's) previous publications on the subject. The volume he produced is a massive storehouse of anecdotal and scholarly knowledge about the Hungarian-American past. Although it is extensively documented and provides a massive bibliography, it dispenses with some academic paraphernalia such as a theoretical framework and substantive conclusions. It might have been titled "Forty-four Essays on Hungarian Americans." It is probably for these reasons that Várdy calls his work an "irregular" or "eclectic" [*rendhagyó*] history.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Julianna Puskás's monograph*

As has been mentioned in the first paragraph of this paper, the publication of Várdy's volume coincided with the appearance on the book market of another work on Hungarian-American history: Julianna Puskás, *Ties that Bind, Ties that Divide*. This is a different work from Várdy's. It is published in English and is intended for North American scholarly audiences. It comprises one of the volumes in the "Ellis Island series" of American immigration and ethnic histories, published by Holmes & Meier Company of New York.

Hungarians who came to the United States from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries brought with them their customs, culture, traditions — along with their religious, linguistic, class, occupa-

tional and ideological ties. Their immigrant experiences reinforced some of these and weakened others. Still other bonds were developed by the newcomers after their arrival in America. These bonds gave rise to what we might call sub-ethnic identities which, according to Puskás, were particularly abundant and marked among the people who came to the US from Hungary. All in all, these ties served both to bind and to divide — in a complex and ever changing manner — the communities that immigrants from Hungary established here. Puskás tells the story of their interplay in an effective and readable manner.

More than most other historians of the American immigrant experience, Puskás emphasizes the transitory nature of the stay of the pre-World War I arrivals. Their "emigration" from Hungary was a "temporary emergency solution to a problem at home."<sup>17</sup> Such migration resulted in a lot of criss-crossing of the Atlantic by "immigrants" until the war and the subsequent social, economic and political upheavals in East Central Europe put an end to such travelling.

Puskás is ready to go out on a limb and reinforce unexpected findings of other scholars who have examined patterns of European emigration, or to debunk widely-held theories that are not supported by evidence. In the former category, Puskás emphasizes the fact that emigration from Hungary to the United States peaked in years when there was considerable prosperity and economic progress in Hungary. The explanation lies partly in the fact that advances in economic development caused dislocations for a large number of peoples — including craftsmen who suffered as a result of the expansion of factories.

One of the often voiced myths Puskás questions is the allegation that political discrimination was an important factor contributing to the decision by members of Hungary's ethnic minorities to emigrate.<sup>18</sup> She points out the fact that a great many Germans left Hungary before 1914, just at a time when in the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary there was no political discrimination against German-speaking citizens. Another myth that Puskás dismisses is the one that holds that the old economic migrants discovered their ethnic nationalism after their arrival in America. This was, at most, partially true in the case of the early Hungarian immigrants and certainly does not hold water for later groups.

Staring with the 1920s came the transformation of America's immigrant Hungarian communities into ethnic ones. At first, immigrant culture flourished, but then came times of accelerated assimilation and inter-generational conflicts, all against the backdrop of the hardships

caused by the Great Depression and World War II. The coming of new waves of Hungarian immigrants (with very different social and ideological backgrounds) after the war did little to retard the "waning of the Hungarian identity in the United States."<sup>19</sup>

In this connection it should be mentioned that, aside from comments such as this one, neither Puskás nor Várdy explored in detail the theme of the prospects of the Hungarian ethnic group in the U.S. Puskás emphasizes instead the great changes that America's Hungarian communities had undergone in the past — and are undergoing even in our days. She points out that we can hardly talk of an ethnic identity among the pre-1914 Hungarian immigrants to the US because these people were not members of an American ethnic community — they considered themselves sojourners. Only the post-war period saw the transformation of America's transient Hungarian communities into ethnic ones.

In two sentences devoted to the subject of the future of the Hungarian-American communities,<sup>20</sup> Várdy basically agrees with Puskás's conclusions. Actually, he had covered this subject in a separate study, in an article that appeared in Hungary. He was quite pessimistic. He felt that the preservation of Hungarian identity and culture in America succeeded for three generations at best — in the case of the refugees of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, and in the case of the more recent arrivals — not even that long.<sup>21</sup>

While we can celebrate the appearance in recent years of not one but two major syntheses of the history of America's Hungarian communities, we must not be under the impression that the task of uncovering the Hungarian-American past has been accomplished. While both of these books are the results of monumental labour, they both have their shortcomings. Scholars will probably bemoan the fact that Várdy is not more analytical, that he does not try to develop overarching themes, or at least, to offer substantial conclusions — a chapter instead of two paragraphs.

Admittedly, Puskás's *Ties that Bind* tries to do all this. It is a comprehensive, scholarly study, filled with refreshing arguments. It offers an all-encompassing, original theme. It is most authoritative in discussing the pre-1920s immigration of Hungarians to the United States and the evolution of their communities. Alas, the post-1940 decades and the tumultuous world of wartime and post-war emigre politics are not covered by it in the same knowledgeable manner. In fact Puskás admits that some aspects of this age await examination by historians in the future.

Indeed, much new research will have to be done before a truly comprehensive and scholarly synthesis of the history of America's Hungarian communities can be written. Above all, more specialized studies will have to be undertaken, ones based on painstaking research in archival and/or oral history sources, the kind of work that had been presented in the past in Puskás's earlier books, and in the works of Fejős and Vassady to name the most obvious. We hope that the two volumes of our journal devoted to this subject (the ones for 2003 and 2005), with such extensively researched articles as those of Judith Szapor, Tibor Frank, Thomas Sakmyster and others, will make it easier for a future historian to undertake another, a more comprehensive "grand synthesis" of the Hungarian-American experience.

## NOTES

This paper is an extensively revised and expanded version of a study that appears on the website of the Hungarian American Foundation's Hungarian American Studies Resource Center: [www.hungarianamerica.com/harc/papers.asp](http://www.hungarianamerica.com/harc/papers.asp)

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Zora Ludwig (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, Ellis Island series, 2000), xix + 444 pages, illustrations.

<sup>2</sup> Judit Kesserű Némethy, *Az argentínai magyar emigráció, 1948-1968* [The Hungarian emigre community of Argentina, 1948-1968], doctoral dissertation, József Attila University, Szeged, 1999. Published under the title: "*Szabadságom lett börtönöm*". *Az argentínai magyar emigráció története, 1948-1968* ["My freedom became my prison." The history of Hungarian émigrés to Argentina] (Budapest: A Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> A fair amount of information on the Hungarian community of Brazil can be found in Ágnes Judit Szilágyi and János Sáringer, *Ifj. Horthy Miklós, a Kormányzó kisebbik fia* [Mikós Horthy jr., the younger son of the Regent] (Budapest: Holnap, 2002). My own modest contribution to the subject is "Hungarians in Brazil," serialized in *Kaleidoscope* (Toronto), starting with 3, 1 (Jan. 2000), 13-15.

<sup>4</sup> My collaborators in the writing of this book were Professors Paul Bódy, Martin Kovács and Bennett Kovrig, each whom had written an introductory chapter to the main body of the book. After teaching for two decades at various North American institutions of higher learning, Paul Body had joined the faculty of the University of Miskolc in Hungary, from where he retired recently. Political Scientist Bennett Kovrig studied at the University of Toronto, the Sorbonne, and the London School of Economics. He had taught at the University of Toronto, where he was chairman of the Politics Department for many years,

and from where he retired a few years ago to live in semi-retirement in Paris, France. For Martin Kovacs, see below, note 6.

<sup>5</sup> There is an even shorter version, also by myself, "Peoples of Canada: Hungarians in Canada," in *Horizon Canada*, 10, no. 110 (June 1987): 2630-35.

<sup>6</sup> Martin (Márton) L. Kovacs, was born in Budapest in 1918 and died in Regina, Saskatchewan in 2000. In 1956 he left Hungary and settled in Australia, from where he immigrated to Canada to teach at the University of Regina. His most important book on early Hungarian settlement in the Canadian West is *Peace and Strife: Some Facets of the History of an Early Prairie Community* (Kipling, Saskatchewan: Kipling District Historical Society, 1980). He also published articles relating to the subject. Some of these are "The Hungarian School Question," in *Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education*, ed. M.L. Kovacs (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1978), 333-58; "Searching for Land: The First Hungarian Influx into Canada," *Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies*, 7, 1 (Spring, 1980): 37-43; "From Industries to Farming" *Hungarian Studies Review*, 8, 1 (Spring, 1981): 45-60; as well as chapter three of *Struggle and Hope*.

<sup>7</sup> John Kosa, *Land of Choice: Hungarians in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957). At the time of his death in the mid-1970s, Professor Kosa was member of the faculty at Harvard University.

<sup>8</sup> Especially in her article "Hungarian Immigration to Canada Before the Second World War," in *Hungarians in Ontario*, ed. Susan M. Papp (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1980), a special double issue of *Polyphony*, 2, 2-3 (1979-80): 17-21; as well as in her monograph, *Patriots and Proletarians: Politicizing Hungarian Immigrants in Interwar Canada* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 1994), *in passim*. Professor Patrias teaches in the Department of History of Brock University, in St. Catharines, Ontario.

<sup>9</sup> In chapters four and five (entitled "Years of Growth and Change, 1919-1929," and "A Decade of Setbacks: The 1930's" respectively) of the volume *Struggle and Hope*, as well as elsewhere: "In Search of a Hungarian-Canadian Lobby: 1927-1951," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 12, 3 (Fall 1980): 81-96; "Aspects of Hungarian Settlement in Central Canada," in *Hungarian-Canadian Perspectives: Selected Papers*, ed. M.L. Kovacs (Ottawa: Hungarian Readers Service, 1980), 121-21; "Immigrant Lives and Lifestyles in Canada, 1924-1939," *Hungarian Studies Review*, 8, 1 (Spring 1981): 61-83; "Immigration and Re-Migration: The Changing Urban-Rural Distribution of Hungarian Canadians, 1986-1986," in *The Tree of Life: Essays Honouring a Hungarian-Canadian Centenary*, ed. M.L. Kovacs and N.F. Dreisziger (Toronto: HSR, 1986); "The 'Justice for Hungary' Ocean Flight: The Trianon Syndrome in Immigrant Hungarian Society," in *Triumph in Adversity: Studies in Hungarian Civilization*, ed. S.B. Várdy (Boulder, Co.: East European Monographs, 1988), 573-89; "Immigrant Fortunes and

Misfortunes in Canada in the 1920s," a documentary article in the *Hungarian Studies Review*, 17, (Spring 1990): 29-59; "Sub-ethnic Identities: Religion, Class, Ideology, etc. as Centrifugal Forces in Hungarian-Canadian Society," *Hungarian Studies* (Budapest), 7 (1992): 123-138; and, "Jövőépités Kanadában, az első magyar bevándorlástól 1948-ig," [Building a future in Canada from the time of the first Hungarian immigration to Canada to 1948], in *Itt-Ott* [Here and there, the journal of the Hungarian Society of Friends, USA] 33 (2000): 21-23.

