

# HSR

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Special Volume:

## **The United States and Hungary**

**in the Twentieth Century**

Part I

edited by  
**Nándor Dreisziger**

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**Studies, Review Articles, Documentary  
Articles and Memorial Tributes by**

TIBOR FRANK  
JUDITH SZAPOR  
N. F. DREISZIGER  
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## **Twentieth Century Hungarian Art at Home and Aboard**

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(the exact contents are tentative)

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Preface:

## **The United States and Hungary, Hungary and the United States**

**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. We began preparations for the publication of such a volume three years ago. In time it became evident that we had material at hand to fill more than one volume. It also became clear that some of that material would not be ready to go to print till the second half of 2004. Accordingly, we decided to split the project into two and publish the papers, review articles, etc. that had come in by the end of 2003, in this volume and leave the rest for a future one.

The appearance of a scholarly compendium dedicated to the subject of the interaction of the United States and Hungary, of Americans and Hungarians, of the government of the U.S. and Hungarians in America and in Hungary, is both timely and appropriate. Only recently, the U.S. and Hungary, officially enemies throughout much of the twentieth century, had become allies when Hungary became a member of the NATO alliance. Further, despite the appearance in recent years of two major works on the history of the Hungarian community of the United States, the literature on our wider subject remains woefully limited. It is this lacuna that we hope to help fill with our present volume, and the one that will follow soon.

\* \* \*

From the time of the creation of the American Republic to our days multiple levels and forms of interrelationship existed between the U.S. and Hungary. At first the Republic acted as a model of a state and society that was admired by many Hungarian intellectuals and even some

Hungarian statesmen. Some of these men and women strove to introduce reforms in Hungary that imitated the American model.<sup>1</sup> Before 1867 Hungary was a kingdom within the Habsburg Empire with a certain degree of autonomy the extent of which kept changing depending on prevailing political tendencies in Vienna. In these circumstances the implementation of reforms patterned on the American experience was difficult at best, as the Habsburg Court often thwarted such reforms. Of course, sometimes these or other reforms were opposed by elements of Hungary's own ruling classes. On the whole, however, ideas emanating from America served as impetus to reform in Hungary throughout the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries.

Such trends were reinforced starting with the second quarter of the nineteenth century when contacts between Americans and Hungarians increased, mainly as a result of visits by Hungarians to North America.<sup>2</sup> Some of the visitors came for a short period, others were in effect sojourners as they spent considerable time in the Republic. Still others settled there on a long-term or even permanent basis. After the unsuccessful Hungarian War of Independence against the Habsburgs in 1848-49, the trickle of Hungarian visitors to, and sojourners in the United States, became a torrent. The most famous of the new visitors was Louis Kossuth, the leading statesman of Hungary throughout the tumultuous years of 1848 and 1849.<sup>3</sup> While he was "only" a visitor, many of his followers stayed longer in the American Republic and some even tried to establish colonies of their own,<sup>4</sup> always with the idea that they would return to Hungary if changes in political and strategic circumstances warranted. Indeed, after Hungary gained full autonomy in 1867 within the reorganized Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, many of these "forty-eighters" abandoned their plans for settlement in the United States and returned to their homeland.

During the last quarter of the century, the phenomenon of gentlemen adventurers, ex-soldiers, and middle-class entrepreneurs spending more or less time in the United States was replaced by that of Hungarian agricultural workers, poor peasants and other elements of Hungary's lower classes coming to the New World — not so much to settle but to spend enough time there to save some money and to return to the mother country. By the turn of the century this "new immigration" had turned into a torrent and was responsible for the growth of colonies of Hungarian



## *Preface*

newcomers in America's industrial centres. Although the initial plans of probably the vast majority of these new arrivals were for a temporary stay, a great many of them did in the end settle in the United States as political and other developments — above all the turmoil brought to Hungary by World War I and its turbulent aftermath — time and again postponed, and in many cases prevented, their return to the country of their birth.<sup>5</sup>

Still another consequence of the war was the establishment of direct diplomatic relations between Hungary and the United States. Despite this, Budapest and Washington had little to do with each other during the interwar years. Isolationism in foreign affairs was the order of day in the United States while the Hungarian government was more interested in developing better and more intense relations with certain European powers than in cultivating friendship with the U.S.. During World War II, the United States and Hungary became enemies. Unfortunately for many Hungarian Americans, poor relations between their adopted land and native country continued during the decades of the Cold War. It was not till the collapse of the Soviet Empire in the late 1980s and early 1990s that better relations between Washington and Budapest became possible — and interstate hostility could be replaced by friendship and even a formal alliance.

As Professor Tibor Frank explains in his study in this volume, the mass influx of Hungarians into the United States was interrupted by World War I. It never resumed in the 1920s because Congress imposed the so-called Quota Laws that greatly restricted immigration to America of newcomers from Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, by that time such large numbers of Magyars had put down roots in the United States that Hungarian immigrant life began to flourish in many of the country's large cities, above all in Cleveland, Chicago and New York.<sup>6</sup> Though the new immigration regulations severely limited the number of Hungarian citizens who could enter the country, during the late-1930s and even during the early years of the Second World War — when Hungary was still a neutral power — newcomers from Hungary kept arriving, driven mainly by the fear of expanding Nazi influence in Central and East Central Europe. The evolution of this immigration is told in Professor Frank's study in Part 1 of our volume, while the story of one refugee family is discussed in the paper of Dr. Judith Szapor. Many of the intellectuals mentioned in the

other papers in this volume were also members of this small wave of immigration, while others came after the Second World War and the political and economic upheavals that followed it.

The 1930s and 1940s were difficult times for America's Hungarian communities, even beyond the fact that the restriction of immigration from Hungary put an end to such phenomena as family reunification. In the long term, of course, the ban on large-scale immigration from Hungary threatened most Hungarian-American communities with cultural extinction. The 1930s were also times of acute economic difficulties for the vast majority of Hungarian-American families. The hard times no doubt increased inter-generational conflicts within America's Magyar communities that, in turn, helped to accelerate the disintegration of their organizations and, in general, their assimilation into the "melting pot" of American society.

The Great Depression was followed by the war which may have solved some of the economic problems of Hungarian Americans, but it caused others for them. These included the interruption of contacts with friends and relatives in the old country. The war also meant that, beginning in 1942, Hungarian immigrants to the Republic became "enemy aliens" — some officially, others only in the eyes of the American public. Fortunately for them, their enemy alien status was a fairly benign one, unlike what it became for German Americans and, especially, the Japanese. Still, Hungarians in the U.S. — and, particularly, their organizations — were watched by the authorities in wartime Washington, as I make evident in my documentary article in Part 2 of this volume. In the following part of this collection of studies, Dr. András Csillag reviews Béla Várdy's new book on Hungarian-American history, while in the last part, three scholars discuss a handful of outstanding Hungarian Americans, two of whom had passed away only recently.

In conclusion let me say that, undoubtedly, this volume is a substantial contribution to the subject of the inter-relationship of the United States and Hungary, and of Americans and Hungarians. The two lead articles are extensively researched in scattered, in some cases obscure, public archives and private collections. Furthermore, the volume's contributors include authors with massive publication records and fine national and international reputations. For some of them this is the first time that they are published in our journal. The document excerpted and partly

## *Preface*

reproduced in my article: "Keeping an Eye on Hungarians in Wartime America" contains a great deal of hitherto unknown and /or little-known historical information. To my knowledge, this document has never been reproduced in print elsewhere. The article by Dr. Szapor includes, in its appendix, a letter by Albert Einstein, also reproduced in print here for the first time. We believe, moreover, that our follow-up volume of studies, *The United States and Hungary Part II*, will be a similarly valuable contribution to its subject. In the meantime, work on a regular issue of our journal, as well as two more special volumes, continues.

**This Preface** offers an opportunity for me to report on the trials and tribulations of our journal during the past few years. We have rarely included such commentary in our publication in the past, but because significant events had happened in recent years while others are about to happen soon, we consider it important to inform our readers about them.

The journal continues to exist despite the financial constraints that it has been facing for many years now. Our ability to persist is due in part to the help we receive from our two co-publishers, the National Library of Hungary and the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada. The former handles — more precisely, contracts out — the printing of our journal, and absorbs much of the postal costs involved in its distribution. The latter collects subscriptions for us from its members and recently has helped me with replacing some of my outdated computer equipment. Mrs. Éva Tomory has continued her invaluable work, always on a volunteer basis, of handling most matters connected with subscriptions. In addition to this help, our journal has been receiving, in some cases on an annual basis, financial contributions — ranging from one hundred to several hundred dollars — from a handful of faithful friends. The Széchenyi Society of Calgary has also helped with our finances by placing bulk orders for some of our special volumes, for the purpose of distributing these to its members.

One misfortune the journal faces is the discontinuation by the University of Toronto of the Chair of Hungarian Studies at that institution at the end of the 2004 academic year. Although a handful of courses, as yet undetermined in their exact nature, will continue to be offered by the university, there will not be an office there that could serve as an institu-

tional address for the journal. The change will mean that Professor George Bisztray will no longer serve as our journal's co-editor, but will continue to make his expertise available to us as an editorial adviser. And, the journal's editorial address will become my office address, as indicated on the inside cover of this volume. We can only hope that the scholars who will be involved in teaching courses for the Hungarian program that will survive at the University of Toronto will do whatever they can to support the work of our journal.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Géza Zavodszky, *American Effects on Hungarian Imagination and Political Thought* (Boulder, Colorado, and Highland Lakes, N.J.: Social Science Monographs and Atlantic Research and Publications; distributed by Columbia University Press, 1995), transl. Amy Modly.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the best-known of these visitors was Sándor Bölöni Farkas. See his *Journey in North America, 1831* (Santa Barbara, CA and Oxford: ABC-Clio, 1978), trans. and ed. Arpad Kadarkay; also, another edition of this work: *Journey in North America* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1977), trans. and ed. Theodore and Helen Benedek Schoenman.

<sup>3</sup> On Kossuth see above all István Deak, *The Lawful Revolution: Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians 1848-1849* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979; paperback edition: London: Phoenix Press, 2001). On his visit to the U.S. see Donald S. Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America: A Study of Sectionalism and Foreign Policy, 1848-1852* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1977), as well as Steven Béla Várdy, *Magyarok az Újvilágban: Az észak-amerikai magyarság rendhagyó története* [Hungarians in the New World: the irregular history of the Hungarians of North America] (Budapest: A Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága, 2000), 44-55.

<sup>4</sup> Várdy, pp. 56-81; also, Béla Vassady, "Kossuth and Újházi on Establishing a Colony of Hungarian 48-ers in America," *Hungarian Studies Review* 6, 1 (Spring 1979): 21-46.

<sup>5</sup> See Julianna Puskás's works, especially: *Kivándorló magyarok az Egyesült Államokban, 1880-1940* [Emigrant Hungarians in the United States, 1880-1940] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1982).

<sup>6</sup> The history of the Hungarian colonies of Chicago can be found in 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). For those of Cleveland, see Susan M. Papp, *Hungarian Americans and their Communities of Cleveland* (Cleveland: Cleveland Ethnic Heritage Studies, Cleveland State University, 1981).

## PART I

# Immigration Policy, Migration, Refugees from Nazi Europe: An Introduction

N. F. Dreisziger

**For many generations** after the establishment of the United States, the new republic welcomed the "down-trodden," "freedom-loving" masses of Europe. Gradually, however, restrictions came to be placed on just who could enter the United States. By the end of the nineteenth century, measures were taken to make sure that the sick, the infirm and the criminally inclined were not among the masses who came to seek a new life in America. In the third decade of the twentieth century still other restrictions were introduced. With the rise of strident nativistic sentiments in America during the turn of the century and the First World War, both the public of the United States and its politicians were ready to extend the definition of just who was a desirable or undesirable immigrant to the country. Now, the notion of "undesirable" was extended from individuals seen as feeble or potentially criminal, to entire ethnic groups who were perceived to be inferior to other ethnic groups. Desirable populations were perceived to be those that had populated the United States in the first place: North-western and Northern Europeans and, above all, Protestants. As a result of such racist prejudices, there arose a popular clamour for the encouragement of immigration from lands that had provided the country with its first immigrants during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the curbing of immigration from countries that had been the source of "less desirable" newcomers during the time of the "new immigration": from the 1880s to the outbreak of World War I.

The resultant immigration regulations, introduced during the first half of the 1920s, had disastrous impact on immigration to the United States from Hungary and, in time, on the by then large Hungarian com-

munities of America. Dr. Tibor Frank, in his essay in this volume, illustrates the drastic nature of the restrictions placed on immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe, and the further cuts that were made to initial quotas in 1924. All this was done in the name of contemporary "science," which decreed that populations from these parts of Europe were inferior to those that had constituted the founding demographic elements of the American Republic. The net result was the fact that, from the mid-1920s onward, immigration from Hungary to the United States was reduced to a trickle.

The idea that some "races" were superior to others, and that some populations were "inferior" and in fact "undesirable," were of course not unique to America. In fact, such attitudes were gaining currency in many parts of Europe. There, first in Italy and then in Germany, right-radical political movements incorporated these ideas into their platforms and then, after gaining power, into their legislative agendas. The results included anti-Semitic measures that put fear into the members of the region's large Jewish communities. The fear of fascist and, in particular, Nazi anti-Semitism prompted many Jews, especially intellectuals with knowledge of foreign languages, familiarity with French, British and American culture, and contacts in the West, to seek means of leaving Central Europe and finding refuge in some safe place, above all in the U.S.A.

Though there seemed to be no imminent physical threat to the Jews of Hungary, many members of that country's Jewish intellectual and commercial elite reacted to the danger in a similar manner. Their determination to leave Central Europe was reinforced when Hungary became the Third *Reich's* immediate neighbour as a result of Hitler's takeover of Austria in March of 1938, with the subsequent strengthening of right-radical movements in the country, as well as the introduction of various anti-Semitic measures by the country's government. Would-be refugees from the spread of Nazi influence who wished to enter the United States, however, faced the obstacles presented by American immigration laws, in particular the "quota system" that was so prejudicial to potential newcomers from Hungary. In his paper in this part of our volume Tibor Frank explains how some of these people managed to overcome these obstacles, while Judith Szapor in her article examines the experiences of one Jewish-Hungarian extended family in their quest for admission to the United States.

## **Patterns of Interwar Hungarian Immigration to the United States**

**Tibor Frank**

### *The Selective Principle*

Based on the 1910 U.S. Census, the Act of May 19, 1921 established a quota limit of 3% of the number of people belonging to any nationality, thereby restricting immigration into the United States in a highly selective way. In addition, the Act provided that not more than 20% could be admitted in any one month.<sup>1</sup> The new law had very specific purposes: it aimed at severely restricting population movements from Eastern and Southern Europe and the Near East, and at allotting generous quotas to Great Britain, Germany and Scandinavia. In several cases, the countries of Northwestern Europe were given greater quotas than the pre-War immigration would have allowed. As a result, after a temporary setback in 1922, Britain, Germany and the Scandinavian countries re-attained their pre-War immigration figures in 1923 and 1924, while Hungary, Austria, Italy, Greece, and Russia maintained merely a fraction of their earlier figures.

Another temporary measure, the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1924 employed similar techniques of computation but “put the clock back” in time and set a new 2% immigration quota against the U.S. Census of 1890 when only a small number of East and Southern Europeans had arrived. The result was dramatic: the total number allotted to Southern and Eastern Europe was reduced from 155,585 to 20,423. While continuing to ration U.S. immigration on a quota basis, the second Quota Law employed racial discrimination on an even larger scale. Whereas the total quota for Eastern and Southern Europe was cut by 87%, that for Northern and Western Europe was reduced by only 29%.<sup>2</sup> This large variance is understandable within the context of the continued, heated debates of the early 1920s, both in and out of Congress, which was conditioned by influential articles and tracts such as “The Immigration

Peril," authored by the Italian-American lawyer Gino Speranza (and subsequently published in his 1925 book *Race or Nation*).

The principle of the "national origins" of the American population, the result of decades of public discussion and the much wanted ultimate "scientific basis" of future immigration policies, required several years of intensive statistical studies. It involved the Bureau of the Census and the American Council of Learned Societies and drew heavily from a 1909 publication of the Bureau of the Census, *A Century of Population Growth*, which relied chiefly on an evaluation of family names. The national origins system established once again new quotas, which were markedly different from those, based on the census of 1890 and Congress adopted the plan in 1924 with very little consideration or discussion.

Controversy did not break out until this provision went into effect in 1927.<sup>3</sup> The debate focused on the differential treatment of the various immigrant groups as introduced by the National Origins provision, and openly bared the question of their innate mental and physical qualities. This was the enactment of the pseudo-scientific theory of the inherent inferiority of the Eastern and Southern European nations, which was drawn largely from the highly questionable results of new intelligence tests, which had first been used in the U.S. Army. A further aspect of the invalid underpinnings of this principle of National Origins was that its executors were unable to follow accurately the European border changes and population shifts after World War I, which drastically altered the ethnic composition of the new Europe.<sup>4</sup>

U.S. Consuls had considerable influence on the process of immigration in several ways. In March 1925 the U.S. Consul General in Prague sent a detailed report to the Department of State on "Emigration from Czechoslovakia," surveying the years 1924-1925, which he called the period of the Restrictive Immigration Act. After some basic statistics, the Consul went on to describe the "Habits and Customs of the People," an exciting exercise in cultural anthropology. Consul General C. S. Winans made the same type of observations for the State Department, which the immigration inspectors of the pre-war period recorded for the Department of Labor. Some remarks of the U.S. consuls reflect on how the American image of Central Europe was shaped by the Foreign Service.



Consul Winans's persuasive statements made pre-World War I Hungarian educational policies responsible for Slovak ignorance, poverty and emigration.

The majority of the Slovaks and Ruthenians are rather dull and uneducated and, as a general rule, are slow to think and act, have been accustomed all their lives to little of worldly goods and are satisfied with less. This condition may be partly attributed to the lack of elementary schools in that section of former Austro-Hungary... As a rule, these people do not have much initiative and ability to organize - quite to the contrary, they are more inclined to be led than to be leaders. Their idea of sanitation is nil and standard of living low. The rule rather than exception being that several persons occupy a small house which comprises one or two small rooms. During the Winter months most of the family life is confined to one room...

Their food consists chiefly of potatoes, rye bread and soup. Their clothing is of the poorest quality and practically all the manfolds of Podkarpatská Rus wear home spun garments.... Physically they are on the average, of rugged build, sturdy and healthy. As regards the average age of those emigrating to the United States, it is safe to say that from observation of the hundred thousand or so emigrants who have passed through this office during the past four years the majority are not of the receptive age.

Emigrants from Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia are more educated and intelligent, and have more initiative and ability to organize. They are of ordinary stature, rugged build and healthy. In fact, generally speaking, the emigrants from Czechoslovakia are, with the exception of the Jewish element, producers and not consumers, and as such are not likely to become public charges through an aversion to work.<sup>5</sup>

The U.S. Consul in Prague described the fundamental difference between pre-War and post-War emigration from Slovakia and Podkarpatská Rus. While previous emigrants left their homes with the intention to return as soon as they had acquired enough wealth, the emigrants of the 1920s sold everything to obtain sufficient funds to take their families to, and stay permanently in, the United States. Poverty is responsible for the unparalleled desire among practically everyone in Slovakia and Podkarpatská Rus to emigrate to the U.S.: there were 40 thousand appli-

cations for emigration passports to the U.S. on file in the Czechoslovak Ministry of Social Welfare. Prospective emigrants from the Slovak and Ruthene [i.e. Subcarpathian Ukrainian] areas represented approximately 80% of the total emigration.<sup>6</sup>

The Consul helped the State Department understand the new realities of Central Europe by describing how the prohibition of seasonal work in post-War Hungary's agriculture contributed to the pauperization of the Slovak and Ruthene peasantry. His remarks underlined the similarities between the pre-War migration patterns and the socio-economic functions of large geopolitical entities such as the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the United States.<sup>7</sup>

### *Hungary and the National Origins Principle*

In the long period during which the Quota Laws defined emigration from Europe to the U.S., the citizens of Hungary were particularly adversely affected. As is well known, Hungary was a major victim of the Quota Laws' limitation on the number of immigrants. This abrupt discontinuation of U.S. immigration hit Hungary most severely at the time of the economic and social disaster, which had been created by the lost War, the revolutions, and the Paris Peace Treaties. By depriving Hungarian society of a well established outlet, the enactment of the Quota Laws and in particular, their timing, made U.S. immigration legislation a catastrophe in Hungarian history comparable in many ways only to the disastrous impact of the Treaty of Trianon.

One of the top contributors to U.S. population growth in pre-World War I Europe, Hungary sent approximately a hundred thousand people per annum for a decade before 1914 (with peaks of 193,400 in 1907 and 143,321 in 1914). The Act of 1921, based on the 1910 Census, provided Hungary with a meager quota of 5,747; the Act of 1924, based on the Census of 1890, significantly reduced it again to a paltry 473.<sup>8</sup>

Not that the unhappy news of the virtual abolishment of U.S. immigration discouraged everybody in Hungary from trying to apply. As of July 1, 1927 the demand against the Hungarian quota, as estimated by the State Department, was still 20,000.<sup>9</sup> It did not help much to intended immigrants from Hungary that the National Origins provision of the 1924 Act more than doubled their quota, bringing it to 1,181.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, even this small increase was upsetting to certain groups of "old" immi-

grants, such as Scandinavian-Americans, who considered this detrimental to their interests and bitterly complained about it to Congress.<sup>11</sup> By the late 1920s the Hungarian figure was reduced to 869.<sup>12</sup> This was such a small figure that just in the six months from July through December 1928 when the registered number of U.S. visa applications from Hungary was only 3,802, this generated a waiting list sufficiently long for more than four years of immigration.<sup>13</sup> That "the quota for Hungary was exhausted in prospect for a number of years in the future" was a well-known fact in the late 1920s in Congress as well as throughout the U.S. government.<sup>14</sup>

Hungarians, many of them more desperate to leave in the 1920s than ever before, tried to use all remaining categories of the new laws to get into the U.S., first and foremost the preference sections. Half of the Hungarian quota was assigned to relatives, principally parents of U.S. citizens, and to persons skilled in agriculture.<sup>15</sup>

With so many incomplete Hungarian families in the U.S. after World War I, securing the entrance of relatives of former immigrants seemed to become absolute priority. This was a time when most Hungarian families and communities already in the U.S. experienced transition to permanent residence.<sup>16</sup> In the session of 1926-1927 some twenty bills were introduced in Congress amending the law, typically to allow entrance for relatives.<sup>17</sup> The fact, however, that so many Hungarians had family in the United States did not entitle relatives in Hungary "to exemption from the quota restrictions nor to preference in the issuance of a quota visa."<sup>18</sup> Would-be emigrants in Hungary were strictly advised to apply "for an immigration visa within the quota."<sup>19</sup>

Subsequent to September 22, 1922, marrying a U.S. citizen did not confer United States citizenship upon an alien woman and could not be interpreted as an exemption from the quota regulations. A Hungarian woman visiting the U.S. in 1928 was advised, "to depart not later than the expiration of her authorized stay." It turned out that upon marriage, the citizen husband could file a "properly executed petition... with the Bureau of Immigration... that may be submitted prior to the departure of the wife from the United States."<sup>20</sup> A case from 1926 revealed that adoption after January 1, 1924 did not entitle a child to exemption from the quota either, nor to preference in the issuance of a quota visa.<sup>21</sup> However, in another case where a U.S. Senator intervened on behalf of a husband, a positive result was achieved.

A special feature of the 1924 Act was that it extended preference in the issuance of quota immigration visas to aliens skilled in agriculture.

Citizens of what was still basically an agricultural country, many Hungarians tried to capitalize on this, only to be warned in each case that the law “does not entitle every person who has worked on a farm or every farmer to such preference, and the question would be decided by the consul to whom the aliens apply for the necessary visas.”<sup>22</sup>

National quotas were so rigid that they could not be suspended even if there was some legitimate American interest involved. The Governor of Mississippi tried to settle a large group of Hungarian farmers on agricultural lands in his state. Nonetheless, he was advised by Secretary of Labor James J. Davis “that while persons skilled in agriculture are accorded a preference in the issuance of immigration visas, such preference does not carry with it exemption from the quota limit or contract labor provision of the immigration laws.”<sup>23</sup> In principle, the stringent quota provision overruled all other considerations.

At this point it may be important to add that U.S. observers traveling to Hungary were keenly aware of the deplorable circumstances of post-World War I Hungarian professors and their universities. Nevertheless, an extensive report from 1923 for the Rockefeller Foundation does not mention the possibility that those professors might be recruited for the United States.<sup>24</sup>

### *The Admission of Hungarians in the Early War Years*

Appreciating Hungary’s neutrality at the beginning of World War II, the United States developed an attitude of tolerance toward Hungarian immigration in 1939-40.<sup>25</sup> This was abruptly changed, however, when Hungary joined the Tripartite Agreement on November 20, 1940 and János Pelényi, the Hungarian Minister in Washington, D.C. tendered his resignation and remained in the United States.<sup>26</sup> Pelényi’s letters from November 1940 documented the dramatic change in the U.S. image of Hungary, a country now increasingly viewed as an unwilling satellite, but a satellite of Germany nonetheless.<sup>27</sup>

As the War approached Hungary, Hungarian-Americans became increasingly politicized and polarized. For a time, the shady figure of Tibor Eckhardt emerged, a close associate of Regent Miklós Horthy and a political adventurer who tried to dominate the political scene. Eckhardt was rumored to have been sent by the Hungarian political elite to work on the eventual formation of a government in exile,<sup>28</sup> but had little

credibility with the majority of the Hungarian-American community who frequently cited his political past of 1919-1920 in the extreme right wing of Hungarian politics.<sup>29</sup> His critics included former Hungarian President Count Mihály Károlyi, who launched from his London exile vicious attacks on Eckhardt and his U.S. followers.<sup>30</sup> Several new action groups were formed and added to the dozens of already existing Hungarian-American organizations, with the *Amerikai Magyar Szövetség* (Federation of American Hungarians) representing the right wing and the *Demokratikus Magyarok Amerikai Szövetsége* (American Federation of Democratic Hungarians) the left wing or liberal immigrants. A host of public meetings, newspaper campaigns and political rallies tried to win over the sympathies of the hundreds of thousands of Hungarian-Americans in the highly charged atmosphere of 1941.<sup>31</sup>

With the War threatening Hungary and the rest of Europe, the last wave of interwar Hungarian emigration began. Terrified and desperate, Jewish Hungarians tried to leave other countries of Continental Europe as well, even Britain, to come to the United States. The refugee problem became a major theme in the ongoing debate among Hungarian-Americans. Law Professor Ruzstem Vámbéry, himself a 1938 refugee in the U.S.<sup>32</sup> and a leader of the liberals, argued that the refugee-problem could only be solved by the elimination of the causes that force persecuted minorities either to perish or leave their country and suffer in an alien and unwelcoming environment.<sup>33</sup> This indeed was a burning issue and by the end of the year, when the United States entered the War, Vámbéry launched the Free Hungary Movement, intended as a new group against the pro-German and conservative Horthy régime.<sup>34</sup>

### *Networking*

Vámbéry repeatedly called attention to the obvious fact that not all who fled their countries should properly be called refugees. He argued that the Hungarian-American community was in fact a mixture of "two emigrant groups," people with very different backgrounds and the circumstances which brought them together did not make them a community.<sup>35</sup> Yet, bonding, networking, cohorting within and, less often, between various factions of the American-Hungarian community became more intense than ever during the War years, all of which was abundantly documented by their correspondence.

To understand the nature of networking is essential to appreciating the social structure of immigrant groups and their ties to prospective newcomers. Because the bulk of the quota was earmarked by preferences for one sort of immigrant or another, and non-quota emigration was greatly dependent upon letters of recommendations, affidavits, and invitations from fellow nationals who had become U.S. citizens, the social composition of the exile community was virtually self-sustained and self-perpetuating. Because of this, there was very little chance to incorporate new elements or groups. Typically, peasant communities absorbed prospective farmers, professionals attracted fellow professionals, Gentiles invited Gentiles, and Jews welcomed Jews. Thus, American immigration policies, especially during the long Quota period between 1924 and 1965, contributed to the growth and stable characteristics of existing social patterns in the immigrant communities. Even though we have had access to a limited number and type of sources regarding this information, typically in the private papers of scientists and other professionals, this observation seems valid. Statistical evidence regarding all U.S. immigrant visas issued, including enclosed personal material, still needs to be discovered. Nonetheless, it may prove enlightening to survey some case studies, which have become available.

Jewish-Hungarians were first warned of the increasing Nazi danger by the *Anschluss* of neighboring Austria by Germany. As the small Hungarian quota was entirely filled for years ahead, immigration seemed possible only for scientists who had received an invitation to a particular university or research institute. Thus, many scientists embarked on a desperate struggle to obtain invitations. "I beg you to give me your assistance in this difficult situation," pleaded the eminent Viennese-Hungarian mycologist József Szücs to potential employers through his mentor, Theodore von Kármán, who was one of the most willing supporters of refugee scientists.<sup>36</sup> Also begging for Von Kármán's support was young aeronautical engineer Miklós Hoff from Budapest who did indeed receive his first U.S. job, as an instructor in Brooklyn, through Von Kármán.<sup>37</sup> Vilmos Szilasi explained to his cousin Theodore von Kármán that the letter of affidavit should make it very clear that "you know me since our childhood and give the explicit assurance, that my immigration would not be inimical to the interest of the United States" and "that you assume the responsibility of keeping yourself informed of my conduct in the U. St. as well as immediately reporting to the Department of Justice any irregularity in my activities."<sup>38</sup>

An invitation by itself was not enough: appointments to a particular job had to be for at least two years. When Professor Gábor Szegő secured sufficient funds to invite for a year to Stanford his long-time associate and friend, the distinguished Hungarian mathematician George Pólya from Switzerland, “the American Consul in Zurich refused to admit him on non-quota basis because of the temporary character of the appointment.”<sup>39</sup> In a desperate attempt to get his friend out of Europe, Szegő turned to Von Kármán to secure an additional invitation for Pólya from Caltech. “You understand that although Pólya is not in a concentration camp and not yet dismissed, his situation is very dangerous and he tries desperately to get out before it is too late,” Szegő wrote to Von Kármán.<sup>40</sup> “It is not necessary to stress how urgent the case is. Every day may bring new restrictions and difficulties.”<sup>41</sup> The Pólyas left Zurich via Portugal for the U.S. in 1940 where Pólya ultimately succeeded in obtaining a two-year teaching position at Brown University and Smith College before joining the Stanford Faculty in 1942, to remain there until the end of his very long life.<sup>42</sup>

The noted Budapest lung and T. B. specialist Gyula Holló, a personal physician of Béla Bartók, Dezső Kosztolányi, Frigyes Karinthy and Joseph Szigeti, turned to his former patient John von Neumann to support him

by drawing the attention of some influential person who could help me to get a job or an invitation or give instructions through the State Department to the Consulate in Budapest so that I get a non-quota place (which is not unprecedented) or, and this seems to be the most realistic idea, prepares the way and helps me if I come as a visitor searching for a job personally.<sup>43</sup>

Dr. Holló succeeded in getting out of Hungary and accepted a position at Goldwater Memorial Hospital and died in New York City in 1973.<sup>44</sup>

As the War came nearer to Hungary, mostly pure and applied scientists, medical doctors, and mathematicians filled the non-quota contingent for years ahead. Yet, many did not succeed in getting an invitation. The celebrated Budapest surgeon, Professor Lajos Ádám was told that the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota would not extend an invitation although Dr. C. W. Mayo counted him “as one of my very good friends.” Ádám’s well-known and well-connected Hungarian-American protector, the journalist and author Emil Lengyel was told that “we are up against conditions here at present which make it impossible

for us to guarantee bringing him here as a Professor or to guarantee any salary."<sup>45</sup> Ádám stayed in Budapest and survived the War, fortunately.

In the meantime, many non-scientists managed to get out. Refugees included many people from the world of film and theater, entertainers, literary people, actors, directors and musicians. In early 1940, Von Kármán had the distinct impression that "New York and Los Angeles are full of newcomers from Budapest, but almost exclusively artists, actors, and writers. Certainly more than half of the music and literature is now in the United States," he commented to a friend in Hungary.<sup>46</sup>

For people naturally dependent upon their native language and culture, immigration was merely the lesser of two evils. It may have saved their life but, in many cases, emigration nonetheless turned out tragically. A lesser-known but important case among authors was that of Ignotus (Hugo Veigelsberg), the famous liberal critic, essayist, and journalist in turn-of-the-century Budapest and interwar Vienna. It is worth recalling his case in some detail as it reveals virtually the entire support mechanism, which immigrants could expect in the United States.

Ignotus was a pathetic figure with a difficult case: he was more than 70 years old and, with his poor command of English, not in a position to rebuild his literary career in the U.S. Ignotus was one of those who were forced to leave Austria after the *Anschluss*. After a brief stay in England, he went to Lisbon in an effort to secure a U.S. immigration visa, but was stranded there. His old Hungarian-American friends mobilized their best connections: Emil Lengyel, Ruzstem Vambery, and Sandor Rado, M.D. wrote to the influential Ingrid and Bettina Warburg as well as to Lotte Loeb, all of whom worked for the Emergency Rescue Committee, and he was able to secure their cooperation.<sup>47</sup> Lengyel pointed out how Ignotus had been "fighting Hitlerism in its Hungarian and German varieties," and that he was "on the blacklist of the Gestapo."<sup>48</sup> Rado and Edith C. Field provided moral sponsorship affidavits for the State Department; Edith C. Field added an affidavit of support as well.<sup>49</sup> Ruzstem Vambery prepared a detailed biographical sketch and emphasized how the periodical *Nyugat* under Ignotus had advocated "liberal and progressive ideas" and "was for two decades the center of young intellectuals."<sup>50</sup> The Emergency Rescue Committee used Vambery's text to obtain him a visa, though they also solicited the support of Nobel Laureate Thomas Mann.<sup>51</sup> Other sponsors included Professor Oscar Jászi and Count Ferdinand Czernin.



Ignotus was admitted to the United States in early 1941, together with his wife, but the Immigration and Naturalization Service did not provide them with unlimited permission to stay. When they were asked to leave the country in August 1942, Ignotus's friend Oscar Jászi used his personal connections to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter,<sup>52</sup> and it was probably Frankfurter's support, which secured an extension for the Ignotus couple.

Ignotus, however, had a very difficult time in New York. His wife became seriously ill and the long years in exile made him "a very worried and fearful man" who "can get things unintentionally quite confused," as associates of the International Rescue and Relief Committee who took care of him were soon to find out.<sup>53</sup> The only income to support the couple came from charitable organizations such as the American Committee for Christian Refugees and, subsequently, the Community Service Society. The monthly allowance of \$60, which the Community Service sent him was insufficient. Furthermore, this organization supported refugees only on a temporary basis and refrained as a matter of policy from helping "chronic" cases.<sup>54</sup> The International Rescue and Relief Committee and the Jewish Labor Committee took joint responsibility for additional sponsorship in the amount of another \$50, which was extended to Ignotus through 1948.<sup>55</sup> On the recommendation of the Writers' Project, Ignotus received a prize from New York City in May 1944, which came with \$1,000.<sup>56</sup> His wife, however, was so sick that a deportation order was pending against her as she was in a mental institution, which made their permanent immigration plans to the U.S. hopeless.<sup>57</sup> In early 1949 he departed for Hungary via Britain, leaving his wife behind in the care of the American Committee for Foreign Scholars, Writers and Artists (subsequently the American Council for Emigres in the Professions). He also left behind bitter feelings among the supporting agencies. "Mr. Hugo Ignotus has left for England," commented Charles Sternberg of IRRC adding: "I am glad he did."<sup>58</sup> He was 80 then and approaching his end. Upon his arrival in Budapest he was taken immediately to a hospital where he was found by an old friend "shriveled,... sitting unstopably trembling. He was half dead..."<sup>59</sup>

The poignant case of the great composer and piano virtuoso Béla Bartók is well known.<sup>60</sup> In one sense he was less fortunate than Ignotus: after a few years in voluntary exile during the war years, he died in New York City before he could complete his wish to return to his native country.