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Puskás's other Hungarian-language studies include "Kivándorlás Magyarországról az Egyesült Államokba 1914 előtt" [Emigration from Hungary to the United States before 1914], *Történelmi Szemle*, 27, 1-2 (1974): 32-68; her English-language monograph is *From Hungary to the United States (1880-1914)* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982).

<sup>11</sup> There are also studies of other localities, but these tend to be written for popular rather than academic consumption. See for example Malvina Hauk Abonyi and James A. Anderson, *Hungarians of Detroit* (Detroit: Ethnic Studies Division, Wayne State University [ca. 1975]), Susan M. Papp, *Hungarian Americans and their Communities of Cleveland* (Cleveland: Cleveland Ethnic Heritage Studies, Cleveland State University, 1981); Paul Bódy and Mary Boros-Kazai, *Hungarian Immigrants in Greater Pittsburgh, 1880-1980* (Pittsburgh, PA: Hungarian Ethic Heritage Study Group, 1981); Magdalene Havadtoy, *Down in Villa Park: Hungarians in Fairfield* (by the author, 1976); and Leslie Konnyu, *Acacias: Hungarians in the Mississippi Valley* (Ligonier, PA.: Bethlen Press, 1976).

<sup>12</sup> Zoltán Fejős's specialized studies include his "'Magyar ruha', 'szüreti nál' és az amerikai-magyar etnikus kultúra néhány kérdése" [The Hungarian dress', 'the grape harvest festival' and some questions of American-Hungarian ethnic culture], *Magyarságkutatás* (Budapest: Magyarságkutató Csoport, 1987); and "Harc a háború ellen és az új Magyarországért" [Struggle against the war and for the new Hungary], *Medvetánc* [Bear-dance] (Jan. 1988): 282-332, a work that deals mainly with the left-wing Hungarian-American periodical *Harc* [Struggle]]. Still other such publications by Fejős are listed in the bibliography of S. B. Várdy's latest book, pp. 665f. After Dr. Fejős was appointed the chief executive officer of the Museum of Hungarian Ethnography in Budapest, his output on Hungarian-American subjects diminished.

Still another valuable specialized study is Béla Vassady, "Kossuth and Újházi on Establishing a Colony of Hungarian 48-ers in America," *Hungarian Studies Review* 6, 1 (Spring 1979): 21-46; and the same author's "Hungarian-American Mutual Aid Associations and their 'Official' Newspapers: A Symbiotic Relationship," *Hungarian Studies Review* 19 (1992): 7-27. Dr. Vassady teaches in the Department of History of Elizabethtown College, in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania.



Most of Béla Várdy's relevant publications are listed in the bibliography of his *Magyarok az Újvilágban*, pp. 701-711. Stephen Beszedits' publications on Hungarians in the American Civil War are reproduced on the website of the Hungarian American Foundation, Inc.: [www.hungarianamerica.com/harc/papers.asp](http://www.hungarianamerica.com/harc/papers.asp). My relevant studies include the articles: "The 'Justice for Hungary' Ocean Flight: The Trianon Syndrome in Immigrant Hungarian Society," in *Triumph in Adversity: Studies in Hungarian Civilization in Honor of Professor Ferenc Somogyi*, ed. S. B. Várdy and A. H. Várdy (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1988), 573-89; "Emigre Artists and Wartime Politics: The Hungarian-American Council for Democracy, 1943-45," in *Hungarian Artists in the Americas*, ed. Oliver Botar (Toronto: HSR, 1994), 43-75; "The Atlantic Democracies and the Movements for a 'Free Hungary' during World War II," in *20th Century Hungary and the Great Powers*, ed. Ignac Romsics (Boulder, Co.: Social Science Monographs /Columbia University Press, 1995), 185-205; which has also appeared in Hungarian translation: "Az atlanti demokraciák és a 'Szabad Magyarorszáért' mozgalmak a II. világháború alatt" [The Atlantic Democracies and the movements for a "Free Hungary" during World War II], in *Magyarország és a nagyhatalmak a 20. században* [Hungary and the Great Powers], ed. Ignác Romsics (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 1995), 149-62; and "Oscar Jaszi and the 'Hungarian Problem:' Activities and Writings during World War II," *Hungarian Studies Review*, 18, 1-2 (1991): 59-91; reprinted in *Hungary in the Age of Total War, 1938-1948*, ed. N. F. Dreisziger (New York: East European Monographs/Columbia University Press, 1998), 267-86.

<sup>13</sup> Várdy, *Magyarok az Újvilágban*, p. 765. One of the books that he has published is the more than 800-page *Historical Dictionary of Hungary* (Lanham, Md., and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1997). For a complete list of his publications (to the year 2000), see *Hungary's Historical Legacies: Studies in Honor of Professor Steven Béla Várdy*, ed. Dennis P. Hupchick and R. William Weisberger (Boulder, Colorado and New York: East European Monographs/Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. xiv-xli. This list is compiled by his wife and occasional co-author, Ágnes Huszár Várdy of Robert Morris University.

<sup>14</sup> A case in point is the very first "Hungarian" visitor to the New World whom Várdy introduces to his readers, the man called Tyrker. Apparently he accompanied the Viking explorer Leif Ericsson on his trip to the shores of North America around the year 1000 A. D. As Várdy points out, the ethnic identity of Tyrker has been the subject of much historiographical debate. Those that endorse the hypothesis that he was a Hungarian adventurer attached to the Vikings of Greenland list a number of factors that support their contention. One of these is the story, told in one of the sagas of the Greenlanders, that when Leif and his companions came upon the land they called Vinland, Tyrker left camp for some time, ate "grapes" he had found, returned drunk and babbled in a language incomprehensible to his companions. A drunkard speaking a strange tongue —

not exactly irrefutable evidence of a Hungarian identity. Of course there are problems with this evidence, most of which Várdy admits. One is the fact that it is hard to get drunk from eating grapes, the other is the circumstance that Vinland was probably not named after the "grapes" the Vikings were supposed to have found there, but more likely the vines they harvested for use as fasteners. In any case, the sagas of the Greenlanders are fantastic stories, which were probably embellished by each generation that handed them down orally, until they were finally written down centuries after the events they described.

<sup>15</sup> Many people who claim a "Hungarian ancestry" in the English-speaking world are descendants — or putative descendants — of St. Margaret, the 11<sup>th</sup> century Queen of Scotland, whose mother, Agatha, was supposed to have been a Hungarian princess, possibly a "daughter of King St. Stephen". The myth of Agatha's Hungarian background has been debunked by Gabriel Ronay of the London *The Times* who has argued that she was the daughter of Liudolf, the Prince of West Freisland, and that she wasn't even born in Hungary but in Kiev, the capital of Kievan Rus. Gabriel Ronay, *The Lost King of England: The East European Adventures of Edward the Exile* (Wolfeboro, N.H.: Boydell Press, 1989). As a small child, Margaret did live in Hungary, with her parents, at the court of Andrew I (ruled 1046-1060). The "Hungarian royal ancestry" of Margaret has been endorsed by none other than Watson Kirkconnell (the late President of Acadia University) who identified her as "dau. of (Saint) STEPHEN, King of Hungary, and his wife GISELA." Watson Kirkconnell, *Medieval Mosaic: A Geneological Supplement...* (Wolfville, N.S.: by the author, 1976), 18 (also, 14).

<sup>16</sup> Várdy's book can be regarded as "eclectic," "irregular" or "unorthodox" also because it deals in great detail with aspects of Hungarian-American past that are known, and leaves out those that have not been recorded or researched by previous commentators, or by Várdy and/or his wife. This shortcoming, however, is hardly unusual: most histories of ethnic groups suffer from it. This is so because the evidence (most importantly, the old-timers who could tell the story) is no longer there for historians to reconstruct certain aspects of the past. Inevitably, any discussion of an eclectic book is also eclectic, in the case of my examination of it, perhaps even more so than scholarly conventions would warrant.

<sup>17</sup> Julianna Puskás, *Ties that Bind, Ties that Divide*, p. 304.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33f.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>20</sup> Várdy, *Magyarok az Újvilágban*, p. 632.

<sup>21</sup> Béla Várdy, "A magyar öntudat és a magyar megmaradás kérdése" [The question of Hungarian identity and survival], *Nyelvünk és Kultúránk*, 110 (April–June, 2000): 74–76.

## PART II

### About Books — Old and New

**In this section** J. Eugene Horvath writes about a little-known Hungarian travelogue that describes the travels of three Hungarian tourist-adventurers in late nineteenth century North America,<sup>1</sup> Peter Pastor reviews a collection of American diplomatic documents concerning pre-World War II Hungary that had been edited recently by Tibor Frank,<sup>2</sup> and N. F. Dreisziger reviews György Litván's new biography of the Hungarian-American thinker and émigré politician Oscar Jaszi.<sup>3</sup>

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Oszkár Vojnich. *Budapesttől Sitkáig. Utijegyzetek* (From Budapest to Sitka. Travel notes). Budapest, 1894.

<sup>2</sup> Tibor Frank, ed. *Discussing Hitler: Advisers of U.S. Diplomacy in Central Europe, 1934-1941*. Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> György Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*. Budapest: Osiris, 2003.



## Late Nineteenth Century Hungarian Tourists in America

J. E. Horvath

A resume of a little-known Hungarian travelogue of North America: Oszkár Vojnich. *Budapesttől Sitkáig. Utijegyzetek* (From Budapest to Sitka. Travel notes). Budapest, 1894.

**On June 12, 1893**, three enterprising young Hungarian gentlemen of means set out from Budapest on a journey that would take them into one of the last surviving wilderness areas of North America. Their names are recorded in the caption of a group photograph in the volume that was subsequently published — at their expense. They were Dr. Oszkár Vojnich, to whom we are indebted for keeping a detailed record of the "expedition," Dr. Emil Kosztka and Béla Krisztinkovich, my wife's grandfather. They embarked on the luxury ocean-liner *Columbia* at Hamburg, and landed at New York. From there they travelled by rail to Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Colorado, San Francisco and points north.

The expedition to Alaska effectively commenced in San Francisco, where the three tourists began registering their impressions concerning novel aspects of the customs, economic activities, and attitudes to the environment of American society. They found much to astound them. They were particularly fascinated by San Francisco's extensive Chinese settlement, and the strangeness of its way of life. One wonders whether the Hungarian reception of popular English mystery novels of the period had alerted the visitors to the more colourful and intriguing aspects of the opium den. Anyway, they found their way to one — an early example of their good fortune (or good judgment) in obtaining reliable guides — and provided the readers with a closely observed description of the appearance of the denizens and their pipes.

The country's richness came to the travellers' attention in sometimes unexpected ways. Thus, a visit to an army camp in San Francisco left them with a very distinct impression of the wealth of a nation that could afford to pay its soldiers the princely sum (in European terms) of

twenty dollars per month. Having fulfilled the requirements of compulsory service in their own country, the Hungarians were especially interested in the men's quarters, which they were given the opportunity to inspect. They were amazed to see, hanging over the beds, "complete outfits of civilian clothing." On learning that the soldiers were required to undergo only two hours of drill per day, and that they were served their meals sitting down, they came to the conclusion that the American Army was "a refuge for work-dodgers." They were subsequently even more impressed when, in the course of an excursion to Yosemite Park — of which there is an illustration showing them riding in a stagecoach — by not only the scenery, but also on learning that the stagecoach driver earned as much as seventy-five dollars a month.

On leaving booming California, the visitors spent some time in the Washington State city of Tacoma. From there they ventured north to Seattle. "This town has one of the prettiest locations of all we have seen so far," our informant notes. He goes on to remark on the general practice of setting fires to burn off forest growth, thus creating cleared spaces "which are promising for buildings and cultivated fields in the future." The modern reader will pay particular attention to the observer's notes on land use in relation to tree cover. Having seen that because of the "great prehistoric forests that cover most of the Northwestern area, the trees have very little value," Dr. Vojnich comments that, for the inhabitants, "it is therefore more advantageous that they be cut down to make way for commercial installations." "Still," he reflects, "there should be a limit to this cutting, and some sort of development plan." (This in 1893!)

During the entire course of this part of their journey, from Tacoma to Seattle and back, the travellers observed that the horizon was obscured by smoke from forest fires, and furthermore that this smoke was usually trapped by low-lying clouds, "a common sight in the Northwest." One wonders whether Dr. Vojnich had any notion of the prophetic nature of what he writes: "New wooden houses erected in the midst of burning debris herald the new civilization that will flourish in years to come. Twenty years is a long time in the life of an American city."

At this stage, inclination or necessity caused Béla Krisztinkovich to decide to go east to Chicago, and await his compatriots there. Drs. Vojnich and Kosztko would continue their explorations further, all the way up the coast via British Columbia to Alaska. Accordingly, the pair left Tacoma at midnight on August 4, 1893, on the good ship *City of Topeka*. Next day, at about three in the afternoon, the vessel cast anchor in Victoria Bay. An unfortunate scene met their eyes. "When we arrived in the bay in front of Victoria, we saw a freighter run aground, listing

heavily, her stern completely submerged. A smaller ship struggled to free her, while the surrounding water was alive with sailboats filled with curious spectators."

The *City of Topeka* remained for about four hours in Victoria. During this period, in the company of three German acquaintances from the boat, together with the wife of one of them, the Hungarians explored Victoria, the capital city of British Columbia. The following is representative of the travellers' keen observation for the minutiae of life.

It is very similar to the American cities we have seen in its style of architecture; nevertheless, the presence of British influence is obvious. Thus, the individual shops have a more European look; another example is that revolvers are not for sale in drugstores here. Also, we noticed something which had never happened during all our time in America — twice we were greeted by perfect strangers! Instead of American men smoking short-stemmed pipes which we had become accustomed to seeing, we encountered "European" men with modest manners.

On the whole, the visitors were impressed with Victoria; they noted its beautiful setting, and saw something of the suburbs where they noted that each house had its own garden. Again, as in San Francisco, they were struck by the sizeable Chinese population amounting to almost 20% ("out of a population of seventeen thousand, there are three thousand Chinese, living together in one area.") Again, the travellers were bedeviled by fog. "But when the fog lifts, we could see the snowy peaks of the Cascade Mountains on the mainland," they noted with relief.

Next day, the vessel made its way up the coast, and stopped at Nanaimo. It anchored at 2 a.m. in a little bay off the Gulf of Georgia, and began taking on coal. "This morning we walked about three miles into Nanaimo, a city of about five thousand people, with our three friends from the boat," the doctor noted. "We learned from a gentleman who lived there that the city has a considerable income from the coal fields. He told us that the average miner earned three dollars a day, which might rise to as high as seven dollars a day in some places!"

Nanaimo was to engage their attention further, for the process of taking on coal was a lengthy one. Consequently, the vessel was still tied up when evening came. It was then that they encountered a social phenomenon which had already puzzled them when they first saw it in "America" (the United States). They were additionally amazed to find the

same sort of thing on the streets of this little town in remote B.C. This time it consisted of a group of perhaps ten men and women gathered on a street-corner in the downtown area, singing hymns and exhorting their fellow-men to strive to attain a better life.

The Doctor explained his puzzlement: "When we were in the country of the 'big advertisement,' I couldn't help but think that this must be some form of publicity, and therefore thought it not worth inquiring about. But today in Nanaimo I have again seen a similar procession, and one of our companions has given me an explanation as to this strange group." The doctor then proceeds to describe this local branch of what was by then — in Western Europe at least — widely known as the Salvation Army, a charitable organization run on military lines. "It is widespread in England, Germany and America," he learned, "and its main religious ideal is moderation in all things." The Hungarians may have been impressed to learn further that the Army was headed by a personage by the name of Booth, an Englishman who adopted the title of General. "In each location there is a separate Captain, and under him is an organization of other officers," the doctor recorded. "This group has a salutary influence on the common people — before anyone enrolls he is required to testify to his crimes and vices, and to promise to live according to the rules of the Army. Those of the group assembled on the street corner are there to invite spectators to join, and each 'meeting' is introduced by a speaker who narrates his own story of salvation from a life of sin." From the published narrative it is clear that this was new and interesting for the young Hungarians.

At three o'clock the following afternoon the boat weighed anchor, and set forth on the long voyage through coastal waters to Sitka Island, off Alaska. The scenery impressed our travellers, in much the same way as it continues to do in the case of those aboard today's giant cruise ships. The smoothness of the water between the shore and the islands was reassuring. "There are eleven thousand islands between Nanaimo and Sitka," the doctor noted, "and of these the rocky shores and green forests are continuously fascinating. The view is captivating at all times of day, and commands the attention of the traveller. It is too bad that the cloudy horizon constantly present in British Columbia forebodes week-long rainy spells." However, the travellers were to be rewarded for spending so many hours at the rail. "When we entered Discovery Passage the sun came out briefly towards evening, and to the west there could be seen a huge rainbow inclining upon the chain of snowy peaks. It was an ending worthy of the scenery of this beautiful day."



At eleven o'clock that night the travellers' vessel came to a stop in the mile-wide passage. That is to say, though the engines were turning and the stern wheel was spinning furiously, the boat made no headway. The information was relayed to them that this was on account of the swift current that at low tide flows so rapidly that it renders steering almost impossible. The diary continues: "Therefore we must wait for the tide to return so that we can pass through. We waited until fifteen minutes after midnight, at which time it became calmer, thus allowing us to proceed."

The next day, August 7th, was one of blinding rain and heavy clouds. That's the coast of British Columbia for you," remarks Dr. Vojnich philosophically, as if in explanation of the meteorological phenomenon. The passengers saw many seals on the shore, and also many fish leaping out of the water. Shortly before dusk on that same day they sighted a whale about a hundred yards from the ship, "spouting three great jets." They also encountered a ship on its way south, to Victoria. The following day they arrived in Alaska. This elicited the following general description, well conveying the travellers' impression of emptiness. "Out of the thirty-two thousand inhabitants, only one-seventh are civilized, and there are seventeen square miles to each person in the area." As they approached the shore, they saw great schools of salmon. "As we hadn't seen too many of these on the B.C. coast, we think this means a change in the weather," the doctor recorded. (This was borne out by sunshine on the following day).

At Metlakatla the passengers were able to observe operations in a fish-packing plant; they watched the Indian workers, both men and women, cleaning, cutting up and canning the fish. On the way to Fort Wrangel they viewed the progress of porpoises, easily six hundred pounds in weight apiece, following the boat. On reaching the Fort they saw their first totem pole, and were much impressed by this form of art. "Those totems are anywhere from six to twelve meters in height, and are sometimes designed as monuments to the dead, sometimes as records of the feats of heroes. They remind me of the cemetery poles in certain parts of Transylvania," Dr. Vojnich added. He and his friend visited the home of an old native wood-carver, whose name he unfortunately does not mention. Through the English-speaking chief (he calls him "Chief kin") acting as interpreter, the author was able to learn something of the significance of totem poles and the meaning of some of the symbols represented.

In particular, it was made clear to the travellers that in this region the Eagle and the Bear families were dominant. The doctor made detailed notes:

The Eagle Clan has three symbols, the eagle, the frog and a three-headed god (elf); the Bear Clan's three symbols are the bear, the wolf and the whale. If a member of the Eagle family has a totem pole erected, the eagle, the frog or the three-headed god is carved at the top of the pole, while on the lower part, relatives of the owner may be represented. The Indian carver, depicted on the lower part of the totem pole standing in his room, has a carved moon-face with big eyes and no neck; above him there is a crouching figure holding a fish on his lap, surmounted by an erect figure with a hat on his head, holding an unrecognizable object in his hands. The whole pole is painted in red, blue, black and brown.

The author was unable to reconcile the figures on this totem with the carver's explanation. Accordingly, he remarked that the artist apparently used his imagination, rather than tradition, in this design.

There was much more to be seen. "A few steps from this house, there were three totem poles standing, two with a bird, the third with a crouching man on top. We saw three more poles in front of the chief's house, another four at the edge of the village and three on the other shore. These totem poles are all more than a hundred years old, and almost completely rotten."

From Fort Wrangel the vessel took its passengers to Juneau amid heavy rain. The high point of this part of the trip was the sighting of a small pod of whales. In Juneau the two Hungarians went ashore in the evening to a local dance hall where they encountered further novel sights:

Sailors and gold miners dance with the copper-skinned ladies. They spin their partners to the music of a harmonium, violin and flute. Their Yankee dances are probably adapted from the French quadrille. Some of the men offer apples and oranges to the ladies between dances, and the men also refresh themselves with the terribly expensive whiskey and beer which are for sale... In one corner a few miners throw their hard-earned gold into the dealer's pot — gambling is very popular in America.

Finally, the travellers arrived at Sitka. At first they had time only to visit the local museum, where they were impressed by two huge totems and by Indian and Eskimo clothing as well as implements for hunting and fishing. The travellers observed how the boat's passengers literally besieged the shops and the Indian vendors along the little town's main street. "Everyone who returned to the ship was clutching some souvenir,

despite the high prices." (Presumably the pair from Hungary too.) There are only two more observations on the visit to Sitka, the first concerning the harbour. "Anchored beside us in the narrow bay were a huge steamship, six small sailboats and a warship with three small guns. This warship would have made little impression on any conventionally sturdy ship. However, she had participated in an interesting manoeuvre the other day, running into an iceberg and a rock and almost knocking a whale out of the sea." These notes conclude with the visitor's fulsome impressions on the bountiful supply of fish: "There are so many fish in the sea here, you have only to reach down into the water to pull one out."