Invited to give a concert at the Library of Congress in 1939, Bartók, of Gentile origin, was already highly eager to leave Hungary by the time the War broke out. He described his anxieties and fears as if he spoke for all intending exiles:

...at the outbreak of the war, I really came into a really desperate state of mind... We see that small countries are invaded from one day to another quite unexpectedly by the most terrible armies and subjected to tortures of every kind. As for my own country, now, instead of one dangerous neighbour, we have got two of them; nobody knows what will happen next day. It may happen, if I leave the country for America that I can't return, can't even have news from my family.... I hope you will understand my state of spirit...<sup>61</sup>

Bartók ultimately decided to leave Hungary for the United States in late 1940 when he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Music from Columbia University.<sup>62</sup> As of February 1941 he was employed by Columbia as a Visiting Associate in Music to work on the late Professor Milman Parry's Yugoslav music collection of nearly 4,000 discs.<sup>63</sup> This work, which lasted until the end of 1942, Bartók enjoyed very much, but he was never really happy in his voluntary exile and always hoped to return to Hungary. While he was relatively healthy, he played a political role in the Movement for Independent Hungary, trying to convince the world that the movement represents millions of Hungarians actually "supporting those who fight for a free and democratic world."<sup>64</sup> He died of leukemia in New York City in 1945.

Some of the old political connections or affinities survived even World War II. During a visit to Moscow, Theodore von Kármán rediscovered his old ties to the highly influential Hungarian-Soviet economist Eugene Varga, director of the Institute of World Economy and Politics of the Soviet Academy of Sciences right after the War. He used these newly established contacts to try and help in the case of Susan Meller, the daughter of art historian Simon Meller, who had been apparently captured by the Soviet military police. Varga did in fact contribute to getting Ms. Meller freed. The friendships dating back to pre-Trianon Hungary often survived political changes in the world and in interpersonal relations.<sup>65</sup>

*The Private Bills of 1939-1941*

As Robert A. Divine pointed out, until 1930 it was Congress that formulated immigration policy, but by the end of the 1930s the dominance of the executive branch prevailed. Throughout the 1930s, immigration was discussed along three basically different lines: the public charge policy, the refugee problem, and the prevention of admission of subversive elements. These reflected the traditional conflict between idealists trying to help the oppressed of other nations (with Senator Wagner of New York as their chief advocate), and restrictionists who argued, "charity should begin at home."<sup>66</sup> A series of bills were introduced both to protect refugees, especially from Germany after 1933, and to keep out subversive aliens. Most of these bills died at various stages in the legislative process. The end of this period of immigration legislation came with the entry of the United States into the War in December 1941.

In the heated atmosphere of the early war years the competition among would-be immigrants became even fiercer, almost lethal, without the principles of their selection always being clear, transparent, or germane. When the War broke out it was estimated by members of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization that large numbers of people were "here temporarily and for one reason or another can not get out and are seeking legal admission,"<sup>67</sup> thousands in California alone. As it became more difficult and dangerous for temporary visitors in the United States to go home, or ask and wait for a regular quota number, Congress made it possible to appeal to the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization. Representing both restrictionists and liberals, the Committee received hundreds of appeals, many of which came from people who were still considered able to "go out and come back in the regular way."<sup>68</sup> In those cases, however, where people could not be sent home, a private bill was considered by Congress, which would circumvent the regular immigration process.

Political considerations were declared, if only for the record, and in this early part of the War, Hungary's quasi-belligerent nature, her half-hearted joining of the Tripartite Pact, her role as an "unwilling satellite" were clearly important issues.<sup>69</sup> In January 1941, well before Hungary's actual entry into the War, the Chairman of the House Committee noted "that Hungary more or less declared war upon this country, whether it was done voluntarily or not," and he made it clear that he was forced to make this comment "because I do not want to be told on the Floor [of the

House] that I have not gone into it and the Committee should have clarified the admission.”<sup>70</sup>

In a case in early 1941, the Chair of the House Committee launched a vehement attack on the immigration bureaucracy for making the procedure so complicated. “Under the new regulations,” he stated openly, “the Department [of State] has set up that it needs a Jesus to get by. They have got 4,000 questions and forms, and it would take eight lawyers, two from Philadelphia and two from New York and three from California...”<sup>71</sup> Without a private bill, unlawful aliens were subject to deportation. Private bills of this sort were numerous and were referred to the House Committee of Immigration and Naturalization. In various ways, they saved a number of Hungarians who had arrived into the country earlier without being properly authorized to stay, and many of who had been ordered to be deported from the U.S. A separate bill was needed for every visitor-to-be-immigrant, and members of the House Committee themselves criticized the apparent lack of policy in a situation where there were thousands and thousands of cases involved.<sup>72</sup> The only policy considered was that where prospective immigrants who came first as visitors “can go out and get a quota number they ought to go out.”<sup>73</sup>

Some of these immigrants had first arrived with a visitor’s visa and later had found a way to present their case to the House Committee. The Committee faced a relatively very large crowd of “visitors of all nations who have come here as visitors and have been caught in this international situation.”<sup>74</sup> The Committee evidently tried to shape some kind of policy towards these visitors, admitting, however, their failure. Finances were always a consideration: if visitors could prove that they possessed enough money so they “would never become a public charge,” their case was favorably reported to the House. Such was the case of businessman Ernest Ungar, who had a large penny fashion department in Budapest employing 250 clerks and who had also bought a large farm in New Jersey. He thus had sufficient proof that he was “a desirable alien to be admitted to this country.”<sup>75</sup> Money often made aliens desirable.

Money alone did not do it, though. It is evident from the questions of the Committee members in the various cases they handled over the years 1939-1942 that they were looking for the combination of financial stability, good character, young age, and some class. Table tennis champions Tibor and Magda Hoffman were made U.S. citizens on the merit of their star quality sportsmanship. The Hoffmans arrived in the U.S. in 1939 at the invitation of the United States Table Tennis Associa-

tion and found themselves, as they told the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, "unable to return to their native country,"<sup>76</sup> probably because of their Jewish origins. Colonel George H. Foster, general counsel for the U.S. Table Tennis Association, testified to the Committee that the Hoffmans "are splendid people, have high ideals, and would be in our opinion worthy citizens of the United States."<sup>77</sup> Reminding his colleagues of a similar case, Mr. Kramer, a member of the House Committee, recalled another couple "whose property was all taken over and confiscated by Hitler because they were Jews, but," he added, "they are very high class people, people that I would welcome to get into this country..."<sup>78</sup> This was a revealing though thinly veiled anti-Semitic statement that clearly made a point about rich and high class Jews being wanted, and poor and low class Jews being unwanted. It is noteworthy that such a reference was made in Congress to a division within the Jewish community along class lines and differing attitudes toward Jews in terms of their social position. After a thorough cross examination of their politics and their finances, the Hoffmans were placed in the no preference category of the Hungarian quota, deduction from which being the standard practice followed in all similar cases for several years. For the House Committee investigating the intentions of would-be immigrants upon entering the U.S., honesty and legitimacy of purpose was a very serious issue and only *bona fide* visitors, not those who had entered illegally, could hope for approval.

The Paris representative of a Hungarian firm manufacturing electric lamps and radio tubes, engineer Ladislav Frank came to the U.S. in October 1939 and was unable to return to France after the German occupation. Frank was questioned by the Committee in painstaking detail as to the circumstances of his entry into the U.S. from France, in an effort to ascertain the genuineness and honesty of his original intentions of returning to Europe.<sup>79</sup> Adherence to the prescriptions of the quota system proved to be more a dominating factor than an applicant's experience and expertise, yet the Committee often showed a measure of human understanding. In fact, the Committee members were often torn between their official function to keep people out of the country and their personal inclinations to give support to those in trouble.

Signals or symbols of willingness to assimilate, such as having entered the U.S. armed forces or exerting some Americanizing influence in the local community by using the English language, were among the strongest recommendations for admission into the country. The Reverend

Julius Paal [obviously Paál Gyula] arrived in the country in 1937 as a student at the Princeton Theological Seminary. When the War broke out, he voluntarily offered his services to the U.S. Army. Previously he had written anti-Nazi articles for the Hungarian-American press and worked for the Evangelical Reform Church in Bethlehem, PA.<sup>80</sup> For members of the Committee the vital question was whether or not the Reverend Paal was trying to prolong his studies in the U.S. in an effort to stay indefinitely in the country or whether he had been a *bona fide* student for the five years between 1937 and 1941. The Committee turned favorably towards Paal's case when they learned that he had conducted his services in English (as he actually said, "in American"), which had had a beneficial effect on the local community. Representative Walter, who introduced the private bill on behalf of Reverend Paal, explained to the Committee why he had appreciated Paal's efforts:

I represent a district in which there are many races. Up to a few years ago on the very street in which this church is located with which Reverend Paal is connected, there are three churches, and on Sunday mornings the services were conducted in each of the three churches in three different languages... And during the last few years there has been a departure from that, and I think that Reverend Paal pioneered the way... All of these churches are now conducting their services in English, and it has had a very good effect on the older people, who found it difficult to master the English language, but found it easy to go to church and have the sermons and the services conducted in their own language, so they had never bothered very greatly in learning the English language. There is a tremendous change now throughout that entire section of Pennsylvania.<sup>81</sup>

The Reverend Paal's admission was charged against the Hungarian quota by order of the Committee.

Investigating the 1941 case of builder Marcel Stark, the House Committee noted that in Canada there were 137 people waiting for a quota number. As the Hungarian quota was "behind," "closed," admission through individual bills was made possible if charged against the Hungarian quota "for the first year the said quota was available."<sup>82</sup>

Occasionally, in a case handled by the House Committee, the procedure was surprisingly quick and seemed a mere formality. Some-

times there was no indication as to the reason why someone immediately received a quota number through the direct intervention of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization. Temporarily admitted to the U.S., Otto Rudolf Nemeth, for example, was without further explanation and discussion “admitted and permitted to remain in the United States permanently as though he had in all respects complied with the immigration laws upon entry.”<sup>83</sup> As he came from Austria, his admission was charged against the German quota.

In certain cases the House Committee acted as a court of appeal. The Department of Labor charged garage owner Charles Molnar with fraud, as it was accidentally discovered in 1936, at a crossing of the Canadian border, that he had entered the U.S. illegally in 1922. Nevertheless, the verification of his *bona fide* actions and his financial status was enough for the Committee to report favorably to the House: Molnar was admitted legally as of 1936.<sup>84</sup>

Even this small sample of Hungarians admitted through the Congressional Commission of Immigration and Naturalization gives us a sense of U.S. immigration priorities at a time when international developments renewed restrictionist sentiments and produced an atmosphere in which aliens, once again, were looked upon with growing suspicion and fear. The image of the foreigner was tinged with threat and confusion when the security of the United States was jeopardized by international circumstances. Speaking for the Hungarian-American community before the House Committee of the Judiciary, critics spoke very specifically of the disastrous consequences of this changing perception. Louis Perlman, representing the Hungarian Societies Central Committee in New York, an organization to which some 25 Hungarian societies belonged, declared on April 18, 1941:

Up until comparatively recently in our history admission to the United States was practically at the will of the individual. It was on that fact that our Nation's development was based, and it was on that fact... that the prosperity of our country was also based.

At this time a number of bills have been presented, quite possibly because of the conditions abroad. Certainly to the alien these conditions cannot be attributed, because for the most part these aliens who have come to the United States, whether they are here legally or not, have sought to escape those conditions, have sought asylum in the only country in the world

where asylum was possible. But suddenly the entire picture is changed. We are determined to put the alien in a separate class apart from the body politic; to point him out as one who is not a citizen.<sup>85</sup>

In an attempt to defend aliens arriving without a proper visa, Perlman used some of the great liberal arguments for keeping the gates open amidst adverse circumstances:

Failure of citizenship may be an accident, due to chance, due to failure to come here properly; and I think an alien who comes to the United States without a visa illegally is to be commended for his feelings, is to be commended for his faith and his hope in this country, because that alien that has sought asylum in the United States, for the most part, is seeking relief from conditions over which he has no control, and over conditions oppressing to him in the country of his birth. Those aliens, I say, are to be commended, although they are criminals in the United States, because they know that for centuries this wonderful land of ours has been an asylum, a place where a man can seek his own place in the universe, without fear of religion, social standing, or economic beliefs.<sup>86</sup>

Though defending the bill under consideration, the Chair of the session commented favorably on the contribution of Hungarians to the United States. "I think we are wholly cognizant of the contribution citizens of your country, that is, the country for which you speak, have made; we appreciate the contribution which Hungarians have made time and again to the building of our American civilization..."<sup>87</sup>

Despite continually shifting U.S. immigration policies, intolerable political and social conditions exerted such an influence that many of Hungary's talented and ambitious people were forced to find creative ways of doing battle with these changing and uncertain policies for the sake of their personal survival. In many cases, separation from the motherland resulted in painful consequences. Many people, however, found ways to overcome the hardships of their alienation from Hungarian culture and contributed to American society in numerous valuable and creative ways. Though often first received begrudgingly in the New Land, the American soil eventually proved fertile for thousands of Hungarian-



Americans before World War II. Their contributions were ultimately acknowledged, and often deeply valued, by American society.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah Jenks and W. Jett Lauck, *The Immigration Problem. A Study of American Immigration Conditions and Needs* (New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1926), 448–49.

<sup>2</sup> William S. Bernard, ed., *American Immigration Policy — A Reappraisal* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), 25–26.

<sup>3</sup> Robert A. Divine, *American Immigration Policy, 1924–1952* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 26–27.

<sup>4</sup> Bernard, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>5</sup> Consul General C. S. Winans and Vice-Consul J. L. Calnan to the Department of State, March 13–24, 1925, Records of the United States Department of State, Record Group 85 (hereafter RG 85), 55452/223, National Archives of the United States (hereafter NA), Washington D.C.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Jenks and Lauck, pp. 455, 670, 672, 674. NB: The actual figures of those admitted varied somewhat between 1922–1924.

<sup>9</sup> Edward R. Lewis, "National Origins and American Immigration. A Compilation of Source Material" (Chicago, Ill.: Immigration Restriction Association, [1928?]), pp. 7–11, RG 85, 55639/577A, NA.

<sup>10</sup> Immigration Quotas on the Basis of National Origin. Message from the President of the United States, February 27, 1928, Senate Document No. 65, 70th Congress, 1st Session; cf. Secretary of Labor James J. Davis to Hiram W. Johnson, Chairman, Senate Committee on Immigration, March 24, 1928, RG 85, 55777/359C, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> The Scandinavian American Citizens' League, Troy, N.Y., "Is Immigration from Scandinavia and other Northern European Countries to be still further reduced by Congress?" Attached to the SACL's letter to Congressman James S. Parker, March 20, 1928, RG 85, 55639/617A, NA.

<sup>12</sup> Department of State press releases, June 1931 – May 1933, RG 85, 55398/2F, NA.

<sup>13</sup> Acting Secretary of Agriculture R. N. Dunlap to Mississippi Governor Theodore G. Bilbo, September 23, 1929, RG 85, 55777/359C, NA.

<sup>14</sup> Commissioner General of Immigration Harry E. Hull to Senator Robert F. Wagner, May 3, 1928, RG 85, 55599/875, NA.

<sup>15</sup> Dunlap to Bilbo, September 23, 1929, *loc. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> Julianna Puskás, *Ties That Bind, Ties That Divide: One Hundred Years of Hungarian Experience in the United States* (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 2000), 197–200.

<sup>17</sup> Edward R. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> Acting Secretary of Labor W. W. Husband to Matthew Feitz, October 8, 1926, RG 85, 53827/14, NA.

<sup>19</sup> Second Acting Secretary of Labor W. W. Husband to John F. Carew, Member of Congress, June 4, 1926, RG 85, [55598/31] = 53827/14, NA.

<sup>20</sup> Commissioner General of Immigration Harry E. Hull to Senator Robert F. Wagner, June 2, 1928, RG 85, 55599/875, NA.

<sup>21</sup> Acting Secretary Robe Carl White to W. Frank James, M. C., October 6, 1926, RG 85, 55608/120, NA.

<sup>22</sup> W. W. Husband to John F. Carew, June 4, 1926, *loc. cit.* Cf. Second Acting Secretary of Labor W. W. Husband to Mrs. Julia Varga, February 2, 1926, RG 85, [55598/31] = 53827/14, NA.

<sup>23</sup> Secretary of Labor James J. Davis to Mississippi Governor Theodore G. Bilbo, October 17, 1929, RG 85, 55777/359C, NA.

<sup>24</sup> Dr. H. O. Eversole, "Medical Education in Hungary. Reports on the Medical Faculties at the Universities of Szeged, Pecs, and Debreczen, 1923," Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RG 1.1 Projects, Series 750A Hungary, Box 2, Folder 13.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral on Horseback: Miklós Horthy, 1918-1944* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1994), 237-67; see esp. p. 250.

<sup>26</sup> János Pelényi to Rufus B. von Kleinsmid, January 29, 1941, Theodore von Kármán Papers, File 22.36, California Institute of Technology Archives, Pasadena, CA.

<sup>27</sup> János Pelényi to Prime Minister Count Pál Teleki, Washington, D.C., November 28, 1940, János Pelényi to Count Miklós Bánffy, January 11, 1941, János Pelényi Papers, Box 1, Archives of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, CA (abbreviated hereafter as Hoover Archives). Cf. John F. Montgomery, *Hungary the Unwilling Satellite* (DevinAdair, 1947, repr. Morristown, N.J.: Vista Books, 1993), new Hungarian edition, ed. Tibor Frank (Budapest: Zrínyi, 2004); and 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>28</sup> John Pelényi, "The Secret Plan for a Hungarian Government in the West at the Outbreak of World War II," *Journal of Modern History*, 34 (June 1964), 170-77; see also N. F. Dreisziger, "Bridges to the West: The Horthy Regime's Reinsurance Policies in 1941," *War and Society*, 7, (May 1989), 1-23. On Eckhardt see also the paper of one of my doctoral students, Katalin Kádár Lynn, "Eckhardt Tibor és a Szabad Magyarorszáért Mozgalom [Tibor Eckhardt

and the Movement for an Independent Hungary]," in *Tanulmányok a XIX-XX. századi történelemből* [Studies from the History of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries], ed. Miklós Zeidler (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 2001), 195–210.

<sup>29</sup> György Faludy, "Manhattan szigetén" [On Manhattan Island] [original source unknown]; "Pro and Con Mr. Eckhardt," *The Nation*, October 1940; Ruzstem Vambéry Papers, Box 8, Archives of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, CA.

<sup>30</sup> Count Mihály Károlyi to Emil Lengyel, London, November 25, 1942, Emil Lengyel Collection, Bakhmeteff Archives, Butler Library, Columbia University Library, New York, N.Y.

<sup>31</sup> See clippings and posters in the Ruzstem Vambéry Papers, Box 8, Archives of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, CA.

<sup>32</sup> Abraham Flexner to Ruzstem Vambéry, May 7, 1938, Ruzstem Vambéry Papers, *loc. cit.*, Box 1.

<sup>33</sup> "Vámbéry Ruzstem beszél a refugee-problémáról," [Ruzstem Vámbéry on the refugee problem], *Igazság*, December 1, 1940 [?], Ruzstem Vambéry Papers, *loc. cit.*, Box 7.

<sup>34</sup> Ruzstem Vambéry, "'Free Hungary' Movement in U.S.," *Voice of Freedom*, December 1941, clipping, Ruzstem Vambéry Papers, *loc. cit.*, Box 3.

<sup>35</sup> Ruzstem Vámbéry, "Két emigráció," [Two Emigrations] *Tárogató*, Vol. III, No. 4, October 1940, clipping, Ruzstem Vambéry Papers, *loc. cit.*, Box 4.

<sup>36</sup> Dr. Josef Szücs to Theodore von Kármán, and Enclosure, Wien, June 29, 1938, Theodore von Kármán Papers, File 29.20, California Institute of Technology Archives, Pasadena, CA.

<sup>37</sup> Miklós Hoff to Theodore von Kármán, Budapest, September 19, 1938 and Palo Alto, CA, April 20, 1940, Theodore von Kármán Papers, *loc. cit.*, File 13.20.

<sup>38</sup> Wilhelm Szilasi to Theodore von Kármán, Lisboa, May 20, 1941, Theodore von Karman Papers, *loc. cit.*, File 29.20.

<sup>39</sup> Gábor Szegő to Theodore von Kármán, Stanford, July 24, 1940, Theodore von Kármán Papers, *loc. cit.*, File 23.35.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> G[ábor] Szegő to George Polya, Stanford, June 11, 1940; Brown University President Henry M. Wriston to Georg Polya [*sic*], Brown University, Providence R.I., July 31, 1940; George Polya Papers, SC 337, 86-036, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, CA. Author unknown, *The Life of Mathematician George Polya, 1887-1985*, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Cecil H. Green Library, Stanford University Libraries, December 13, 1987–June 1988 (Exhibit Guide).

<sup>43</sup> Gyula Holló to John von Neumann, n.d. [1939?], John von Neumann Papers, Box 6, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>44</sup> *Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon*, Vol. III (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981), 311.

<sup>45</sup> Dr. C. W. Mayo to Emil Lengyel, May 19, 1941, Emil Lengyel Collection, Bakhmeteff Archives, Butler Library, Columbia University Library, New York, N.Y.

<sup>46</sup> Theodore von Kármán to Lajos Bencze, February 19, 1940, Theodore von Kármán Papers, File 2.24, California Institute of Technology Archives, Pasadena, CA.

<sup>47</sup> Emil Lengyel to Ingrid Warburg, New York, October 25, 1940; Sandor Rado to Bettina Warburg, October 28, 1940; Bettina Warburg to Ingrid Warburg, October 28, 1940; Sandor Rado to Ingrid Warburg, November 11, 1940; Rustem Vambéry to Lotta Loeb, February 22, 1941; International Rescue Committee, Box 6, Archives of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, CA.

<sup>48</sup> Lengyel to Warburg, New York, October 25, 1940, *loc. cit.*, Box 6.

<sup>49</sup> Sandor Rado, Affidavit, November 18, 1940; Ingrid Warburg to George Warren, January 28, 1941; International Rescue Committee, Box 6, Archives of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, CA.

<sup>50</sup> Rustem Vámbéry, "Biographical Sketch of Dr. Hugo Ignotus," New York, January 28, 1941, International Rescue Committee, Box 6, Archives of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, CA.

<sup>51</sup> Ingrid Warburg to George Warren, January 28, 1941; Lotta Loeb to Thomas Mann, November 13, 1940, International Rescue Committee, *loc. cit.*, Box 6.

<sup>52</sup> Oscar Jaszi to Felix Frankfurter, August 21, 1942, Felix Frankfurter to Oscar Jaszi, New Milford, Conn., August 27, 1942; Oscar Jaszi Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Butler Library, Columbia University Library, New York, N.Y.

<sup>53</sup> Excerpts from Letter of Janet Siebold, August 21, 1944, International Rescue Committee, Box 6, Archives of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, CA.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Sheba Strupsky to Jewish Labor Committee, September 15, 1943; Eva Lewinski (IRRC) to Jewish Labor Committee, January 10, 1946; IRRC Case Department, Hugo Ignotus Correspondence, 1947-1949; International Rescue Committee, Box 6, Archives of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, CA.

<sup>56</sup> Excerpts from Letter of Janet Siebold, August 21, 1944, International Rescue Committee, *loc. cit.*, Box 6; cf. *Magyar Irodalmi Lexikon*, Vol. I (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1963), p. 491.

<sup>57</sup> Minutes of a January 8, 1945 meeting at ACCR, International Rescue Committee, *loc. cit.*, Box 6.

<sup>58</sup> Charles Sternberg (IRRC) to Samuel Estrin (Jewish Labor Committee), January 31, 1949, International Rescue Committee, *loc. cit.*, Box 6.

<sup>59</sup> Oszkár Gellért, *Kortársaim* [My Contemporaries] (Budapest: Művelt Nép, 1954), 179-180.

<sup>60</sup> Agatha Fassett, *Béla Bartók: The American Years* (New York: Dover, 1970).

<sup>61</sup> Béla Bartók to Harold Spivacke, Budapest, November 9, 1939, Coolidge Collection/Béla Bartók, Library of Congress, Music Division, Washington, D.C.

<sup>62</sup> Nicholas Murray Butler to Béla Bartók, April 1, 1940; Frank D. Fackenthal – Béla Bartók Correspondence, November 1940, Bartók Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Butler Library, Columbia University Library, New York, N.Y.

<sup>63</sup> Columbia University to Béla Bartók, February 3, 1941; Béla Bartók to Douglas Moore, April 18, 1941 and January 21, 1942; Bartók Papers, *loc. cit.*

<sup>64</sup> Béla Bartók to Theodore von Kármán, June 27, 1942, Theodore von Kármán Papers, File 2.5, California Institute of Technology Archives, Pasadena, CA.

<sup>65</sup> Theodore von Kármán to Eugen Varga, February 11, 1946, E[ugen] Varga to Theodore von Kármán, April 15, 1946, Theodore von Kármán to Eugene Varga, November 4, 1946; Theodore von Kármán Papers, File 31.21, *loc. cit.*

<sup>66</sup> Robert A. Divine, *op. cit.*, pp. 100, 108.

<sup>67</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Tibor Hoffman and Magda Hoffman," House Report 3315, February 12, 1941, 77th Congress, 1st Session; Library of Congress: Law Library, RR (77) HIm-T.43, p. 6; Unpublished U.S. House of Representatives Committee Hearings, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 1941–1942.

<sup>68</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Tibor Hoffman and Magda Hoffman," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Tibor Frank, "Treaty revision and doublespeak: Hungarian neutrality, 1939–1941," in Neville Wylie, ed., *European Neutrals and Non-Belligerents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 150-173.

<sup>70</sup> "A Bill to record the lawful admission to the United States for permanent residence of Reverend Julius Paal," House Report 1374, January 3, 1941, 77th Congress, 1st Session, p. 2; Library of Congress: Law Library, RR (77) HIm-T.87, Unpublished U.S. House of Representatives Committee Hearings, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 1941–1942.

<sup>71</sup> Samuel Dickstein, M.C., Chair, "A Bill for the Relief of Tibor Hoffman and Magda Hoffman," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Tibor Hoffman and Magda Hoffman," *op. cit.*, pp. 11-13.

<sup>73</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Tibor Hoffman and Magda Hoffman," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Tibor Hoffman and Magda Hoffman," *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>75</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Ernest Unger [sic]," House Report 7626, November 3, 1939, 76th Congress, 2d Session; Library of Congress: Law Library, RR (76) HIm-T.92, p. 5; Unpublished U. S. House of Representatives Committee Hearings, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 1939-1941.

<sup>76</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Tibor Hoffman and Magda Hoffman," *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Tibor Hoffman and Magda Hoffman," *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>78</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Tibor Hoffman and Magda Hoffman," *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>79</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Ladislav Frank," House Report 4584, April 29, 1941, 77th Congress, 1st Session; Library of Congress: Law Library, RR (77) HIm-T.45, Unpublished U.S. House of Representatives Committee Hearings, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 1941-1942.

<sup>80</sup> "A Bill to record the lawful admission to the United States for permanent residence of Reverend Julius Paal," *op. cit.*

<sup>81</sup> "A Bill to record the lawful admission to the United States for permanent residence of Reverend Julius Paal," *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>82</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Marcel Stark," House Report 4181, March 25, 1941, 77th Congress, 1st Session; Library of Congress: Law Library, RR (77) HIm-T.24, p. 3 and titlepage; Unpublished U.S. House of Representatives Committee Hearings, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 1941-1942.

<sup>83</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Otto Rudolf Nemeth," House Report 390, January 3, 1941, 77th Congress, 1st Session; Library of Congress: Law Library, RR (77) HIm-T.21, title page; Unpublished U.S. House of Representatives Committee Hearings, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 1941-1942.

<sup>84</sup> "A Bill for the Relief of Charles Molnar," House Report 7749, January 8, 1940, 76th Congress, 3d Session; Library of Congress: Law Library, RR (76) HIm-T.94, Unpublished U.S. House of Representatives Committee Hearings, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 1939-1941.

<sup>85</sup> "Statement of Louis Perlman, representing the Hungarian Societies Central Committee, New York, N.Y." House Report 3, Supervision and Detention of Certain Aliens, Hearings before Subcommittee No. 2 of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, 77th Congress, 1st Session, Serial No. 2, Part II (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941), pp. 161-162;

Library of Congress: Law Library, RR (77) H 929-7, Published Hearing, 77th Congress, Senate Library, Vol. 929, 1941.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*





## From Budapest to New York: The Odyssey of the Polanyis

Judith Szapor

This article is a short version of Chapter 4 of my manuscript, entitled "*The Hungarian Pocahontas; The Life and Times of Laura Polanyi, 1882-1959*," to be published by the University of Toronto Press. In the preceding chapters I describe the first stages of the Polanyis' Odyssey. It included the emigration from Hungary of Laura Polanyi's brothers, Adolf, Karl and Michael, to Italy, Austria and Germany, respectively. They left Hungary, along with scores of left-wing intellectuals, during the period of right-wing repression that followed the post-war democratic and Bolshevik revolutions. By 1939, both Michael and Karl had settled in England. As for Laura Polanyi's immediate family, in the late 1920s and early 1930s her children, Michael, Eva and George Stricker all studied and worked in Austria and Germany. While the latter, her youngest was completing his studies at the University of Vienna, Michael and Eva took a detour to the Soviet Union. By 1932, both had taken up positions as "foreign experts," Michael as a patent expert in Moscow, Eva as a designer, eventually working for the Lomonosov Porcelain Factory in Leningrad. Although keeping her homes in Budapest — where her husband lived — and Vienna, Laura accompanied her children to the Soviet Union for extended periods of time. She was there when, in May 1936, Eva was arrested and accused with participating in a plot to assassinate Stalin. Fourteen months later, in September 1937, when Eva was released and expelled from the Soviet Union, the family gathered in Vienna, preparing to leave for the United States.

**The Polanyis, fleeing from** Central Europe in 1938-39, were part of the great wave of intellectual refugees reaching the United States. Of the twenty-three family members in the second and third generations of the Polanyis, nineteen changed their country of residence between 1919 and 1942. In addition, the Stricker relatives, on the side of Laura's husband, were also generously represented in the ranks of the intellectual refugees. These numbers in themselves would make the Polanyis an ideal subject

for a case study in the history of the intellectual emigration. More than merely illustrating it, their case also highlights the significant gaps in the American scholarship on the refugee intellectuals.<sup>1</sup>

The refugee intellectual wave sparked an instant and lasting fascination both in the American popular imagination and academia. From the first statistical surveys, pointing to the potential effect of the massive influx of intellectuals,<sup>2</sup> to the affirmation that "the exiles Hitler made were the greatest collection of transplanted intellect, talent, and scholarship the world has ever seen,"<sup>3</sup> there emerged the consensus that the intellectual migration from Europe signalled a turning point in American intellectual and academic life. In the late 1960s, a new interest in intellectual history produced a couple of outstanding collections of essays that successfully combined the insights of former émigré but by then fully established American scholars with the fresh energy and broad outlook of a new generation of young scholars in a by then full-fledged academic field, the history of intellectual émigrés.<sup>4</sup>

As the period of the 1930s and 1940s became sufficiently removed in time, the intellectual migration took its place in American immigration history. The study of American immigration policy of the period and the attitude of the Roosevelt administration toward the refugees, in particular, was an overdue and necessary task. It was, however, accomplished at a price, by shifting the emphasis from the refugees and their interaction with American society to the role and responsibility of various government bodies, political factors and public opinion. Although these studies never claimed to focus on the intellectual emigration, their approach still resulted in the intellectual refugees being lumped together with refugees in general or, if the focus was on Jewish immigrants, limited to Jews.<sup>5</sup> While government policy and its shortcomings were intensely scrutinized, the vital role of non-government organizations and individuals in the rescue effort was often overlooked.

The case of the Polanyis does not fit readily into a scholarship that has shown increasing compartmentalization and often limits the scope of its query according to the refugees' country of origin and academic or creative field.<sup>6</sup> By virtue of their accomplishments, in fields ranging from physics to the arts, education, literature, economics, and philosophy, not to mention politics, the Polanyis always resisted easy classification. Because of the multiple stages of their emigration, and their temporary settlement in Austria, Weimar Germany, and England, not even their country of origin could be clearly determined.<sup>7</sup> The same applies to their

ethnic background; their complex identities, developed through multiple affiliations with Austrian, Hungarian, German, and an increasingly secular Jewish culture are not easily fitted into a clear-cut ethnic or religious framework. Meanwhile, even relatively recent examples of the refugee scholarship display a tendency to ethnic or religious stereotyping that harks back to the popular perception of the refugees at the time of their arrival.<sup>8</sup>

Another lacuna concerns the stage between departure and arrival, the flight itself. With the attention focused on the organizations and individuals who were instrumental in their rescue (or, conversely, the hostile government officials whose efforts had to be overcome), only marginal attention has been paid to the refugees' own efforts to save themselves. By overlooking this aspect, scholarship not only failed to do justice to the efforts of the refugees, it also created an artificial discontinuity, turning the leading lights of Central European intelligentsia into helpless victims, unexplainably reinvigorated once in America. Yet, if the Polanyis' example is any indication, the intellectual refugees did not passively wait to be rescued. One of the underlying patterns in the Polanyis' immigration was their reliance on their own resources and their use of organized outside help only as a last resort, pointing to the need for a new focus on agency; it would not only bring the study of intellectual refugees in line with that of ordinary immigrants to the U.S. but could also point to additional unexplored aspects of the emigration process itself. Perhaps the most important of these is the "head start" of the Hungarian intellectual émigrés of the 1918-19 revolutions.<sup>9</sup> Disruptive as it had been, this first emigration, from Hungary, offered invaluable lessons, a dress rehearsal for the next flight, this time from Hitler's Europe.

For, if there was one crucial factor in the flight of the intellectuals escaping from Hitler, it was the role played by their academic and intellectual networks. The Polanyis' case is paradigmatic because of the way they were grounded in the Central European intellectual, political and academic networks from the late 19th century. The post-1919 wave of emigration from Hungary did not disrupt, only expanded these ties into every corner of Europe, carrying relatives and friends everywhere from Paris to Vienna, Berlin, Moscow, and Manchester. In addition to the significance of these networks in transplanting the intellectual, scientific and artistic talent into America, they also forecasted a trend, the internationalization of modern academia, science and the arts.