Dr. Vojnich's professional interest was aroused by reports of Indian witch doctors, unknown in Sitka since 1863, who still practiced in the town's wild hinterland. He records having felt some envy on hearing that one such Indian doctor was "the richest man in the village." However, the reported nature of the therapy practiced cast a pall over the listeners. Apparently, after collecting generous offerings of blankets, "the witch doctor calls on spirits to tell him the name of another Indian who has bewitched the sick man." This Indian is then tied up. "If the patient dies, the bound man will be buried alive in the grave, or left still bound in the path of the rising tide."

We must pass over what else our travellers witnessed and experienced in what they may well later have referred to in conversation as the "Wild North-West." Instead, we shall accompany them on their way back to the east coast of the great continent. However, we cannot pass over part of what they recorded of their visit to that hub of the continent's communications system, and place of tumultuous life, the city of Chicago. There, what impressed them most, it appears, were the extremes to which advertising was taken.

You can see all kinds of advertising on the streets of Chicago. We have even seen characters in mediaeval costume selling newspapers. In one huge shop window there was a display of women from all over the world, all with exceptionally long hair — and these had been gathered here simply in order to sell some kind of hair tonic. The Admiral Cigarette company advertises by means of an actual model of a ship carried on a horse-drawn cart. A midget dressed in admiral's uniform is seated on the ship, and on the side, in huge letters, is the message "Admiral Cigarettes." Though it is natural in most places to see houses and lots with "For Sale" signs on them, it is not at all usual to see what we have seen in this city — a

horse hitched to a post on State Street with a big "For Sale" sign hung around its neck!

In Chicago the three friends were united again. Thereupon they determined to make a detour to Canada in order to see the St. Lawrence River basin. Therefore, the next section of the narrative describes their trip from Chicago through Toronto to Montreal. In the course of this, they spent nearly thirty-six hours on the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario, where they found much to admire. On September 18th they left Chicago and travelled by train along the right bank of the Niagara River. They went as far as Lewiston by train, where they boarded a vessel for the journey across Lake Ontario to Toronto. From there they voyaged down the St. Lawrence River to Montreal, arriving in that city at eight p.m. on the following day. "Lake Ontario is like a small sea, sometimes quite rough, and sailing on its green water is quite interesting," it was noted. To the travellers, the really exciting part of the voyage was between Toronto and Montreal, principally the part beginning at Kingston, which they noted is on Lake Ontario at the source of the St. Lawrence River.

The description given expresses their reactions to the scenery at a particularly favourable period of the year:

Our ship anchored at Kingston at five o'clock in the morning, and most of the passengers came aboard here. We then sailed among seventeen hundred islands on a stretch of the river forty miles long and forty-seven miles wide. These are known locally as The Thousand Isles, and they are a great vacation spot. Most of the islands are inhabited by summer holiday makers, and one can see resorts and hotels on the larger ones. Many of the smaller ones are distinguished by the villas of the rich. The trip through these islands is very beautiful and interesting.

The Hungarian visitors were impressed by the natural hazards and also by the means employed by human ingenuity to circumvent them.

Between the Island of Long Sault and the Canadian shores of the river, we sailed through swirling rapids one and a half meters high. Later on, on a stretch twenty miles long, we left even more rapids behind. The skipper avoided the Lachine Rapids, about a mile from Montreal, because of the time of day; much to the annoyance and disappointment of the passengers, he chose to sail around the rapids by means of the canal built for ships going upstream. Thus our only diversion was in

watching the operation of the sluice gates and the mechanism of the swing bridges overhead. The construction of these bridges is very ingenious. The same bridge which had turned completely around on its axis to let us pass, was already in position to carry the oncoming train when we were scarcely six or seven hundred feet beyond. Only a few men were required to operate it.

The next stop was Montreal where the travellers arrived on the 19<sup>th</sup> at eight, in the evening. It speaks volumes for the city's attractiveness is that, even though the hour was late, our travellers immediately set about exploring its downtown area and stayed there until one o'clock in the morning. "Although it is but a few hundred years old [!]," the doctor explains, "Montreal is visibly expanding, and has a distinctly European aspect. Its population is half French. Montreal and Buffalo [!] are among the best American cities, principally because of their cleanliness, pleasant buildings, and wide streets. Of course they belong to British-ruled Canada" [sic!].

The reader will note the interest that the Hungarian travellers took in town planning — at a time when Budapest was undergoing rapid expansion — and in civil engineering. Thus, we should not be surprised at their next decision. "Both my friend Emil and I were regretting having missed the Lachine Rapids," the doctor wrote, "so we agreed that even if we would have to stay a while longer we would make an effort to visit them. We did just that. From eight o'clock until twenty minutes after we travelled by train to the port beyond the Rapids. There we found a small ship, the *Filgate* which daily battled its way through the dangerous waters. On leaving behind the fine Canadian Pacific Bridge, which stands on thirteen stone pillars, we were able to spot the rapids while still quite a distance away, from their foaming white surface.

The hazards encountered by the obstacles nature had placed in the path of progress was a source of awe and excitement to the travellers. "It started when we reached the narrow channel, here only a few meters wide, where we could see flat rocks only a few feet below the surface of the water. Just one wrong calculation in terms of direction, and the ship would be dashed to pieces. It is easy now to understand why our captain had avoided this place last night as dusk was falling. The navigable portion is visible only in broad daylight."

Their adventures over, but safely committed to longhand, our three New World travellers made their way back to New York. There they took the ocean-liner *Elbe*, and, after nine days at sea, they landed in

Europe. When the Doctor resumed his journal, the date was November 2nd 1893, and the place Budapest. In all, he and his companions had been away nearly five months. He had had the opportunity to arrive at some conclusions on what he had seen. He would record that one of his most outstanding experiences was his trip on the magnificent St. Lawrence River.

I have travelled up the Rhine from Cologne to Mainz, a trip that affords maximum opportunity to admire the beauties of the river scenery as well as the ruins of the many castles which lend a most romantic aspect. I have also travelled the American Rhine, the Hudson River, which lacks the lustre of the castle ruins and altogether falls short of the beauty of the original. But the trip down the St. Lawrence, with its vista of summer homes on the seventeen hundred islands, gives a more enchanting view surpassing that of either of the others.

## American Representation in Hungary from 1934 to 1941

Peter Pastor

*Discussing Hitler. Advisers of U.S. Diplomacy in Central Europe 1934–1941*. Edited and introduced by Tibor Frank. Budapest–New York: Central European University Press, 2003. 374 pp. Index and illustrations. 59.95 USD.

**Zsuzsa L. Nagy**, the prominent Hungarian diplomatic historian, noted more than thirty years ago that interwar Central Europe, and more specifically Hungary, was in the backwater of American diplomacy. This lack of interest was demonstrated by the mediocre quality of US representation in Budapest. Between 1934 and 1941 President Roosevelt's envoy was a Democratic Party stalwart, the wealthy businessman, John F. Montgomery. He received his post for political reasons, and had no previous training or experience in the Foreign Service.

In this book Professor Frank includes the recorded summary of 182 conversations Montgomery had with various Hungarian establishment figures and diplomats of foreign legations in Budapest. These *aide memoirs*, which are masterfully annotated by the editor, served as bases for the diplomatic reports Montgomery sent back to the State Department.

Through Professor Frank's seventy page introduction, one could get a better understanding of Montgomery's naivete as reflected in the documents. The summaries of conversations with Hungarian officials, who became Montgomery's "advisers," also provide a remarkable insight into the Hungarian authorities' attitude about the varieties of fascism, communism, anti-Semitism, etc.

The introduction's title, "A Vermont Yankee in Regent Horthy's Court: the Hungarian World of a U.S. Diplomat," points to Professor Frank's theme: Montgomery's misunderstanding of Horthy's role in Hungarian politics. The American minister perceived the regent as a Hungarian version of a British constitutional monarch, rather than the authoritarian figure that he was.

Professor Frank notes that among Montgomery's friends was Joseph E. Davis, the U.S. ambassador in Moscow, "who had shown himself both blind and deaf as a star guest at the Moscow show trials" (p.

14). Yet from the documents presented, one could see that the American minister in Budapest was also blinded and deafened by the pomp and circumstance he encountered in the regent's court. If Davis wrote his apologia for Stalin's system in his 1941 book *Mission to Moscow* in response to the Nazi aggression against the Soviet Union, then Montgomery did the same for the erstwhile Horthy regime at the outset of the Cold War 1947. His work, *Hungary the Unwilling Satellite* is, as Frank notes, "an apologia for Hungarian politics in general and specifically Horthy in person" (p. 45). This is evidenced most starkly when one reads his conversation with the German Minister Otto von Erdmannsdorff regarding the draft of the "racial" (p. 219) anti-Semitic Second Jewish Law and compares it with Montgomery's account in the latter's memoirs. In the document dated 17 December 1938, Montgomery noted that the representative of Nazi Germany spoke to Horthy a number of times about the need to slow down the Hungarian government's anti-Jewish measures in order to avoid economic chaos. Erdmannsdorff told the regent that "the ideas he presents so far as the Jews are concerned are the ideas of his government, that is, they would understand it if the Hungarians did not get rough on the Jews at once" (p. 218).

In his *Hungary the Unwilling Satellite*, however, Montgomery claims that the anti-Jewish laws were passed in order to placate Hitler. "The safety of the Jews in Hungary was largely due to the type of the restrictive laws passed. Through them Hungary seemed to be falling in line with the demands of the tyrant..." (p. 99). He also relates his conversation with von Erdmannsdorff, but with a different twist: "... he was telling me this privately, Hitler was compelling him to put pressure on the government.... It can be seen that this situation offered excellent opportunities to anti-Semitic demagogues" (pp. 105-106). Thus, Montgomery's conversation, which was put down on paper right after the meeting, indicates that the Nazi government put pressure on Horthy to slow down Hungary's anti-Semitic policies. Yet in 1947 Montgomery twisted the facts in order to make Hungary a victim of the Nazis.

Montgomery's book was translated and published in Hungary in 1993. Its publication seems to support the argument of some Hungarian intellectuals, who claim that unlike the Germans, the Hungarians have yet to come to terms with their country's responsibility for being Nazi Germany's ally and for the Holocaust. The publication and analysis of the conversations will contribute to this cleansing effect, especially since the document collection was first published in the Hungarian in 2002.

In the United States some unrepentant Hungarian emigres financed the reprinting of Montgomery's original book in 1993 in order to convince a new generation of readers about Hungary's wartime innocence. Professor Frank's publication will serve as an antidote.



## **A Hungarian Liberal in American Exile: The Life of Oscar Jaszi**

**Nándor Dreisziger**

György Litván. *Jászi Oszkár* (Oscar Jaszi). Budapest: Osiris, 2003. Millenniumi Magyar Történelem, Életrajzok. Cloth. 509 pages.