The experience of Laura and the younger women in her family highlights another, relatively underdeveloped area in the study of intellectual refugees: that of intellectual refugee women.<sup>10</sup> In addition to Laura and Eva, most women in the Polanyi family were intellectuals in their own right, armed with university degrees — some in science and engineering, almost unheard of for American women at the time — and a long list of professional and political accomplishments. They no doubt shared these characteristics with a much larger group of refugee intellectual women who found — and were often baffled by — the American social norms and expectations concerning women in academia and the professions much more conservative than in the European countries they had come from. The eventual professional success of Laura and her daughter, Eva Zeisel, seems to have been the exception rather than the rule: the majority of intellectual immigrant women had to settle for the role of the faculty wife and hostess or find socially acceptable creative outlets.<sup>11</sup> Finally, despite the support of old- and new-world networks, the Polanyis were not exempt of the difficulties normally associated with emigration as they rebuilt their lives. That included the confrontation with the often-simplistic American perceptions concerning the refugees' identity. The reason for their flight, as in the case of many of the refugees, was a combination of their political opposition to Nazism and the anti-Semitic measures of Hitler and his allies. And, like many of the refugee intellectuals, they too refused to adjust their identity to Hitler's racial laws.<sup>12</sup>

By March 1938, Laura and her children had completed the preparations to leave for America. The *Anschluss*, declared on the 13th of March, served as a timely justification of their decision to leave the Continent behind. It also complicated matters. When the news of Hitler's troops marching into Austria reached Vienna, Eva, still suffering from the trauma of her recent imprisonment, was not going to take any chances; with her British visitor's visa in hand, she boarded the train and reached England a few days later. The sudden flight left her affairs in disarray: her American visa application was still pending and her divorce from Alexander Weissberg, a physicist working in the Soviet Union, uncompleted. Even the fact that Weissberg was arrested in May 1937 and was still imprisoned at the time did not phase Laura; she collected the paperwork and managed to finalize the divorce a month after Eva had fled Vienna.<sup>13</sup>

More alarmingly, Egon Szécsi, Laura's brother-in-law, was arrested during a coffeehouse raid, a random victim of the terror of the first days of Nazi takeover in Vienna. Sophie Polanyi, the younger sister of Laura, and Szécsi, a social democrat, struggling lawyer and failed entrepreneur, had been living in Vienna for decades. Yet not even the news of Szécsi's arrest and detention in the Dachau concentration camp could shake the family's optimism. It only doubled the efforts of the Szécsis' eldest daughter who had been living in the States for some years, to make arrangements for bringing her parents over.<sup>14</sup>

The Polanyis proceeded with their plan; Michael and Hilde Stricker — Laura Polanyi's elder son and daughter-in-law — sailed to the U. S. on the 13th of April 1938, leaving their two-year-old daughter, Michelle, in Laura's care. Michael who had business connections in the States did not waste his time. By the end of April, he had already opened an office on Broadway — Dr. Michael S. Striker, Patents and Trade Marks — and, according to his letterhead, promptly Americanized the spelling of the family name. The couple rented an apartment nearby and, most importantly, continued the process of securing affidavits for the rest of the family, sending almost daily dispatches of the developments.<sup>15</sup>

By then they had first-hand confirmation that American visas were granted largely on the strength of affidavits; and while immediate family members made the best sponsors, in their absence, the length of American residency and the amount of income and assets of the guarantors were considered crucial. By May 1938, Michael had secured multiple affidavits for his mother as well as for Eva and her future husband Hans Zeisel, and mobilized the relatives of Barbara, the young wife of his younger brother, Otto. The names circulating as possible guarantors — from Emil Lederer, to emigre politician-turned-academic Oscar (Oszkár) Jászi, Paul Lazarsfeld, and nuclear physicist Leó Szilárd's brother, Béla — provide a good indication of the breadth of the family's connections, transplanted to the States from Central Europe.<sup>16</sup> American immigration policy further complicated matters, requiring that potential immigrants apply on the quota assigned to each country based on their birthplace. Consequently, Ottó and Laura had to apply on the German quota (by force of their Austrian birth and the fact that it was now part of the *Reich*), while Eva and Barbara were to be considered within the Hungarian quota.<sup>17</sup>

June and July 1938 brought promising developments; Hans Zeisel and Eva travelled to Prague (as a Czech citizen, he had to apply for his

American visa there), received his American visa and returned to England to marry in July. At the end of June, a family friend from Budapest optimistically reported to Michael Polanyi in Manchester that Ottó, his wife, and Laura all expected to receive their American visas in a few weeks.<sup>18</sup> As far as Sophie's husband, Egon was concerned, continued the report, they were hopeful that he would be released in a couple of weeks. The optimism was not entirely unfounded; it corresponded to a period that lasted only a few months before the November 1938 *Kristallnacht* during which the Nazis granted passports to bearers of valid visas, even to those arrested and in prison or concentration camps. The Polanyi "brain trust", always on top of new developments, sprung into action: on June 28, Michael Polanyi rushed to cable the Szécsis' daughter in Chicago with the news. If they could provide strong affidavits, have them approved in Washington by the State Department, and cable the approval to the American consul in Vienna, there was a chance that her father could be released.<sup>19</sup> As a result, Sophie applied for an American visa (both for herself and her husband) in July 1938.<sup>20</sup> As Laura assured Michael Polanyi in late August, Sophie, nearing her fiftieth birthday, was healthy and full of energy.<sup>21</sup>

Laura herself was wrapping up her affairs in Vienna. She was running last-minute errands: always the thoughtful mother, she ordered a new easel for Eva and packed her photography equipment.<sup>22</sup> She was also planning one more visit to Budapest. The short side trip necessitated queuing for a number of extra transit visas (French, Italian and Yugoslavian visas on top of the Czech and British she already had), yet she was determined to go home, to say good-bye, to see her mother one last time.<sup>23</sup> Her brother Michael, anxious to see her leave Austria, understood her reasons but urged her to keep the trip short.<sup>24</sup>

In August 1938 the family got one more step closer to the completion of the plan: Ottó and Barbara left for the U.S.. At their stopover in England, Eva awaited them with ashen face: she had just received the news of Laura's arrest in Vienna.<sup>25</sup> As it turned out, it had nothing to do with political or "racial" reasons; Laura invited the unwanted attention of the Austrian police by holding too many business meetings and making numerous phone calls on her son's behalf in the lobby of her hotel. Her position, in the custody of the Austrian police, waiting for the review of her case, was precarious and prompted frantic action from her family and friends in Budapest and London.

In the absence of her children, on their way to or already in the U.S., the remaining family members and friends organized the battle lines with admirable speed. Sophie took over the care of Laura's grandchild, visited her sister in prison, and sent detailed reports to family members. The Stricker relatives in Budapest held an "emergency council meeting" and decided to dispatch the best lawyers to Vienna, to explore official and semi-official avenues. Finally, they relayed the news and developments to Eva and her uncles in England.<sup>26</sup>

The disastrous event sounded painful echoes in Eva, herself only recently liberated from prison. The thought of her mother languishing in a Viennese jail cell in Nazi-annexed Austria was unbearable.<sup>27</sup> While the Budapest relatives debated the chances of various courses of action and Laura was waiting for her case to go to a hearing,<sup>28</sup> Eva made desperate attempts to acquire the help of the Quakers. The origins of the Quaker connection are far from clear.<sup>29</sup> It may have been Karl Polanyi's idea who possibly met Quakers through his position in the British Christian Left.<sup>30</sup> Another clue points to Michael Polanyi. While in England, Eva was the guest of a Mrs. Bruce, also a Quaker<sup>31</sup> whose sister was "Professor Polanyi's" neighbour in Manchester. A few days later, a Mrs. Richards, a representative of the Friends Service Committee reported to Eva that despite her best efforts in Vienna, she was not able to bring her mother home with her. "But as long as there was the smallest suspicion of any money transactions" – a hint at the possible reason for her arrest — "it was quite impossible to get her out before the hearing of the case. I wish I could have stayed there longer," she continued "but I had to get home to get my children ready and off to school, and to look after some of my other cases, which are all urgent."<sup>32</sup> Due to the combined efforts of Mrs. Richards, the Hungarian lawyers, the medical certificates, gathered by the Budapest relatives, attesting to Laura's poor health, and the leniency or, possibly, corruption of the Austrian police official in charge of the case, Laura was released on the day of her scheduled hearing.<sup>33</sup> On the 22nd of September, she announced in a telegram: "Coming Friday 7 pm flight Mummy."<sup>34</sup>

The traumatic experience had left little effect on Laura's fighting spirit. On her arrival in London, she immediately picked up where she had left off in Vienna: organizing her own and her granddaughter's passage to America. She was in almost daily correspondence with her brothers, Karl and Michael, only worrying about the slow progress of the Szécsis' affairs. Once Eva and Hans sailed too — they left for the U. S. in

October 1938, taking with them their little niece — Laura was left with no one to take care of and nothing to do but wait. She spent almost an entire year waiting for her American visa, possibly the darkest period for her in the entire endeavour. She longed to see her family in Hungary but, with her Austrian passport and the recent, close encounter in Vienna, could not risk a visit.<sup>35</sup> In December 1938, she was taken to hospital for tests and to treat her feverish bouts. She was frequently visited by her brothers, yet the physical weakness, the inactivity, the anticipation of war, the worries about her family still trapped on the Continent drove her, perhaps the first time in her life, to complaints. In a letter to Andor Németh, a Hungarian writer living in Paris, whom she contacted to find out Arthur Koestler's address, she burst out: "I'm not healthy and stayed behind all alone, with my children already having left for America. My visa is still delayed but because of a grotesque accident I have an Austrian passport, I cannot go home either. It is a bad situation, being paralyzed and with many other troubles."<sup>36</sup> Christmas, a time of family gatherings, still spent in the French Hospital in London, was the lowest point, although the telegram she received on Christmas Eve must have brought some holiday cheer: "Don't feel lonely children united as never before are with you good health many kisses au revoir. Hans Eva."<sup>37</sup>

By spring, things were looking up. Following a long stay in the hospital, in February Laura was feeling better, staying with Mrs. Bruce, admiring her garden and trying to push things along. Her correspondence testifies to hopes for a spring or summer sailing date, pending receipt of the American visa, postponed over and over.<sup>38</sup> In March 1939, Adolf Polanyi arrived in England, prompting a long-overdue reunion of four of the five Polanyi siblings. Adolf's visit was far from voluntary; he had settled in Italy since the early 1920s, but anti-Semitic legislation introduced there in the fall of 1938, set a short deadline for foreign-born Jews to leave the country.<sup>39</sup> Since he had hardly any prospects in England, it was agreed that Adolf should pursue emigration to the Americas, preferably to a South American country where he could use his prodigious business and language skills. He should, however, take advantage of his stay in England to speed up the exit of his four children from Italy, all about to finish their university studies.<sup>40</sup>

The surge of new anti-Semitic measures introduced in Hungary and Germany seriously limited the chances of helping the relatives there. Michael Polanyi who carried the responsibility of financially supporting his mother in Budapest and his sister, Sophie, in Vienna, grew increas-



ingly concerned as his property in Germany was, to all intents and purposes, confiscated and his regular income in Hungary (as scientific advisor for the reputable electric company Egyesült Izzó) which he used to support Cecile, blocked.<sup>41</sup> The window of opportunity for the release of Egon Szécsi — and, with it, Sophie's emigration — seemed to close up. The Szécsis had had their English visa since July 1938 and could expect their American visa reasonably soon. Egon, however, was still in the hands of the Gestapo and an American visa for their mentally disabled son was out of the question. Michael Polanyi, the mastermind behind the efforts to save them, reported in February that matters had reached an impasse; following a denunciation, the Gestapo called in Sophie, took away her passport, and made it clear that her husband would not be released and their passports given back, unless they procured a visa for the boy or left him behind in the care of an institution.<sup>42</sup>

In the end, Laura slipped out of England in late August, 1939, mere days before war broke out.<sup>43</sup> A few weeks after arriving in New York, Laura received news from Budapest: on September 5 her mother, the legendary Cecile, had died. Condolences poured in. Aunt Irma described Cecile's last day — a beautiful, sunny day, spent in the park and reading in her bed — and the funeral that she had organized in the absence of Cecile's children.<sup>44</sup> The widow of Károly Pollacsek, Laura's aunt had always been a reliable presence, frequently reporting on Cecile's physical and mental well-being and only a few months earlier reminding the "children" to mail their birthday greetings to her.<sup>45</sup> A friend sent the obituary of the Social Democratic daily *Népszava*.<sup>46</sup> Its author wrote of Cecile's Russian roots and international Socialist connections, a gesture of remarkable courage at the time, before turning to praise her beautiful eyes, revolutionary reform-dresses and hairdo. An old friend, the former Hungarian Social Democrat activist now Chicago businessman Alexander (Sándor) Vince, commented bitterly on "the shackled writer of the *Népszava*" who was afraid to write of Cecile's real significance. "To us and to the entire progressive Hungary she was the mother of the Gracchi," inspiring the intelligentsia of a generation.<sup>47</sup>

Oscar Jászi's wife, Recha, summed up perhaps best the mixed feelings over Cecile's passing: "The time is so sad and tragic that I do know very well that it is best so. She was old and sick and she had lived her life. But a landmark is gone..."<sup>48</sup> As if marking the end of an era and the passing of the torch between generations, Aunt Irma died not long after, in June 1940.

Laura's welcome in New York quickly erased the memory of her lonely and miserable months in London. Michael and Hilde, who as Aunt Irma had predicted, were "people made for America" were thriving.<sup>49</sup> Eva began to work in design and teach at the Pratt Institute within months of her arrival, and Otto soon procured a job as an engineer at the Zenith Company in Chicago. The inevitable hurdles of social adjustment were eased by the wide circle of old friends already settled in America. Laura's Riverside apartment as well as Michael's on 115th Street were right in the middle of the Upper West Side neighbourhood preferred by the Central European refugees, creating a social environment not very different from that of Budapest or Berlin.<sup>50</sup> Even Julius (Gyula) Holló, the Polanyis' family physician in Budapest, made it out and set up practice in Manhattan. In addition to the friends and relatives already mentioned above, Alfred Adler's widow and the artist Anna Lesznai, Jászi's first wife, also lived nearby. Jászi and his second wife, Laura's Viennese friend from her youth, Recha had made their home in Oberlin, Ohio since the late 1920s.<sup>51</sup> The Jászis were among the first to greet Laura in America on her arrival. "Dearest Mausi, welcome, welcome! How good to know that you are here, safe and happy with your children. And all of them working! I have read your 'Odysee' with great emotion and joy — knowing the happy end!<sup>52</sup> I cannot tell you how I admire your courage! You have done a good job, Mausi!"<sup>53</sup> To which Jászi added in Hungarian: "Dear Mauzi, Heartfelt greetings in the new homeland, wishing you all the best, Oszkár."<sup>54</sup>

Recha, delighted to know that her oldest friend was near and safe, was also the first to remind Laura of the immediate reversal of roles; that as soon as they arrived, the rescued became rescuers.

There is an "aching" point in every family, Mausi. I have more than one. Shall I begin to tell you my "Odysee", a ghastly year in which I suffered not by being an actor, but only a spectator, in a distance. ...My sister's husband, whom I know only slightly (and herself I know almost as little,) is a very decent but indolent type. Only by late November [1938] he woke up to the idea to leave Germany. We have sent affidavits, ours and of a well to do friend, but their turn might come — when? For Mother I have sent a preference visa. She was sailing August 23d with the 'Hansa.' August 25th the boat was recalled from

Southampton. Nobody allowed to land. Poor thing! Now I have paid a passage for her on an Italian boat but being without competition the Italians are sitting on a high horse. I cannot get any information on which boat Mother will get accommodation, when she will sail, etc. No news from her, though I have cabled three times, reply prepaid. It is a nerve wrecking experience.<sup>55</sup>

Recha's subsequent letters described the Jászis' efforts to help friends and relatives flee Hitler as an all-consuming, full-time undertaking that not only exacted a heavy mental, physical toll on the Jászis, but ate up their savings as well. "Ghosts sit on my bedside" she wrote, capturing the anxiety that was only heightened by their own safety. Laura's letters must have revealed her own worries to Recha with whom she shared not only their former Viennese social circle, now dispersed all over the world, but also the agony of having a sister stranded in Germany.<sup>56</sup> The outbreak of the war in Europe made communication with family members in Budapest and Vienna even more fragile and increased the sense of urgency to act on their behalf.

Despite his relative safety, the most urgent task was to bring Sándor Stricker, Laura's husband, over. His children did not waste any time and submitted the applications for him in August 1938.<sup>57</sup> Even if his was a relatively simple case, Laura and the children did not take any chances. By this time, they were almost certainly aware that the Hungarian quota for 1940 was taken up entirely, even if parents over the age of 65 of American residents were exempt from quota regulations.<sup>58</sup> Laura asked the old family friend Alexander Vince for help, who in turn approached the local members of the House of Representatives.<sup>59</sup> The latter promised to intervene immediately with the American consul in Budapest and by February 1940, the Republican congressman assured his constituent of his "very best efforts" in the matter, in exchange for his "unqualified support."<sup>60</sup> Still, it took another year and half to complete the preparations. Sándor's trip began on the 20th of July, 1941, and, with stopovers in Vienna, Switzerland, Spain and Lisbon, he arrived almost a month later in New York.<sup>61</sup> His impeccably organized journey, with relatives and friends to contact in case of emergency at every step of the way, was a monument to the organizational skills, "sustained efforts and considerable sacrifices" of Michael Striker.<sup>62</sup> It completed the transplanting of Laura's immediate family.

These praising words came from Karl Polanyi, at the time in Washington, making the rounds in the State Department to secure his own and his wife, Ilona Duczynska's stay in the United States. In 1941 Karl Polanyi accepted an invitation to teach at Bennington College, Vermont, frequently visiting his sister and family in New York City and contributing to the sense of a family reunion. It was during the years in Bennington that he wrote the *Great Transformation*, first published in New York in 1944. Although Karl Polanyi and Duczynska returned to England in 1943 and remained there for the rest of the war, the publication of his seminal book and his growing reputation resulted in the invitation for a visiting professorship at Columbia University in 1947. Until his retirement from Columbia in 1953, when in New York, Karl lived in the apartment on 115th Street, across the street from the main entrance of Columbia. Karl's relationship with his older sister, always close but now facilitated by the geographical proximity, was also underlined by a belated outburst of academic productivity and success, an experience brother and sister shared and much enjoyed.<sup>62b</sup>

Although Sándor Stricker's arrival in America was the result of a truly collective effort by his children, Laura's role in reassembling the family had been crucial. On her 60th birthday in February 1942, her brother Adolf, never at a loss for words, summed it up: "You have saved all or nearly all of what had and has meaning to, things born and formed by you and forces revolving around you in a closed and self-supporting circle. I feel that life has given you a birthday present for the 60th recurrence as few people have received in this uprooted world."<sup>63</sup>

The success of reuniting, in a remarkably short time, Laura's closest family, only highlighted the tragedy of her sister and her family. The efforts to save them, directed by Michael Polanyi, did not let up and in 1939 accomplished bringing the Szécsis' younger daughter, Edith, to England. She died there, in February 1944, most likely a suicide.<sup>64</sup> The urgency of the Szécsis' situation became more evident by each day, even if no one could possibly foresee the full extent of the coming disaster. By September 1939, Sophie and Egon would have got their American visa. His release from the concentration camp and their freedom hinged on finding a solution for their mentally disabled son, Karl. Earlier, in 1938, relatives had offered to place him at an institution in Hungary yet back then, still hopeful to keep the family together, Sophie was reluctant to leave the boy behind.<sup>65</sup> Last-minute attempts to acquire a visa for him to Mexico or the Dominican Republic fell through.<sup>66</sup> And by the time

Sophie decided to leave without her husband, it was too late. In March 1941 she and the boy were taken to the Kielce ghetto in Poland.<sup>67</sup> As for Egon, he was killed in the concentration camp in April of 1941.<sup>68</sup>

For another two years, the family miraculously managed to keep in touch with Sophie, even send her money. In March 1942, news was relayed that the boy was taken away from her, prompting one last push to save her. By then, the family must have had some understanding of the fate of Jews taken to the East.<sup>69</sup> But Sophie was already beyond reach, despite the American visa waiting for her in Vienna.<sup>70</sup> After the spring of 1943, she was not heard from any more. "My last postcard came back with the note: 'Addressee moved to address unknown'. The rest is silence," wrote a friend to Laura.<sup>71</sup>

As the Nazis' hold was tightening on the Continent, there came news of other tragedies. The widow of Samuel Klatschko, Anna, starved to death, abandoned in occupied Paris. Her daughter, Lina, Laura's childhood friend made it to New York, but died shortly after.<sup>72</sup> The fate of Anna Klatschko, Cecile's friend from the Vilna and Vienna of their youth confirmed that Cecile's peaceful end was for the better. Laura's nephew, an "enemy alien" in a French internment camp, cut off from his wife and children who were trapped in the occupied zone, sent desperate messages to New York.<sup>73</sup> Recha's own sister and brother-in-law in Germany perished in a concentration camp. By February 1943, she lost touch with them entirely.<sup>74</sup> What made Sophie's fate perhaps more difficult to accept than that of other victims was that she had the chance to escape and, guided by moral obligation or indecision, she chose not to take it. Adolf expressed what must have been on everyone's mind, writing on receiving the news of Egon's death and Sophie's deportation. "What you write about Sophy is terrible. We cannot help but feel that Egon could have probably been saved and Sophy living with a new lease of life in America if it had not been for the unfortunate idiot boy, whose fate has in no way been changed or altered by all this. She is certainly the most tragic victim of her loyalty, to a lost cause."<sup>75</sup>

At the time he wrote this letter, Adolf had his own worries. Of his four children, Eszter had earlier moved back to Hungary. When Adolf and Lily, his second wife, had to leave Italy in the spring of 1939, his other daughter, Vera, and his two sons, Thomas and Michael, stayed on in Rome to finish their studies. Vera was training to be a psychiatrist and the two sons were completing their Ph.D.'s in Enrico Fermi's institute. After unsuccessful attempts to stay closer to them, in France or England, Adolf

found employment with a company in Brazil. In May 1941, the Polanyi boys, with their freshly earned degrees but their prospects cut off in Italy, were ready to leave. They enlisted as deck hands on a neutral merchant ship, heading for New York, with valid Italian passports but without any visas.<sup>76</sup> Forewarned by Adolf, Laura watched the arrival times of merchant ships in the newspapers and when six weeks later the ship docked "in a godforsaken dock on Bayonne, N.J.,"<sup>77</sup> she waited for them, in time to convince the authorities to take them to Ellis Island.<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile Adolf mobilized his connections and his company's lawyer in Washington acquired Cuban visas for the boys.

In the course of the following months and years, Laura was in almost daily contact with her nephews, who were cooling their heels in Cuba for over two years. She provided them with moral and financial support, while orchestrating a widespread campaign to bring them into the States. It is an extensively documented story whose value goes beyond the sheer human interest it represents; it casts a light on the *modus operandi* of Laura, her incredible grasp of the bureaucratic obstacles raised by the authorities, and the way the family pulled ranks around two of its members. Moreover, it provides an insight into the issue of the Polanyis' Jewish identity, a subject only seldom mentioned in the family's correspondence.

Within days after the boys' arrival, Laura contacted prestigious members of the Italian refugee community, such as professors Giuseppe Borgese (Thomas Mann's son-in-law) at Columbia and Lionello Venturi at the University of Chicago, as well as Enrico Fermi, and various other potential sponsors.<sup>79</sup> Everyone in the family, or least those with incomes was instructed to fill out affidavits for them. At the same time, Adolf also took steps to engage his company's support (he was employed by the South American affiliate of an American company in Rio de Janeiro).<sup>80</sup> By an unfortunate coincidence, the State Department's visa policy had been considerably tightened to correspond exactly with the arrival of the boys. Purportedly introduced to protect the country from subversive aliens, the new visa regulations took effect on June 5th, 1941. On that day, instructions went out to diplomatic and consular officers to withhold visas from all applicants who had parents, children, husband, wife, brothers, or sisters resident in territory under the control of Germany, Italy, or Russia.<sup>81</sup> These instructions, meant to be secret, barred the Polanyi boys' entry on multiple counts; they had sisters, their mother, and countless relatives in Italy, Hungary, even Germany and Austria. How-

ever, following a leak, the State Department was forced to make the new policy regulations public; and the instant reaction of Laura is obvious from the photocopy of the related *New York Times* article, found in her file containing the boys' documents as well as her request for the new sets of visa application forms.<sup>82</sup>

More importantly, she instructed her nephews to avoid a serious mistake in the visa application:

When you fill out the emigration application, try to make sure AT ALL COSTS that under "race" they write Hungarian. I don't know if you have taken care of the religious matters, I heard from Brazil that it was the case, it would be useful in any case. ... If they write in your application, as they do with pleasure that the race is: Hebrew, that will remain in all your documents that you will have to show at every job application, and that is not to your advantage but in your field almost prohibitive. Neither Otto nor the others claim their ancestors' race and religion!<sup>83</sup>

It was an only slightly coded warning to the boys, intended not only to guide them through the bureaucratic procedures but to make them aware that anti-Semitism was not limited to the Fascist and Nazi countries they escaped from; that it was alive and well in the U.S. too (84). And if they needed further proof, the fact that their application was promptly refused provided one. In July, Michael Polanyi reacted to the new visa policy and his nephews' failure to enter the States in an uncharacteristically passionate outburst:

The Polanyi boys have been refused entry to the U.S. because they have relatives living in a Fascist country. I think they are now in Cuba awaiting the results of Mausí's further strenuous efforts to get them access to some place on the Western Hemisphere. This new law of the U.S. which prevents their entry is one of the worst piece of cruel and hypocritical legislation, pursuing a policy of antisemitism under the pretext of protecting the country against Hitler's influence.<sup>85</sup>

In December 1941, their application was rejected again, the refusal signed by the very official, A. M. Warren who was one of the

authors of the new policy.<sup>86</sup> Adolf, in faraway Brazil, was desperately searching for a way to bring the boys to South America but concluded that "the United States are the only reasonable hope left."<sup>87</sup> Despite the unfair and unjust position of the American Government, evident in the visa regulations, he shared with most refugees a "too strong a belief in American Ideas of fairness as to accept the situation as final."<sup>88</sup> As for the role of Laura in bringing the Polanyi boys to America, she displayed a commitment that went even beyond her usual determination. Always the responsible eldest sibling, she was motivated primarily by the sympathy she felt for the boys who (although not exactly children; they were 27 and 23 years of age, respectively, in 1941) had not had their own parents around to help them. Adolf, himself too far away to act, and never the model father, also delegated her as his proxy. He repeatedly asked her to look after matters, as he doubted whether "Karli has the push and ... Misi the time"<sup>89</sup> and to go to Washington where her "energy and tenacity would do a lot more than all the rest put together."<sup>90</sup> An additional motive for Laura to pour all her energies into the boys' cause may have been that she felt she was handed another chance; she could help them while there was nothing left she could do for her sister. It would take an additional two years and several rounds of reviews before the two could enter the U.S. Even then, one of the brothers, eager to offer his Ph.D. in physics for defense projects, was denied clearance.<sup>91</sup>

But what to make of the advice Laura had given the boys to hide the fact that they were Jews? Was this not pure opportunism? Or the chameleon-like behaviour of the parvenu German Jew Hannah Arendt satirized so memorably?<sup>92</sup> These are questions that deserve to be carefully weighed against the perspective and experience of the highly assimilated Central European Jews arriving in America. First of all, the existence of strong anti-Semitism in the U.S. had come as a shock to the Central-European intellectual refugees for whom Roosevelt's America was associated with the best liberal values. Laura felt she had to warn her nephews about it. After all, the Polanyi boys' future depended on their chances to work in their field; their university degrees came at a price of substantial sacrifices from Adolf's entire family. And in the Polanyis' value system, the boys' academic brilliance, their Hungarian birth, even their Italian upbringing and culture defined them more than the Jewish religion of their ancestors. They could not risk their entire future life because of one question on an application form that served, in their eyes, an anti-Semitic immigration policy.



Their Jewish ancestry was an indelible part of the Polanyis and one they had never hidden or denied. Yet they felt nothing in common with the Yiddish-speaking Eastern-European Jewish world of New York. If Laura advised her nephews to hide their religion in the application, it was only one angle of a wider strategy. The future choices of Laura's children and grandchildren in their education and professional life demonstrated that the family continued in its long-standing tradition to strive for intellectual and academic excellence. They went on to produce academic high achievers who attended the best schools and rose to the highest echelons of American academic and cultural life. If, under the circumstances they found in America, that meant to underplay their Jewish identity, it was a small price to pay.

The Polanyis also had the luxury to make choices free from immediate financial pressures. The majority of intellectual refugees, made up of German Jews, had to leave everything behind because of the Nazi regulations and reached America penniless. They had no choice but to rely on the refugee aid organizations, organized along ethnic and religious lines. One refugee, an assimilated German Jew, summed up the circumstances that forced him to reluctantly shift his identity in the following: "in New York, you were either Jewish or nothing; otherwise nobody would help you."<sup>93</sup>

While maintaining their numerous ties with fellow émigrés, Laura and her children quickly developed connections with the local non-immigrant community. The family attended the Unitarian church in Brooklyn where Laura was a highly regarded member of the congregation.<sup>94</sup> Her granddaughter remembered that they had to take Sunday school lessons at Laura's insistence. She also explained to her grandchildren that they chose the Unitarian church because of its ties to 16th-century Transylvania.<sup>95</sup> Again, a seemingly opportunistic move had, at least to some degree, its explanation in long-standing cultural tradition. Their membership in the Unitarian congregation was also an indication that they recognized the community-building role of the local churches in their new homeland. The family's encounter with the Quakers and Laura and Eva's temporary stay in England when they had occasion to witness their help to the refugees could have played a role as well.<sup>96</sup>

One last case among Laura's files demonstrates that the solidarity displayed in the rescue efforts went beyond family responsibilities and blood ties. It concerns the fate of Alex Weissberg, Eva's first husband. When we last met him, he was in a Kharkov jail, waiting for his trial.

Perhaps because Weissberg was one of only a very few never confessing to any of the crimes he was accused of, he never went to trial or received a sentence. As soon as Eva reached England, she began a relentless campaign to free him. Weissberg's valiant efforts in the Soviet Union to save Eva created a solidarity between them that survived the break-up of their marriage.

In 1936, at the time of Eva's arrest, Weissberg had solicited reference letters for Eva, regardless of the risks involved. Now the roles were reversed yet the method and the network they used remained the same. The details of this fight and his own part in it are described in Arthur Koestler's *The Invisible Writing*.<sup>97</sup> Koestler's efforts, motivated by his friendship with Weissberg and Eva and his growing disenchantment with Communism were reinforced by his own recent imprisonment and near-execution by Franco's forces in Spain. Eva's uncle, Michael Polanyi, played at least an equal part by contacting his colleagues, members of the community of physicists. Koestler's idea of soliciting letters from three French Nobel-Prize laureates, all Communists, masterfully combined the professional and political aspects while Michael Polanyi arranged for a separate letter from Einstein.<sup>98</sup> Einstein's letter and Joliot Curie's telegram were duly sent to Stalin in 1938 and although they did not achieve the freedom of Alex, they were credited with saving his life.<sup>99</sup>

No news came from Alex until April 1940 when Eva received a telegram from Aunt Irma in Budapest. Weissberg was alive and free in German-occupied Krakow, begging for help to get out of Poland.<sup>100</sup> Weissberg, according to the stipulations of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, had been among the German nationals handed over by the NKVD to the Gestapo a month earlier. He escaped from the Lublin prison and ended up in the newly established Krakow ghetto.<sup>101</sup>

Weissberg's letters and postcards, mailed under the Gestapo's nose in the Krakow ghetto and miraculously delivered to New York, chronicle the indomitable spirit of this "human Jack-in-the-box," in Koestler's words, and Eva and Laura's efforts to save him from the seemingly inevitable end. Hoping to reach a neutral country (since the Allies no longer had consulates granting visas in German-occupied Poland), Weissberg tried to contact Niels Bohr who could bring him to Denmark. He also urged Eva to turn, one more time, to the physicists' network.<sup>102</sup> A last chance to save Alex would be, she wrote to his old colleagues (and her friends from the Berlin days), by now settled in the States, to get him out through Lisbon on a non-quota visa. Eva even managed to collect the

\$600 deposit needed.<sup>103</sup> Then she called on Einstein, reminding him of his intervention two years earlier. In order to acquire a non-quota visa, she asked him to write to a Mr. Charles Liebmann, president of the Refugee Economic Corporation, one of the organizations assisting refugees.<sup>104</sup>

Einstein produced the letter in a mere five days. Not surprisingly, he also avoided any reference to Weissberg's well-known Communist persuasion and long stay and in the Soviet Union. Instead, he emphasized his "three years" of imprisonment by the Germans (in fact it lasted only a few months) and made a strong case for him as a candidate for a non-quota emergency visa, not only as a potential university professor but also as a valuable expert who could contribute to the war effort.<sup>105</sup> Normally, a university professor applying for a non-quota visa had to have a position secured at an American institution and a two-year minimum teaching experience in Europe.<sup>106</sup> Weissberg did not meet these criteria.<sup>107</sup> But these were desperate times calling for desperate measures and Einstein's name may have carried enough weight to secure Weissberg a non-quota visa. In any case, it was too late. In September 1940, a HIAS (Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society) official Laura had previously contacted to make travel arrangements for Weissberg informed her that "We are in receipt of a letter from Warsaw advising us that at the present time the emigration of the above named [Weissberg] is impossible for the reason that the Italian border has been closed."<sup>108</sup> It was the contemporary equivalent of a death sentence and the last the Polanyis heard from Weissberg for the rest of the war.

Despite the failure of the rescue mission, the efforts to save Weissberg highlighted the strength of old-world networks. First among them was the community of physicists, the forerunner in the internationalization of academia. The reasons physics emerged as the model of international academic networks were complex and included the pioneering practice of international exchanges and collaboration from the 1920s.<sup>109</sup> Another Hungarian physicist, already mentioned as Michael Polanyi's friend and colleague in Berlin, the great Leo Szilard, described how his own professional and social connections in the world of physics laid the ground for the first organized rescue efforts in 1933.<sup>110</sup> To these ties of solidarity, grounded in professional interests and connections, the Polanyis' social circle during their Viennese and Berlin years added layers of friendship and a shared cultural and social experience.

Attesting to his amazing resilience, Weissberg survived the war in Poland, and resurfaced in Stockholm in 1946, eventually ending his life in France.<sup>111</sup> His escape added a fitting postscript to the already outstanding success of the Polanyis in emigration.

In an almost equally surprising development, Laura's younger son, Ottó, decided to return to Hungary after the war. The decision prompted a carefully worded warning from the Stricker relatives, picking up the pieces of their former life among the ruins of Budapest. "I'm surprised to hear that Ottó wants to come back. Needless to say we are very glad to have him back, only wondering as for the reasons when everyone else is trying to go the other way."<sup>112</sup>

Ottó had been and remained a Communist since his youthful commitment in 1934 Vienna. He participated in the war-time émigré activities in Chicago, and was elected as acting secretary of the Chicago section of the "Hungarian American Relief" in April 1945, as a representative of the "Hungarian American Democratic Council" whose president was László Moholy-Nagy, the eminent Bauhaus artist and professor at the University of Chicago.<sup>113</sup> As soon as the war drew to a close, émigré Hungarian organizations, united by war relief during the war, were quickly dissolving into an infight between the various political agendas. While conservatives as well as members of the pre-war democratic opposition turned pro-Communist in increasing numbers and many of the émigré politicians decided to return, Jászi remained entirely sceptical.<sup>114</sup> In an exchange with her old friend, Laura urged him to take a stand in Hungary one last time.<sup>115</sup> The democratic Left in Hungary, she argued, desperately needed his moral leadership. And the Soviet Union which, as she believed, continued to support a limited parliamentary democracy in Hungary, needed political leaders representing the ideals of the old progressive camp. Jászi, the creator of the idea of the "Switzerland of the East," a peaceful, democratic, multi-ethnic East-Central Europe, was the only one left to stop the Communist tide.<sup>116</sup> Jászi was not convinced. Laura's hopes for a democratic development in Hungary and the Soviets' need for his moral leadership were "pure fantasy," he replied.<sup>117</sup> "You cannot seriously think that the Soviet needs me. I am afraid they don't even need Károlyi who is much closer to them."<sup>118</sup> Jászi was soon proven right in his assessment. Although Soviet foreign policy and the Communist Party in Hungary insisted for another three years on their "sincere" desire to keep the framework of a parliamentary democracy in place, the

beginning of the Cold War was followed by unmistakable signs of an imminent Communist takeover.<sup>119</sup>

It was yet another indication that when it came to politics, Laura, in sharp contrast to her unerring instinct in practical matters, was driven more by wishful thinking than reality. She may have been also influenced by Ottó's plans to move back to Hungary and her maternal instinct to justify his decision. Ottó, anxious to participate in the rebuilding of a new, Communist Hungary, and prompted by the signs of increasing anti-Communism in the States, returned in 1948. By the 1950s, he rose to become a high-level functionary in the Hungarian scientific hierarchy, enjoying such limited — but by contemporary Hungarian standards, substantial — advantages as trips to the West and a relatively comfortable lifestyle. His decision to move back to Hungary also helped to maintain Laura's ties to the family's Hungarian members. She kept up correspondence with the relatives and sent a steady supply of much-needed food packages.<sup>120</sup> As soon as the worst years of the Cold War were over, she visited her son and her three grandchildren almost yearly.