**The life of Oscar Jaszi** (in Hungarian *Jászi Oszkár*) is an attractive subject to a biographer for a number of reasons. First of all, it is easy to sympathize with him, especially if one believes in democracy, progress, and a united Europe — it also helps if the biographer is Hungarian. Throughout his life, Jaszi (1875-1957) was a federalist who advocated the confederation of the peoples of the Danube Valley. He maintained that the ultimate solution to the problems of the whole of Europe was union in a federation. He was a strong believer in progress in human affairs: the advancement of the technical and social sciences, of democracy, education and human rights. As far as political convictions are concerned, he can be best described as liberal — this in an age when many of his contemporaries gravitated not to liberalism but to either left- or right-wing radicalism. What makes Jaszi especially attractive to a Hungarian biographer is that, for all the years he lived in exile, he remained loyal to his native land — though certainly not to the regimes that ruled it. Lastly, the writing of a Jaszi biography is an appealing undertaking because there is an abundance of archival information about him, a fact that makes the crafting of an extensively documented and exhaustive work an achievable — though doubtless quite a time-consuming — enterprise.

György Litván's biography of Jaszi is as sympathetic to him as it is detailed and extensively documented. Litván is undoubtedly the most qualified person to write such a work. He has edited and arranged for reprinting several volumes of Jaszi's writings,<sup>1</sup> and published a great number of articles dealing with him, his activities and writings.<sup>2</sup>

Litván's preface to the biography points out that Jaszi's refusal to endorse either the radical (or reactionary) right or the radical left earned him the enmity of the regimes that ruled Hungary most of his lifetime. In pre-1918 Hungary he was seen as a troublesome critic of the establishment and its policies. Throughout most of the interwar years he

was regarded as a dangerous progressive, while during Hungary's communist era, he was seen as an agent of American imperialism. From 1920 to 1944 Jaszi couldn't even contemplate a visit to his homeland because he was branded a "leftist radical" by the regime of Admiral Horthy; after 1948 he couldn't visit because the regime of Mátyás Rákosi deemed him an opponent of "true" (i.e. Soviet-style) socialism. Jaszi spent his remaining years in American exile. He died early in 1957 and his ashes were interred in Oberlin (near Cleveland, Ohio) where he had lived for most of his American stay. Only in 1991 were his earthly remains re-buried in the Jaszi family plot in Budapest's Farkasréti cemetery.

Oscar Jaszi was born in 1875 to a family of assimilated Jews. His father had a medical practice in Nagyvárad (today's Carei, Rumania), from where he looked after patients of various faiths and ethnicities in the surrounding countryside. The young Oszkár often accompanied his father on his visits to the villages around Nagyvárad. Despite this early exposure to the realities of life in the multi-ethnic Kingdom of Hungary, in the first three decades of his life Jaszi did not develop a keen interest in nationality problems. His attention as a young man was devoted to the promotion of reformist ideas. By about 1900, he had become prominent among Hungary's radical academics. He and other similarly-motivated young intellectuals launched the sociological journal *Huszadik Század* [Twentieth Century] and established the *Társadalomtudományi Társaság* [Society for Social Studies]. A few years later Jaszi did turn his attention to the nationality problem, the historic Kingdom of Hungary's most intractable and, in the end, unsolvable problems.<sup>3</sup>

Once Jaszi realized the importance of the issue, he undertook a systematic examination of it. He studied the nationalities policies of Hungary's revolutionary regime of 1848-49 and familiarized himself with the leading reform-minded Austrian thinkers' writings on the problem. In the years following he visited many of his country's non-Magyar inhabited regions and established contacts with minority intellectuals. In 1909 he published his first major work on the subject, *A nemzetiségi kérdés és Magyarország jövője* [The nationality question and Hungary's future]. Jaszi had come to believe that nationality groups should have the right to express their cultures in their own way. Attempts at the forceful assimilation of ethnic groups were wrong and could be counter-productive. The giving of equal rights as individuals to members of the nationalities, something that some of the more liberal of Jaszi's countrymen were willing to concede, was not sufficient. Nationality groups were entitled to collective rights, including the right to have their own schools, courts, and access to government services in their own language.

In 1912 Jaszi's *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés* [The development of nation states and the nationality question]

appeared. It was the earliest and most significant Hungarian contribution to the theoretical literature on nation states and national minorities. Its basic ideas can be summed up as follows. The awakening of an ethnic identity, a feeling of belonging to a cultural group, is a natural part of the historical development for all peoples. The process leads to the emergence of nation states, but the ultimate result of this process is not the nation state itself but the creation of large federation of states. Nationalism, then, is a constructive force in human evolution which leads to internationalism. The process of evolution from nationalism to internationalism can be derailed when nationalistic emotions are exploited and are used to foster the oppression of one ethnic group by another. According to Jaszi, this often happens in backward, economically underdeveloped countries, where unenlightened leaders implement policies designed to thwart the aspiration of minorities for cultural emancipation. The result is ethnic conflict.

Such conflicts, according to Jaszi, do not need to develop into bloody warfare. They can be solved, the recipe for a solution is progress: industrialization and democratization, as well as the establishment of large federations of democratic nations. He had earlier suggested the immediate solution: schools, courts and government services for the minorities, in their own languages. Not surprisingly, given the existence of strident nationalism in Hungary at the time, Jaszi's recommendations were rejected by a majority of Hungary's intelligentsia.

The First World War wrought great changes in Jaszi's political outlook. He responded to the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 by withdrawing from public activities. Out of his despair surfaced the hope that from the ashes of war a better world would emerge, a world cleansed of intolerant nationalism. He first put his faith in German liberalism and the hope for the reorganization of Central Europe along Friedrich Neumann's plans for a *Mitteleuropa*. The increasing subordination of German politics to the military after 1916 dampened Jaszi's enthusiasm for a post-war world dominated by Germany. Until 1917 he worried about the possible expansion of autocratic Russia and the setbacks that this would mean for progress and democracy in Central Europe. After the February Revolution, however, Jaszi looked to the new Russia to lead Europe to progress and unity.

In the meantime Jaszi continued to criticize his own country's government for its nationality policies and for the deteriorating relations between Budapest and the nationality regions of Hungary. He also began working on a blueprint for a postwar Central Europe. These were later outlined in his book, *A monarchia jövője, a dualismus bukása, és a dunai egyesült államok* [The future of the Monarchy, the failure of dualism, and the Danubian united states]. The work, completed months earlier, was published only at the war's end. In it Jaszi outlined his plan for the

confederation of the five nations living in the Middle Danube Valley: the Czech, Austrian, Polish, Hungarian and the South Slav nations — a federation that the Rumanians might join at some point in the future. Like the Dual Monarchy it was to a large extent replace, this state was to be a customs union and was to have a federal army as well as a united foreign policy. Hungary was not to be dismembered in the process of creating the federation, although Jaszi acknowledged that Croatia would probably want to belong to the "Illyrian republic," i.e., the South Slav state within this "Pentarchy."

After Hungary's wartime government collapsed in late October of 1918, a left-of-centre coalition assumed power under the leadership of the reformist politician Count Mihály Károlyi. Soon, Jaszi was put in charge of nationality policies. His task was to reorganize Hungary before the centrifugal forces of minority nationalism, greatly strengthened by the war, tore the country asunder and resulted in the disintegration of the Middle Danube region of Europe into several small nation states.

Jaszi undertook his Herculean assignment with determination. He no doubt looked upon with exasperation the prospect of the disintegration of Hungary into its component ethnic units. He never intended to dismantle the multi-ethnic Kingdom of Hungary — he only wanted to reorganize it by giving collective rights and cultural autonomy to the nationalities. He had another reason to fear the disintegration of his country. Jaszi had been a firm believer in the organization of the world, in particular Europe, into larger and larger political units or federations. The establishment of small nation states in the heart of Europe would have gone completely counter to such historical processes.

By November the chances of creating a Pentarchy along the lines of Jaszi's earlier plans had become nonexistent. All Jaszi could hope for was to reorganize Hungary along ethnic lines. His efforts were in vain. Only with the country's small Ruthenian minority did he reach an agreement that, had events not intervened, would have involved Subcarpathia receiving a large degree of self-government within Hungary. Jaszi's negotiations with Hungary's Slovaks and Rumanians met with failure. Accordingly, instead of a democratic "Eastern Switzerland" emerging in the Middle Danube Basin from the ruins of war, there arose an agglomeration of small, independent states. Their existence was sanctioned through the post-war peace treaties, especially by the Treaty of Trianon of June, 1920. It dismembered the historic Kingdom of Hungary and mandated the transfer of two-thirds of its territories to the "Successor States" of Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia. Ironically, these three new states were just as, if not more, multi-ethnic as the old Hungarian Kingdom had been.

In Hungary itself, the regime of Károlyi gave way to the Republic of Councils under the communist leader Béla Kun. Jaszi left the country

in May, 1919 and began his long exile, first in Austria and then in the United States. Throughout his life in exile he continued to devote his time and energies to further the cause for the establishment of a Danubian confederation. Disappointed in the Western democracies' imposition of a "wrong and short-sighted" peace settlement on Hungary, early during his exile Jaszi put his faith in the governments of the Little Entente countries (Czechoslovakia, Rumanian and Yugoslavia) and strove to build good relations with their leaders. "He conceived this alliance," wrote Litván in 1991, "not as a mere tactical one, necessary to defeat the Horthy regime, but as a long term necessity in... seeking rapprochement with the Successor States, in the integration of Hungary in a new democratic environment and,... in [bringing about] a Danubian Confederation."<sup>4</sup>

At first Jaszi was encouraged by his successes. Soon, however, his relations with governmental circles in the Little Entente states soured, though his ideas were still well-received in progressive intellectual circles. By 1923 Jaszi had begun to realize the futility of expecting help from the regimes in Prague, Belgrade and Bucharest, for a democratic reorganization of the Middle Danube Valley. As a result, he decided to abandon emigre political activities and to settle in the United States. He arrived there in September, 1925 — he had been offered an academic position at Oberlin College, in Ohio.

At Oberlin Jaszi taught, worked on his academic publications, and continued advocating reforms in Central Europe. It was during the early years of his stay he produced his most famous English-language book, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*. Though written from the perspective of the sociologist and political scientist it gained respect from many historians. Although this book was mainly a scholarly undertaking, it also served political purposes. It cautioned the statesmen of East Central Europe against policies of undue centralization, bureaucratization and the pursuit of state autarchy. It also called for civic education and the fostering of tolerance among peoples. Jaszi demanded that all nationalities be assured cultural autonomy and advised the international community to remedy some of the blatant injustices of the post-war peace settlement. He expressly warned the statesmen of the Little Entente that if their countries did not heed the lessons of the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy, they would suffer the same fate.<sup>5</sup>

In 1934 Jaszi visited Eastern Europe and late that year he reported on his findings. His main conclusion was that the nationalities problem had not been solved and that the efforts then being undertaken to solve it were inadequate. Even in Czechoslovakia he had found "a growing spirit of nationalism." In Romania, the situation was "alarming." He listed myriad complaints by Hungarians and Germans there of Romanian discrimination against them. Still, the situation there was not as bad as in Yugoslavia where under the royal dictatorship, minorities were denied

even the opportunity of complaining about their treatment. Jaszi saw no solution to these problems in the immediate future. Without "fundamental reforms" Jaszi concluded, a "new war will come." And after it will come "the revolution" with its "kolkhozes" and not a "free system of federalism" but the "dictatorship of the proletariat." "Not Europe but Asia will then rule in this part of the world..."<sup>6</sup> Evidently, Jaszi's 1934 tour of the Little Entente countries dealt a profound blow to his hopes for the solution of the Danube Valley's problems.