Laura's continuing ties to Hungary resulted in her last feat: of rescuing a relative from mortal danger six years after the end of the war. Eszter Polanyi, Adolf's daughter survived the Holocaust and was living in Hungary when in 1951 the Communist regime introduced the internment of "former bourgeois elements" in makeshift camps in the countryside. In one last concentrated effort that had all the trademark elements of her old skills, Laura saved Eszter Polanyi from "a second deportation within seven years!"<sup>121</sup>

It was a case that showcased the multiple layers of the Polanyis' old loyalties and connections; it also highlighted the universality of methods, used by Laura and the family when it came to successfully fighting dictatorships, whether it was Stalin, Hitler or Rákosi. Rákosi, the Communist dictator of Hungary, had been a former deputy commissar and as such, Adolf's one-time superior, in the heady days of the Hungarian Republic of Councils in 1919. Adolf who was desperate to bring his daughter, lonely and ill, to Brazil, had already tried to contact Rákosi, "being fully convinced that my name would carry weight with him!"<sup>122</sup> When his efforts failed — for the simple reason that no one in Hungary was brave enough to deliver the letter — Laura wrote to Rákosi herself, reminding him of the old connections and achieving, in a matter of days, Eszter's release.<sup>123</sup>

Laura's regular visits to Europe highlighted the fact that her family, the Polanyis and Stickers, were now represented by a large contingent living in the United States and South America as well as spread over Europe from Hungary to Italy, Switzerland, France and England. Her visits and correspondence helped maintain the ties between them and keep up the family traditions. The collection of family documents that she preserved was only one of the signs that it was a role she consciously cultivated. Among her last notes, there were detailed lists of lesser-known Stricker ancestors and their academic and intellectual contributions.<sup>124</sup> After a 1957 visit to Italy where she met up with the daughter of a cousin, she reflected on the continuity of old connections with the "beautiful new ones that you represent."<sup>125</sup> She also sent them the family tree, for the sake of the grandchildren.<sup>126</sup> It was an act highly illustrative of the role that she earned and cherished to be the link between generations and the custodian of the family's history.<sup>127</sup>

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> This overview does not aspire to fulfil the need for a long-overdue survey of the scholarship on the refugee intellectuals. A relatively recent history of the New School for Social Research offers a critique of the American scholarship up to the mid-1990s. Claus-Dieter Krohn, *Intellectuals in Exile; Refugee Scholars and the New School for Social Research*, translated by Rita and Robert Kimber (Amherst, Mass.: The University of Mass. Press, 1993), 1-11.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice R. Davie, *Refugees in America: Report of the Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe* (New York, London: Harper and Brothers, 1947); Donald Peterson Kent, *The Refugee Intellectual: The Americanization of the Immigrants of 1933-1941* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953).

<sup>3</sup> Peter Gay, "Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider," in Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds., *The Intellectual Migration; Europe and America, 1930-1960* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), 12.

<sup>4</sup> Fleming and Bailyn, *The Intellectual Migration*; Robert Boyers, ed., *The Legacy of the German Refugee Intellectuals* (New York: Schocken, 1972), especially the essay of Henry Pachter, "On Being an Exile; An Old-Timer's Personal and Political Memoir"; Jarrell C. Jackman and Carla M. Borden, eds., *The Muses Flee Hitler; Cultural Transfer and Adaptation, 1930-1945* (Washington D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983). An example of a similar approach in a different genre is the insightful survey of Laura Fermi, *The Intellectual Migration from Europe, 1930-41* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), revised edition 1971.

<sup>5</sup> Roger Daniels, *Coming to America; A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990) and idem, "American Refugee Policy in Historical Perspective," in Jackman and Borden, *The Muses Flee Hitler*, 61-77; Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1970); Saul S. Friedman, *No Haven for the Oppressed: United States Policy Toward Jewish Refugees, 1938-1945* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973); David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941* (Amherst, Mass.: The University of Mass. Press, 1968, revised edition New York: Pantheon Books, 1985); and idem, *The Abandonment of the Jews; America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> An example of this sometimes arbitrary compartmentalization is Hartmut Lehmann and James J. Sheehan, eds., *An Interrupted Past; German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the U.S. after 1933* (Washington, D.C. German Historical Institute, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Pachter, in his essay "On Being an Exile," Boyers, ed., *The Legacy of the German Refugee Intellectuals*, already warned of the dangers of simplistic classification of this kind, citing the example of such subgroups as White Russians, Red Spaniards and Hungarian Communists.

<sup>8</sup> Andreas Lixl-Purcell, ed., *Women of Exile: German-Jewish Autobiographies since 1933* (New York, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988).

<sup>9</sup> Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants*, 111; Lee Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought; Hungarian Intellectuals in Germany and Austria, 1919-1933* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), Introduction.

<sup>10</sup> Studies dealing with the experience of intellectual refugee women are few and far between. The best is the collection of essays by Sibylle Quack, ed., *Between Sorrow and Strength; Women Refugees of the Nazi Period* (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 1995). It contains a strikingly relevant chapter on women refugee professionals in the U.S. Lixl-Purcell, *Women of Exile* and Mark M. Anderson, ed., *Hitler's Exiles: Personal Stories of the Flight from Nazi Germany to America* (New York: New Press, 1998) recycle some of the same, previously published material, and sample

from the refugee autobiographies commissioned by Harvard University and the Leo Baeck Institute during the war, without adding much new insight.

<sup>11</sup> Anderson, *Hitler's Exiles*, includes accounts by German woman physicians, fighting an uphill battle against the combined challenges of immigrant hardship and social conventions.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Gay's account of the reaction of his own family of secular, assimilated German Jews and their refusal "to be Jews by Nazi edict" is typical in that regard. Peter Gay, *My German Question: Growing Up in Nazi Berlin* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), 110.

<sup>13</sup> Susannah Lessard, "Profiles: The Present Moment," *New Yorker*, 13 April 1987: 49.

<sup>14</sup> Felix Schaffer, "Vorgartenstrasse 203: Extracts from a Memoir," in Kenneth McRobbie and Kari Polanyi Levitt (eds.), *Karl Polanyi in Vienna* (Montreal, New York, London: Black Rose Books, 2000), 333, met up with Egon Szécsi later in Buchenwald.

<sup>15</sup> Letters of Michael Striker to Laura Polanyi, New York, 27 April 1938, 2 May 1938, and 19 May 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>16</sup> Lederer, the husband of Laura's cousin, was a professor at the New School. Lazarsfeld, Hans Zeisel's friend and collaborator in Vienna, had stayed on in America when his Rockefeller scholarship expired in 1934. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir," in Fleming and Bailyn, *The Intellectual Migration*, 275-76.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Striker to Laura Polanyi, 10 May 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>18</sup> Fragment of letter from unknown to Michael Polanyi, Budapest, 22 June 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Polanyi to Eva Stricker, 28 June 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>20</sup> Laura Polanyi's biographical draft about Egon Szécsi, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>21</sup> Postcard of Laura Polanyi to Michael Polanyi, 30 August 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>22</sup> Postcard of Laura Polanyi to Eva Stricker, 28 August 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>23</sup> Postcard of Laura to Michael Polanyi, 10 August 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Polanyi to Laura, Manchester, 2 August 1938, in the poss. of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Barbara Stricker, Budapest, December 1997.

<sup>26</sup> Máriusz Rabinovszky to Eva Stricker, Budapest, 19 September 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel; Lili Radványi to Eva Stricker, Budapest, no date, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.



<sup>27</sup> In her interviews, Eva often refers to the mirror images of their imprisonment and their bond forged by the act of saving each other's life. Interview with Eva Zeisel, March 1994 and Lessard, "The Present Moment," 49-50.

<sup>28</sup> Mrs. Bruce to Eva Stricker, Kent, 12 September 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>29</sup> Neither Eva Zeisel nor Kari Polanyi-Levitt could recall who suggested the idea of contacting them. Interviews with Eva Zeisel, March 1994, March 1995, interview with Kari Polanyi-Levitt, Montreal, April 1998. The Quakers' heroic efforts in rescuing Jews and other persecuted from the Nazis have never been widely publicized. David S. Wyman consulted the archives of the American Friends Service Committee for his books, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968). Revised edition New York: Pantheon Books, 1985 and *The Abandonment of the Jews; America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). He specifically mentions that the Friends' representatives in Vienna and Berlin had good working relations with the American consuls there. Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 161.

<sup>30</sup> This seems to be supported by a letter of Eva to Laura in which she makes a coded but obvious reference to a *friend*, underlined in the original, an acquaintance of her uncle Karl, soon to call on Laura in Vienna. Eva Stricker to Laura Polanyi, London, no date, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>31</sup> In the same letter, Mrs. Bruce is referred to as "a *friend* too." *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Phyllis Richards to Eva Stricker, 12 September 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>33</sup> As a sign of gratitude, Eva named her first-born daughter Jean Richards — after Mrs. Bruce's daughter and Mrs. Richards. The families stayed in touch in later years. In 1943, Phyllis Richards wrote to Laura: "I have asked Hans and Eva to send me a snapshot of Jean, as I long to see what she is like. I hope you got the letter I wrote in answer to yours, in which you told me about her birth and christening. I was so touched to think she had been named after me..." Phyllis Richards to Laura Polanyi, no date, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>34</sup> Telegram of Laura Polanyi, 22 September 1938, original in German, in the possession of Eva Zeisel, my translation.

<sup>35</sup> Laura Polanyi to Andor Németh, London, 23 December 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, original in Hungarian, my translation.

<sup>37</sup> Telegram of Eva and Hans Zeisel to Laura Polanyi, 24 December 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel. A letter from Laura's niece that reached her in London also recalled, with nostalgia, the memory of old Christmases. Lili

Szondi to Laura Polanyi, Budapest, no date, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (the National Library of Hungary, hereafter OSzK) PC 212/205.

<sup>38</sup> Red Star Line, Passenger Traffic Manager to Laura Polanyi, 10 March 1939, in the possession of Eva Zeisel. Ella Bruce to Laura Polanyi, 25 March 1939; 15 June 1939, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>39</sup> Ella Bruce to Laura Polanyi, 25 March 1939, in the possession of Eva Zeisel; Susan Zuccotti, *The Italians and the Holocaust: Persecution, Rescue, and Survival* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 41.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Polanyi to Laura Polanyi, January 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>41</sup> In Hungary, decree no. IV/ 1939, the so-called "second Jewish law" further limited the number of Jews in the professions and employable by companies, and established racial criteria instead of the previous religious ones. Michael Polanyi's reaction spoke volumes: "Since according to Hungarian law I am a Jew, I expect to be fired soon." Michael Polanyi to Laura Polanyi, Manchester, 11 December 1938. Original in Hungarian, my translation. In the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Polanyi to Laura Polanyi, 16 February 1939; notes of Laura Polanyi on Egon Szécsi, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>43</sup> As the legendary Hungarian essayist Ignotus wrote to her, "I was really delighted to hear that you caught the last pre-war steamer..." Ignotus to Laura Polanyi, 17 February, 1940, OSzK PC 212/130. Getting out of Europe on the "last ship" or "last train" as well as "catch the last ship" were some of the most commonly used phrases in the émigré mythology. Eva Zeisel "caught one of the last trains out," in March 1938, according to Lessard, "The Present Moment," 49. Following the burning of the *Reichstag*, Leo Szilárd took the last train to Vienna that was not stopped and searched at the border. Leo Szilard, "Reminiscences," Fleming and Bailyn, *The Intellectual Migration*, 96-97.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Polanyi to Laura Polanyi, Manchester, 8 September 1939, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>45</sup> Irma Pollacsek to Laura Polanyi, no date (probably November 1938), OSzK PC 212/247.

<sup>46</sup> Photocopy in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>47</sup> Sándor Vince to Laura Polanyi, Chicago, 30 November 1939, OSzK PC 212/213. Original in Hungarian, my translation.

<sup>48</sup> Recha Jászi to Michael Polanyi, 26 September 1939. OSzK PC 212/134.

<sup>49</sup> "I can already see them as future American millionaires," she quipped. Irma Pollacsek to Laura Polanyi, 5 August 1939, OSzK PC 212/170.

<sup>50</sup> Anderson, *Hitler's Exiles*, 201.

<sup>51</sup> The friendship of the two women preceded World War I and Recha's marriage to Jászi.

<sup>52</sup> Odyssey was a reference frequently used by this most literate cohort of refugees. See Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees," in Anderson, *Hitler's Exiles*, 260.

<sup>53</sup> Recha Jászi to Laura Polanyi, Oberlin, 7 November 1939, OSzK PC 212/134.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, in Hungarian, my translation.

<sup>55</sup> Recha Jászi to Laura Polanyi, 7 November 1939, Oberlin, OSzK PC 212/134. Victor Weisskopf, Eva Zeisel's physicist friend from Vienna and Berlin, described this common experience in a darkly humorous vein: "[It was] a period when you were asked if you were expecting children, and you said, 'No, first we expect parents.' It was literally so. Of what little money we had, we had to pay the way of my mother, my brother, and my little sister coming over. They were facing death and they had to come over." Charles Weiner, "A New Site for the Seminar: The Refugees and American Physics in the Thirties," in Fleming and Bailyn, *The Intellectual Migration*, 222.

<sup>56</sup> Their correspondence in OSzK PC consists of mainly Recha's letters with copies of only a few of Laura's.

<sup>57</sup> Máriusz Rabinovszky to Laura Polanyi, Budapest, 2 February 1939; István Rudó to Michael Striker, Budapest, 1 December 1939, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>58</sup> Máriusz Rabinovszky to Laura Polanyi, 6 January 1939, OSzK PC 212/175; Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 170.

<sup>59</sup> Alexander (Sándor) Vince to Laura Polanyi, 30 November 1939, OSzK PC 212/213.

<sup>60</sup> Ralph E. Church to Alexander Vince, Washington, D.C., 20 February 1940, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>61</sup> According to the Declaration of Intention, in the possession of Eva Zeisel, he finally reached the U.S. on 18 August 1941.

<sup>62</sup> Karl Polanyi congratulated with these words his nephew. Karl Polanyi to Michael Striker, Washington D.C., 8 August 1941, OSzK PC 212/325. The itinerary of Sándor Stricker is in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>62/b</sup> Karl Polanyi to Laura Polanyi, 26 August 1941, 16 September, 1941, 12 November 1941, OSzK PC, 212/325; Ilona Duczynska Polanyi, "I first met Karl Polanyi in 1920," in *Karl Polanyi in Vienna; The Contemporary Significance of The Great Transformation*, ed. Kenneth McRobbie and Kari Polanyi Levitt (Montreal, New York, London: Black Rose Books, 2000), 321.

<sup>63</sup> Adolf Polanyi to Laura Polanyi, Rio de Janeiro, 16 February 1942, OSzK PC 212/172.

<sup>64</sup> Laura Polanyi to Karl Polanyi, 26 April 1944, Karl Polanyi Archives, Concordia University, Montreal (hereafter KPA), box 14.

<sup>65</sup> Sophie Szécsi to Laura Polanyi, October 1938, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>66</sup> Arthur Rényi to Laura Polanyi, Budapest, 25 February 1940, OSzK PC 212/178.

<sup>67</sup> Arthur Rényi to Laura Polanyi, Budapest, 10 March 1941, OSzK PC 212/178.

<sup>68</sup> Michael Polanyi to Ilona Duczynska, 30 July 1941, KPA, box 14.

<sup>69</sup> Recha Jászi commented: "What a blessing that Sofie's son is gone, what a relief for her! Or have the Nazis sent him off in their humanitarian fashion?" Recha Jászi to Laura Polanyi, Oberlin, Ohio, 21 March 1942, OSzK PC 212/134.

<sup>70</sup> Even if they could keep the fragile lines of communication open, it would have taken a miracle to get her out. "In October [1941] legal exit from Nazi territory ended. Escapes took place throughout the war, but for most victims of Nazi terror the closed borders formed an almost insuperable barrier." Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 205.

<sup>71</sup> Arthur Rényi to Laura Polanyi, Budapest, 31 August 1946, OSzK PC 212/178, my translation.

<sup>72</sup> Recha Jászi to Laura Polanyi, 14 February 1943, OSzK PC 212/134.

<sup>73</sup> László Radványi to Laura Polanyi, Le Vernet, 15 August 1940 and to Ottó Stricker on 18 November 1940, in the possession of Eva Zeisel. Radványi and Anna Seghers were eventually sent out of Marseilles by Varian Fry. Andy Marino, *A Quiet American: The Secret War of Varian Fry* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 259. They survived the war in Mexico.

<sup>74</sup> Recha Jászi to Laura Polanyi, 14 February 1943, OSzK PC 212/134.

<sup>75</sup> Adolf Polanyi to Laura Polanyi, Rio de Janeiro, 29 July 1941, OSzK PC 212/172.

<sup>76</sup> In an article, "Laura Polanyi (1882-1959); Narratives of a Life," *Polanyiana*, vol. 6, no. 2. (1997): 41-47, I related the story of Adolf's sons. The following account includes the information provided by Thomas Polanyi, in his reaction to that article, *Polanyiana*, vol. 8, nos. 1-2 (1999): 85-86.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Laura Polanyi to Lionello Venturi, 31 May 1941, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>80</sup> Laura Polanyi to Michael and Thomas Polanyi, 1 June 1941, Laura Polanyi to Lionello Venturi, 31 May 1941, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>81</sup> Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 195.

<sup>82</sup> Eric D. Frankel to Laura Polanyi, 30 June 1941, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>83</sup> Laura Polanyi to Michael and Thomas Polanyi, 1 June 1941, in the possession of Eva Zeisel, her emphasis. Original in Hungarian, my translation.

<sup>84</sup> Just as Laura was warned, on her arrival, by her friend Recha of anti-Semitism in the U.S.. "Things in America look easy over there [in Europe],"

Recha wrote. They don't know how antisemitic America already is." Recha Jászi to Laura Polanyi, Oberlin, 7 November 1939, OSzK PC 212/134.

<sup>85</sup> Michael Polanyi to Ilona Duczynska, 30 July 1941, KPA, box 14.

<sup>86</sup> A. M. Warren, State Department, Washington D. C., to Michael Striker, 18 December 1941, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>87</sup> Adolf Polanyi to Laura Polanyi, Rio de Janeiro, 29 July 1941, OSzK PC 212/172.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Adolf Polanyi to Laura Polanyi, Rio de Janeiro, 1 November 1941, OSzK PC 212/172.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Thomas Polanyi to Laura Polanyi, 31 December 1943, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>92</sup> In Arendt's parable, Mr. Cohn, the 150 percent German patriot, becomes an instant 150 percent patriot in every country he flees to for he simply cannot come to terms with simply being a Jew. Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees," Anderson, *Hitler's Exiles*, 253-262.

<sup>93</sup> Richard Plant, "Being Gay, Becoming Jewish," Anderson, *Hitler's Exiles*, 311.

<sup>94</sup> Letter of John H. Lathrop to Laura Polanyi, 28 December 1944, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Jean Richards, New York, March 1995.

<sup>96</sup> Lathrop to Laura Polanyi, 28 Dec. 1944. The minister thanked Laura for her gift, a book of Michael Polanyi and "for giving me some insight into the rare intellectual atmosphere of your family."

<sup>97</sup> Arthur Koestler, *The Invisible Writing, The Second Volume of an Autobiography: 1932-40* (New York: First Stein and Day Editions, 1984), 501-503.

<sup>98</sup> "It took two months to get this present letter," wrote Michael Polanyi to his niece on 30 May 1938. Michael Polanyi to Eva Zeisel, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>99</sup> "The joint protest of the French Nobel-laureates, supported by a simultaneous letter from Einstein to Stalin, was never acknowledged or answered, but seems nevertheless to have influenced Alex's fate. ... Once higher quarters recognised the significance of the case, his bare life at least was safe." Koestler, *The Invisible Writing*, 501.

<sup>100</sup> "My Dear Mause! Ilus Pikler received the following news that you should forward to Evi: 'Befreit, verständiget Weisskopf, Placzek, Ruhemann. Bezoget Einreise erlaubniss neutralen Landes' Alex Weissberg, Krakau, ulica Dietla 75/14." Telegram of Irma Pollacsek to Laura Polanyi, 11 April 1940, in Hungarian and German, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>101</sup> A young Polish-Jewish woman met and befriended Weissberg there. Halina Nelken, *And Yet, I Am Here* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Mass. Press, 1999).

<sup>102</sup> Alex Weissberg to Eva Zeisel, Krakow, 11 April 1940, 18 June 1940, 25 June 1940, 29 July 1940, Alex Weissberg to Arthur Rényi, 14 May 1940, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>103</sup> Eva Zeisel to Georg Placzek, New York, 21 May 1940, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>104</sup> Eva Zeisel to Albert Einstein, New York, 17 July 1940, in the possession of Eva Zeisel. At the beginning of her letter, she referred to her uncle, Michael Polanyi, who had already contacted Einstein in a separate letter.

<sup>105</sup> Albert Einstein to Mr. Charles Liebmann, Knollwood, Saranac Lake, N.Y., 22 July 1940, in the possession of Eva Zeisel. The text of Einstein's letter is reproduced in the appendix to this paper.

<sup>106</sup> See, among others, Daniels, *Coming to America*, 297-298; Weiner, "A New Site for the Seminar," in Fleming, Bailyn, *The Intellectual Migration*, 214.

<sup>107</sup> He may have had the required teaching experience; his curriculum vitae in Laura Polanyi's handwriting, photocopy in the possession of Eva Zeisel, listed his employment at the Charlottenburg (Berlin) *Technische Hochschule* as assistant between 1927 and 1930; however, there is no sign of a position waiting for him in the U.S.

<sup>108</sup> Isaac L. Asofsky, executive director of HIAS to Laura Polanyi, New York, 10 September 1940, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>109</sup> Weiner, "A New Site for the Seminar," 190-234, provides a thorough analysis of the internationalization of the field and the quick reaction of the scientific community to come to the aid of the refugees.

<sup>110</sup> Szilard, "Reminiscences," 91-151.

<sup>111</sup> Telegram of Alexander Weissberg to Eva Zeisel, Stockholm, 23 April 1946, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>112</sup> Gina Kernstok to Laura Polanyi, Budapest, 6 May 1946, OSZK PC 212/137.

<sup>113</sup> *Magyar Jövő – Hungarian Daily Journal*, 13 July 1944. Also, N.F. Dreisziger, "Émigré Artists and Wartime Politics: The Hungarian-American Council for Democracy, 1943-45," in *Hungarian Artists in the Americas*, ed. Oliver Botar (Budapest and Toronto: a special volume of the *Hungarian Studies Review*, 1994): 43-75; and Oliver Botar, ed., "László Moholy-Nagy and Hungarian-American Politics [documents]," *ibid.*, pp. 91-102.

<sup>114</sup> On Jászi's position, see György Litván, ed., "Egy barátság dokumentumai; Károlyi Mihály és Jászi Oszkár levelezéséből," in *Októberek üzenete* [The message of the Octobers] (Budapest: Osiris, 1996), 256-58. On Jászi see also the 1991 special vol. of the *Hungarian Studies Review: Oscar Jaszi: Visionary, Reformer, and Political Activist*, ed. N.F. Dreisziger with A. Ludanyi (with

articles by Péter Hanák, Attila Pók, Thomas Spira, György Litván, Thomas Szendrey and N.F. Dreisziger).

<sup>115</sup> Laura Polanyi to Oszkár Jászi, draft of letter, no date, [March 1945], in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Jászi to Laura Polanyi, no date [February-March 1945], in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> For a summary of Hungary's political development in the years immediately following World War II see László Kontler, *Millennium in Central Europe: A History of Hungary* (Budapest: Atlantisz, 1999), 389-407; see also, N.F. Dreisziger, ed., *Hungary in the Age of Total War, 1938-1948* (New York: East European Monographs/Columbia University Press, 1998), especially the papers of Susan Glanz and A. B. Göllner (pp. 169-210).

<sup>120</sup> Letters of Gina Kernstok to Laura Polanyi, OSzK PC 212/137.

<sup>121</sup> Laura Polanyi to Karl and Ilona Polanyi, 14 August 1951, KPA, box 14.

<sup>122</sup> Adolf Polanyi to Laura Polanyi, Sao Paolo, 1 November 1946, OSzK PC 212/176.

<sup>123</sup> In an uncharacteristic departure from her usual modesty, she reported her success to Karl and Ilona. Laura Polanyi to Karl and Ilona Polanyi, 14 August 1951, KPA, box 14.

<sup>124</sup> Notes on the Stricker ancestors, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

<sup>125</sup> Laura Polanyi to Eva Carocci, 25 September 1957, OSzK PC 212/82.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Michael Polanyi sent her some family documents addressed to "the custodian of the family's traditions." Michael Polanyi to Laura Polanyi, 11 August 1957, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.

## Appendix

Albert Einstein's letter to Charles Liebmann

22 July 1940

Dear Mr. Liebmann:

A very good friend of mine, Mr. Michael Polanyi, Professor at the University of Manchester, brings attention to the fate of a young physi-

cist, Mr. Alexander Weissberg. I have heard of him before and I should like to help him in this emergency situation. I understand that you are one of the few persons who is able to save him in this desperate situation.

Mr. Weissberg was recently released from a German concentration camp after three years of imprisonment with the notice that, that he would be brought back again, if he cannot obtain immediately an immigration visa for an oversea country. His numerous friends in this country are trying to obtain a non-quota visum for him (as University Professor) but this will not be possible in the short time he is given by the German authorities. Would it be possible that Mr. Weissberg gets some visa through your help in the meantime?

I understand that his friends here are able and willing to support him. But in addition to that he is a specialist in the field of refrigeration [low-temperature physics] technique and will prove to be an asset for any country which will accept him.

I should greatly appreciate if you could help me to save Mr. Weissberg. If there is such a possibility, please communicate with Mr. Rudolph Modley, Director of Pictorial Statistics in New York. He is an old friend of Mr. Weissberg and will be glad to provide you with all the necessary information.

Very sincerely yours,  
Professor Albert Einstein.

[Albert Einstein to Mr. Charles Liebmann, Knollwood, Saranac Lake, N.Y., 22 July 1940, in the possession of Eva Zeisel.]



PART II

**American Attitudes to Hungarians  
and Hungarian-American Politics:  
An Introduction**

N. F. Dreisziger

**There can be little doubt** that the twentieth century was a time of fairly intensive interaction between the United States and Hungary, especially as far as migration, re-migration, international travel, etc. were concerned. Another type of interaction, such as the transmission and interchange of ideas, has existed ever since the birth of the American Republic, or has even pre-dated it. It has been pointed out that the United States had an important impact on the evolution of Hungarian political ideas and public beliefs even before the 1848 Revolution in Hungary.<sup>1</sup> Such interaction intensified in the early 1850s during the visit of Louis Kossuth to the American Republic and the coming of thousands of refugees of the 1848–1849 Hungarian War of Independence — then by the participation of many of these ex-soldiers in the American Civil War — and, in the three-and-a-half decades before 1914, as the result of the arrival of over a million economic migrants from Hungary. By that time, informal — and, to a lesser extent — formal interstate ties had also started.<sup>2</sup>

American-Hungarian interstate relations, both informal and formal, were greatly influenced by the image American society had formed of Hungary — and also of Hungarian immigrants to the country. In the middle of the nineteenth century, this image was quite favourable, as it invoked a portrait of Hungarians as fighters for liberal reforms and national independence. Alas, at the turn of the century, this particular impression was increasingly replaced by the image of Hungary as a country dominated by an arch-conservative aristocracy opposed to reform and unfair to the national minorities<sup>3</sup> — and of the Hungarian newcomer in America as a poorly educated and uncouth individual. Unfortunately for Hungary and Hungarians, throughout the first half of the twentieth century, these images persisted. It was only in the aftermath of the 1956 anti-Soviet uprising in Hungary that the image of Hungary and Hungarians improved substantially in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

The first essay in this part of our volume deals with American attitudes to wartime Hungary — as well as to Hungarian Americans and their organizations. It presents a hitherto unknown document that was produced in Washington in 1943 and which describes these organizations and their relationship to Hungary's regime of the times. In doing so, it offers some new historical details and, at the same time, reveals much about wartime Washington's attitudes to Hungary and Hungarians. The second paper in this section reviews the works of the American scholar Lee Congdon who, according to the review's author, presents a peculiarly American image of Hungarian intellectuals forced into exile by the upheavals that had befallen Hungary from the time of the First World War to the aftermath of the Second. It should be added that, while the image presented by Professor Congdon might be more or less characteristically American, he is by no means a typical American academic — just as the reviewer of his work is not a typically Canadian one.<sup>5</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Geza Zavodszky, *American Effects on Hungarian Imagination and Political Thought* (Highland Lakes, N.J.: Atlantic Research and Publications; Columbia University Press, distributor, 1995). The author argues that political, economic and social developments in the United States had a profound impact on Hungarian political ideas and provided an impetus to demands for reforms.

<sup>2</sup> On this subject see Tibor Glant, "The War for Wilson's Ear: Austria-Hungary in Wartime American Propaganda," *Hungarian Studies Review*, 20, 1-2 (1993): 25-52, as well as his book, *Through the Prism of the Habsburg Monarchy: Hungary in American Diplomacy and Public Opinion during World War I* (Boulder, Co.: Social Science Monographs, Columbia U. P. distr., 1998).

<sup>3</sup> The deterioration of Hungary's reputation was even more marked in Great Britain. See Géza Jeszenszky, *Az elvesztett presztízs: Magyarország megítélésének megváltozása Nagy-Britanniában (1894-1918)* [The lost prestige: the transformation of Hungary's image in Great Britain] (Budapest: Magvető, 1986).

<sup>4</sup> The subject is touched on in several of the papers in Béla K. Király, B. Lotze and N. F. Dreisziger, eds., *The First War between Socialist States: The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and its Impact* (New York: Social Science Monographs—Brooklyn College Press, Columbia U. P., distr. 1984).

<sup>5</sup> Indeed, another Canadian scholar gave Congdon's book a different evaluation. See Judith Szapor, in *Left History*, 9, 1 (2003): 113-17. For still other, largely favourable reviews of *Seeing Red*, see István Deák, "Communism's Appeal Revisited," *East European Politics and Societies*, 16, 1 (2002): 314-22; and György Litván, "Fatal Attraction," *Hungarian Quarterly*, 44, 1 (2003): 117-25.

a documentary article

## **Keeping an Eye on Hungarians in Wartime America:**

### **The Spencer Taggart Memorandum (Part I)**

**N. F. Dreisziger ed.**

#### *Introduction*

Spying on foreign nationals, especially enemy aliens, is a practice that all nations involved in the wars of the twentieth century have followed. The United States was no exception, even though in the America of the Second World War period paranoia about potential "fifth columnists" was directed at such groups only as the Japanese Americans, and to a lesser extent, the German Americans.<sup>1</sup> Other "enemy alien" groups, and even Italians, were on the whole not treated with suspicion, and were not singled out for wholesale incarceration or severe loss of civic freedoms. In this respect Hungarian Americans, and even recent Hungarian arrivals from Europe, were particularly lucky. Even though their mother country had declared war on the United States soon after Pearl Harbor in December of 1941,<sup>2</sup> Washington did not respond with an American declaration of war until the summer of the following year. Furthermore, the treatment of Hungarian nationals living in the United States, not to mention naturalized Hungarian Americans, remained lenient throughout the war. Nevertheless, Hungarians — and, especially, émigré Hungarians and their organizations — would be watched by the agencies of the American government, both those that had existed even before the war and those that were created, precisely for this purpose, after America's involvement in the conflict.

America did possess an apparatus for observing the activities of alien nationals in its territory before the Second World War. The personnel of the European Section of the State Department was involved in such endeavour as were some individuals working for various branches of the

Justice Department. Their work was unsystematic, uncoordinated and underfunded. The matter did not have a high priority in a country that was isolationist in its foreign policies and, for the time being, cared little about the comings and goings of newcomers after they had arrived in the US. As war came to America, and as the conflict kept widening in Europe and in South East Asia, it became obvious to the Roosevelt administration that the existing apparatus of intelligence gathering was insufficient and that new agencies, in fact a centralised agency, had to be established in Washington to handle the collection and analysis of intelligence, the dissemination of propaganda, and related activities, both abroad and in the United States. The result was, after a painful process of bureaucratic experimentation, the establishment of the Office of Strategic Services or OSS, and within that agency, of the Foreign Nationalities Branch, which was tasked with keeping an eye on émigré groups, especially emigres from Axis countries, in the United States as well as throughout the Americas.<sup>3</sup>

The origins of the OSS go back to the summer of 1940 when, after the defeat of France by Hitler's *Wehrmacht*, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) dispatched an acquaintance of his, William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan, to England to study the British wartime intelligence establishment. A distinguished veteran of World War I and prominent New York lawyer, Donovan completed his mission in July of 1940, during the early phase of the Battle of Britain.

In the winter of 1940-41, Roosevelt sent Donovan on another fact-finding mission, this time to some of the countries of the Mediterranean. One of his tasks was to study Nazi propaganda and infiltration methods in this part of the world. On his return, he and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, began discussions with FDR. In these, Donovan emphasized the need to counter Nazi psychological warfare by effective measures. Later he made similar recommendations to a cabinet committee in which he stressed the need for a powerful agency to handle intelligence, counter-intelligence, and psychological warfare. The result was the establishment, in July of 1941, of the office of the Coordinator of [Strategic] Information, the COI. Donovan became its "Coordinator". COI was financed by secret funds available to the President, and Donovan reported directly to FDR.

Being an organization designed for wartime in a country that was officially still neutral, the COI got off to a slow start. It began with a small staff but kept acquiring additional branches, divisions within the

branches, and sections within the divisions. One branch that was established was the Research and Analysis Branch which became staffed by scholars recruited from the civilian world. Late in 1941 the establishment of a "Foreign Nationalities Branch" (FNB) was suggested, evidently by Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles. It was to recruit intelligence on — and from — foreign exiles and émigré groups in the United States. Jealousy between some State Department officials (who believed this work should belong to their Department) and the COI-NFB's successor, the OSS' NFB, would be a periodic problem throughout the war period.<sup>4</sup>

To help to plan and run the COI's Foreign Nationalities Branch, Donovan recruited John C. Wiley, a former diplomat with service in the Baltic countries. He in turn secured the services of DeWitt C. Poole, another American ex-diplomat. Together they, in consultation with the other agencies concerned, drafted the NFB's "charter," which was officially accepted by FDR at the end of 1941. Wiley became the Branch's director, while Poole became the actual supervisor of its activities. The two of them cultivated contacts with prominent exiles resident in the US, as well as maintained liaison with other government bureaus and agencies. Poole, in particular, kept in touch with Assistant Undersecretary of State Adolf Berle and regularly attended the meetings of an Interdepartmental Committee on Foreign Nationalities Problems.

The FNB became staffed by a team of experts in command of various foreign languages. They maintained contacts with certain exiles and monitored the foreign-language press in the United States. Some of these functions were undertaken by volunteers, mostly academics at American institutions of higher learning. There were also special consultants gathering specific types of information emanating from behind enemy lines. By March of 1942, information gathered and processed by the Branch began flowing to various other wartime agencies, as well as to the Department of State and Department of Justice. By the time of the dissolution of the COI in June of 1942, the Branch had 35 full-time employees and some 50 volunteers and it had produced reports on 30 nationality groups. In May of 1942 alone, its staff had conducted interviews with 344 persons.<sup>5</sup>

In July of 1942, FDR decided to replace the COI with another agency and Office of Strategic Services was born. By mid-December of the same year the new agency was operating under a "definitive charter" and with an increased budget. The availability of more money resulted in the creation of new branches and divisions, and a rapid expansion of the

staff. At the apex of the new organization stood the Director, below him the Assistant Director who supervised the work of several Deputy Directors. One of these was the Deputy Director of Intelligence under whom originally there were two branches, Research and Analysis and Foreign Nationalities (the FNB). Later, other branches were added.<sup>6</sup>

When the COI was reorganized as the OSS, suggestions were made for the attaching of the former's Foreign Nationalities Branch to the State Department. After some debate, it was decided that FNB personnel would have more freedom to engage in unorthodox means of obtaining intelligence as members of the OSS than as State Department personnel, and the Branch was assigned to the OSS.<sup>7</sup> Possible overlaps of functions with the State Department and other agencies in Washington, were soon resolved. The Branch was given a larger budget and DeWitt Poole became its director. By early 1943 the number of people employed full-time by the Branch had reached about fifty, with some hundred others working as part-time volunteers.<sup>8</sup>

The FNB' staff and volunteers used various open and covert means to collect information relating to the activities of European exile groups in the United States and elsewhere in the New World. Intelligence the FNB was not in position to obtain through its staff, such as information from postal intercepts, was acquired from other US and Allied agencies involved in surveillance. The information obtained was "analyzed and processed" and was subsequently disseminated throughout the appropriate departments and agencies in Washington — and, on occasion, even beyond: in London and Ottawa. Such dissemination most often took the form of "Reports," "Bulletins," and "Specials," in descending order of significance. The FNB also produced "Handbooks," fairly massive volumes which contained general information on immigrant and exile groups in the United States.<sup>9</sup>

Among the groups monitored by the FNB was the Hungarian-American. Of special interest to the Branch's staff were recent emigres from Hungary and especially, their organizations. The great many reports that FNB — and other organs of the US government — produced on Hungarian Americans, recent Hungarian arrivals, and their organizations, were supplemented by reports that had been submitted to the OSS and other agencies by Hungarian emigres anxious to make Washington officials familiar with their point of view. These official and unofficial documents have never been collected and published. A few, selected rather randomly, have been printed, in our journal throughout the 1990s.<sup>10</sup>

It is not the aim of this "documentary article" to publish all or even a substantial sampling of this documentation. This article will feature only one wartime American document that dealt with Hungarian-American organisations (and their leaders). In fact, it will reproduce only about half of this memorandum since printing all of its 110 pages cannot be done because of the limitations of space in our journal. The part reproduced deals with the American Hungarian Federation and the World Federation of Hungarians, and the relationship between the two. Those interested in the whole of this document can order it photocopied or microfilmed by the National Archives of the United States. If possible, a further instalment of the "Taggart Memorandum," Part II, dealing with the Movement for an Independent Hungary and including the document's appendices, will be published in the 2004 or 2005 volume of our journal.