Jaszi continued to write on this subject after 1934 but he was forced to rely on second-hand information for his accounts. In 1936 he still had vague plans to return for another fact-finding mission, but by late 1937 he had come to the conclusion that he could not and should not go. By then he feared that he would never see his native Carpathian Basin again. For the next few years he would watch the unfolding of events there, often with dismay and concern for the fate of his friends and relatives there (pp. 376-77).

The outbreak of World War II caused Jaszi to fling himself into political action — he even headed one of the several political organizations of Hungarian emigres in America. During the early years of the war he had hoped that the conflict might lead to changes in Danubian Europe and that these changes would result in the implementation of his ideas. The war, however, brought new disappointments for Jaszi — setbacks that were probably more profound than those he had encountered after 1918. Not only was his hope of a federal reorganization of East Central Europe not realized after the war, but democratic and other reforms were stifled there with the imposition of Soviet-style communism.<sup>7</sup> (pp. 394-396)

The decade that followed the end of the war brought more disillusionment for Jaszi. He was saddened by the spread of Soviet influence throughout Eastern Europe and the diminishing prospects for democracy and federalism in the region. He was greatly upset by the treatment of minorities by Hungary's neighbours, especially by Czechoslovakia whose leaders expelled hundreds of thousands of the country's minorities. In the nick of time, in the fall of 1947, not long before the assumption of total power by the communists in Hungary, he managed to pay a visit to his homeland.<sup>8</sup> The trip was the last of the septuagenarian Jaszi's major undertakings. Ageing and ailing, he took a long time to recover from it. His declining levels of energy and advancing age were not the only disappointments in his life. He had marital troubles. Furthermore he lost many of his friends. His friendship with Rusztem Vámbéry suffered in part because of the latter's continued association with the Czech leaders and Hungary's increasingly communist-dominated government. Jaszi's decades of congenial correspondence with Karl Polanyi also came to an end under the strain of ideological differences. And Jaszi once again broke off his friendship with Mihály Károlyi, this

time in a more serious manner than during any of their previous misunderstandings. In Jaszi's eyes, as the late 1940s approached, Károlyi appeared to be more and more an opportunist, a Bolshevik fellow-traveller. This decision caused Jaszi much agony. On the other hand, with Michael Polanyi (whom he called Misi), that most astute and unrepentant critic of Marxism,<sup>9</sup> he remained on friendly terms to the very end.

During his long life Jaszi had his share of admirers. The most prominent of these was the poet Endre Ady. Interestingly, Litván points out that some Hungarians have forgiven Ady for his censure of Hungary's establishment but have not forgiven Jaszi for doing the same. Late in his life, the intellectuals who esteemed him clustered around the periodical *Látóhatár* [Horizon] and included Gyula Borbándi, the prolific writer on the affairs of Hungary and the Hungarian diaspora. And there were others, some of them main-stream political and/or intellectual figures, including the respected diplomat Aladár Szegedy-Maszák. (pp. 8-9)

Jaszi's detractors were more numerous: members of Hungary's pre-1918 establishment and supporters of the Horthy regime, as well as the leaders of the 1919 and post-1948 communist regimes in Hungary. To the former two groups he was the revolutionary, to the latter two he was a counter-revolutionary. From 1948 to 1975 in particular, in the People's Republic of Hungary, Jaszi was a non-person or someone whose ideas were seen as misguided. In 1975, the year of the centennial of his birth, he was partially rehabilitated, though his critiques of Marxist thought were kept secret.

The regime change of 1989 didn't bring Jaszi greater and wider acceptance in Hungary. Some people still see him as the radical and, in particular, the politician — and later, the would-be politician — who was ready to treat with the "enemies" of the Hungarian nation. Still others call him a self-loathing anti-Semite. To many of his countrymen he is still a "divider" of the nation, though to Litván he appears to be more of a "uniter," a man who was willing to try cooperation with people of a wide range of political views, except the extreme right and the left. (pp. 8-9) And Litván agrees with those who see Jaszi more as a prophet than an ideologue, among other things a prophet of European unity. Regarding Jaszi's unpopularity, Litván admits that Jaszi's criticism of Hungary's establishments before World War I, in the interwar period and during the Cold War, was strident and relentless, a fact that accounts for the many enemies that he made during his lifetime — and continues to make even today. (pp. 10-11)

Aside from a few such observations, Litván does not try to evaluate Jaszi's life's work and overall political impact. He leaves that task to future historians — and to the readers of his book. What he has given us is not an assessment of Jaszi's legacy but a meticulously researched,

stimulating and elegantly presented story of his life that will no doubt remain the *magnum opus* of Jaszi biographies for generations to come. Hopefully it will be published in English so that interested Americans can read about a remarkable intellectual who spent half his adult life among them.

## NOTES

I am indebted to Professor Judith Szapor of the University of Ottawa for lending me her copy of Dr. Litván's book — until I received a review copy from the publisher.

<sup>1</sup> Including: *Jászi Oszkár pulicisztikája* (Budapest: Magvető, 1982); Oscar Jászi, *Homage to Danubia* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995); and a new, partial edition of Oszkár Jászi, *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés* [The development of nation states and the nationality question] [original edition, Budapest, 1912] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Including an article in our journal: "Jaszi's Viennese Years: Building Contacts with the Democratic Left in the Successor States," *Hungarian Studies Review*, 18, 1-2 (1991): 43-49.

<sup>3</sup> The paragraphs that follow here are based on papers I had given on certain aspects of Jaszi's writings and activities at conferences in 2003 and 2004 at Concordia University in Montreal and at the College of Charleston in Charleston respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Litván, "Jaszi's Viennese Years," p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> Beginning with the early 1930s, Jaszi produced a stream of articles whose subject and message would be more overtly political than those of his *The Dissolution*. These essays were prompted by political trends in Central Europe. The phenomena that distressed Jaszi more and more was the strengthening of right-wing movements in that part of Europe as well as in Germany.

<sup>6</sup> One of Jaszi's reports on his visit is reprinted in *Homage to Danubia*, pp. 78f.

<sup>7</sup> For discussions of Hungarian-American emigre politics during the Second World War see my study "The Atlantic Democracies and the Movements for a 'Free Hungary' during World War II," *20th Century Hungary and the Great Powers*, ed. Ignác Romsics (Boulder, Colorado: Social Science Monographs, distr. Columbia University Press, 1995), 185-205.

<sup>8</sup> The antecedents, events and aftermath of this visit are discussed by Litván in great detail (pp. 424-444).

<sup>9</sup> On Michael Polanyi see Lee Congdon's article in our journal, "Polanyi and the Treason of the Intellectuals" (vol. II, no. 2; Fall, 1975), 79-90.



A letter to the Editor:

## **Some Reflections on Millennial Retrospections**

The *Hungarian Studies Review* (HSR) published a special volume (Vol. XXVIII, Nos. 1-2 [2001]) entitled "Hungary: 1001-2001 – A Millennial Retrospection," written by a group of scholars. It presents an excellent survey of Hungary's history and touches on some key problems of future survival of the Hungarian nation. The Introduction and Postscript of the 236 pages long work consists of approximately 100 pages by the editor of the volume Professor Nándor F. Dreisziger.

Focusing on Hungarian ethnic survival in the past and future in the light of negative demographic trends in Hungary and in the post-Trianon successor states today, the volume presents a novel, bold approach which is worth to note. Unfolding the multiple causes of the country's demographic decline in the 20th Century, the study suggests that in the post-communist era Hungary's future prospects are promising: the economic indicators are positive and this will remove obstacles to higher birthrates, but no major breakthrough can be expected (p. 52). However, Hungary might become a country of immigration from the larger Carpathian area, especially in the east and southeast, attracting new settlers. EU membership would undoubtedly contribute to the desirability of immigration from less developed neighbours who would favour the expanding economic opportunities and stable political system: they would represent people of diverse ethnic and religious background (p. 53).

To bring about these results (of increasing Hungary's population), a "judicious immigration policy is desired" (p. 53), which ought to be the answer to the frustrating experiences: since Trianon Hungary has been unable to affect a lasting territorial revision nor achieve the establishment of (cultural) autonomy in some compact Hungarian areas. The study unequivocally predicts on the aforementioned grounds that Hungary in the 21st Century would become a prosperous country of immigration and stabilize demographic trends. (p. 54) These are essentially the grounds for the proposed population shift and the argument is even more forcefully restated in the Postscript (pp. 227-230). The government should "encourage the immigration of Hungarians from neighbouring countries;" and the lawmakers might well put aside any reservations about the negative implications of their immigration policies for these countries." (p. 228).

The writers of these comments believe that these proposals are worthy of attention as one way to cope with this crucial question. However, they also find that there are significant weaknesses in the

study's future projections and that the empirical bases are on shaky grounds. We put forth the following arguments:

1. The negative demographic trends, the net loss of population in Hungary and in Hungarian minorities abroad are not exact science predictions. Population studies of the Central Statistical Office (KSH) and other assessments indicate several alternative outcomes in the next decades.<sup>1</sup> Although it is unlikely that the trend can be decidedly reversed, it is too early to visualize an apocalyptic outcome. The negative growth is a general phenomenon in the developed world and the successor states' population bases are also contracting. There is no scientific evidence that the migration per se would decidedly change demographic patterns in the society.

2. The key argument of the study is a projection of an optimal growth of the Hungarian economy in the near future; this is perhaps the weakest link in the proposal. Since the writing of this volume (2000), the economic indicators moved in the opposite direction: GDP growth slowed down; the Treasury shows alarming deficits;<sup>2</sup> unemployment especially in the less skilled populations is officially high and the hidden unemployment numbers are virtually unknown. Partly because of EU integration and expected transition, partly due to its own structural weaknesses the agro-sector is in deep crisis not being able to compete on the market with large scale industrial production. The inevitable transformation to the new farming system will likely yield a new mass of unemployment in the dislodged rural population. Thus the key economic argument for a prosperous magnet country attracting immigrants has no basis in fact.<sup>3</sup>

3. Because of the above, the suggestion that in the surrounding areas, specifically in the east and southeast, Hungary could become a preferred target for large scale immigration, remains a sterile point of view; furthermore, such an officially legalized attempt would also raise EU concerns if not objections. Hungary so far has not clarified its legal/political position in regards to the minorities, and this is reflected in the ambivalent position about double citizenship, a question resurfacing periodically without solution.