This particular document did not, in fact, originate with the FNB of the OSS, but with wartime Washington's Justice Department. This fact underlines the circumstance that several agencies were involved in the gathering of intelligence in Washington during the war, and much work was done outside of the agency, the OSS, that was supposed to be the focal point of such activities. Indeed, the Justice Department, along with the Federal Bureau of Intelligence which it included (whose roots went back all the way to 1908), was particularly well equipped to spy on alien residents of the United States. In fact, the FBI regularly reported on the activities of Hungarian-American organizations and prominent Hungarian nationals in the country.<sup>11</sup>

Not much is known about the origins of this document or, as a matter of fact, its author. The letter that accompanied the memorandum when a copy of it was sent to the State Department is dated 16 December 1943, was signed by James R. Sharp, "Chief, Foreign Agents Registration Section, War Division." In this letter Taggart is identified as one of the analysts "on the staff of this Section." Sharp added that he believed the report was "very excellently done" and "was prepared for our assistance in connection with matters arising under the Foreign Agents Registration Act."<sup>12</sup> Taggart later joined the OSS's FNB. Many of the Branch's 1944 reports are addressed to Poole and "S. L. Taggart."<sup>13</sup>

In editing the Taggart Memorandum for the purposes of this volume some liberties were taken and a few unconventional practices were introduced. Since the memorandum has a two-tier system of footnoting (it uses both footnotes and endnotes), it was deemed unwise to introduce further notes, not even editorial notes. Instead, editorial expla-

nations are sometimes added in much smaller print. Original spellings (the omission of diacritical marks on Hungarian names, for example) are left as they existed in the original. Terms underlined (newspaper titles, etc.) in the original, however, have been italicized in this printed version. Text omitted by Taggart is indicated as "...", text I deleted is shown as "[...]" or "[....]" (three dots stand for a part of a sentence missing, four dots mean a whole sentence or more). Additional biographical and other data is rarely introduced in view of the fair amount of information provided by Taggart in his memorandum — and its notes. Those who wish further details on the individuals or events that are mentioned, can look for these in various scholarly publications on the subject.<sup>14</sup>

#### NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

Research grants that supported my work on this and related subjects included a Senior Fellowship in Canadian Ethnic Studies from Canada's Multiculturalism Directorate, at least two Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada grants, and several Arts Research Program (ARP) grants from Canada's Department of National Defence. For these I am grateful.

<sup>1</sup> For literature concerning the treatment of Japanese Americans during the war see Peter Irons, *Justice at War: The Story of the Japanese American Internment Cases* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); Page Smith, *Democracy on Trial: The Japanese American Evacuation and Relocation in World War II* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995); Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps* (New York, 1976); Robert Shaffer, "Opposition to Internment: Defending Japanese American Rights During World War II," *The Historian*, 61 (spring, 1999): 597-619; and Mikiso Hane, "Wartime Internment," *Journal of American History*, 77, 2 (Sept. 1990): 569-75. On German Americans, see Timothy J. Holian, *The German-Americans and World War II: An Ethnic Experience* (New York, etc.: Peter Lang, 1996); also, some information can be gleaned from several of the papers published in Hans L. Trefousse, ed., *Germany and America: Essays on Problems of International Relations and Immigration* (New York: Brooklyn College Press/Columbia University Press, 1980). For the general context of the wartime treatment of enemy aliens in the U.S. see John W. Jeffries, *Wartime America: The World War II Home Front* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996), especially chapter 6 (pp. 120-44);



Richard Polenberg, *America at War: The Home Front, 1914-1945* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968); as well as several other works listed in the bibliography of Jeffries' book (pp. 206f).

<sup>2</sup> On the subject of Hungary's declaration of war on the United States, which came just after the declaration of war on Hungary by the members of the British Commonwealth, see my papers "Hungary Enters the War, March-December, 1941," and "Was László Bárdossy a War Criminal?" in *Hungary in the Age of Total War, 1938-1948*, ed. N. F. Dreisziger (New York: East European Monographs/Columbia University Press, 1998), 61-69 and 311-20 respectively; also, in the same volume: Pál Pritz, "László Bárdossy Before the People's Tribunal, 1945," 287-310. See also the concluding parts of Tibor Frank's "Treaty Revision and doublespeak: Hungarian neutrality, 1939-1941," in *European Neutrals and Non-Belligerent during the Second World War*, ed. Neville Wylie (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002): 150-173;

<sup>3</sup> The paragraphs that follow are based mainly on Kermit Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS* (New York: Walker & Co., 1976), 63-67 and 198-202. For a brief overview see Barry M. Katz, *Foreign Intelligence: Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Services, 1942-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 1-4.

<sup>4</sup> Bradley F. Smith, *The Shadow Warriors: O.S.S. and the Origins of the C.I.A.* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), especially pp. 101-33, and 212-15 *in passim*.

<sup>5</sup> *War Report of the OSS*, 63-67.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-123 *in passim*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* Adolf Berle of the State Department explained at the time that his department's interest in foreign nationality groups "was limited primarily to following the operations of foreign government in exile attempting to operate on United States soil or free movements attempting to be governments." Memorandum, [Berle] to [Secretary of State Cordell Hull], 18 June 1942, Adolf Berle Papers (reel 4). The Berle Papers on microfilm are available in the Massey Library of the Royal Military College of Canada.

<sup>8</sup> The latter were scattered at some twenty American institutions of higher learning and were directed from Princeton University. The FNB's main branches were in New York and Washington, but by 1943 there were field representatives functioning in Pittsburgh and San Francisco. *War Report of the OSS*, pp. 198-199. Students of wartime Canada might be interested to know that, at about the same time, the NFB's Canadian equivalent, the Nationalities Branch of the Department of National War Services, had a full-time staff of three, two of whom were often absent because of chronic illness. On the origins of the NB see my paper, "The Rise of a Bureaucracy for Multiculturalism: The Origins of the Nationalities Branch, 1939-41," in *On Guard for Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, 1939-1945*, ed. Norman Hillmer, Bohdan Kordan, and Lubomyr

Luciuk (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War and the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, 1988), 1-29.

<sup>9</sup> *War Report of the OSS*, 199-201. As the war began to come to its conclusion in the spring and summer of 1945, the Branch's budget, staff and activities were gradually reduced. Soon after the war's end, its remaining staff was transferred to the State Department.

<sup>10</sup> See especially the following papers and documentary articles of mine: "Oscar Jaszi and the 'Hungarian Problem:' Activities and Writings during World War II," in the special volume (Vol. XVIII, Nos. 1-2): *Oscar Jaszi: Visionary, Reformer and Political Activist*, ed. N. F. Dreisziger and A. Ludanyi (Toronto: HSR, 1991): 59-91; and "Emigre Artists and Wartime Politics: The Hungarian-American Council for Democracy, 1943-45," in the special volume (Vol. XXI, Nos. 1-2): *Hungarian Artists in the Americas*, ed. Oliver Botar (Toronto: HSR, 1994): 43-75. The Jaszi memorandum printed in my 1991 documentary article was re-printed under the title "Oscar Jaszi's 'Hungarian Problem' (1944)," in *Hungary in the Age of Total War, 1938-1948*, ed. N. F. Dreisziger (New York: East European Monographs/Columbia University Press, 1998), 357-66.

<sup>11</sup> Copies of some of these reports, obtained from the FBI records in the National Archives of the United States, are in my possession. Still another wartime American agency that produced intelligence reports on émigré organizations in the United States, was the Office of Censorship. One document produced by this agency is reproduced in the appendix to my paper "Émigré Artists," cited above, see pp. 61-75.

<sup>12</sup> James R. Sharp to Cavendish Cannon of the State Department, 16 December 1943. Records of the U.S. Department of State, 864.01 B 11/73. National Archives of the United States, Washington, D.C. I am indebted to the staff of the National Archives for having the Spencer Taggart memorandum declassified, following my request, on 21 Sept. 1972.

<sup>13</sup> A Foreign Nationalities Branch memorandum, dated 15 June 1943, identifies him as being with the Special War Policies Unit, Department of Justice (OSS-FNB Records INT-9CZ-484). Many documents in the records of the FNB for 1944 and 1945 are directed to the attention of Taggart and/or DeWitt C. Poole. Evidently by then Taggart had joined the FNB. The records of the FNB are available on microfiche. One set of these is in the Massey Library of the Royal Military College of Canada. As a Mormon missionary, Taggart had lived in Czechoslovakia from 1931 to 1934, a fact which helps to account for what many readers of his document might consider his pro-Czech sympathies. His experiences as a missionary are told in his *Becoming a Missionary (1931-1934)*, manuscript, Merrill Library, Utah State University.

<sup>14</sup> Some of my own relevant publications are mentioned in the above notes. On the subject of the Movement for an Independent Hungary and its leader Tibor Eckhardt, see also my article "'Bridges to the West:' The Horthy Regime's

Reinsurance Policies in 1941," in *War and Society*, 7, 1 (May 1989): 1–23. A more recent work on this subject is Katalin Kádár Lynn, "Eckhardt Tibor és a Szabad Magyarországért Mozgalom [Tibor Eckhardt and the Movement for an Independent Hungary]," in *Tanulmányok a XIX–XX. századi történelemből* [Studies from the History of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries] (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 2001), 195–210; while the subject of the Hungarian-American left during the war is treated in Zoltán Fejős, "Harc a háború ellen és az új Magyarországért" [Struggle against the war and for the new Hungary], *Medvetánc* [Bear-dance] (Jan. 1988): 282–332. Further, readers will find information on all these and related subjects in Béla Várdy's book (reviewed in this volume): *Magyarok az Újvilágban: Az észak-amerikai magyarság rendhagyó története* [Hungarians in the New World: the irregular history of the Hungarians of North America] (Budapest: A Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága, 2000), 369–86; and, to a lesser extent, in Julianna Puskás's *Ties that Bind, Ties that Divide: One Hundred Years of Hungarian Experience in the United States*, transl. Zora Ludwig (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, Ellis Island series, 2000), chapter 24, "World War II" (pp. 249–56).

## **Appendix:**

# **The Spencer Taggart Memorandum**

### **PART I**

## **The American Hungarian Federation and the World Federation of Hungarians**

[The document starts here. It is stamped with the date: Dec. 8, 1943]

**ACTIVITIES OF HUNGARIAN NATIONALISTS**

**IN THE UNITED STATES:**

**AMERICAN HUNGARIAN FEDERATION**

**WORLD FEDERATION OF HUNGARIANS**

**MOVEMENT FOR INDEPENDENT HUNGARY**

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JRS:JMM/SLT:EKV  
146-45-10

MEMORANDUM

Re: Activities of Hungarian Nationalists in the United States:

American Hungarian Federation  
World Federation of Hungarians  
Movement for Independent Hungary

[Note: This memorandum is a survey of the activities of Hungarian nationalists in the United States since 1938, with specific emphasis upon the work of the American Hungarian Federation in cooperation with World Federation of Hungarians and the Movement for Independent Hungary. No attempt is made here to discuss any other phases of the work of the American Hungarian Federation such as the activities of the various fraternal and independent societies and religious organizations affiliated in it].

Introduction:  
The American Hungarian Community

It has been estimated that there are approximately six hundred thousand persons of Hungarian descent living in the United States. The influx of Hungarian immigration has taken place almost wholly since 1890. Stemming from peasant environment most of these immigrants settled in the mining and steel towns of West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Pennsylvania and later in the automobile centers of Michigan. The largest center of American Hungarians numbering approximately 50,000 is to be found in Cleveland. Other large centers are Pittsburgh, Detroit, New York, Toledo, Chicago, and Buffalo.

Within the Hungarian community in the United States, the American Hungarian Federation is the largest and most influential organization. In general, it has tended to rationalize the position of the Horthy Government and has followed a policy on the right. The most prominent

organizations on the left have been the American Federation of Democratic Hungarians (organized on September 20, 1941, a few days before the Movement for Independent Hungary) and the American Committee for a New Democratic Hungary headed by Professor Oscar Jaszi and Dr. Rustem Vambery respectively. Still farther left, consisting largely of communist elements, the newly organized Hungarian American Council for Democracy with Bela Lugosi as the president is the most prominent organization. These leftist organizations favor the political program of Count Michael Karolyi, who, as the leader of the Movement for a New Democratic Hungary with headquarters in London, advocates marked land reforms and "democratization" in post-war Hungary.

## I. The American Hungarian Federation

### (A) Identification

The American Hungarian Federation with national headquarters located 839 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., is a nation-wide organization with a membership of approximately ninety thousand. It is a roof organization composed of the three largest Hungarian fraternal societies in the United States: namely, the Verhovay Fraternal Insurance Association, the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, and the American Sick Benefit and Life Insurance Association. In addition, the Federation claims among its membership various Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish parishes as well as independent Hungarian organizations, societies and individuals.

Although chartered in 1907 the Federation was resuscitated in 1938, after a lapse in its activities dating from World War I. At first the Federation's declared aims consisted quite largely of an Americanization program designed to assist immigrants from Hungary in making adjustments to their new environment. In foreign policy the Federation has strongly favored the revision of the Treaty of Trianon, and many in the organization regarded with approval the revision effected as a concomitant of the conquest of Europe by Nazi Germany. Although the membership as a whole appears to be favorably disposed towards Admiral Horthy (who as head of a satellite state has cooperated with the Nazi regime), this Unit has no information showing that the Federation itself ever officially supported in any way the Hitler Government. In January 1941, the Federation declared itself to be a "spokesman of the silenced Hungar-



ian people" and organized the abortive Movement for Independent Hungary of which Tibor Eckhardt became the leader. Until Eckhardt's resignation in July, 1942, this movement occupied the full attention of the Federation. Since then the Federation has remained somewhat dormant awaiting possibly a more propitious moment to resume its political activities.

The national officers of the Federation are Dr. Bela Szappanyos, national president; Dr. Tibor Kerekes, executive secretary; and Emery Kiraly, Treasurer. The Board of Directors of which John Dezso is president is composed of Rev. Ferenc Ujlaky, Monsignor Elmer Eordogh, Kalman Revesz, Stephen Gobozy, Zoltan Gombos, Paul Nadanyi, Dr. Bela Mark, John Walko, Dr. Charles Vincze, and Ignatius Lengyel. When the American Hungarian Federation was first reorganized in 1938 it was decided that the presidents of the three fraternal societies affiliated in the Federation should each in turn serve one year as president of the Board. The Board is composed of representatives of the three leading fraternal organizations as well as of the various member religious denominations including the Jewish. Gombos and Nadanyi, editors of the *Szabadsag* and the *Amerikai Magyar Nepszava* respectively, represent the daily Hungarian-language press. An appointive member of the Board represents, in addition, the various Hungarian weeklies.

#### (B) Leaders

Since November, 1941, DR. SZAPPANYOS, a practicing physician in Detroit, has been the national president of the American Hungarian Federation. Dr. Szappanyos came to the United States shortly after World War I. Until his election as national president of the Federation he is said to have been little known in American Hungarian circles. He is believed to exert only nominal influence upon the affairs of the American Hungarian Federation.

DR. TIBOR KEREEKES, professor of history at Georgetown University, is the executive secretary of the American Hungarian Federation. He, too, was little known in American Hungarian circles before 1938. Dr. Kerekes came originally to the United States from Hungary in 1924. He has resided in Washington, D.C. since 1927. As the executive secretary, Tibor Kerekes has been able to exert considerable influence upon the policies of the Federation. He is said to be influenced greatly, if

not dominated, by Rev. George E. Borshy-Kerekes, field secretary of the Hungarian Reformed Federation, who is an ardent Hungarian nationalist.

JOSEPH DARAGO who recently resigned as head of the Verhovay Association was president of the Board of Directors from 1939 until 1941. In 1941 Darago became president of the American branch of the newly founded Movement for Independent Hungary. Although lacking in formal education, Darago is generally thought to be an able man and has been one of the most influential persons in the affairs of the Federation. Since Darago is about 70 years of age his recent resignation as president of the Verhovay has been generally interpreted to mean that he will no longer be active or effective in Hungarian affairs.

REV. UJLAKY, president of the Hungarian Reformed Federation and JOHN DEZSO, president of the American Sick Benefit and Life Insurance Association, have each in turn served as president of the Board of Directors. Rev. Ujlaky is reported to be a chauvinistic Hungarian nationalist who is anxious to return to Hungary after the war to claim a pension promised to him by the Hungarian Church through Rev. Stephen Szabo, his son-in-law now in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

MSGR. ELMER EORDOGH, a papal prelate who has lived in Toledo, Ohio about thirty years, has been one of the most influential persons in determining the policies of the American Hungarian Federation. He is an ardent Hungarian nationalist who favors cooperation with the House of Habsburgs as the proper solution to the problems of Hungary. Msgr. Eordogh is about seventy years of age and enjoys considerable prestige within Hungarian circles [...]

EMERY KIRALY is the treasurer of the American Hungarian Federation as well as of the Hungarian Reformed Federation and enjoys a good reputation for personal integrity. Kiraly is a staunch Hungarian nationalist who does not speak English although he has lived in the United States some twenty years. Unlike the other leaders of the Federation, he is not yet a citizen of the United States. A check with the Immigration and Naturalization Service showed that Kiraly had filed a petition for citizenship on March 22, 1943, in Washington, D.C., and that his case is still pending.

### (C) Organizational Structure

The present By-Laws of the American Hungarian Federation were discussed and accepted at a meeting held on November 16, 1938 (acting

in accordance with the directives of the conference held on November 4, 1938, at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania).\* At the meeting on November 16 the By-Laws were accepted by the following: Joseph Darago on behalf of the Verhovay Fraternal Insurance Association, Rev. Ferenc Ujlaky representing the Hungarian Reformed Federation, John Dezso on behalf of the American Sick Benefit and Life Insurance Association, Stephen Varga representing the Rakoczi Aid Association. Monsignor Elmer Eordogh for the Catholic congregations, Rev. Gabriel Dokus for the Protestant congregations, Martin Himler as the representative of the American Hungarian Press, and George Pikay on behalf of the United Hungarian Organizations in Detroit. It should be observed, however, that the Rakoczi Aid Association at its regular quadrennial convention in 1939 voted against membership in the Federation allegedly because of the expressed political aims of the latter.

According to the By-Laws, the Federation has the following administrative bodies: the convention, the directors, the auditing committee, and the executive committee including the executive secretary.

The By-Laws provide that the directors must convoke a regular convention of the Federation every three years. Extraordinary conventions may be called by the directors at any time, providing a notice is placed in the Hungarian-language newspapers at least thirty days prior to the opening session. The convention carries out the election of the national officers of the Federation by a simple majority vote or secret ballot if requested by at least twenty delegates.

The By-Laws state that the affairs of the Federation shall be carried out by the national directors, numbering two hundred in all. The directors are chosen for a term of three years and are empowered to elect

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\* The first meeting of the American Hungarian Federation was held in Cleveland, Ohio on February 27, 1906. The primary aim of the new Federation was "to organize the Hungarians in America to aid their native country not only morally but financially and with deeds if necessary". The Federation also sought to safeguard the rights of Hungarian immigrants and to preserve Hungarian culture among them [Appendix II the By-Laws issued November 25, 1909, validated by the executive committee at Cleveland, Ohio, January, 1910]. The supporters of the present American Hungarian Federation point to this action as proof of the Federation's continuous history since 1906, when, as a matter of fact, the first organization became dormant after World War I. At most it can only be considered the predecessor of the present American Hungarian Federation.

the treasurer of the Federation. Should the presidency become vacant the directors are authorized to elect a successor who will preside over the Federation until the next convention.

The By-Laws assign the direction of current affairs in the American Hungarian Federation to an executive committee. The executive committee is composed of the presidents of the nation-wide fraternal organizations affiliated in the Federation as well as of representatives of the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religious denominations, a representative of the Hungarian-language press, and the national president of the Federation. The office of president of the executive committee is filled by the presidents of the member nation-wide fraternal organizations each serving a term of one year. The executive secretary is employed by the executive committee to direct and oversee the activities of the central office of the Federation. The executive committee is empowered to decide what the aims and principles of the Federation shall be as well as the methods of carrying them out.

#### (1) The Federation as it Actually Functions

In actual practice the organization provided for in the By-Laws of the American Hungarian Federation has not been completely carried out. For example, the two hundred directors were never chosen. Their function as well as that of the executive committee has been performed by a board of directors consisting of the national president of the Federation, the president of the board, the executive secretary, and representatives of the various organizations affiliated in the Federation, usually numbering ten persons in all.

It is of interest to note, however, that at the meeting of the board of directors held in Washington, D.C., on October 19, 1943, it was decided that an executive committee should be formed to direct and oversee the activities of the Federation. This committee is composed of the national president (Dr. Szappanyos), the president of the board (John Dezso), and the executive secretary (Tibor Kerekes). The necessity for such an executive committee arose as a check upon the activities of the executive secretary who had been making many decisions on behalf of the Federation quite independently. At the same meeting, it was also proposed that an advisory board composed of one hundred and fifty members be created. The primary purpose of this body will be to strengthen the leadership of the Federation. The members of the advisory board will be

selected in this fashion: each director will submit a list of ten names from which the new executive committee will make the final selection.

## (2) Aims and Purposes

According to the By-Laws of 1938 the American Hungarian Federation seeks to acquaint the Hungarian immigrant with the concept of democracy and to help him understand the background and trends of his new environment. Among its aims the Federation also seeks to acquaint the second and succeeding generations of Americans of Hungarian descent with the history of Hungary and to bring them into active participation in American Hungarian organizations. The Federation also seeks to coordinate the common aims of the various Hungarian organizations in the United States. The Federation thus attempts to provide a connecting link in American Hungarian Life with the Hungarian homeland. The By-Laws also explicitly state that it is the aim of the Federation "to counteract all attempted discriminations and falsifications directed against the Hungarian nation and the historical truths of the Hungarian race. For this reason [it is the aim of the Federation] to keep the closest kind of cultural connection with the World Federation of Hungarians". As a means of accomplishing the above aims the By-Laws provide for the establishment of an information service to provide the press in Hungary with news items. In addition an English language publication by the Federation was projected. So far as is known neither of these projects was ever carried out.

## (D) Membership

The By-Laws of the American Hungarian Federation adopted in 1938 provide that all nation-wide and local Hungarian organizations, congregations of various religious denominations, grand committees, clubs and similar organizations are eligible for membership in the Federation if they will accept the Federation's aims as their own and undertake to pay into the treasury membership fees of at least one cent a month per member. Private individuals may possess one of the following classifications of membership: charter members — those who have contributed at least \$100 to the Federation, patrons — those who have given over a period of three years at least \$25 to the Federation, regular members — those who give at least \$1.00 annually to the Federation. American

Hungarian journalists, editors, and publishers are granted membership in the Federation without payment of any fee. The By-Laws also provide that only American citizens may be elected to official positions in the Federation. It should be noted, however, that this provision has not always been strictly adhered to since the present treasurer, Emery Kiraly, is not a citizen.

At the present time the most important organizations affiliated in the American Hungarian Federation are the Verhovay Fraternal Insurance Association, the Hungarian Reformed Federation, and the American Sick Benefit and Life Insurance Association. The Verhovay Association is the largest and most influential Hungarian fraternal organization in the United States. The total membership of the Verhovay in 1942 was 46,937 which included 33,880 adult members and 13,057 juvenile members.<sup>2</sup> In 1942 the total admitted assets of the Verhovay was approximately five million dollars. The Verhovay was founded in 1886 and at the present time maintains a home office in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The national officers (elected in September, 1943) are John Bencze, president; Kalman Revesz, secretary; John Szalancy, treasurer; and John Szabo, auditor.

The Hungarian Reformed Federation of America is the second largest nation-wide fraternal society affiliated in the American Hungarian Federation. As of December 31, 1942, the Reformed Federation had a total membership of 23,241 which included 15,513 adults and 7,728 juvenile members.<sup>3</sup> The admitted assets of the Hungarian Reformed Federation totalled in 1942 more than one and a half million dollars. The Hungarian Reformed Federation was founded in 1896 and until 1936 maintained headquarters at Toledo, Ohio. Since that date it has maintained a home office in Washington, D.C. The officers of the Hungarian Reformed Federation are Rev. Ferencz Ujlaky, president; Emery Kiraly, treasurer; Rev. Edmund Vasvary, auditor; and Rev. George E. Borshy-Kerekes, field secretary. Recently Stephen Molnar was retired after more than forty years of service as secretary of the Reformed Federation. Pending the next national convention his duties have been assumed by the other officers of the organization.

The American Sick Benefit and Life Insurance Association with headquarters at Bridgeport, Connecticut, is the third important fraternal society affiliated in the American Hungarian Federation. It has a combined membership of 14,408 which is broken down into 9,475 adult and 4,953 juvenile members.<sup>4</sup> The admitted assets of the Association total approximately two million dollars. The organization was founded in 1892

as the Hungarian Aid Association of America (Bridgeporti Szovetseg) and was know by that name until 1936. The national officers of the association are John Dezso, president; John Walko, secretary; Dezso Grega, treasurer.

The primary purpose of these three fraternal societies is life insurance protection to its members. The financial status of each of the three organizations is very sound and they are considered to be highly reliable. If the juvenile membership is included, the three fraternal combined have a total membership of approximately 85,000. If the membership of the various smaller organizations, and the congregations of the different religious denominations is added, the combined membership of the American Hungarian Federation would total over 90,000.

#### (E) Newspapers

The American Hungarian Federation has no official news organ, although the majority of Hungarian-language newspapers in the United States have served it as official channels of expression. The most important of these are the dailies *Amerikai Magyar Nepszava* and the *Szabad-sag* whose editors are Paul Nadanyi and Zoltan Gombos respectively. Both Nadanyi and Gombos are members of the Federation's board of directors. The official organs of the three fraternal societies affiliated in the Federation have also served as official news channels for the Federation's releases. In addition there is the Chain of Associated Hungarian Weeklies as well as the various independent Hungarian weeklies which have supported the Federation by publishing all of its official news releases.

The *Amerikai Magyar Nepszava* (380 Second Avenue, New York City) is the oldest and largest Hungarian-language newspaper in the United States. Founded in 1884 it has a circulation today of some 28,000 serving especially New York City and the Eastern States. The *Nepszava* has been a strong supporter of the present Administration in the prosecution of the war. Although critical at times of certain leaders of the American Hungarian Federation, it has consistently supported the Federation and the Movement for Independent Hungary. With reference to Hungary the *Nepszava* has tended to differentiate between the Hungarian people and the Horthy Government, which it has condemned as being responsible for Hungary's alignment with the Axis Powers. Yet it has not openly advocated displacement of the Horthy Regime in post-war Hungary.

The *Szabadsag* (1736 22nd St., Cleveland, Ohio) was first established in 1891 and has a circulation of approximately 26,000. At the present time the *Szabadsag* serves the area around Cleveland, Ohio (the largest Hungarian colony in the United States), and the Midwestern States. The *Szabadsag* may be characterized as being a democratic moderate nationalist daily. During the past few years it has been a consistent supporter of the Federation publishing all its releases and supporting Eckhardt in the Movement for Independent Hungary to the fullest extent.

The most important fraternal publications supporting the American Hungarian Federation are the *Verhovayak Lapja*, the official journal of the Verhovay Association, and the *Testveriseg*, the official organ of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America. These organs are respectively published in Detroit, Michigan, and in Washington, D.C. Both have been consistent supporters of the American Hungarian Federation and the Movement for Independent Hungary having published all their official releases and pronouncements.

The chain of Associated Hungarian Weeklies is composed of eight Hungarian-language newspapers (9 until the *Himler Marton Hetilapja* ceased publication about a month ago). The chief newspaper of this group is the *Magyar Banyaszlap*, the Hungarian Miners' Journal published in Detroit, Michigan. Until his retirement in September of this year Martin Himler was the editor and publisher of *Magyar Banyaszlap*, having served in that capacity for thirty years. With the exception of the local news items the contents of the newspapers belonging to the Associated Hungarian Weeklies are identical. These newspapers have been consistent supporters of the American Hungarian Federation from the beginning of its reorganization, although during the last year they have tended to criticize the "inactivity" of the Federation as well as certain of its leaders.

The independent Hungarian Weeklies supporting the American Hungarian Federation are for the most part relatively small local sheets. Published in New York City, the *Az Ember*, the most important of the independent Weeklies, has been critical of the American Hungarian Federation. On the whole it may be characterized as being liberal in policy. Edited by Ferenc Gondor, this publication serves primarily the intelligentsia within the Hungarian community. In the beginning *Az Ember* supported the American Hungarian Federation and the Movement for Independent Hungary, as well as Tibor Eckhardt. Gondor's more re-



cent support of the American Federation of Democratic Hungarians and the Movement of Count Karolyi has gradually led him to come out openly against the American Hungarian Federation. The publication is violently anti-Horthy and Editor Gondor considers himself to be a political exile from Hungary. Most of the independent Weeklies, however, have supported the Federation by publishing its official releases, usually without editorial comment.

## II. European Background of Hungarian Revisionism

### (A) Historical Sketch

Perhaps the most difficult problems facing Hungary after World War I were directly related to the international situation. The Peace Treaties had made it possible for the first time in several centuries for the small peoples living between western Europe and Eurasia to be their own masters — to a degree — in their own national states. However, Hungary, as one of the defeated powers, had lost more than half of her former territory and population, and much of her political prestige and economic strength. [...] In the field of international relations, the watchword of Hungarian foreign policy became "peaceful revisionism" (of the Treaty of Trianon), which really sought the restitution of the former provinces of the "thousand year old Kingdom of St. Stephen" rather than boundary rectifications. On the other hand, the chief preoccupation of the new states (such as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia) was to ensure that the territorial conditions established by the Peace Treaties become safe and enduring.

The refusal of Hungary to reconcile herself to her new restricted position and the outward thrust of her revisionism against Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia were probably the most important factors leading to the creation of the Little Entente. With their combined strength these three states hoped to create a functioning international system which would gradually become the rallying point for the other small nations of Eastern Europe. The adherence of Austria and Hungary to the Little Entente was constantly thought of as the most desirable additions.

Among the opponents of the Little Entente in Germany, efforts were made to keep Austria aloof from any combination that might preclude the possibility of a future "Anschluss". There was fear in Italy lest the Little Entente should become a political substitute for the late

Habsburg Empire. The most vehement opposition, however, came from Hungary. The position of Hungary was based on the belief that the Little Entente came to life primarily as an answer to the Hungarian demand for the restoration of the ancient Hungarian state and that it actually forged a ring around Hungary.

While the Western Powers supported the Little Entente, Hungary turned to Italy for friendship. In the spring of 1927, Premier Count Stephen Bethlen concluded the Italo-Hungarian Agreement of Friendship, which in the years following became the foundation of the constantly improving Italo-Hungarian cooperation. In 1928 Mussolini turned suddenly against France and the Little Entente by announcing that it was in the interest of Italy that the Treaty of Trianon be revised. Mussolini then began a policy of supporting Hungary as a tool to prevent Central Europe from consolidating itself as an independent factor. It was on this road that he was soon to meet and subsequently be eclipsed by his Berlin partner. Hungary gradually intensified her collaboration with Italy and later with Germany primarily because these powers offered the best hope for the restoration of her former provinces. This policy led Hungary into the Axis coalition on November 20, 1940, and into war with the United States on December 13, 1941.

With reference to internal affairs, mention is merely made here that following her defeat in World War I Hungary within one year witnessed three different upheavals: the radical revolution of October, 1918, led by Count Michael Karolyi; the communist revolution of March, 1919, under the leadership of Bela Kun; and the white counter-revolution of August, 1919, which led to the regency of Nicholas Horthy on March 1st of the next year. During his regency efforts have been made to assure national unity and security and to rebuild Hungary. The governments ruling under his regency have been criticized, in general, because of their failure to institute social and political reforms.

The world economic depression intensified Hungary's difficulties and made a radical revision imperative in State policy. Realizing the decline of his popularity, Premier Bethlen tendered his resignation. In the fall of 1932, Julius Goemboes became the prime minister. In internal affairs he proposed an extensive reform program. As regards foreign policy, he continued the Italian orientation and, at the same time, concluded the Pact of 1934 with Austria. Influenced by the new political successes of the Third Reich, Goemboes simultaneously favored friendship with Nazi Germany. During the premiership of Kalman Daranyi

(October, 1936 to May, 1938) the new "Arrow Cross" (Nyilas) parties, the Hungarian equivalent of the German National Socialist Party, gained strength. The German orientation received considerable impetus in March, 1938, when Austria was joined to Germany and Hungary became a direct neighbor of the Third Reich.

During the premiership of Bela Imredy (May, 1938 until February, 1939) the Munich Conference took place. Hungary regained, by virtue of the consequent Vienna award declared by Germany and Italy, territories north of the Trianon frontier totaling approximately 4,600 square miles with a population of more than one million. In February, 1939, Count Paul Teleki, a geographer of international reputation, became the prime minister of Hungary. Teleki believed the future of Europe was closely connected with the cooperation of its different regional units. He emphasized the importance of the natural unity of the Carpathian Basin and declared that it must be guided by the "idea of Saint Stephen", that is, for peace not for war, for co-operation and not for separation – under the leadership of Hungary.

Hungarians in general saw the justification of this principle in the return of the territories north of the Trianon frontier in 1938 as well as in the re-incorporation of Carpatho-Russia in 1939, when the puppet state of Slovakia was proclaimed. Hungarians everywhere saw the renewed assertion of this principle in the return of Northern Transylvania, including the Szekely-Magyar districts, when this area was re-incorporated through the Second Vienna Award on August 30, 1940.

Suffering from political and economic dislocation after World War I, Hungary followed a policy of emphasizing the "injustices" of the Peace Treaties and the need for their revision. Eventually she looked to the Axis Powers for aid and guidance. Thus Hungary "postponed" the solution of her pressing internal problems, while exerting increasing pressure for a change in her external relationships. One of the chief means for such pressure was — as indicated in the discussion below — planned to be the propaganda utilization of Hungarians abroad.

### (B) Propaganda Activities of the Hungarian Government

The propaganda activities of the Hungarian Government in the period between the World Wars emphasized primarily the "injustices" inflicted upon Hungary by the Peace Treaties and the need for their

revisions and naturally followed the lines of state policy. Several agencies and organizations arose in Hungary with this avowed purpose in mind. The Hungarian Revisionist League with Ferenc Herczeg\* as president was among the first. Dedicated to the revision of the Treaty of Trianon the Revisionist League was active especially in England and the United States. The Revisionist League cooperated with and probably subsidized various organizations claiming to speak for the "oppressed" minorities of Central Europe. With headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the Slovak Council, for example, supported the Revisionist League in its efforts to return Slovakia to Hungary.\*\* The Slovak Council was under the leadership of Professor Francis Jehlicka, former parliamentary representative of the Slovaks in Hungary and rector of the Komensky (Comenius) University in Bratislava (Pressburg).

The World Federation of Hungarians with headquarters in Budapest was one of the most important vehicles used by the Hungarian Government to conduct its propaganda activities abroad. This organization had its counterpart in the Hungarian National Federation which sought to perform within Hungary the same functions the World Federation carried out abroad. Information available to this Unit indicates that the World Federation was a semi-official agency of the Hungarian Government, under the control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In its propaganda activities among Hungarians abroad, the World Federation apparently received extensive support from the Hungarian Cable Service

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\* About eighty years of age, Herczeg is recognized as probably the outstanding person in Hungarian literature today.