4. The visualized "judicious" immigration policy touches upon raw nerves and sensitivities psychologically, politically and legally. The key concept of "judicious" is not defined in this context. Does it mean a negotiated cooperation in the Carpathian region with minority organizations and/or governments; does it mean limited and by what criteria; does it mean immigration for Hungarian ethnics only or anyone else living in the effected areas of other countries? Depending on the normative content of the term "judicious", a series of legal puzzles arise, e.g. the definition and proof of who is Hungarian and who would have the authority to make a legal decision in the matter. The ill fated Status Law approved by

Parliament in 2001, would caution about the insurmountable maze of problems regarding such issues.<sup>4</sup>

The interstate regional relations between Hungary and Slovakia and Romania, as well as with the European Union were – mildly stated – disturbed and the issues became hot contests between the leading political parties affecting the outcome of the 2002 parliamentary elections. Public opinion regarding foreign immigrants and migrant labour proved unfavourable in connection with the Status Law and it is unlikely that it would be different toward a large scale immigration policy. The political parties - especially the governing party and the major party of opposition would make the issue the hottest political battle ground – the Hungarian voting public is not ready for such a drastic departure from a key issue of Hungarian history since Trianon. It follows that the governing majority party in Parliament would face a risky task to pass large scale immigration measures which would explicitly and implicitly promote the abandonment of the Hungarian minorities' objectives: survival on the place of their homeland. A wrong move on the issue could result in the overthrow of the government at the polls the next time around and hence bold steps in this direction are unlikely and unwise.<sup>5</sup>

5. The controlling authority on the issue would not be solely the Hungarian Parliament but rather the international treaties under the UN Charter and mostly the EU. The precedent of the Status Law shows that ethnic discrimination or favouritism is contradictory to the EU principles and thus immigration of Hungarian ethnics but exclusion of "other" nationalities would be unacceptable.<sup>6</sup> Under such conditions the study encouraged immigration legislation would open wide the door for non-Hungarian applicants which in time would unlikely not to be blocked politically and *de lege ferenda*. While the Postscript (p. 229) takes the position that such measures would not affect the integrating potential of the Hungarian nation regarding other settlers, this projection is highly dubious.<sup>7</sup> The unpredictable volume of migration could inadvertently alter ethnic ratios; a large number of Romanian Roma population speaks some Hungarian without identifying themselves as Hungarians.

6. Current public opinion in Hungary does not endorse an influx of "foreign", even if Hungarian-labour. The history of the Status Law and public reaction to its substantial alteration by the Nastase-Orbán agreement opening labour transfer for all Romanian workers, is a case in point.<sup>8</sup>

7. Ultimately, there is an even more vital issue involved. The proposal does not even touch upon the question of what would the affected Hungarian population think. It puts forth an unilateral solution in which the affected have no say. Because of the editorial limitations of these reflections, we confine ourselves to two basic issues: the aspirations

of the minority organizations and the grass-root sentiments of Hungarians abroad.

The Romanian Hungarian Democratic Association (RMDSZ) aims not only at ethnic survival but also to prevent or at least slow down the out-migration, exactly the opposite what the millennial study encourages. The speed up of this process would have catastrophic effect on the Hungarian community if they would be decapitated by the educated elite's massive flight. The RMDSZ enjoys near total support and together with other organizations in Slovakia, takes the view that large scale emigration is an anathema which the democratic public tries to avoid.<sup>9</sup>

The cultural survival is likewise in the focus of Hungarian minorities: the establishment of Sapientia University and the constant concern with the Babes-Bolyai University's Hungarian programs are but a few examples. Numerous church and community leaders underline the strength of solidarity in Transylvania and Slovakia while aware of the downward demographic trends. Outstanding intellectuals take a similar stand while stressing the need for ethnic cooperation which ought to be promoted by the Hungarian side as well.<sup>10</sup>

In accordance with these views, there can be some trust in the young generation: a research conducted by the National Youth Research Institute shows that in the 15-29 year old groups, national self-identity is strong everywhere in the successor states, but many would like to study in Hungary; if they would consider immigration, it would be only for economic reasons."

Considering the massive proposals of this study, we ought to look at the grass root sentiments of the affected people. For lack of space in this short comment, we would only refer to our personal experiences with ordinary everyday people, however, if anyone has doubts, he/she ought to consider the meaning of the presence of literally hundreds of thousands on the Csiksomlyo celebrations in Transylvania.<sup>12</sup>

8. The Millenary volume does not offer alternative solutions for the future. We argue that sustained economic and political policies to promote large families should be continued, since improved financial conditions for young families could make a difference. This would be more effective – if at all – than the undoubtedly more expensive tax and budget support needed for the proposals' immigration measures. Instead, it seems more important to expand economic and cultural assistance to Hungarian organizations and individuals and capital investments especially in Romania and Slovakia. The EU principles in force ought to be helpful in protecting alternatives available and used in other economies."<sup>13</sup>

Generational changes could also be expected to contribute to the solution of inter-ethnic animosity. As more we move away from the debilitating trauma of Trianon, as better ought to be the dissolution of tensions arising among the various ethnic groups. Last not least, the

successor states are all on the road to gain EU membership which must make a difference in their internal policies. The entire direction of European integration, the communication revolution result in more openness of information and freedom of movement, all in favour of a hope for a better future of minorities in Europe."<sup>14</sup>

In concluding: we acknowledge that the proposal is inventive but it is also asymmetric and premature. Such a complex question does not tolerate a narrow unilateral approach. The study deserves praise for tackling orthodox views and is free from dogmatic nationalist thinking, but in doing so forgot about the realm of possible: the theory is separated from its empirical bases.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Consult the Central Statistical Office (KSH) trend-assessment 9 June 2001, and also the KSH report on population census data, 23 July 2002.

<sup>2</sup> GDP growth declined from 5% in 1998-2000, with further decline expected, see Barnabas Racz, "The Left in Hungary and the 2002 Parliamentary Elections," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 55, 5, (2003): 751-752. The budget deficit significantly grew in 2002-2003, foreign investments slowed down or moved out, see Central Statistical Office report, 20 June 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Unemployment in 2001-2002 estimated at 6.5% and inching upward, consult András Vértes, "Gyors növekedés, töredező egyensúly" (Fast Growth – Declining Balance) in S. Kurtán, P. Sándor, L. Vass, eds., *Magyarország Politikai Évkönyve* [The political yearbook of Hungary] (Lajosmizse: Demokrácia Kutatások Magyar Központja Alapítvány, Magyar Hivatalos Közlöny Kiadó, 2001), 169-178. The size of hidden unemployment is virtually unknown.

<sup>4</sup> The Status Law (officially named the Benefit Law) passed by Parliament 20 June 2001; for full analysis see János Kis "Statustorvény" (Status Law), *Élet és Irodalom*, XLVI, 8 March 2002, pp. 304.

<sup>5</sup> In the 21st Century society seems to divide into two groups regarding Trianon: those who are still nostalgic and those who are indifferent. The former would oppose immigration measures, the latter would also object if it would put further stress on the economy and the taxpayers.

<sup>6</sup> See Gyula Hegyi, "A kisebbségek és az ELI" (The minorities and the ELI") *Népszabadság*, 4 November 2002, p. 12. The Hungarian delegation in 2003 submitted a motion at the European Convention to include a clause in the European Constitution Draft about minority and ethnic rights. These norms however, are implicitly included in the general human rights section. The future of the proposal remains to be seen. *Magyar Nemzet*, 24 June 2003.

<sup>7</sup> The conclusions of the study state that "recent scientific tests show that the genetic makeup of Hungarian characteristics is indistinguishable from their neighbours" on p. 229. The reference is to a study by Judit Béres, "Népünk genetikai rokonsága" (The genetic relationship of our people) *Élet és Tudomány* (Life and Science), no. 38, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> The December 2001 Nastase-Orbán agreement aimed at opening the labour market in Hungary for all Romanians and extended authority to Romania to control official financial support for Hungarian organizations. Slovak rejection was even stronger and at the time of this writing still awaits solution. The agreement is constitutionally questionable as it altered parliamentary law without legislative authorization.

<sup>9</sup> Viktor Orbán, prime minister, made references to population transfer in connection with the Status Law; the statement was retracted as it evoked resentment by all shades of minority personalities, *Magyar Nemzet*, also, *Népszabadság*, 9 June 2001. The issue did not play a direct role in the 2002 campaign.

<sup>10</sup> See Béla Biró, publicist's (Kolozsvár – Cluj-Napoca) several excellent analyses in *Népszabadság*, 6 January, 1 May and 17 May 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Consult "Mozaik 2001 Research", 25 March 2002.

<sup>12</sup> On the 9th of July 2003, the "István a király" opera was performed in the open; the audience was estimated at 300,000; see for reports all leading press organs, 9-11 July 2003.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. the extension of retirement age; two jobs and/or overtime; organized guest workers. New technology-generated productivity may also inconveniences alleviate the need for massive influx of new labor and dislodged agricultural workers may also increase the pool of employables.

<sup>14</sup> On the occasion of the Hungarian accession to the EU in Athens, Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy sent a message to Hungarian minorities and stressed that the ELI membership provides increased opportunities to represent and protect minority rights, that Hungary will play a role in this and will not forget the Hungarians abroad in the successor states, *Népszabadság*, 17 April 2003, p. 6.

Barnabas Racz  
Eastern Michigan University

Susan Glanz  
St. John's University

Éva Kiss-Novák  
Szeged University

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Professor Dreisziger replies:

## Debating Hungary's Future

In their "letter to the editor," Professors Éva Kiss-Novák, Susan Glantz and Barnabas Racz suggest that I have not done proper research to back my statements regarding the future of Hungary that I had made in my

introduction to the 2001 volume of the *Hungarian Studies Review* (the special issue entitled "Thousand Years of Hungarian Survival"). In some respects they are right, as my rather lengthy introduction (and post-script) to this volume was not intended as a major research effort, especially its concluding passages, which were meant mainly as a kind of endnote to the thousand years of Hungarian history that I surveyed in my essay.

In this endnote I ventured to say that, starting with 1989, Hungary will probably look forward to a more prosperous future than she had had throughout most of the 20th century. Whether my prediction will come true, only our children or our children's children will be able to say with any certainty. I implied of course that this trend toward a brighter future is already evident, but, as the authors of the letter to the editor suggest, I hadn't examined the economic indicators. In other words, to some extent at least, I based my observations on what social scientists call "anecdotal" evidence.

Had I looked for other evidence, for example assessments by Western experts of the performance of the Hungarian economy, I probably would have found some support for my contentions. Let me just cite one positive report on the progress Hungary has experienced since 1989. The study was published by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in 2002. Let me quote a brief excerpt from the conclusions of the organization's 2002 *Economic Survey* on Hungary:

Hungarian structural reforms have permitted an impressive catching up with living standards in more advanced OECD member countries [in Western Europe and North America].... The economy out-performed most of the other countries during the recent slowdown largely due to a strong fiscal impulse and rapidly growing private consumption...<sup>1</sup>

Of course, this is very much an interim assessment of Hungary's progress, and it was certainly not meant to be more than that by the experts of the OECD.