\*\* The following quotation is illustrative of the propaganda line followed by the Slovak Council: "...the Slovaks are not strong enough to form an independent State of their own. It may truly be said of them, EXTRA HUNGARIAM NON EST VITA. While Czechs have managed in the past, and will manage in the future, to live without Slovakia, the Slovaks cannot live without the great Hungarian Plain. They must return to a life consecrated by the associations of centuries. Union with Hungary and a common frontier with Poland, another Catholic State with which Hungary was at peace for a thousand years, are of vital importance for the Slovak race" [Francis Jehlicka, *Father Hlinka's Struggle for Slovak Freedom*, London, 1938, p. 41].

(Magyar Tavirati Iroda), the Hungarian press, and the radio. [...]

Within the United States the propaganda activities of the Hungarian Government were obviously directed primarily towards Americans of Hungarian descent including those whose ancestral homelands were formerly a part of Hungary. Thus, the Americans of Slovak and Carpatho-Russian extraction were especially thought to be potential converts to the cause of Hungarian revisionism. The grandiose scale of official Hungarian propaganda is suggested by a document appearing to be a report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Budapest by the Hungarian Consuls in New York City and in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which contains a discussion of Hungarian propaganda activities in the United States. Although undated, the text clearly indicates that the document is at least as recent as 1940. The report specifically discusses the success of Hungarian propaganda activities among the Americans of Slovak and Carpatho-Russian origin mentioning several of the agents by name.

For example, the report states that Editor Gustav Kosik was paid "about a thousand dollars a month" for the support given by the *Slovak v Amerike*, a Slovak nationalist mouthpiece published in New York City now advocating the creation of an independent Slovak State within a Central European Federation after the war. The report points out that Kosik was willing to place his newspaper at the disposal of the Hungarian Government, converting it from a semi-weekly into a daily, but that it would be necessary to increase the subsidy "by 6,000 to 9,000 dollars a year".<sup>5</sup>

In discussing Hungarian propaganda activities among the Carpatho-Russians in the United States, the document also specifically mentioned the work of Bela Csomor, Dr. Alexis Gerovsky, and Rev. Jozsef Olasz, identifying them as "agents" of the Hungarian Government.

### III. The World Federation of Hungarians

The World Federation of Hungarians was a semi-official propaganda agency of the Hungarian Government set up primarily to bring about the restoration of the historic boundaries of pre-Trianon Hungary. In this chapter attention is focused mainly upon the efforts of the World Federation to win the support of American Hungarians for "peaceful revisionism" by working through the American Hungarian Federation. It will be shown in the discussion that certain prominent leaders of the

American Hungarian Federation participated in the organization of the World Federation and were a party to the plans to create an American Section within its framework. Pursuant to this objective they attended the Second World Congress of Hungarians held in Budapest in 1938 at which the World Federation was formally organized. The primary concern here is to determine the extent of their participation.

#### (A) Identification

The World Federation of Hungarians first began to take form in 1929, when the First World Congress of Hungarians was held in Budapest. At this congress not only members of the current Hungarian cabinet spoke but also representatives of the opposition such as Tibor Eckhardt.<sup>6</sup> The Second World Congress held in Budapest, August 16-19, 1938, signalized the formal organization of the World Federation. Prominent Hungarian officials who had been active in the organization from the very beginning included Baron Sigmund Perenyi (first president and founder of the World Federation), Ferenc Ripka (the Lord Mayor of Budapest), Dr. Charles Nagy (director and founder of the World Federation), Tibor Tors (a former vice-president of the House of Deputies and the present leader of the World Federation), and Stephen Anta (present minister of propaganda in Hungary).

In 1936 the *Pesti Naplo*, published in Budapest, printed an interview with Baron Perenyi about the coming Second World Congress of Hungarians. Recalling the successful work of the First World Congress in 1929, the article characterized the group as follows: "The headquarters of the World Federation of Hungarians has become the center of Hungarians from abroad. All Hungarians turn here with their trouble and their difficulties. This is the organization to which they open their soul... Hungarians abroad now know that this organization is the link which binds them to the homeland".<sup>7</sup>

#### (B) Relation to the Hungarian Government

The references below indicate that the World Federation of Hungarians was a semi-official agency of the Hungarian Government, directed from the Foreign Office. The aims of the World Federation were

synchronized with those of the Hungarian Government and many important governmental officials addressed its public sessions. The official "patron" of the Federation was [...] Regent Nicholas Horthy.

Martin Himler, well-known American Hungarian newspaper publisher, in a refutation of charges that the World Federation was a Nazi propaganda organization stated: "The World Federation of Overseas Hungarians was founded by Baron Perenyi and Dr. Charles Nagy, who were under the control of Section IX of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which deals with Hungarians living in foreign countries".<sup>8</sup>

The work of the First World Congress of Hungarians and the plans for the organization of the World Federation, including recommendations for support by all governmental institutions, were discussed in a mimeograph report of an interpellation in the Hungarian Parliament during Budgetary Hearings for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1937-1938. At the session on May 26, 1937, the problems pertaining to propaganda among Hungarians abroad were exhaustively reviewed, with special reference to Hungarians in the United States. Mentioning the special press service [...] and the radio broadcasts, the deputy stressed the importance of the coming World Congress of Hungarians and made the following recommendations:

First, that in the future we allot much larger sums for taking care of the social and cultural matters connected with Hungarians living overseas, than we have allotted up to the present:

Second, that the government should see to it that the work of the headquarters of the World Congress of Hungarians should receive the strongest kind of support from all institutions for its work, which cannot be overestimated;

Third, [a museum showing the life of Hungarians overseas]...

Fourth, [Ministry of Interior should show all possible courtesies to those coming to Hungary for various celebrations and congresses].<sup>9</sup>

In an article discussing the projected Second World Congress Joseph Nagy, an official of the World Federation, referred to the support extended by members of the Hungarian Foreign Service to the Federation.<sup>10</sup>

In November, 1941, a deputy in the Hungarian Parliament, representing the pro-Nazi Arrow Cross Party, demanded that certain steps be taken to remedy the inefficiency of propaganda among Hungarians abroad. Implying that the work of the World Federation was being done

for the Foreign Ministry, Dr. Laszlo Bardossy, Hungarian prime minister and foreign minister, stated:

"The proposals which Deputy Mesko has made are unusual since they concern the organization of new offices and sections in the government and come from a member of the Opposition. However, I am in the fortunate position of being unable to meet these demands, because the sections which the honorable Deputy wishes to have organized ARE ALREADY IN EXISTENCE. An INFORMATION SECTION is already functioning in the Foreign Ministry, which has the duty of turning out propaganda for overseas use.

"There has been much criticism about the effectiveness of this propaganda. I admit that this propaganda is not what it should be in our interest. This is possible because we do not have all we want at our command... " The honorable deputy also advises the organization of a third office which would keep a record of Hungarians living abroad. I am happy to say to the honorable Deputy that our Foreign Service has been entrusted with the duty of keeping an account of all Hungarians living in their territories. It is to this work that the World Federation of Hungarians is dedicated, although perhaps not on so large a scale as we would like. However, in general, we are informed about those brothers of ours who live overseas, and about whose fate we must know. In this way we can consider them as one with us, among those who belong to us spiritually.<sup>11</sup>

In connection with the information given in the paragraph above it is noteworthy that a leader of the Arrow Cross Party announced in the Hungarian Parliament the following day that his party was satisfied with the policies and information given by Prime Minister Bardossy.<sup>12</sup>

### (C) Propaganda Themes of the Second World Congress of Hungarians

The Second World Congress of Hungarians was held in Budapest on August 16-19, 1938. According to the official minutes of the Congress a total of 806 persons from abroad were in attendance. Of this number 283 were in attendance from the United States. The next largest delegation was from Germany numbering 201. Some fifty-six organizations in the United States including fraternal, church congregations and publications, and newspapers were reported to have been represented at the congress. Among these organizations were the Verhovay Fraternal



Insurance Association, the Hungarian Reformed Federation, and the American Sick Benefit and Life Insurance Association, the three fraternal organizations affiliated in the American Hungarian Federation.

Officers of the Congress from the United States included the following honorary presidents: Joseph Darago, John Dezso, Monsignor Elmer Eordogh, and Rev. Ferenc Ujlaky. The executive committee of the congress included twenty members from the United States among them Rev. George Borshy-Kerekes [...] All of these Americans have been associated with the American Hungarian Federation.

Probably the most significant development at the Second World Congress was the formal organization of the World Federation of Hungarians. On August 19 John Dezso, presiding as chairman, addressed Baron Perenyi, the president-elect of the World Federation as follows: "Your Excellency: The World Congress of Hungarians yesterday concluded its activities and Hungarians assembled from all over the world organized the World Federation of Hungarians. Your Excellency has been elected unanimously and enthusiastically to the Presidency of this World Federation."<sup>14</sup>

The undying love of all Hungarians for their "motherland" as a feature of the propaganda of the Second World Congress and of the World Federation was so fundamental that it was stressed on all formal occasions. [...] Thus, immediately after the formation of the World Federation, Baron Perenyi sent expressions of the Federation's views to officials of the Hungarian Government. To Regent Horthy he sent the following telegram; "His Serene Highness, Regent Nicholas Horthy de Nagybanya, [...]" "I report with homage and deepest respect that the World Federation of Hungarians has been organized, and with greatest enthusiasm is placing itself under the supreme patronage of Your Highness. Hungarians assembled from all over the world invincibly attached to the homeland, request God's abundant blessing upon the Providence - like work of your Highness,"<sup>15</sup>

The leaders of the World Federation of Hungarians justified the organization's existence by pointing out that those in whom they engendered love for the "motherland" would hasten to aid Hungary. Immediately upon accepting the office of President of the Federation, Baron Perenyi said: "It is our firm belief that we, hand in hand with our brothers abroad, can bring about Hungarian Unity. We can then serve our Hungarian homeland well, honestly, and profitably."<sup>16</sup>

At the World Congress itself and later in the publications of the Federation there were many appeals to aid the 'motherland'. At the congress, Perenyi pointed with pride to the fact that the leader of the Hungarians in Egypt, having begun a collection for, a "'Horthy aviation fund", had donated five hundred pounds sterling as the first donor. Perenyi remarked: "Since this amount was given by Hungarians from abroad, I thought it proper to announce it here as a beautiful example of willingness to sacrifice."<sup>17</sup>

In addition to stimulating the affection of Hungarian immigrants for their "motherland", the World Federation attempted to win approval of and support for the Horthy Regime. The various leaders of the Hungarians abroad who were present at the Second World Congress were presented to Regent Horthy in order to pay him their homage. He in turn graciously accepted the title of "patron" of the World Federation of Hungarians. Monsignor Elmer Eordogh, a prominent leader among American Hungarians led a delegation to the palace where he addressed Regent Horthy:

"Before we began our great work, we have come before the exalted presence of your Serene Highness to offer with deep homage, an expression of our loyalty and deepest attachment. To us Hungarians abroad the thought is very dear that the future of this mutilated and long suffering nation has been placed by God into your hands. The fact that our native country is today one of the world's most orderly countries is, and will remain, the everlasting merit of Your Serene Highness. [...] we beseech God that He keep and protect your Serene Highness not only for the sake of our native land, but for the benefit of Hungarians living abroad for long, long; time, so that you may see and glory together with us in the resurrection of our country."<sup>18</sup>

Representing the World Federation, Baron Perenyi expressed the attitude of the members towards the current government when he sent the following telegram: "To His Excellency, Vitez Bela Imredy, Prime Minister of Hungary: "Hungarians assembled from all over the world for the World Congress, before they return to their new homes, assure Your Excellency and their brethren in the homeland of their unshakeable loyalty," (Signed) baron Sigmund Perenyi."<sup>19</sup>

That these two themes—love of the motherland, and support of the Horthy Regime—would be articulated, was to be expected. Illustrative of

this action was the broadcast made in 1941 over short-wave radio by the Hungarian nationalist Ferenc Herezeg, famous publicist and writer, at the direct request of the World Federation:

"We are trying to reach the overseas Hungarians, so that we might explain to them the difficult situation in which Hungary finds herself. The fate of the nations of Europe has been intertwined because of their interests and feelings., We must explain this to those Hungarians who are still with us in spirit. We expressly call upon our nationals everywhere to counter-act the false propaganda being spread about our country by the Slavs and Roumanians, all directed against Hungary and Hungarian aims. We must not under-estimate the importance of the propaganda directed against us.... We must take part in this struggle by contributing our bit in other lands to righting the wrong impressions made against us by hostile propaganda."<sup>20</sup>

The speaker at the Second World Congress also stressed the need for revisionism. Bitter complaints were constantly voiced about the injustice done to Hungary by the Treaty of Trianon. After reviewing the millennial history of Hungary, Miklos Kozma, who later became the first governor of the area acquired from Czechoslovakia, addressed the delegates to the World Congress as follows:

"In Trianon the Hungarians underwent, an historical injustice, because of which not only Central Europe, but all Europe is now desperately ill. We have borne, and will continue to bears our fate with super-human courage and intelligence, because we believe in, the conscience of nations, and knowing that with the memory of this horrible injustice to us, they will not again want to envelop Europe in flames. In Trianon, from the standpoint of justice and morality, Hungarians were treated inhumanly; from the standpoint of political practicality, they were treated in a stupid manner. Not only Hungarians, but leading statesman of Europe are now ready to acknowledge this. There are still those, however, who wish to blacken Hungary's name. All Hungarians should know about Trianon, and about Hungary's progress since Trianon."<sup>21</sup>

Count Paul Teleki, then Minister of Education and Religion, addressed the delegates to the World Congress on behalf of the Royal

Hungarian Government and the Hungarian State. In his speech Count Teleki referred to the coming new order: "...In this expanded world, which has nevertheless become too small and is therefore trying to find new ways of life, we are hoping to build not only a new Europe but a new world everywhere where a Hungarian may be or lives. [...]"<sup>22</sup>

The address by Dr. Andor Lazar in the House of Deputies on August 17, concurrent with and made for the Second World Congress, stressed in less subdued terms the advent of the new order and the German orientation of Hungarian national politics:

"...The world war in the life of nations was a volcanic eruption. It destroyed empires, hurling them into strange spheres. The fog of new creation eddies in the heart of Europe... and the leaders wishing for world peace are anxiously and diligently seeking a new world picture, a way of adjustment on a firmer basis. "I must speak, of the great German Empire. This complete nation created with marvellous energy, under wise leadership, has succeeded in creating spiritual harmony among the German people uniting the people in service for the nation and in self confidence, able to fight for the respect and honor due them. To live in understanding and warm friendship with the German people, to respect the powerful neighbor, and be honored by it, to the natural road of Hungarian national politics, which is convinced that its loyalty and trust is completely reciprocated and its national strengthening is a matter of concern and interest to one which depends on it as a friend."<sup>23</sup>

The plea to understand the needs and policies of the motherland, which runs throughout the Proceedings of the World Congress was tied to the admonition that true Hungarians must explain these policies to the world. This was stressed in one of the most important speeches at the World Congress by Dr. Julius Kornis, the president of the House of Deputies:

"... what are your duties, my brothers, [...] toward your nation, your old homeland, your race? Without denying your new land which gives you bread, which assures you a living and civil rights Love and keep alive in your souls the picture of the homeland, work and sacrifice for it, work for the spiritual unity and self-respect of Hungarians all over the world. Be loyal guardians of the Hungarianness; enlighten those among your

nation with necessary tact about the past of your nation and its present tragic circumstances. Deny the slander of our enemies cherish the language, without it the spirit of national feeling is lost. [...] Our nation was crucified because it was misunderstood. The historical role of the sons of a nation living abroad is illustrated in the organized agitation of the Czechs and the sons of Ireland. Neither Ireland nor Czechoslovakia would be represented on Europe's maps had they not been organized in the United States. This is the role of Hungarians abroad. [...] You can figure out the best methods of seeing to it that they [the people of the United States] become acquainted with justice for Hungary that their consciences should be shocked enough to urge them to action. It is these things, not facts which move men to action."<sup>24</sup>

Thus, to summarize, the propaganda of the Second World Congress and the World Federation of Hungarians followed the familiar themes: (1) the love of all Hungarians for their "motherland"; (2) support for the Horthy regime; (3) the "injustices" of Trianon and the need for "peaceful revisionism"; (4) the advent of the new order; (5) and the responsibility of all Hungarians to explain these principles to the World.

#### (D) Activities

##### (1) Distribution of Printed Matter

Propaganda through the distribution of printed matter appears to have been the chief activity of the World Federation. Arrangements were made soon after the formation of the World Federation for it to use as a propaganda channel the *Magyarország*, the official organ of the Hungarian National Federation in Budapest. As a propaganda organization the Hungarian National Federation sought to perform within Hungary functions similar to those carried out by the World Federation on a world scale. It is a matter of interest that Baron Perenyi was president of both Federations.

Since the Second World Congress of Hungarians was an important landmark in the formation of the World Federation, the official Minutes of the Congress were printed in book form (containing 188 pages) and widely distributed. Within a few months after the congress some 6,000 copies of the Minutes had been sent abroad.<sup>25</sup>

It is quite probable that many other types of printed matter were distributed by the World Federation. In this connection, it is noteworthy that the Central Office of the World Congress of Hungarians, the predecessor of the World Federation, had distributed before 1938 large quantities of propaganda materials. These included some 32,000 copies of printed matter in addition to sending out approximately 20,000 letters, 4,000 copies of the official minutes of the First World Congress of Hungarians held in 1929, and 10,000 copies of the book — *Do You Know What the World Owes to Hungarians?* by Dr. Andor Kun, a prominent Hungarian journalist. Copies of the book by Dr. Kun were sent largely to children of Hungarian descent abroad. In addition some 19,000 copies of Hungarian books were sent to libraries in Hungarian centers abroad.<sup>26</sup>

The work of the World Federation continued even after the outbreak of the European war. In his annual report, President Perenyi stated that in 1941 one thousand books as well as a large number of phonograph records and large quantities of photographs depicting the re-occupation of certain Carpathian areas by Hungary were sent overseas.<sup>27</sup>

Another important aspect of the propaganda work of the World Federation was apparently carried out in cooperation with newspapers published outside of Hungary. In his report for 1939, Baron Perenyi said: "We are continually seeking methods to supply Hungarian newspapers abroad with proper news material."<sup>28</sup>

The cooperating agency with the newspapers abroad was the Hungarian Cable Service (*Magyar Távirati Iroda*), a semi-official news cable service. Deputy Gyula Somogyváry while addressing the Hungarian Parliament on May 26, 1937, commented: "The proper orientation of the American Hungarian Press has been spontaneously undertaken by the Hungarian Cable Service. This service, which... is unselfish and given free, is more and more effective and proceeding in ever widening circles, although it far surpasses any function of the Hungarian Cable Service in a strict sense."<sup>29</sup> [...]

Although an agency with a history covering several decades, the Hungarian Cable Service was not developed on an international scale until it was controlled by Miklos Kozma, a close associate of Baron Perenyi and the first governor of the areas acquired from Czechoslovakia. An anniversary article about the Cable Service noted that the MTI (*Magyar Távirati Iroda*) had a central editing office composed of eighty-seven members as well as 423 representatives throughout Hungary. The Cable

Service was reported, in addition, to have direct contacts with all semi-official news services of Europe and to have correspondents in all the largest cities abroad.<sup>31</sup> [...]

## (2) Sponsorship of Radio Programs

The dissemination of propaganda through radio programs is closely related to the distribution of printed material. It was announced at the Second World Congress in 1938 that overseas broadcasts were being carried on, and that the radio equipment was being perfected.<sup>33</sup> These broadcasts were widely advertised in most propaganda material sent out from Hungary.<sup>34</sup> Often, prominent nationalists were invited to speak over the World Federation hookup. The broadcasts followed the usual propaganda pattern discussed above in connection with proceedings of the Second World Congress. [...]

## (3) Encouragement of Study in and Travel to Hungary

Considerable effort was expended by the World Congress and later the World Federation in an effort to facilitate travel by Hungarians abroad to the "mother country" and to encourage youths of Hungarian descent to study in Hungary.<sup>36</sup> In his formal report to the Second World Congress of Hungarians President Perenyi made the following comment: "Year after year, we are making sacrifices when we try to bring home the most eminent of the second and third generations. We made such a trip possible for this World Congress. We keep in touch constantly with those Hungarians studying here, so that they can feel our loving interest."<sup>37</sup>

Rev. George Borshy Kerekes, a leading delegate from the United States, in addressing the delegates to the Second World Congress stressed what he regarded to be a matter of primary importance for Hungarians abroad: namely, how to keep the generations of Hungarian descent in America, "if possible in language but by all means in spirit and in thinking, Hungarians." [...]

According to the *Magyar Banyaszlap* (Detroit, Michigan, June, 25, 1942) scholarships were awarded to Hungarian youths by the World Federation. The World Federation had secured funds from some source apparently for this purpose. In his annual report on the work of the World Federation in 1941, Baron Perenyi announced that: "We have on hand a fund of 6209.90 Pengos to be used for rewarding deserving

young Hungarians overseas".<sup>39</sup>

#### (4) Maintenance of Contact with Hungarians Abroad

The compilation of information concerning Hungarians abroad and the maintenance of contact with these groups was another of the major tasks undertaken by the World Federation. Joseph Nagy, the managing director of the Central Office of the World Congress of Hungarians, summarized the work of the Congress in this direction before 1938:

"The permanent headquarters... has prepared accurate statistics on Hungarians abroad, based on authentic replies to questionnaires. Dispensing with bureaucratic methods, it has helped to solve thousands of individual problems of Hungarians living abroad. To the best of its ability, it aided students from foreign countries who are studying in Hungarian universities. It established a permanent connection with Hungarian organisations abroad, and with churches and the press. Its work was well received and supported by all [...]"<sup>40</sup>

As mentioned above, the Hungarian prime minister stated in parliament that this work had been entrusted to the World Federation and to the Foreign Service: "The honorable deputy also advised the organization of a third office which would keep a record of Hungarians living abroad. I am happy to say to the honorable deputy that our Foreign Service states has been entrusted with the duty of keeping an account of all Hungarians living in their territories. It is to this works that the World Federation of Hungarians is dedicated".<sup>41</sup>

Pursuant to its work of compiling information on Hungarians abroad World Federation compiled a map which indicated every city and region populated by Hungarians in South America. According to the *Reformatus Ujsag* (Cleveland, Ohio, March, 1938, p. 19) a similar project was under way for North America.

It appears that the World Federation became increasingly the central office for the coordination of all efforts in Hungary to influence Hungarians abroad. At the annual meeting of the World Federation in 1941, the Executive Director of the Federation announced "that it has been possible to establish the closest kind of cooperation between the religious and civic bodies in the homeland, which do work among the Hungarians living abroad."<sup>42</sup> At the same meeting, President Perenyi



reported: "we have quietly and continuously gone about our duties during the past year. In spite of tremendous difficulties, the ties we have had with our overseas groups have not been severed...." [....]<sup>43</sup>

(5) Fulfillment of Requests for Information

The Central Office of the World Federation apparently received a limited number of requests for information from Hungarians abroad. The bulk of these seem to have concerned such matters as the duplication of birth certificates. In 1941, some 1800 of such requests were reported to have been filled, most of them coming from the United States.<sup>43</sup>

(6) Recent Activities of the World Federation of Hungarians

Due to the paucity of information only brief reference can be made to the recent activities of the World Federation of Hungarians. According to the *Amerikai Magyar Nepszava*, the Budapest radio reported in March, 1943, that Tibor Tors had been elected president of the World Federation to succeed Baron Perenyi. Tors began his career as a journalist, and at the time of his election as the leader of the World Federation was the vice-president of the House of Deputies.<sup>45</sup>

*Harc*, a bitter critic of the American Hungarian Federation and its policies, reported on May 12, 1943, that Tors had made a speech at the annual celebration honoring the Hungarian national flag in which he made the following appeal: "Over the waves of the ether, the World Federation of Hungarians turns to Hungarians abroad week after week with words of admonition and supplication. It asks and admonishes them not to forget the homeland, those living here, and not to listen to those unfaithful stewards, who are not the true servants of the Hungarian cause...."

(E) Relation of the World Federation of Hungarians to the American Hungarian Federation

Considerable dispute has existed concerning the relationship of the American Hungarian Federation to the World Federation of Hungarians. Without digressing to discuss the different arguments, it should suffice to call attention here to what the American Hungarian Federation itself or its representatives have said about such connections.

(1) Influence of the Supporters of the World Federation in the Revival of the American Hungarian Federation

The formal reorganization of the American Hungarian Federation did not take place officially until November 16, 1938 (nearly three months after the Second World Congress), when the organization's Bylaws were accepted. [...] At this time the Federation was put on a sound financial basis by being assured of the regular monthly contribution of the three largest Hungarian fraternal associations in the United States.

A careful perusal of the sources, however, clearly indicates that the American Hungarian Federation was functioning as an organization prior to November 16, 1938. Already in 1937 plans were being made to resuscitate the Federation, now long defunct, in order that it could be represented at the coming Second World Congress of Hungarians. In his annual report, Rev. George Borshy-Kerekes stated that 1937 was a year of "historical significance". He reported that in July and August of that year he had been in Hungary where he took "significant steps" in making known the activities of the Hungarian Reformed Federation and where he "obtained favors and advantages through the kindness of important agencies for our pilgrimage group and for our young people." Rev. Borshy-Kerekes stated that upon his return from Hungary on September 3, 1937, he "immediately began to work out detailed plans and preliminary propaganda for our trip in 1938 through articles in the newspapers and lectures." Rev. Borshy-Kerekes pointed out that he had submitted his plans to the supreme council of the Hungarian Reformed Federation on September 28 and after approval had begun carrying them out.<sup>46</sup>

On November 3, 1937, the officials of the four Hungarian fraternal organizations held a conference in Washington, D. C., the first of its kind. The organizations represented were, the Verhovay Association, the Hungarian Reformed Federation, the American Sick Benefit and Life Insurance Association, and the Rakoczi Aid Association. At this conference it was decided to send delegates led by the presidents of the respective organizations to the Second World Congress of Hungarians. At the same meeting the officials of the four organizations worked out a plan "in the interests of a united social ideal and representation for Hungarians in America".<sup>47</sup>

On March 9, 1938, the same fraternal associations held a conference in Bridgeport, Connecticut. At this meeting Stephen Kundrath, one of the representatives of the Rakoczi Aid Association, reported that he

and his colleagues had been directed by their superiors to attend the present meeting and subsequent meetings on the condition that they may remain "completely free from politics". He stated that they would only be permitted to participate if no assistance were proffered to the Hungarian Government and if no demonstrations were made on its behalf by sending representatives to Budapest. Kundrath stipulated that the conference must discuss only matters of interest to the fraternal organizations.

Rev. Ujlaky of the Hungarian Reformed Federation replied that this was not a "question of politics but of building up Hungarian unity. It is not politics if we Hungarians in America in the interests of our own future build up our own Hungarian front and if through it we find ourselves working for the welfare of Hungarians all over the world. Hungarians in America will have a future only as long as we work in every conceivable manner with this Hungarian interest."

Joseph Darago pointed out that it was the "Rakoczis" who were "playing with politics" when they talked about the "Horthy or any other kind of Hungarian Government, and they in turn make their members conscious of their attitude." Darago declared that "the political idea must be separated from the national idea.... The homeland can have a government carrying on any kind of politics, but if we do not profess ourselves to be Hungarians we are denying ourselves."

After considerable deliberation the conferees, including the representatives of the Rakoczi Association, decided that "representing the Hungarians at the World Congress is not politics, but a national question in which we must take part in our own interests".<sup>48</sup>

According to Nadanyi the reorganization of the Federation took place at a meeting held in Detroit, Michigan, on May 30, 1938, during a "get together" of American Hungarian leaders who had been trying for a long time to form an association which could guide the activities and represent the interests of Americans of Hungarian extraction.<sup>49</sup> At this meeting a pamphlet — *What Does the American Hungarian Federation Want?* — was issued which further attested to the connections between the American Hungarian Federation and the World Federation. According to this pamphlet, the American Hungarian Federation stressed its desire to maintain "the closest possible cultural cooperation with the World Federation of Hungarians with headquarters in Budapest, which embraces all Hungarians in the world, in order to keep intact their heritage [as Hungarians] and to protect the historical truths concerning the Hungarian nation...."

The affiliation of the American Hungarian Federation with the World Federation is explicitly described in its By-Laws as adopted on November 16, 1938, which declare that the aim of the Federation is "to counteract all attempted discriminations and falsifications directed against the Hungarian nation and the historical truths of the Hungarian race. For this reason [it is the aim of the Federation] to keep the closest kind of cultural connection with the World Federation of Hungarians."

## (2) American Hungarian Federation Leaders' Participation in the Second World Congress of Hungarians

The official minutes reported that 283 persons from the United States attended the Second World Congress of Hungarians, representing some fifty-six organizations. Among those attended were many prominent leaders in the American Hungarian Federation. This was emphasized in the following commentary on the World Hungarian Congress, by an official organ of a member organization of the American Hungarian Federation.

"The World Federation of Hungarians, an organization en-folding our people on all five continents has come into being under the patronage of Admiral Nicholas Horthy, Regent of Hungary. The aims of the Federation are to form and foster cultural and economic ties between the people of the old country and their brethren abroad. Its officers are men who have previously proven their ability as officers of the world congress, and such representatives of the Hungarians from the United States and other countries as Jozsef Darago, Janos Dezso, Andor Dobay-Szekely, Msgr. Elmer Eordogh, Dr. Ferens Ujlaki, Bela Farkas and many others. [...] It is the aim off the Federation to protect the right[s] of Hungarians wherever they may be and to have the old country and her sons under foreign flags work together for their mutual benefit".<sup>50</sup>

Several resolutions were introduced at the Second World Congress in the name of the American Hungarian Federation. These resolutions are indicative of the support of the Congress and the cooperation extended to it by the Federation. For example, resolutions 9, 12, 40, and 41 propose that the second generation Hungarian in America who has graduated or who is attending college should have the opportunity of one

year of post-graduate work in a Hungarian university. Similar opportunities, according to these resolutions, should be accorded the students in Hungary. In this way an exchange system could be worked out which would make "a cultural link possible between the homeland and the Hungarians in the United States". The American Hungarian Federation also proposed that the World Federation make it possible for at least fifty worthy poor students from among American Hungarians to attend Hungarian universities. The funds in this case were to be provided by the Immigration Foundation of the Hungarian Government. The resolutions also contain proposals for the exchange of professors and teachers. The American Hungarian Federation requested the World Federation to send to the United States "a few Hungarian teachers who would teach our children" in summer schools.<sup>51</sup>

Some of the representatives of the American Hungarian Federation individually assured the delegates to the Second World Congress of their support. The address by Msgr. Eordogh at the closing session of the Congress is illustrative of this action. Msgr. Fordogh declared that "he would do "everything possible" in America in the interests of the World Federation so that it may spread "everywhere".<sup>62</sup>

A letter from Baron Sigmund Perenji to Joseph Darago, president of the Vorhovay Association, dated July 3, 1937, suggests that persons prominent in the affairs of the American Hungarian Federation also assisted with the plans for the Second World Congress. In his letter Peranyi expressed pleasure at the approaching visit to Hungary of the Verhovay delegation in 1937. Porenyi stated that he was convinced that "the participants will return to the United States strengthened in their Hungarian sympathies and will serve the great Hungarian cause...." [....].<sup>53</sup>

In connection with the plans for the participation of the American Hungarians at the Second World Congress, it is noteworthy that Dr. Ivan Nagy, ministerial secretary for, the World Hungarian Federation, came to the United States on a visit in January, 1938. Nagy at this time was believed to be the right-hand-man of Under Secretary Stephen Antal. [from 1935 to 1944 Antal occupied a series of cabinet posts in Hungary's government, including that of Minister of Propaganda (April 1942 to March 1944) - ed.] Nagy spent about three months in the United States during which time he visited twenty-four cities and delivered nineteen lectures. Although Nagy did nothing conspicuous during this period he did survey American Hungarian activities and one article about his trip was published in the domestic Hungarian-language press.<sup>64</sup>

Any attempt to appraise the participation of the American Hungarians in the Second World Congress must take cognizance of the portentous developments which provided the setting for that gathering. Plans were made to bring the propaganda work among the Hungarians abroad to a climax in the Second World Congress. This was also the year of the Austrian "Anschluss" and the Munich Agreement. As a result of these developments the pro-German orientation of the Hungarian Government was given considerable impetus. [...]

### (3) Plans for Revisionist Propaganda Among American Slovaks and Carpatho-Russians

Available information indicates that persons prominent as leaders in the American Hungarian Federation were sympathetic towards and supported the plans of the Hungarian Government to carry on revisionist propaganda among the American Slovaks and Carpatho-Russians. [...]

### (4) Forms of Support by the American Hungarian Federation

On September 12, 1942, *Magyar Jovo*, a bitter critic of the American Hungarian Federation, reported that Hungarian "fascist" propaganda was being smuggled into the United States and that it was being distributed by "unseen" hands. The same issue referred to the calendar published by the World Federation of Hungarians for 1942 which was distributed in the United States after Pearl Harbor. *Magyar Jovo* implied that this work was being done by the American Hungarian Federation at the direction of some "secret Horthyist center".

Baron Perenyi in his annual report for 1941 made the following reference to the publication of such a calendar. "We [the World Federation of Hungarians] put some of our prized photographs of Hungarian life overseas at the disposal of those who published a calendar of world events."<sup>59</sup> Copies of the calendar examined by this Section contained photographs of the World Congress of Hungarians and mementos of various objects of interest to patriotic Hungarians. It appeared to be a useful channel for the stimulation of the loyalty of overseas Hungarians to the "homeland".

This calendar was apparently the same publication referred to by *Magyar Jovo*. Available data clearly establish that such a calendar was

distributed in the United States after Pearl Harbor, but it is not certain that this was done under the auspices of the American Hungarian Federation.

Due to the lack of its own news organ, the World Federation had a regular section in the *Nagymagyarország*, published in Budapest by the Hungarian National Federation. Despite the fact that this newspaper was pro-Nazi in polioy, [...] copies of it were apparently distributed in the United States through the central office of the American Hungarian Federation. According to Tibor Kerekes, the costs for mailing this publication were assumed by the American Hungarian Federation in payment for the assistance it had received from the Word Federation in locating birth and marriage certificates for Hungarians in the United States.<sup>60</sup>

(5) Tibor Kerekes and the  
World Federation of Hungarians

It is noteworthy that the *Nagymagyarország* on August 1, 1940, published a letter dated July 9, 1940 from Tibor Kerekes, executive secretary and a moving spirit in the present American Hungarian Federation, to the officers of the World Federation of Hungarians. Referring to his work as a professor of modern European history at Georgetown University, Kerekes wrote: "The knowledge fills me with deep satisfaction that during the course of long years the young intelligent Americans number thousands who as my students have learned, and thus understood, the great historical injustices which were perpetrated on our dear homeland when the shameful Treaty of Trianon mutilated the body of thousand year old Hungary."

Calling attention to his position as executive secretary of the American Hungarian Federation, Kerekes stated:

"In this capacity it is my duty to organize the first, the second and third generations into a united large national organization so that Hungarian blood may have authority and influence in the new homeland. [...] It is with deep satisfaction that I report from here — from the new land to the homeland — that beginning with the President of the United States every statesman of consequence including congressmen, senators, and political leaders have had their attention called. through me, to the serious international position of mutilated Hungary, Without exception, I have received understanding and sympathetic replies from all. [...] [A]t the coming peace trials, where the

United States will have such an important role to play, American representatives will attend with knowledge concerning the Hungarian question. We will not permit a second Trianon because we believe in justice for Hungary: the resurrection of thousand year old Hungary." [...]

#### (F) Evaluations

On the basis of the information above, it can be concluded that certain leaders of the American Hungarian Federation were collaborating with Baron Perenyi and his subordinates in an attempt to create a world Hungarian organization which would embody an American section. Already in the summer of 1938, at the Second World Congress, cooperation pursuant to this objective had reached extensive proportions. Cooperation between these persons apparently continued unabated until the outbreak of the European war in 1939. When Hungary joined the Axis Coalition in 1940 [1941? – ed.] (following the suicide [in early April, 1941 – ed.] of Count Paul Teleki, the Hungarian Prime Minister), most American Hungarians began to question the wisdom of Horthy's pro-German policy, and many suggested that Hungary had in reality become a victim of Nazi Germany. This viewpoint, with the assertion that Regent Horthy had been able to prevent complete Axis dominance in Hungary, has been increasingly characteristic of the supporters of the American Hungarian Federation.

The plan to create an active overall world organization of Hungarians — in which the American Hungarian Federation would form an integral part — was never completely carried out. This was probably due to the following factors: first, the failure of the American representatives to arrive at a complete understanding with their Hungarian-compatriots at the Second World Congress; secondly, the inability of the World Federation leaders to put their plans into operation before the beginning of the European war; thirdly, the difficulty of securing active support from the American Hungarians for the motherland (Hungary) when their present homeland (America) was itself going through increasing dangers and demanding ever greater sacrifices from its citizens.

Fragmentary letters and articles indicate that complete harmony of purpose did not prevail at the Second World Congress. It appears that the American delegates resented the somewhat dictatorial attitude of the Hungarian officials. They, in turn, were apparently disturbed by the independence of action demonstrated by some of the Americans.



An article by Martin Himler, an American Hungarian publisher, argued that the World Federation was not a propaganda organization serving the Axis, but does admit: "it is true that Stephen Antal [pro-Nazi propaganda minister] did everything in his power to take the World Federation of Hungarians from the jurisdiction of Section II of the Foreign Ministry in an effort to transfer it to the Propaganda Section which he had organized in the Office of the Prime Minister".<sup>63</sup>

In the same article, Martin Himler, who attended the Second World Congress as a visitor (according to his own statement he sat in the balcony), claims that he was approached by Antal's subordinates for the purpose of "buying the cooperation" of the important American Hungarian newspapers by granting subsidies. Himler states that he, of course, rebuffed these advances.

That all was not in complete accord was further indicated by a letter from Darago (later a leader within the American Hungarian Federation) to Dr. Charles Nagy, the executive secretary of the World Federation of Hungarians, dated October 3, 1938. Herein Darago emphasized that unless it was possible to organize the American Section of the World Federation so that "definite economic advantages" would be forthcoming, there was a possibility that "the organized American Federation will make itself independent of the ideas of the World Federation, and will start on the path which it considers most advantageous for itself".<sup>64</sup>

Since the plan for the creation of an overall world organization of Hungarians was still in the formative stage it is probably true that most of the American Hungarians attending the Second World Congress did not know what sort of meeting they were attending. With the possible exception of certain American Hungarians such as Darago, Rev. Borshy-Kerekes, Msgr. Eardogh, and others, it is a fair assumption that most of the American delegates regarded their attendance at the Second World Congress primarily as a visit to the "old homeland" rather than as actual participation in the creation of a world organization to propagandize in the interests of Hungarian foreign policy.

Finally, the most important factor which prevented the complete collaboration of the American Hungarian Federation with the World Federation of Hungarians was the rapid tempo of world events. The outbreak of the European war in 1939 and the avowed sympathies of the United States for the cause of the Democracies as opposed to that of the Axis coalition, of which Hungary soon became a part, definitely precluded the possibility of consolidating the World Federation of Hunga-

rians into a closely knit organization which could count upon the unre-served support and collaboration of Americans of Hungarian descent.

Nevertheless, it appears that a small group of American Hungarians — such as Rev. Borshy-Kerekes, Msgr. Eordogh, and Joseph Darago — were earnestly cooperating with the home office of the World Federation of Hungarians in support of the policy of the Hungarian Government in its efforts to regain the lost territories and prestige of the Kingdom of St. Stephen.

[Taggart's] FOOTNOTES [to the memorandum]

1. F. B. I. Report. John P. Buscher. dated 5/5/43 at Cleveland Ohio. Re: Stephen Szabo, p. 3, Records File No. 149-1114.
2. *The Fraternal Compend Digest*, 1942 edition, p. 257.
3. *Testveriseg*, September, 1943, p. 8.
4. *The Fraternal Compend Digest*, 1942 edition, p. 256.
5. F. B. I. Report, J. E. Jones, dated on July 6, 1942, at Newark, N.J., Re: Slovak League of America, pp. 23-24, 26. Records File No. 100-4675; a more recent F. B. I. Report by J. Raymond Ylitalo, dated on September 1, 1943, at New York City, Re: *Slovak v Amerike*, Records File No. 145-7-1121, failed to verify that Gustav Kosik was ever subsidized by the Hungarian Government. Confidential Informant, T-4 , reliability unknown, advised that a certain Rev. Biskurvanyi of Guttenberg, N. J., frequently visited the Hungarian Consulate in New York City. According to an F. B. I. Report by L. Frederick Ratterman, dated on July 19, 1943, at Newark, N. J., Re: Hungarian Propaganda among Ukrainian and Karpatho-Russian Communities, an informant has advised that a priest in Guttenberg acted as the intermediary between the Hungarian Government and Kosik in the payment of \$1,000 monthly; also. Kosik admitted to the informant having received such money.
6. Dr. Sandor Krisztics, ed., *A Magyarok Vilagkongresszusanak Targyalasai* (Minutes of the World Congress of Hungarians), Budapest, August 22-24, 1929; published by the Central Office of the Hungarian World Congress, 1930, Budapest.
7. *Pesti Naplo*, September 18, 1938.
8. Martin Himler, "Is the Hungarian World Federation a Nazi Organization?", *Magyar Banyaszlap*, June 25, 1942, p. 1.
9. Information taken from special reprints of this speech, printed in Budapest at the expense of Parliamentary Deputy Gyula Somogyvary, who made the recommendations.

10. Joseph Nagy, "Before the Second World Congress of Hungarians". *Lathatar* (a magazine devoted to "the life of minorities and Hungarians abroad"), May, 1938.
11. *Az Ember*, New York City, July 4, 1942.
12. *Peter Lloyd*, Budapest, November 22, 1941.
13. *A Magyarok II. Világkongresszanak Targyalásai* (Minutes of the Second World Congress of Hungarians), Budapest, August 16-19, 1938, pp. 167, 171-172; hereafter cited as Minutes Second World Congress.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 147,
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
20. *Magyarok Vasarnapja*, Cleveland, Ohio, April, 24. 1941.
21. Minutes Second World Congress, p. 71.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
25. Report by Baron Perenyi, "Meeting of the World Federation", *Reformatus Ujsag*, Washington, D. C., July, 1939, p. 13.
26. Official Report of the Work of the World Congress of Hungarians since its Founding by President Perenyi. Minutes Second World Congress, pp. 85-88.
27. *Magyar Hirlap*, New Brunswick, N. J., May 16, 1941, p. 2.
28. "Meeting of the World Federation", *Reformatus Ujsag*, Washington, D. C., July, 1939, p. 13.
29. Mimeographed report of an Interpellation in the Hungarian Parliament during the course of Budgetary Hearings of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 1937-1938.
30. Minutes Second World Congress, p. 148.
31. *Magyar Hirlap*, New Brunswick, N. J. , May 9, 1941. p. 2.
32. *Verhovayak Lapja*, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 29, 1941, p. 3.
33. Minutes Second World Congress, p. 86.
34. *The Hungarian Quarterly*, Budapest. Volume 7, No. 1, Spring, 1941, p. 22; Annual report of President Perenyi, *Magyar Hirlap*, New Brunswick, N. J., May 16, 1941, p. 2.
35. *Nagymagyarország*, June 1, 1941, p. 3.
36. *Lathatar*, Budapest, May, 1938, p. 3.
37. Minutes Second World Congress, p. 86.
38. Minutes Second World Congress, p. 102.
39. *Magyar Hirlap*, New Brunswick, N. J., May 16, 1941. p. 2.

40. *Lathatar*, organ for overseas Hungarians, Budapest, May, 1938, p. 24.
41. *Az Ember*, New York City, July 4, 1942, p. 2.
42. *Magyar Nemzet*, Budapest, May 9, 1941, p. 1.,
43. *Magyar Hirlap*, New Brunswick, N. J. May 16, 1941, p. 2.
44. Ibid.
45. *Amerikai Magyar Nepszava*, March 19, 1943, p. 7
46. *Reformatus Ujsag*, April, 1938, p. 18.
47. *Reformatus Ujsag*, November, 1937, p. 7.
48. *Reformatus Ujsag*, April, 1938, p. 52.
49. Paul Nadanyi, *The Free Hungary Movement*, p. 11.
50. *Reformatus Ujsag*, Washington, D. C., October, 1938, p. 12.
51. Minutes Second World Congress, pp. 45-46, 53-54.
52. Minutes Second World Congress, p. 147.
53. Photostatic copy of a letter in the files of this Section from Baron Sigmund Perenyi to Joseph Darago, dated July 3, 1937,
54. See *Amerikai Magyar Nepszava*, January 27, 1939.
55. *Voelkischer Beobachter*, August 16, 1933, p. 2, with Antal's portrait.
56. Minutes Second World Congress, p. 147.
57. Photostatic copy of a letter in the files of this Section to Joseph Darago from Andrew Fay-Fisher, September 17, 1938,
58. Facsimile of an undated letter from Joseph Darago to Fay-Fisher, published in *Magyar Jovo*. July 20, 1943; photostatic copy of letter in the files of this Section from Joseph Darago to Fay-Fisher dated November 7, 1938.
59. *Magyar Nemzet*, Budapest, May 9, 1941.
60. Memorandum of conversation on December 13, 1940, between Adolf A. Berle, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State, and Dr. Tibor Kerekes. A telephone conversation by this Section with Tibor Kerekes on October 23, 1940, confirmed that the American Hungarian Federation had just received [300] copies of the *Nagymagyarország* for distribution.
61. Intercept, BER 5734/43, from Andras Tamas to Tibor Kerekes, dated February 9, 1943; Intercept, BER. 9863/43, from T. Kerekes to A. Tamas, dated March 24, 1943.
62. Secret interview with Szenes by the Office of Strategic Services on the boat before disembarkation, July 7, 1942,
63. "Is the World Federation of Hungarians a Nazi Organization?" by Martin Himler, *Magyar Banyaszlap*, May 25, 1942.
64. Photostatic copy of a letter in the files of this Section from Joseph Darago to Charles Nagy, dated October 3, 1938.

[....]

[end of Taggart's notes to his memorandum, part 1]

a review article

## **With an Ideology of a Different Colour: An American View of Hungarian Intellectuals in Exile**

**Kenneth McRobbie**

Lee Congdon, *Seeing Red. Hungarian Intellectuals in Exile and the Challenge of Communism*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001. 223pp. Cloth. ISBN: 0-87580-283-4. US \$40.00.

Lee Congdon has produced two valuable books on the careers and writings of Hungarian intellectuals in emigration between the world wars and after the 1956 Revolution. The first, *Exile and Social Thought. Hungarian Intellectuals in Germany and Austria 1919–1933* (Princeton University Press, 1991), appeared at a time when the extraordinary interest in the culture of East Central Europe, that had largely been stimulated by the Cold War, was beginning to wane. Nevertheless, with its extensive documentation on writers and summaries of their works, it helped to fill a gap for the Western reader, particularly in the field of the arts. Now, after more than a decade, it has been followed by a companion study from a different publisher, whose provocative title *Seeing Red* signals that the author's treatment of the material (in chapters entitled "A New Faith," "The Soviet Experiment," "The War Years," "The Cultural Cold War," "The New Emigrés," and "Beyond Anticommunism") and in particular the author's attitude, makes this appear a somewhat different book. For here Congdon's focus on intellectual history takes on a restrictive ideological slant. This has the effect of causing him to neglect the world of competing political and economic institutions — the impact of which had, after all, caused the intellectuals concerned to emigrate in the first place. Instead, Congdon presents it as a place of Manichaeic dichotomy between nihilism and religion.

Thus, the lifework of the distinguished Hungarian intellectuals who are his subjects is reduced, in effect, to a search for a substitute

religion. Setting aside Aristotle's dictum that man is a social animal, the author's point of departure is a prefatory quotation from Edmund Burke proclaiming that man is a "religious animal," and he goes on to quote Nietzsche in support of his decision to make *Seeing Red* "a study of the threat [of] nihilism," on the grounds that "the history of the last century... can only be understood in light of the struggle with that menace" (Preface). Historical evidence for this position is, perhaps not unfortunately, slight. That "Christianity [was] losing its hold" (according to Arthur Koestler, by whom Congdon was clearly influenced) and that "the West" lacked "an alternative faith", had cleared the ground, he thinks, for communism as a serious alternative. This new "faith", "a jealous god", was short-lived, though. For within three decades or less, as the title of a key collection of essays suggests (to which Koestler contributed), it was becoming "The God that Failed". Congdon seems to accept Koestler's misguided pronouncements on history, such as that there was no "light" since the Dark Ages until Kepler (*The Sleepwalkers*) (p. 154), and by Michael Polanyi who, he says, "knew" that Western liberalism had arisen as a reaction against the authority of "the medieval church" and suggests that Luther was a "liberal" (p. 106). It is almost as if these refugees were anxious to exchange the failed absolutism of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for a new absolute.

Rather than nihilism, it is scientific rationality that would certainly be selected by most readers as having displaced religion from its primacy in the West. However, according to Koestler, science had provided a "false reading" resulting in a "determinism" which "paralyzed the people of the West" — which led, according to Michael Polanyi, to an allegedly prevalent "universal scepticism" (p. 99). To this, however, scepticism on the part of the reader is a likely reaction. A new passion generated by the pursuit of truth in the study of nature, and by the simultaneous far-reaching impact of Romanticism, had revealed new dimensions of the psyche, emotions and the imagination, informing virtually all aspects of cultural life not excluding Catholicism and the burgeoning forms of Protestantism. Indeed, as Congdon shows, Christianity was sufficiently alive for John Macmurray to declare that Christianity, "rightly understood, was communism" (p. 39). One feels that some intellectuals were motivated by a sense of personal need, rather than by a desire to engage with the great public issues of their time: the attempts to create political and social institutions to deal with matters of war and peace, economic crisis, and the inevitable constraints upon freedom within a complex society. The thinkers whom Congdon cites most often soon retreated into categories of individual perception. Consciousness of sin played a part in the writings

of Koestler, mindful that he had denounced a lover while in the USSR (*The Invisible Writing*), who agonized over the nature of the "I" as more than a grammatical fiction, and at the end, concluding that "science" was "essentially a religious endeavour" (*Arrow in the Blue*), retreated into parapsychology, telepathy and clairvoyance (p. 156). For his part, Michael Polanyi devised a philosophy of "personalism", and engaged in ever "more profound spiritual and moral searches" (p. 159).

It is always a mistake to identify institutions too closely with their founding ethos — "the Church" with Christianity, the dismal "church" of post-Tsarist authoritarian imperialism (an easy target for critics) with Marx. Thus, it is Marxism, not the non-existent communism of the USSR, that was the intellectual — not "religious" — inspiration and concern of most of Congdon's émigré thinkers. Its attraction was that it embodies an interpretation of history which culminates in a "scientific" critique of capitalism, both of which have profoundly influenced thinking in the social sciences. But it is more. Those who were attracted to it were not concerned with moving pieces around on some grand chessboard of ideas, but with following the injunction that rings through the pages of *The Communist Manifesto* to the effect that the point is not to interpret the world but "to change it".

The striking transformation of the West continues to be achieved not only by blind industrial and market forces, but also by attempts to make the economy responsible to society at large, as expressed through the thought, teachings and actions of a broad spectrum of social reformers ranging from socialists to utopian thinkers, from liberal reformers to conservative improvers. For it is the deed, the touchstone of Goethe's *Faust*, that ultimately validates the idea.

Yet it is the "great" economic historian Karl Polanyi (*Newsweek*, January 6, 2003) who was above all concerned with "that which is done" (in Ranke's words) who is singled out for somewhat patronizing criticism in Congdon's book, because he was critical of what had been done in the name of the liberal market utopia, and because he was not "anti-communist" enough. Polanyi was above all concerned with the failures of the market system sustained by ideology which war alone had rescued from depression, failures moreover which explained the compensating world-wide turn to fascism. He argued for the possibility and indeed necessity of change: citing evidence ranging from the local ("Red Vienna's" success in building workers apartments for rents averaging 5% of income) to nation states' interventionist measures to protect society from the worst effects of the unfettered market system. It is mistaken to say that Karl Polanyi was "pro-communism" because he was aware that critics of the USSR also

sought to discredit socialism and democracy, given current doubts as to the ability of democratic institutions to solve the problems of mass society in the industrial age (pp. 36-7).

For this, Karl Polanyi is criticized — as no one else is in the book — for having “flirted” with ideas, and for his (much quoted) article “The Essence of Fascism” which was deemed “unsatisfactory” and “mistaken” due to “its weaknesses” in viewing fascism as “capitalism in crisis” (p. 39). Further, his wife Ilona Duczynska come in for similar treatment: “enraged”, “exasperated”, “unrepentant”, possessed of “notoriety”, and (A. Kolnai) “an inexorable revolutionary fanatic” for insisting on the need to distinguish between bolshevism and fascism.<sup>1</sup>

More serious is the absence of any sustained discussion of the working class — to whom in particular fascism and communism appealed with solutions to their plight. In the rarefied atmosphere in which ideas rather than people are presented in *Seeing Red* (the title summons up images of red rags waved provocatively at bulls), apart from Karl Polanyi, virtually none of the others mentioned seems to have voluntarily encountered real working-class people. Indeed, Congdon devotes more space to the art of the film — and even 14th century Florence — than to the British working class, a brief reference to Walter Greenwood's significant *Love on the Dole* (1933) serving merely to conclude a discussion of the career of the film producer Alexander Korda. The observation that the impact of the Depression “was felt less in Britain than elsewhere” (p. 20) counts for little beside Karl Polanyi's stark discovery, on first arriving there, that nothing he had read or witnessed on the Continent had prepared him for the degradation of all aspects of working-class existence under the class system. It was a pupil of György Lukács, the post-1956 emigrant intellectual István Mészáros — a close friend of Karl Polanyi and Ilona Duczynska — who in a 1992 interview in England provides a corrective. “I think you have to relate yourself to something; political and social commitment cannot be in thin air or in a vacuum. I am deeply committed to the working class, and this is how I think of the future intellectually” (p. 121).

Here a word may be said for those “other” Hungarian intellectuals, those who chose not to emigrate, particularly in and after 1956, who “sought the renewal of socialism by means of radical democratization” (Mészáros, *La rivolta degli intellettuali in Ungheria*, 1958), the message of a key work, listed in the Bibliography but not mentioned in the text, by Karl Polanyi and Ilona Duczynska, *The Plough and the Pen* (1963). But, then, the émigré intellectuals' journey to anti-communism and beyond also took some of them beyond socialism's concern for the people, beyond



equality even. Thus, though Mészáros was aware of capital's expanding system of domination and of growing inequities between and within countries, during 1960-70 Imre Lakatos and Tibor Szamuely actually expressed disquiet at what they deemed to be the West's excessive concern with equality; for his part, Koestler (in his book *Insight and Outlook*, 1949) came to regard integration "only in a cosmic sense, not on the social level" (pp. 150-51).

One would never guess from Congdon's account that Karl Polanyi's much translated and reprinted 1944 *The Great Transformation* had been twice listed among the 100 most significant books written in the past half century (*Time* 1977, and *The Times Literary Supplement* 1995) for he clearly favours Michael Polanyi's attack on this "prime target" in his hastily composed *Full Employment and Free Trade* (1945), on the (mistaken) grounds that the former was advocating "a planned society" (p. 83). On Michael Polanyi's sweeping observation that Soviet economic failure "proved beyond all reasonable doubt that there existed and could exist no alternative to capitalism," Congdon comments "we know that he was right" (p. 81). Karl Polanyi's pioneering study on "Socialist Accounting" (1922), with its all-important distinction between "economic costs" and "social costs", was years ahead of its time. Yet, ignoring the manipulated tax regimes and price structures of multinational corporations, Congdon flatly states that such a functional theory of society "now seems excessively optimistic with regard to human possibility".<sup>2</sup> During this period, in his articles and letters which, Congdon observes, were "wisely" done, "masterly", Michael Polanyi had one purpose: "He had resolved not to let a single leftist claim go unchallenged", for "detachment [means] enslavement" (p. 74).

Equally ideologically determined are Congdon's references to Michael Polanyi's views on science in response to the extremely influential work by J. D. Bernal — to him, that "brilliantly perverse publication" — for whom the former was "more than a match" in a review (p. 74). He even seems to take seriously Michael Polanyi's fear of "enslavement" that would result were "pure" science to be paralleled by, let alone subordinated to, an "applied" science designed more clearly to serve society (p. 44). Fear of slavery was very much in the air. Congdon observes that "the peoples of the USSR had, Polanyi knew, already been enslaved". But, then, Polanyi saw "slavery" threatening from another direction also, along the lines of *Brave New World*, considering it possible that "slavery to private appetites" would prepare the mind for submission to "public despotism" (p. 75). But it may be observed that the author does not refer to what is fast becoming the case in his own country, where private mass

merchandising techniques are leading to the public despotism of big business with its own domestic and foreign policy agenda.

In conclusion, it must be granted that omissions are few, though Congdon's failure to follow up on his opening statement that "many" (p. 3) of the members of the first generation of exiles were Jews is regrettable in light of his emphasis on their readiness to search for a new religion; absent, too, is any reference to the distinguished Marxist art historian Arnold Hauser. An error that strikes the eye is the description of the neo-Gothic Parliament Buildings in Budapest as "neo-baroque" (p. 110). Given the lofty level of discourse in the material cited, the author's attempts at, or recitations of, breezy colloquialisms ("the diminutive Dollfuss" is reminiscent of Time magazine's "the cigar-chomping, bearded dictator" [Castro], as is "Saint Antal", "it was open season on Hungarians" in Moscow in 1937, the "chutzpah" of Alexander Korda, Ilona Duczynska's having "more political savvy", the "salami tactics [of] Rákosi and his myrmidons") do not come off.

There can be no doubt that Lee Congdon's *Seeing Red* is a valuable book. The bibliography and footnotes are in themselves highly useful to scholars, and the interested general reader will learn much from the summarized material in the on the whole clear and always lively text. The two volumes on the Hungarian exiles are indicative of the outstanding contribution made by Hungarians to world culture, and a reminder that in the age of 'world powers' the small countries of the world continue to make a disproportionate contribution to humanity. In important respects, Congdon has risen to the challenge of his material. In general, it appears that he prefers nihilism — if, indeed, that is what it was — to the particular religion that attracted his subjects, perhaps to any religion. However, his text reflects the fact that in his country the free market utopia continues to be proselytized with all the fervour of a new religion of a different colour.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Lee Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought. Hungarian Intellectuals in Germany and Austria 1919–1933* (Princeton University Press, 1991), *in passim*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

## PART III

# Hungarian-American Historiography: An Introduction

N. F. Dreisziger

**It could be said** that until the very end of the twentieth century the historiography of the Hungarian community of the United States was an underdeveloped academic field. In the year 2000 that situation changed considerably. In that year not one but two major surveys of that subject appeared. One of these books is Béla Várdy's *Magyarok az Újvilágban* [Hungarians in the New World].<sup>1</sup> The other is Julianna Puskás, *Ties that Bind, Ties that Divide: One Hundred Years of Hungarian Experience in the United States*.<sup>2</sup> Of course, there had been many general books, specialized monographs, as well as shorter studies written on this subject before — some of them written by Puskás and Várdy themselves<sup>3</sup> — but none of them as comprehensive or authoritative as the two new surveys mentioned above.

In this volume András Csillag reviews the first of these works. He finds that perhaps Várdy's important contributions to Hungarian-American historiography is that his new book complements work done by historians in Hungary:

...it covers topics that have not really been treated by Hungarian scholars. Thus, in addition to dealing with the development of Hungarian-American churches, religious life, fraternal, political and social organizations, newspapers, and even Hungarian-American literature, it discusses the activities and roles of various emigré leaders, and it does so in accordance with their relative significance within the Hungarian-American world. We can learn from this book about the everyday life of the early immigrants, as well as about the relationships and conflicts among the various emigré waves that had arrived in the United States during different epochs of its history.

In a future volume of our journal, probably in 2004, I will survey the literature on this subject and will try to place Várdy's and Puskás's books into the wider context of nearly a century of historical writing on Hungarian-American — as well as Hungarian-Canadian and Hungarian-Latin American subjects.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Steven Béla Várdy, *Magyarok az Újvilágban: Az észak-amerikai magyarság rendhagyó története* [Hungarians in the New World: the irregular history of the Hungarians of North America] (Budapest: A Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Julianna Puskás, *Ties that Binds, Ties that Divide: One Hundred Years of Hungarian Experience in the United States*, transl. Zora Ludwig (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, Ellis Island series, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Previous works by Julianna Puskás include: *Kivándorló magyarok az Egyesült Államokban, 1880-1940* [Emigrant Hungarians in the United States, 1880-1940] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1982); *From Hungary to the United States (1880-1914)* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982), as well as numerous articles including: "Kivándorlás Magyarországról az Egyesült Államokba 1914 előtt" [Emigration from Hungary to the United States before 1914], *Történelmi Szemle* 27 (1974): 32-68.

S. B. Várdy's previous works include: *The Hungarian-Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), and a great many shorter works which are listed in the bibliography of his year 2000 book, pages 701-11. Some of these are co-authored with his wife, Ágnes Huszár Várdy.

a review article

## A New Chapter in Hungarian-American Historiography

András Csillag

Várdy Béla. *Magyarok az Újvilágban: Az Észak-amerikai magyarság rendhagyó története* [Hungarians in the New World: The Unorthodox History of the Hungarians of North America]. Budapest: A Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága kiadása, 2000. Cloth. 840 pp., bibliography, chronology, name and geographical place index, about 250 in-text illustrations, 33-page English language summary. \$50.00 (US).

**Those interested in** the history of Hungarian Americans are generally familiar with the name of Béla Várdy, who in his English language works publishes under the name Steven Bela Vardy. He ended up in the United States as an offspring of immigrant parents, and is a member of the generation of Hungarian-American historians that is hall-marked by such well known scholars as John Lukács and István Deák.

Várdy has been teaching East European history in Pittsburgh for decades. During this time he has authored or co-authored, edited or co-edited seventeen books and many hundreds of scholarly studies, essays, and reviews. His scholarly works deal mostly with historiography, the development of Hungarian liberalism, the intellectual world of the Habsburg Empire, certain specific episodes of the Hungarian Middle Ages, and the Hungarian-American past. His predecessors in the area of Hungarian-American historical research include Jenő Pivány (1873-1946), Géza Kende (1880-1933), Ödön Vasváry (1888-1977), Emil Lengyel (1895-1985), Elemér Bakó (1915-2000), and József Széplaki (b.1932). His *Magyarok az Újvilágban* [Hungarians in the New World] is the author's most significant work to date. It is the result of several decades of research, presenting a comprehensive picture of Hungarian-American

history, from the second half of the sixteenth to the end of the twentieth century.

In light of the work under review, one may ask the question: How does Várdy's scholarship differ from those of his predecessors and contemporaries. For one, most of his Hungarian-American predecessors were amateurs in the discipline of history. They were journalists, Calvinist clergymen, and librarians, although their ranks also included diplomats, such as Andor Sziklay, who was known in the United States as Andor C. Klay (1912–1997). These pioneer historians have waged a heroic struggle in collecting and publishing sources of Hungarian-American history. They also published monographs and detailed studies about certain specific episodes of Hungarian-American history, its prominent personalities, and on the relationship between Hungarian-Americans and their brethren in the Old Country.

Some of the worthy examples of these efforts include Géza Kende's two-volume *Magyarok Amerikában* [Hungarians in America] (1927), Edmund Vasváry's bilingual *Lincoln's Hungarian Heroes – Lincoln magyar hősei* (1939), and Emil Lengyel's *Americans from Hungary* (1948). These enthusiastic emigré historians collected much information on their topics, but were generally unable to produce acceptable scholarly historical monographs based on their research. They were basically dedicated and enthusiastic amateurs who lacked the appropriate scholarly training and consequently produced somewhat superficial works. These volumes lack the necessary documentation in the form of extensive footnotes and comprehensive bibliographies. Notwithstanding these limitations, however, the published works of these pioneer authors are still very helpful. At the same time they have to be used with caution and circumspection. A number of these pioneer historians also tried to produce major syntheses of the Hungarian-American past, but they were unable to do so on a level expected by contemporary professional historical scholarship.

Simultaneously with the activities of the above authors — and to a large degree even today — the majority of professional historians of Hungarian birth or origin declined to do research on the Hungarian-American past. They were and are more inclined to study the history of Hungary and of East Central Europe, which they believe to be more useful for their professional advancement as professors of history. Some went even further, for they abandoned the study of Hungarian history altogether in favour of American history. They research and publish only

on the history of their host nation, without any reference to Hungarian or Hungarian-American history.

Although Várdy also began his professional career by writing only on Hungarian and East Central European topics, by the 1970s he decided to turn some of his attention to the history of Hungarian Americans. By doing so, he stepped on a path that has been tread by a number of scholars in Hungary. But his predecessors among the latter were scholars who studied primarily the process of emigration from Hungary and certain aspects of Hungarian-American historical connections. During the 1980s, for example, several major works have appeared on this topic in Hungary. The best known among these are Julianna Puskás's *Kivándorló magyarok az Egyesült Államokban, 1880-1940* [Emigrant Hungarians in the United States, 1880-1940]<sup>1</sup> which was also published in an abbreviated English version: *From Hungary to the United States, 1880-1914*;<sup>2</sup> and Miklós Szántó's *Magyarok Amerikában* [Hungarians in America].<sup>3</sup> These works however — and, especially, Szántó's — carry the marks of contemporary Marxist scholarship, with all their implications. Moreover, the authors of these works left a number of important topics untouched. Among other things, they failed to consider how Hungarian-Americans have contributed to the social, cultural, and scientific life of the United States — especially through their most talented scholars and scientists.

It was after such antecedents that Várdy undertook to produce the first scholarly and up-to-date synthesis of the history of Hungarian Americans, which, for the first time also covers the history of post-World War II emigration. This monograph appeared in 1985 in Boston under the title *The Hungarian-Americans*. It was soon followed by a briefer, but heavily illustrated version under the same title, published in New York in 1989.

Following the appearance of these books, Várdy continued his broadly based research and publication activities in a wide variety of fields. He published many detailed studies on the Hungarian-American past, but at the same time he also authored books and scholarly articles on Hungarian history proper. The latter include such volumes as his *Attila the Hun* (1990), and his 840-page *Historical Dictionary of Hungary* (1997).<sup>4</sup> At the same time he continued his work on the history of the Hungarian-American past by publishing — among others — a number of studies on the history of the Hungarian-American press. Many of these writings appeared both in English and in Hungarian.

*Hungarians in the New World* is a major and unique synthesis created out of the combination of a great number of studies that Várdy had published both in Hungary and in the United States in the course of the 1990s. In other words, many of this volume's chapters, or sections of the same, have already appeared in print as articles or essays in scholarly and popular periodicals. At this time this thick volume is the largest and most comprehensive Hungarian-language work on this topic. It is richly illustrated and describes the history of Hungarian Americans, while also covering their relationship to the mother country. The book is directed at audiences both at home and abroad. Its style is varied. Although it is basically a scholarly volume with extensive source documentation and bibliographical references, at times it reads like a popular essay. It also contains anecdotic chapters that are a pleasure to read. The author handles a huge amount of material with ease and skilfulness. His analyses are objective, professional, and free from the customary ideological biases. The author is in possession of a vast amount of knowledge, which is based at least partially on his own personal experiences. Such experiences are essential for a true understanding of the organizational life and mentality of an immigrant community. And these experiences can only be possessed by one who has been an active participant in Hungarian-American life for an extended period of time.

In many ways, Várdy's work complements the scholarly literature produced in Hungary, for it covers topics that have not really been treated by Hungarian scholars. Thus, in addition to dealing with the development of Hungarian-American churches, religious life, fraternal, political and social organizations, newspapers, and even Hungarian-American literature, it discusses the activities and roles of various emigré leaders, and it does so in accordance with their relative significance within the Hungarian-American world. We can learn from this book about the everyday life of the early immigrants, as well as about the relationships and conflicts among the various emigré waves that had arrived in the United States during different epochs of its history. Most of all, however, we can clearly discern the direction toward which the Hungarian ethnic group is unavoidably moving.

This tendency, by the way, is not very promising, and this reviewer tends to agree with this assessment. He has personally observed and experienced the pessimistic portrait painted by the author toward the end of his book. It tells us that the Hungarian-American community is on the verge of complete assimilation. Its institutions, its organizations, its



religious congregations, and its ethnic city quarters — the so-called "Little Hungaries" — have all become depopulated, and they are disappearing at an alarming rate. This also holds true for the Hungarian ethnic press, which is likewise fading very rapidly. So do the linguistic skills of the native-born generations of Hungarian Americans. We have to accept the fact that without a new "supply" of immigrants from Hungary, the future of the Hungarian-American community is very bleak indeed. Its individual members may find happiness and satisfaction in life, but their collective ethnic consciousness will undoubtedly fall victim to the melting pot of American society. While we may bemoan this process, we would be our own nation's greatest enemy if we were to hope for the replenishment of the ranks of Hungarian Americans. That would imply another wave of mass emigration from Hungary, a phenomenon that our shrinking nation can hardly afford.

While nowadays multiculturalism is in vogue in the United States, it does not advance the cause of Hungarian-American survival. Multiculturalism is a boon only to the largest and heavily concentrated ethnic groups, such as Latino Americans (36 million), African Americans (35 million), and perhaps Asian Americans (10 million). By virtue of their massive numbers, their assimilation is difficult, and it may not even be possible. It will certainly take much more time than the absorption of the relatively small Hungarian ethnic group.

Finally, let us say a few words about the author's attachment and dedication to the study of the Hungarian-American past. To him, and to his wife and collaborator — the literary scholar dr. Agnes Huszár Várdy — the preservation of Hungarian language and culture has always been a central question. The two of them have done a great deal for the advancement of Hungarian Studies on the university level. For many years they were also in the forefront of the effort to establish and to nurture cultural relations with their counterparts in Hungary. And they did this in spite of the fact that such efforts were frowned upon by many of the emigré spokesmen. For this very reason the Várdys were often criticized and castigated by some of the less-than-enlightened spokesmen of the political immigrants.

The book under review exudes the author's love for his nation and for the country of his birth. This is evident from the way he castigates Hungarian Americans who are reluctant to reveal their Hungarian identities to American society. But it is also clear from the way he faults the immediate post-communist Hungarian Government for failing to mobilize

its resources to help preserve the national identities and cultural traditions of overseas Hungarians.

It should not be left unmentioned that the author has donated his extensive collection of Hungarian American newspapers to the Vasváry Collection of the Somogyi Library of the City of Szeged, and thereby demonstrated his desire to save these important sources of the Hungarian-American past. All Hungarians, but in particular the members of the Hungarian historical profession, should be grateful to the author for his many decades of scholarly activities, his numerous publications, and his varied teaching activities on the university level. All of us should be grateful to him for having produced this major synthesis of Hungarian-American history. The next step is to publish it in English, so as to make this major synthesis available also to the English-speaking world.<sup>5</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Julianna Puskás, *Kivándorló magyarok az Egyesült Államokban, 1880-1940* [Emigrant Hungarians in the United States] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1982). Puskás has published shorter works as well, perhaps the most relevant of which is her "Kivándorlás Magyarországról az Egyesült Államokba 1914 előtt" [Emigration from Hungary to the United States before 1914], *Történelmi Szemle* 17, 1-2 (1974): 32-68.

<sup>2</sup> Julianna Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States (1880-1914)* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> Miklós Szántó, *Magyarok Amerikában* [Hungarians in America] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> Steven Béla Várdy, *Historical Dictionary of Hungary* (Lanham, Md., and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1997), in the *European Historical Dictionaries* series, no. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Julianna Puskás's new book, *Ties that Bind, Ties that Divide: One Hundred Years of Hungarian Experience in the United States*, transl. Zora Ludwig (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, Ellis Island series, 2000), came to my attention too late to discuss in this review. [Editor's note: we plan to comment on this work in a future volume of our journal.]