Rather than relying on the tools of the economists and political scientists, i.e. studying economic indicators, I have relied on methods used by historians, that is comparing the present situation with what had happened under similar circumstances in the past. This method undoubtedly has its shortcoming since history never repeats itself exactly, but it is still an instructive tool that has its place in historical analysis.

In the thousand years of the history of the Hungarian state, there had been situations similar to 1989, i.e. when the country was liberated or partly liberated from foreign domination. This happened at the end of the 17th century when the Ottomans, who had occupied much of the Kingdom of Hungary since the middle of the 16th century, were expelled by

Christian armies led and financed mainly by the House of Habsburg. A similar "liberation" happened in 1867 when the Kingdom of Hungary received extensive autonomy within a reorganized Habsburg Empire, which in fact became known thereafter as the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. After both of these events involving the re-establishment of a greater degree of Hungarian self-rule, though in neither cases the attainment of full national independence, better times followed for most of Hungary's population.

The improvement in the Hungarian economy, and even in the security of the country's cities, towns and villages — and, indeed, of its population — after a period of stress and adjustment that lasted for a quarter century, is made abundantly clear in János Barta's long essay in our journal's 2001 volume, "Habsburg Rule in Hungary in the Eighteenth Century."<sup>2</sup>

The economic growth and social and cultural flowering that had taken place in the four decades after the Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867 has also been abundantly documented, briefly in my introduction to the 2001 volume (see pages 27-30, and endnotes 45-50, on page 63), in essays that had appeared earlier in our journal and, especially, in myriad studies published elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

If the reduction of foreign control over Hungary in the past is any guide, then we could expect that the end of Soviet imperium in 1989 will also be followed by better times, similar to those that unfolded in Hungary in the 18th century, and in the decades after 1867. Of course not every social, cultural or religious group in the country enjoyed equally the benefits accrued from the reduction of foreign influence. The Protestant population of Hungary certainly didn't gain from the transition from Ottoman to Habsburg rule, as the former were more tolerant toward Christian Churches that had broken with Rome than were the Habsburgs. The rulers in Vienna in fact persecuted Protestants almost during the entire 18th century and, to some extent, even beyond. Similarly after 1867, some of Hungary's non-Magyar minorities found themselves more disadvantaged than they had been under more direct Habsburg rule. To this we might add that segments of Hungarian society certainly encountered setbacks after 1989. The transition from a one-party state to a pluralistic society ended the privileged position of the country's Communist elite. It brought grief to significant groups in Hungary, whether members of this elite or not, who had made their living through a knowledge of things Soviet, as well as the Russian language. Still other victims of Hungary's capitalist transformation have been the employees — and their numbers must be in the tens if not the hundreds of thousands — of the country's subsidised and unprofitable, state-owned enterprises.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, with the transformation that followed 1989, Hungary lost its Russian and some other East European markets for low-quality consumer



goods, and it was no longer eligible to receive cheap and probably politically-motivated loans from the West — just to mention a few more of the "disadvantages" of the passing of Communist rule.

For a few people the comparison of 1989 to 1867 would not work — and I am not suggesting that my critics are such people. For those individuals (and their numbers I could not possibly begin to estimate) who believe that in 1989 a free and prosperous Hungary was brought under the influence of foreign oppressors, inevitably the country's future would appear to be bleak.

The signatories of the letter to the editor also accuse me of predicting that in the future Hungary would rely much more on immigration to assure its demographic growth than had been the case in the past. I have made no such prediction, or if it seems that I did, I did not mean to. I just suggested that immigration, if judiciously pursued, would be beneficial to the nation. It may well be that the Hungarian public wants no influx of foreigners, Hungarian-speaking or not. This public might be in for a shock: with EU membership, the ever increasing intermingling of Hungary's (and the whole of Europe's) populations is probably inevitable.

Drs. Kiss-Novák, Glantz and Racz have also said that my suggestion that Hungarians from neighbouring countries should be encouraged to relocate to Hungary, would be looked upon with aversion in the Hungarian communities of the neighbouring states. Hungarian ethnic leaders in these countries have already complained that the departure of professionals and intellectuals from their midst to Hungary has resulted in the "cultural decapitation" of their ethnic group. Indeed, policies that would strengthen this tendency would be reprehensible. It is for that reason that I had specifically noted in my 2001 comments that Hungarian transmigration should be encouraged only from those regions of the neighbouring countries "where the prospects of the long-term survival of Hungarian culture have become next to non-existent" (p. 228).

Few countries in the world have the privilege of being able to attract immigrants with basically the same culture and traditions as the members of the host society. Hungary should take advantage of this unusual opportunity.

Professors Racz, Kiss-Novák and Glantz view Hungary's situation from the points of view of the political scientist, philosopher, and economist. I have viewed it from the perspective of the historian. This perspective suggests that after each of Hungary's liberations from foreign rule, better times followed, which incidentally, made Hungary more attractive to immigrants. This was so after the end of Turkish rule. To those who say that at the time Hungary exchanged one foreign ruler for another we might reply that Habsburg rule was not quite as "alien" as the Ottoman, after all the Habsburgs were Christians and, more importantly, Europeans. At the end of Habsburg rule in 1867 Hungary achieved even greater self-

rule than it did at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries — and the country prospered. I continue to believe (whatever the economic indicators predict at the moment) that this will probably be the case with the end of Soviet rule — but I admit that on this question the jury is still out.

No doubt the debate over Hungary's future will continue, both on the pages of our journal and elsewhere. In the end, our grandchildren might have a more definite answer, but never a final one, as the terms progress, prosperity, public satisfaction ("consumer confidence"), all defy precise definitions. Affluence and happiness, like beauty, are in the eyes of the beholder.<sup>5</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *OECD Economic Surveys, Hungary*, Vol. 2002/10 [June 2002] (Paris, 2002), 18.

<sup>2</sup> And in Barta's several books: a volume on the life of Empress Maria Theresa, another one on Emperor Joseph II, a monograph on the agrarian policies of the enlightened absolutism in the Habsburg and Hohenzollern monarchies, as well as the textbook *A kétféjű sas árnyékában: az abszolutizmustól a felvilágosodásig, 1711-1780* [In the shadow of the two-headed eagle: from absolutism to enlightenment] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> Some of the relevant essays that had appeared in our journal are: János Mazsu, "The Intelligentsia in Hungary prior to World War I," *Hungarian Studies Review*, 24, 1-2 (1997): 81-96; and Scott M. Eddie, "Limits on the Fiscal Independence of Sovereign States in Customs Union: 'Tax Union' Aspects of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, 1868-1911," 9, 2 (Fall, 1982): 7-28.

<sup>4</sup> As well as the employees of "Socialist" Hungary's numerous, Soviet-style research institutes, where academics, unlike most of their counterparts in the West, made their (very modest) living without being involved in teaching.

<sup>5</sup> I should add here that there had been another critical response to my introduction to the 2001 volume, and it had to do with what I had written (or hadn't written) in connection with Hungarian history. Professor Stanislav Kirschbaum of York University's Glendon College regretted the fact that I had not mentioned, in the paragraphs that covered the coming of the establishment of the Hungarian state at the turn of 10th and 11th centuries, the existence in the 9th century of Svatopluk's "Slovak empire" in the Carpathian Basin. In our correspondence on this subject I pointed out the historical debate on this "empire," including its precise geographical location. In this connection it should be mentioned that historian Imre Boba (1919-1996) has argued that Svatopluk's "Magna Moravia" existed south of the Danube and Sava (Száva) rivers, that is largely outside of the Carpathian Basin. (See his *Moravia's History Reconsidered: A Reinterpretation of Medieval Sources* [The Hague, Nijhoff, 1971]). In the end we agreed that the precise location of Magna Moravia remains an historical conundrum. Professor Kirschbaum declined to write a "letter to the editor" in this matter. For his views on this matter, and on the evolution of the Slovak nation in

the Carpathian Basin, see his *A History of Slovakia* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995).

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### **Professors Glanz, Kiss-Novák and Racz reply:**

Professor Dreisziger's reply intends to clarify his position, however he does not dissolve the basic dilemmas of his proposals. The question is not whether the author relied on "proper research" but rather the theses he derived from the used data. We continue to argue our published positions and put forth the following short comments in reply to Dreisziger's response.

1. The economic arguments become a mute question as we write this in 2004-2005. Undoubtedly it cannot be excluded that in the long term the country's economic potential would improve, but currently both the government budget deficit and the economic climate in the EU do not signal the arrival to the Promised Land.

2. We have difficulty accepting the statement that the immigration argument was only "a kind of endnote." As quoted in our comments precisely the Dreisziger reasoning for a "judicial immigration policy" — undefined as it is — was a major plank in his introduction (pp. 1-71) and the Postscript (pp. 209-236) as well.

3. The historical analogies to by-gone eras may or may not provide a clue for future perspectives. We do not question the possibility of future improvement but at this juncture there are no guarantees. The budgetary consequences tied to large-scale influx of populations into Hungary became sharply focused in the public debate and political conflicts regarding the national referendum in December 2004 about the double citizenship proposal.

4. Prof. Dreisziger's reference to his original statement on p. 228 according to which the "transmigration should be encouraged only from those regions ... where the prospects of the long-term survival of Hungarian culture have become next to non-existent" is inaccurate. This reasoning appears to be out of context since on pp. 227-230 he argues for a general "judicious immigration policy" and does not narrow it down to certain regions, does not specify the ethnic issue, does not specify who are those to be chosen and those who ought not to be considered for relocation in Hungary. As we mentioned in our comments there are many unresolved issues about international treaties and diplomatic agreements, EU principles, questions of ethnic discrimination and the like which ought to be settled for such major population movements across national borders within or without the European Union. Yet the author appears to contra-

dict himself suggesting again in his Reply that Hungary should take advantage of the unusual opportunity to relocate ethnic Hungarians to preserve Hungary's demographic basis. Is this a proposal to "Hungarianize" only on a selective basis (who are Hungarians for this purpose) or is anyone included from the surrounding countries?

5. Since we are editorially limited in our reply we are constrained only to a few key points. Basically Dreisziger touched a sensitive issue as a precursor to the ill-fated Status Law and then to the double citizenship referendum lost in December 2004. Probably the dilemma is not dead and will be revitalized in the future by nationalist political forces. Alas the placing of the issue on the national agenda already had negative psychological effects, irrespective of the outcome of voting.

6. The Millennial airing of a similar but even more far-reaching measure of out-migration was projected on the basis of inadequate reasons and is referred to by some politicians in the public debate as a "second Trianon". While this view appears questionable, in the final analysis the population relocation is not only a rational economic/ demographic issue but also touches upon neuralgic emotional aspects of Hungarian existence: a minimal consensus since 1919 not about irredentism but the survival of Hungarians as Hungarians everywhere they are. To propose substantial out-migration and/or double citizenship on the one hand and demand autonomies on the other is an irreconcilable contradiction unacceptable to the successor states and thus devastating to the Hungarian minorities anywhere.

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