## PART IV

# Prominent Hungarian Americans Remembered: An Introduction

N. F. Dreisziger

**Joseph Pulitzer** is probably the best-known Hungarian American; or is it Zsa-Zsa Gabor, or Joe Namath or Karch [Károly] Kiraly? It would be difficult to decide. For sports fans, it might be the latter two. For lovers of Hollywood gossip and scandals, it might be Zsa-Zsa, but other enthusiasts of the American film industry might vote for Adolf Zukor (1873-1976[!]) of Paramount Pictures fame, or William Fox [Vilmos Fischer] of Twentieth Century Fox. For mathematicians and economic theorists, it could be John [János] von Neumann; for nuclear physicists, Edward [Ede] Teller; for aeronautical engineers, Theodore [Tódor] von Karman; for psychiatrists, Thomas Stephen [Tamás István] Szasz; for psychologists, Mihály Csikszentmihályi — another prolific and controversial author; for politicians, New York Governor George [György] Pataki; and for financiers, George [György] Soros. Connoisseurs of classical music might have a more difficult task, as they would have to choose from among conductors Eugene [Jenő] Ormandy, Fritz [Frigyes] Reiner, George [György] Szell, Antal Doráti, Sir George [György] Solti, Cristoph [Kristóf] von Dohnányi, to mention the most obvious. Of course, if a five-year stay in the USA qualifies someone to be a Hungarian American, then the most famous Magyar-American personality is undoubtedly Béla Bartók, the composer.<sup>1</sup>

Not surprisingly under the circumstances, numerous books have been published about both famous individual immigrants from Hungary and the sum total of Hungarian contributions to American cultural and economic development.<sup>2</sup> The three studies presented in this part of our volume make a modest though original contribution to the subject.

Professor Alan Walker surveys the life and artistic contributions of concert pianist, music critic and author Bálint Vázsonyi (1936-2003), Steven Béla Várdy outlines the scholarly work of historian Thomas Szendrey (1941-2003), and in a review article, Béla Bodó examines the new biography of Joseph Pulitzer (1847-1911) by the Hungarian scholar András Csillag, a contributor to our volume.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> More precisely, composer, ethno-musicologist, teacher and concert pianist. I have been in North American university libraries where there were more publications on or by Bartók, than there were books on Hungarian history. Just who qualifies to be listed among Americans from Hungary is not easy to judge. Bartók, as has been mentioned, spent only the last years of his life in the USA. Joe Namath, at the other extreme, was the grandson of an immigrant from Hungary and spoke no Hungarian. Many immigrants from Hungary who achieved fame had a Jewish background and had, and in some cases professed, multiple ethnic identities. Some of the people who are often listed as "famous" immigrants from Hungary always acknowledged their Hungarian heritage, others avoided the subject or even denied their Magyar identity. Some maintained their ties to things Hungarian, others avoided them.

<sup>2</sup> My favourite monograph on the subject is Francis S. Wagner, *Hungarian Contributions to World Civilization* (Center Square, PA: Alpha Publications, 1977). Wagner has also written books on two famous Hungarian Americans: *Eugene P. Wigner: An Architect of the Atomic Age* (1981); and *Zoltan Bay Atomic Physicist: A Pioneer of Space Research* (1985). A classic book on the subject is Emil Lengyel, *Americans from Hungary* (Philadelphia & N.Y.: Lippincott, 1948); while a recent one is Andrew L. Simon, *Made in Hungary: Hungarian Contributions to Universal Culture* (published by the author, 1998). See also György Marx *A marslakók érkezése. Magyar tudósok akik nyugaton alakították a 20. század történelmét* [The arrival of the Martians: Hungarian scientists who contributed to the shaping of 20th century history in the West] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2000). Much relevant information can be found also in S. B. Várdy's book (see its review by András Csillag in this volume): *Magyarok az Újvilágban: Az észak-amerikai magyarság rendhagyó története* [Hungarians in the New World: the unorthodox history of the Hungarians of North America] (Budapest: A Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága, 2000), especially pp. 638-50.

**Bálint Vázsonyi**  
**(March 7, 1936 – January 17, 2003)**  
**A Memorial Tribute<sup>1</sup>**

**Alan Walker**

I first met **Bálint Vázsonyi** in 1966 — or was it 1965? If I am unclear about the date, that is because I feel that I knew him all my life, and a year here or there means nothing. In those days I was a music producer at the British Broadcasting Corporation in London, specializing in the preparation of piano recitals for national broadcasting. One day I was sitting in my office and I received a communication from Bálint, whom I had not at that time met. He wanted to send me a rare tape of Ernst von Dohnányi's last piano recital, which had been recorded in 1959 at Florida State University, Tallahassee, where Bálint had been Dohnányi's pupil. Would there be a chance of my hearing it, and perhaps arranging for a BBC broadcast? he asked me. I told him to send it in, and I would give him my response.

That was the beginning of a life-long friendship. I liked the Dohnányi tape very much, and it became the basis of a 90 minute documentary on the composer's life and work that was broadcast by the BBC a few months later. London was full of Hungarian expatriates, and I managed to interview several who had either been Dohnányi's students or who had known him well in earlier days — among them Iлона Kabos, Louis Kentner, Georg Solti, Béla Siki, Antal Dorati, and of course Bálint himself.

That was how our thirty-five year friendship began. Shortly afterwards I engaged Bálint to give a solo piano recital for the BBC, which included Schumann's *Carnaval* and Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro*. On another occasion he came to the BBC studios to record Beethoven's Sonata in C minor, op. 111, a work for which he never lost his passion. I also recall a stimulating recording session when he taped a performance of Liszt's Sonata in B minor. He had brought along a sizeable coterie of friends and colleagues to the studio in order to hear his performance, and

afterwards we all had a lively discussion about the importance of this work. The reason why Bálint brought his friends into the studio only became apparent after I had got to know him well. I think that he preferred playing to people, rather than face the loneliness of the recording studio, with the ever clinical, ever critical microphone as his only companion, and the even more critical recording engineer locked away in a glassed-in, sound-proofed cubicle. These were stimulating occasions for me. Most artists used to turn up at the studio, record the recital, perhaps do a couple of retakes, and then vanish. Bálint lingered. He liked to be a part of the editing process, to observe what went on backstage. We frequently chatted about the music he had played. I quickly realised that he had an uncommon grasp of musical analysis and musical history, and that he had a definite point of view on musical interpretation, and on practically every other topic besides. As our friendship grew deeper so did our conversations. They ranged across history, politics, psychology, and (above all) music. At that time I was about to publish a Schumann Symposium, and I invited Bálint to contribute an essay on the solo piano works. This he did with conspicuous success. His chapter remains one of the best in the book.<sup>2</sup>

I would sometimes see him on an almost weekly basis. He and his wife Barbara would come to my place in Hampstead for dinner; more frequently I would go to theirs in Bayswater, and later to their house in Chambers Lane, North London, since Barbara was a better cook than I was. It was there that I got to know their son Miki (who has remained a close friend ever since) and also Bálint's mother who paid frequent visits to the family from her adopted home in Switzerland. We had a large circle of musical acquaintances in those days, which included Daniel Barenboim, Jacqueline du Pres, Marta Argerich, and Stephen Bishop among others. I well recall one of our earliest after-dinner conversations. Bálint was bemoaning the fact that Dohnányi had fallen into general neglect, particularly in his native Hungary.

This was in the late 1960s. He spoke with such vehemence that I suggested he ought to consider writing a biography of his famous teacher. It had a salutary effect on the conversation, and I knew that I had struck a chord. The next time we met, Bálint proudly displayed a set of box-files, which he had meanwhile acquired in order to start what was to become a comprehensive filing system on all things pertaining to Dohnányi. Work on the biography progressed swiftly and within a couple of years the Hungarian language edition was ready. (It was re-issued last

year to general acclaim). From the beginning it was always my hope that Bálint would first publish his biography in English, but he argued that it was Hungary which stood in most urgent need of the book, and the English translation could wait. He later told me that "translation" was the wrong word to describe the English version of his text which would in every respect be larger and more comprehensive than anything in the Hungarian edition. I am told that four or five of the projected nine chapters of the English version were complete at the time of Bálint's death, and there are plans to have the Hungarian edition translated into English and to incorporate these new chapters within it. But whatever happens, Bálint will always be remembered as the father of Dohnányi research. His book broke new ground and was largely responsible for the dramatic re-assessment of Dohnányi's place in Hungary's musical life that is going on today.

It is a sad fact that praise for an individual is usually reserved for the eulogy, and is rarely handed out during his lifetime. Why is that? Why are we reluctant to praise people while they are still alive, and only too ready to praise them once they have passed away? There is no simple answer, but whatever it is, it runs deep in human psychology. I'm very glad that I celebrated Bálint's gifts as often as I did, both in public and in private; I was enormously impressed not only with his grasp of music but with his wider abilities as a communicator of stimulating ideas.

Bálint was typical of many Hungarian intellectuals who have mastered the English language to such a degree that they often put the natives to shame. He worked hard to acquire total fluency, of course, but when I first met him, in the mid 1960s, there were still traces of Hungarian in the way that he constructed his spoken English, and we sometimes joked about it. These were soon to vanish during the years he spent in England; but his accent remained unique. I am glad that he did not show the slightest interest in eradicating it, because it was an essential part of his personality. That voice was unmistakable. Shortly after I had arranged his first BBC broadcast (an interview on Dohnányi for the aforementioned documentary programme), he heard his voice coming out of the studio speakers and went into mild shock. "My God," he muttered, "it sounds as if my vocal cords are located in my stomach." I was forced to agree. It was not unlike a quartet of bassoons. The sound was irredeemably Magyar, and I loved it, because it lent personality and colour to his commentary. But it was his passion for the English language that struck me with force; it was a passion he never lost.

Language and ideas go hand in hand, so it is hardly surprising that Bálint had soon developed into a formidable debater. I often thought that had he not been a musician he could have become an excellent lawyer. The only drawback there, of course, is that he would have been prone to start arguments on points of law with the judge, and that might have jeopardized his cases. The longest conversation I ever had with him lasted for eight hours. It took place on board a Pan Am flight from Heathrow Airport to New York, in the late 1960s. We were arguing about the respective merits of four or five concert pianists currently appearing on the world platform. He did not like any of them, because they lacked *gravitas*. I recall that he described the tone of one international pianist as "Like driving nails into a coffin," a remark that always returned to haunt me whenever I heard recordings of the player in question. Of another pianist he remarked that he had fingers like spaghetti. And this is the dish that comes to mind whenever I see his CDs in the record shops.

Bálint was a brilliant lecturer, and could speak for an hour or more without notes, holding his audience spellbound. He was never one to suffer fools gladly, however. I have seen him explode with impatience at some comment or other which revealed the incompetence of the person in whose company he was at that moment unfortunate enough to find himself. But I always admired his willingness to stand in harm's way when a principle he held dear was at stake.

Despite his superior intelligence Bálint was not an iconoclast. He was in fact a great popularizer of music. He thought that music should belong to everyone — not just to the experts. That is why he formed his television company and started to make a series of documentary programmes based on the lives of the great composers. Initially they were to have been called "The Royal Road from Bach to Bartók," but only four programmes were made before the money ran out. They were devoted to the four composers with whom Bálint was closely associated: Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, and Brahms. They were widely and often shown in North America, and give ample proof of Bálint's skills as a communicator.

Some of Bálint's ideas were special, and they still provoke thought. Let me mention two of them. He was convinced that the English language itself promoted fundamental ideas such as liberty and freedom; that it enabled the expression of such concepts to flourish in a way denied to other languages. In brief, had the Founding Fathers spoken German, Russian, or Swahili, the Declaration of Independence would have taken a



different form, indeed might not have been written at all. The notion runs deep. Thought not only develops language; language develops thought.

The other idea is purely musical, and concerns the Beethoven piano sonatas. Bálint argued that the 32 Sonatas — unlike the 9 Symphonies and 18 String Quartets — represent a unity. In other words, they reveal more similarities than differences, like brothers from the same family, and in a profound sense are really one work — the separate Sonatas being, so to speak, mere fragments of the whole. And he went further. He argued that you can't understand any individual Sonata unless you understand them all — that they all throw light on one another. That was a tall order for many musicians to accept, so Bálint set about proving his hypotheses by playing all thirty-two Sonatas in public, across an entire weekend. It was a formidable undertaking, drew a lot of newspaper coverage, and I believe that he did it both in London and again in New York.<sup>3</sup>

Bálint also had a special sense of humour. I do not ever recall him re-telling old jokes — which are all too often a substitute for real humour, told by people who lack it. Formal humour seemed to hold no interest for Bálint. His was comedy on the run, so to speak, a spontaneous attempt to make fun of a current situation, or some comment he had just over-heard. To spend an evening in his company was not unlike walking a tightrope: you think you knew how it would turn out, but there was always the element of the surprise. One example among many springs to mind. I was once invited to join him and Barbara for dinner. They both knew that a favourite dish of mine was Hungarian goulash, so Barbara had gone to a lot of trouble to prepare a large bowl of it in their kitchen. At the appointed time she wheeled it into the dining room, only to have the front wheels of the trolley hit a small ledge on the floor. The trolley stopped abruptly but the bowl of goulash continued moving inexorably forward until it landed on my back and shoulders. Naturally we didn't stop laughing for the rest of the evening. A week or so later I sent Bálint the dry-cleaning bill. He returned it with the comment that it was not the fault of Barbara's goulash that I happened to be in the way. I was not about to let the incident pass. The next time I joined him and Barbara for dinner, I opened a large umbrella just as Barbara started to serve the soup. Again the evening was rocked with laughter, and many subsequent ones too, as we re-lived the incident. Ever afterwards, Hungarian goulash and English umbrellas were linked in our collective imaginations.

Bálint was involved in many struggles during his chequered life. Some he won, others he lost. His last great battle was against cancer, an adversary over which he secured a striking victory. While the illness claimed his body, it completely failed to claim his personality. (How often do we see the reverse: a body that survives but contains a personality that is hardly worthy of the name.) I telephoned him just a few days before he died, and he was making light of everything, even indulging in some jokes at the expense of his chemo-therapy, one of whose side-effects had been (so he told me) to change his complexion. After examining himself in the mirror he was at that moment likening himself to "the phantom of the opera" and he informed me (when we had both stopped laughing) that henceforth he would only leave his apartment building at night wearing a mask, and perhaps even audition for a role in that long-running musical. That was music, incidentally, that he abhorred. Something else we had in common. Sorry, Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber, you can't win them all.

And now the time has come, as it was bound to come, for me to say a last farewell to my old friend, and try to get used to the idea of no longer having him with me. I often find myself contemplating the various problems going on in the world today, both great and small, some of them having to do with the arts, others having to do with the awful political difficulties facing the world at the present time, and I catch myself asking the question: "What would Bálint say? What would he recommend?" He would of course have a very great deal to say, a very great deal to recommend, and I like to think that wherever he is today he is probably looking down on us, rather mockingly, and growling in the "quartet-of-bassoons" voice of his: "The solution is so simple. It's staring you in the face. Why can't you see it?"

I have often asked myself what was the driving force behind Bálint's strong personality. It can be summed up in one phrase: "the pursuit of excellence." He was an idealist, and if he suspected a compromise, he could be highly critical. But there is a down-side to the search for perfection. If he thought that he himself had got something wrong, had compromised a principle, he could be harder on himself than he was on others. Those moments of self-censure were the price he paid in order to do things well.

When Miki telephoned me with the sad news of Bálint's death I was in London, unable to attend the funeral. Even though we were separated by four thousand miles or more, during the memorial service

my thoughts were with the family, as they have been ever since: with Bálint's beautiful wife Barbara, with his brilliant son Miki, with their daughter-in-law Agnes and with their grandchild Leah. I wrote to Barbara, and quoted some words of a Roman philosopher, with which I would like to end this tribute this evening.

"It is not when a man is born that one should rejoice, but rather when he has died — if he has lived well." Bálint did live well. We can rejoice in his life. He developed his talents to an extraordinary degree, and I count myself fortunate that he counted me as a friend. Meanwhile I shall miss the complex pleasures of his company. Goodbye, dear Bálint. I will never forget you.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This text is based on a lecture delivered at the Hungarian Embassy, Washington, D.C. on April 22, 2003.

Bálint Vázsonyi was a concert pianist and a regular columnist for *The Washington Times*. His biography on Dohnányi (*Dohnányi Ernő* [Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1971]) was published in a second, expanded Hungarian edition (Budapest: Nap kiadó, 2002). His most recent book, *America's 30 Years War: Who is Winning?* (Washington, D.C.: Regency; Lanham, MD: National Book Network) was published in 1998.

<sup>2</sup> "The Solo Piano Cycles," in *Robert Schumann: The Man and His Music*, a symposium edited by Alan Walker (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1972), 68-92.

<sup>3</sup> In fact, the complete Beethoven sonata cycle was performed in both London and New York during the 1976-77 season.



## Remembering Professor Thomas Szendrey (1941-2003)

Steven Béla Várdy

**For three decades** Dr. Thomas Szendrey was Professor of History at Gannon University. He died on May 14, 2003, after three years of illness, following a stroke on May 20, 2000. During his life he was a loving husband, a caring father, a faithful friend, a learned colleague, and a man with a brilliant mind. He could have done so much more had fate given him a few more years to commit his brewing ideas to writing.

Thomas Szendrey was born in Budapest, although his family stemmed from the Trans-Danubian resort-town of Tata (Tatatóváros). Having left Hungary at the age of only four, he began his schooling in Austria, and then, following his family's emigration to the United States in the early 1950s, he continued his studies in Miami, Florida, where he completed his secondary education in 1959.

I first met Thomas during the summer of 1959, in Cleveland, Ohio, although I did not really get to know him well until the early 1960s. At that time I was a doctoral student at Indiana University in Bloomington, when that institution was the premier centre of Hungarian and East Central European Studies in the United States.

In the summer of 1960 Thomas came to our house in Cleveland to consult me about opportunities for a historian. Like I, he too was in love with history, but he too was in a cloud about the profession. We both refused to consider the practicality and applicability of our discipline. We simply loved it, and we were convinced that in the long run everything would turn out to be all right. Given this state of mind, I certainly could not give much practical advice to Tom. I could only convey my own feelings about history, and my own emotional attachment to the discipline that I wanted to pursue all my life. Having enrolled at John Carroll University in 1959, Tom graduated four years later with a B.A. (*magna cum laude*) in history and philosophy. Following his graduation

he considered the idea of following me to Bloomington, but in the end he opted to go to New York to pursue his doctoral work at Saint John's University. He did so under the direction of the Hungarian intellectual historian, Professor Boris de Balla (1903-1992), with whom he established a very good working relationship. Under Balla's direction he wrote a 440-page doctoral dissertation on modern Hungarian historiography,<sup>1</sup> in which he explored the development of the discipline from the eighteenth century right up to the 1960s. This work turned out to be a major intellectual endeavour that should have appeared in print immediately. It was never published, for the simple reason that publishers were (and are) always more interested in books with commercial appeal, than in highly intellectual works that have little or no marketability.

After having gotten married, and after having settled down in our respective permanent positions — I at Duquesne University and Tom at Gannon University — we began three decades of intense scholarly cooperation, punctuated by occasional debates and disagreements. We were able to cooperate in spite of our obvious dissimilarities: I being a traditional narrative historian who was constantly engaged in writing articles, monographs and bulky syntheses for the average lover of history on an easily comprehensible level; and Thomas being an intellectual historian, whose exposés were so sophisticated, poised, and elegant that they impressed even those who were unable to fathom his philosophizations.

In the course of his three decades at Gannon University, Thomas Szendrey became a much beloved professor. At the same time he was an eminently respected publishing scholar in the field of intellectual history. He taught thousands of young people the love of learning for learning's sake, and he introduced them to the values of Western Christian Civilization. Many of his former students are now highly ranked professionals or they are persons who occupy prestigious public or ecclesiastical offices.

Dr. Thomas Szendrey can claim authorship of about four score scholarly writings on a wide variety of topics, among them a two-volume textbook on the History of the General Councils of the Roman Catholic Church (Gannon, 1978). I have co-authored with him a number of these writings, and we also had grandiose plans for major projects to be completed after our retirement. Alas, that will never come to be.

Thomas Szendrey has also translated, edited, or was otherwise involved in the publication of a number of works. Among them were Edit Császár Mályusz's history of the national theatre in Central Europe (*The Theatre and National Awakening in East Central Europe*, 1980), Bálint

Hóman's unpublished manuscript entitled *Ősemberek, ősmagyarok* [Ancient People, Ancient Hungarians] (1985),<sup>2</sup> and the history of his own university (The Story of Gannon University, 1985).

In addition to his family and the discipline of history, Tom's great love was his ancestral town of Tata. He loved that place with the affection of a child for his mother. That is the town where he found his future wife, Enikő; that is the town that was constantly uppermost in his mind; that is the town where he planned to live out the rest of his life after retirement; that is the town where he hoped to see his valuable library deposited; and that is the town where he wanted to complete those works that were to contain much of the knowledge he had accumulated in the course of lifelong learning.

One of these books was to be a biography of Sándor Giesswein (1856-1923), a priest, theologian, philosopher, church historian, and one of the founders and leaders of the Christian Socialist Movement in Hungary. Giesswein was especially close to Tom's heart, not only because they shared similar ideas and views about the world, but because Giesswein too, was a native of Tata. Tom would collect everything about the life of his hero. He would write passionately about certain episodes of his life, and he would show me with affection some of the completed sections of his planned manuscript. If only fate would have given him more time to finish this work, as well as some of the others that he planned to write. The latter included a major intellectual synthesis of Hungarian history, that was to follow the Dilthey-inspired *Geistesgeschichte* view of historical evolution, and which the two of us planned to coauthor.

Having lived 120 miles (190 kilometres) apart for the last three decades, we could not meet as often as we would have liked, but we did see each other fairly often. We visited each other's homes and universities, we met at various scholarly conferences, and Tom would also come to Pittsburgh at least once a year to deliver a lecture in one of my graduate seminars. His lectures were highly popular and his perceptive view of historical evolution was always appreciated by my students.

Although unable to meet on a weekly basis, we were always in touch via the telephone. I called him at least once of week, which he would often reciprocate. Lacking colleagues with similar interests in my immediate vicinity, and bereft of people who could appreciate my addiction to the past of the Carpathian Basin, he was the only person (besides my wife, Agnes) I could speak to about issues that were dear to my heart. Figuratively speaking, he was a beacon in the barren desert that sur-

rounded me. This beacon began to flicker there years ago when he suffered a stroke (May 20, 2000), and it was extinguished permanently a nearly a year ago (May 14, 2003). I will miss this beacon, as will his family — his wife and his children — and undoubtedly also many of his friends.

During the three long years of Tom's struggle for survival, he was aided by Enikő, his faithful wife of thirty-two years, who fought for his life relentlessly, desperately and unselfishly. At the end, however, she had to give up. Her only consolation was that she had her son and daughter — Csongor/Tom and Tünde — next to her, to share the burdens of this uphill struggle for her husband's life. Undoubtedly, they will also be there in the future, to alleviate some of the pain and loneliness that will inevitably become part of her life during the coming months and years.

If the "iron chancellor" Otto von Bismarck was right when he claimed that "a really great man is known by... generosity..., humanity..., and moderation...", then Dr. Thomas Szendrey was indeed a great man. He was gentle, generous, and moderate as a person, and gifted as an intellectual. It is a tragedy of history that fate has not given him more time to make his intellectual capacity better known to the world. Even as it stands, however, he will be remembered both through his writings and through the achievements of his students. And we — his family and his close friends — will cherish his memory for many years to come.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Thomas László Szendrey, *The Ideological and Methodological Foundations of Modern Hungarian Historiography, 1750-1970* (New York, Ph. D. thesis, St. John's University, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas László Szendrey with Botond Clementis-Záhonyi, eds. [Bálint Hóman's (1885-1951)] *Ősemberek, ősmagyarok* [Ancient People, Ancient Hungarians] (Atlanta, Ga., Hungarian Cultural Foundation, 1985). Dr. Szendrey's articles and review articles that appeared in our journal include: "Remembering 1956: Some Reflections on the Historical Consciousness of a New Generation," 14, 1 (Spring, 1987): 27-38; "A History of Transylvania: Its Impact and Reception," 16, 1-2 (1989): 137-150; "Some Reflections on Oscar Jaszi and his Philosophy of History," 18, 1-2 (1991): 51-58.



a review article

## **The Joseph Pulitzer Story Re-examined**

**Béla Bodó**

András Csillag. *Joseph Pulitzer és az amerikai sajtó* [Joseph Pulitzer and the American press] (Budapest: Osiris Publishing House, 2000). 228 pp.

**The collapse of Communism** is generally regarded as a great boon to Western scholars specialized in the history of Eastern and Central Europe. Many secret archives are now open and an increasing number of universities and departments have Westerners on their staff. While the opportunities open to Western historians and their impact on the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are usually noted, much less attention has been paid to the opposite trend: the arrival of scholars from the ex-Communist lands and their contribution to Western European and American history. This neglect is no longer justified. As the book of a Hungarian scholar, András Csillag, on Joseph Pulitzer (1847-1911), demonstrates, Central and Eastern European historians are perfectly capable of transcending cultural differences and have much to offer in American, and especially immigration, history.

In his well researched and superbly argued book, Csillag questions one of the most enduring myths — built up in part by the father of modern journalism himself — about Pulitzer: he shows that the time-worn cliché 'from rags to riches' does not apply to the life and career of Pulitzer. The future owner of the *World* was born into a well-to-do Hungarian Jewish family in the town of Makó in southern Hungary in 1847. While his great-grandfather, who had migrated from Moravia to Hungary in the late eighteenth century, possessed a German-Jewish

identity, Pulitzer's parents, like most upwardly mobile Jewish families, sought assimilation into the Hungarian nobility. Several members of Pulitzer's family participated in the Hungarian revolution of 1848; his uncle on the mother side, Pulitzer's lifetime hero, even became a hussar officer. The changing of ethnic identity was accompanied by the loosening of religious ties. Until the age of eleven Pulitzer was raised as a gentleman, receiving a liberal education and taking riding lessons. Then tragedy struck: the early death of his father led to the family's bankruptcy and his mother's remarriage to a man who conformed closely to the fairy-tale image of the evil stepparent. Forced to learn a trade, which he did not like, and constantly humiliated by his stepfather, the increasingly frustrated Joseph — who continued to dream about a career as a hussar officer — sought to enlist in an Austrian regiment soon to be dispatched to put down the rebellion in Mexico. The medical board decision not to enlist him for medical reasons did not dissuade the young Pulitzer from his original plan. He used his inheritance to purchase a ticket to the United States, hoping to reach Mexico via land. Since he only wanted action, Pulitzer quickly changed his mind upon his arrival to a United States torn by civil war: he immediately enlisted in a Northern regiment made up mainly German and other European, including Hungarian, newcomers and soldiers-of-fortune. Discharged from the army and completely penniless, Pulitzer reached St. Louis in the summer of 1865. Penniless but far from poor, he possessed confidence cultural capital and an almost aristocratic bearing. The latter qualities were in short supply in the United States, even among German émigrés whose organizations and public events Pulitzer frequented after his arrival in the city. The same qualities capture the attention of Carl Schurz, a hero of the German revolution of 1848, later senator and the editor of the *Westliche Post*. Schurz basically adopted Pulitzer as his son, not only training him in journalism and teaching him about Central European culture and history but also passing down the essence of his life experience. Under his guidance Pulitzer became a committed liberal and a professional reporter trying, like his mentor, to combine journalism with politics. Unlike Schurz, however, Pulitzer apparently did not possess stable party loyalties.

In the mid-1870s, infuriated by frequent business scandals and the apparently close relationship between the Republic Party leadership and big business, he switched his allegiance to the Democrat Party. About the same time, he acquired the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, in which he pioneered the techniques of what later became known of 'new journalism.' The

newspaper became known for its advocacy of social reforms and open campaigning on the side of Democratic candidates during elections. While his newspaper quickly established itself on the market, Pulitzer's political career failed to take off: after one unsuccessful try, he did become an elected senator in 1884 but, disillusioned with party politics, he gave up his seat within a year.

In 1883, Pulitzer acquired the New York newspaper, the *World*, and turned it into the most popular paper in the country. The revolutionary innovation of the *World* was, as Csillag rightly points out, the merging of the techniques used by elite papers with those of the tabloids. Like the forerunner of the *New York Times*, the *World* carried reliable information fast and offered a balanced view on the most important issues. Pulitzer used the latest technology and recruited advertisers in order to lower the price of the paper. The *World* had a section devoted to sports and fashion and, like today's tabloids, it displayed many pictures and carried shocking stories, many of which were clearly invented. To attract new readers, mainly immigrants and women, the journalists were instructed to adopt a simple prose and write in a clear but enjoyable style. The newspaper clearly reflected Pulitzer's commitment to liberalism, democracy and social reform. The journalists sought to expose corruption in every form and demanded tough punishment for politicians who catered to business interests and accepted bribes. Like the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, Pulitzer's new paper did not hide its political sympathies and campaigned openly for Democratic candidates during elections. The *World* exposed the Republican candidate, Blaine, as the friend of big business and played a major role in the election of Cleveland to the presidency in 1884. In the following year, Pulitzer's even headed involvement in the Venezuelan crisis successfully staved off war between the Great Britain and the United States.

In the second half of the 1890s, Pulitzer found a worthy competitor in the son of a Californian millionaire, W. R. Hearst, who copied his methods (Hearst had learned the trade while working for the *World* as a reporter) without, however, subscribing to his mentor's lofty principles. While Pulitzer sought power to effect social and political reforms, Hearst used scandals mainly to blackmail both politicians and business leaders. Nevertheless, his unscrupulous business practices seem to have paid off, because the circulation of his *Journal* increased rapidly after 1895. Determined to keep the *World* the number one paper in America, Pulitzer increasingly resorted to sensationalism, thus making his paper virtually

indistinguishable from the *Journal*. Eager not be outdone by the *Journal* as the defender of American interest and honour, the *World*, with its constant warmongering and the spread of false stories about atrocities, played a major role in the beginning of the Spanish-American War. While the paper profited enormously from the tension between the two powers and the ensuing war, the image of the *World* as a reliable and balanced source of information declined rapidly in the second half of the 1890s.

Pulitzer spent the last ten years of his life seeking to restore the reputation of the *World* as both an elite and a popular paper. He played an important role in the emergence of journalism as a modern profession in the United States. He not only laid the financial foundation of the faculties of journalism at the University of Columbia and Harvard University but also became intimately involved in developing their curriculum. He wanted the next generation of journalists to have a good education: his plans stipulated that candidates take courses in jurisprudence, literature, sociology, foreign languages, history and natural sciences. The journalists of the future should be politically independent, courageous, have a humanistic orientation, seek the truth and side with the poor and the oppressed. His commitment to liberalism and humanism also found an expression in the creation of the Pulitzer Prize, which, like his plans for journalism schools, came to fruition only after his death. Pulitzer was also a patron of art: without his campaign and financial support the Statue of Liberty in New York, among other things, would have never been built. His children and grandchildren were motivated by the same liberal and democratic ideal and the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* (the *World* was sold off between the wars) still represents high standards and reflects the humanistic orientation of its founder.

This short summary of Csillag's book does not do justice to the fascinating story, which the author has succeeded in telling exceedingly well. The book is well researched: it relies on a wide variety of sources from church registries, official correspondences, memoirs, newspaper articles and interviews. It even has a chapter on historical memory based on interviews both in Hungary and the United States, and on the close analysis of the statues and paintings that famous and less famous artists made of Pulitzer. Csillag has displayed a profound knowledge of both of American and Hungarian history and even succeeded in drawing a realistic picture of St. Louis in the late nineteenth century. The language is clear, the style enjoyable, the quality of the chapters is even, and the

transition from social and cultural history to biographical details is smooth.

What is missing from this book is a clear theoretical framework. The book is basically about the early history of American journalism and the role of Pulitzer in it. The author does a great job in exploring both aspects of the story. However, he does not connect his story to the larger issue of modernization and the emergence of modern professions. The study suggests that editors have a hard time in maintaining their professional standards during times of intense competition. This is an interesting point, which I believe deserves further examination and could have even served as a thesis of the book. Equally important is the connection between journalism, on the one hand, and ideological commitment and political practices, on the other. Csillag accepts at face value Pulitzer's assertion that he wanted power to serve the public and do good. However, one could equally argue, as the *World's* role in the origins of the Spanish-American War showed, that Pulitzer was never able to resolve the contradiction between his liberal/democratic principles and his lust for wealth and power. It seems to me that in many cases his liberalism was self-serving and that by haranguing the rich and the demanding social reform, he merely adopted 'humanitarian rhetoric' to increase circulation.

There were also many contradictions in Pulitzer's character, which Csillag was able to expose but, in my opinion, failed to explain. Pulitzer was a convinced republican and democrat; yet, for years, his best friend was the Austro-Hungarian ambassador and he married into a family of Jefferson Davis. Pulitzer portrayed himself as a self-made man and the populist tribune eager to satisfy the hunger of the common man for news and entertainment. However, he was everything but an average man: Pulitzer came from a well-to-do family, received an excellent education, spoke several languages, later in his life lived in princely luxury and had friends in the highest circles both in the United States and Europe. Pulitzer fought against corruption and monopolies and business; at the same time, he sought to corner the newspaper market and did not hesitate to resort to slander and warmongering to increase profit. He never denied his Hungarian and Jewish background; however, he maintained few ties with the Hungarian and Jewish communities in New York. Finally, I think the author should have at least speculated about the sources of Pulitzer's ambition. Many psychiatrists argue that limitless ambition has not only social causes but could be perceived as a sign of maladjustment and mental illness. Did Pulitzer's work ethic and lust for power reflect the 'spirit' of the nineteenth century, American optimism, the desire of a

recent immigrant to succeed, his Jewish cultural heritage or were they rooted in his mental and psychological make-up?

The above remarks certainly do not reduce the value of the book but prove that it can evoke questions in the reader. Csillag has made a great contribution to many fields: cultural and social historians and those interested in the history of the profession and immigration to North America can equally profit from it. The book is highly relevant since we live in a time when profit motive and political pressure has seriously reduced the quality of media in the United States. The book should be translated into English and included in reading list for both undergraduate and graduate students in American history as well as American journalism.

## NOTES

English-language works on Pulitzer include: Julian S. Rammelkamp, *Pulitzer's Post-dispatch, 1878-1883* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967); George Juergens, *Joseph Pulitzer and the New York World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966); W.A. Swanberg, *Pulitzer* (New York: Scribner, 1967); and Denis Brian, *Pulitzer: A Life* (New York: Wiley, 2001).

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*War, 1938–1948* (Columbia U. P./East European Monographs, 1998). His articles appeared in periodicals such as the *Journal of Modern History*, *Journal of Canadian Studies*, *Historical Papers* (the yearbook of the Canadian Historical Association), *New York History*, *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, *War & Society* (Canberra, Australia), *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, the *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*, and *Hungarian Studies* (Budapest). He is a former President of the American Association for the Study of Hungarian History and of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada.

KENNETH McROBBIE has taught cultural and intellectual history at the University of Manitoba and the University of British Columbia. Since 1959 he has been translating poetry and writing on cultural matters pertaining to Hungary, a country he has visited many times. His publications include *The Selected Poems of Ferenc Juhász* (Oxford, 1970) and (with Tony Connor) *The Selected Poems of László Nagy* (Oxford, 1973). He has edited selected papers from international conferences of the Karl Polanyi Institute (Concordia University): *Humanity, Society and Commitment* (Montreal: Black Rose, 1994) and (with Kari Polanyi Levitt) *Karl Polanyi in Vienna* (Black Rose, 1999). When he was Editor of *Mosaic: a journal for the comparative study of literature and ideas* (University of Manitoba), he produced a special issue on *The Eastern European Imagination in Literature* (Summer 1973, 238 pages). He is working on a biography of Ilona Duczynska, and an edition of her writings and correspondence.

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ALAN WALKER is best known for his highly-acclaimed three-volume biography of Franz Liszt (London and New York, 1983-96). He studied music in his native England (received his doctorate from Durham University in 1965), began his academic career there, and was a producer for the BBC music division from 1961 to 1971. He subsequently became chairman and professor in the music department at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario. His chief areas of research are Romantic music, musical aesthetics, and criticism. He has edited anthologies on the life and works of Schumann, Chopin and Liszt, and produced two books on the creation and perception of music. Alan Walker's personal archives of extensive correspondence with musicians was placed in the library of McMaster University in 1997. He is the recipient of a *Festschrift: New Light on Liszt and his Music: essays in honor of Alan Walker's 65th birthday* (Pendragon Press, 1997).

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