

limited, but she was pleasant to work with and worked harder than any other employee. As days rolled into months, I learned that she was here with her husband, a Fulbright exchange teacher, who happened to be teaching in a high school just a few blocks from where I lived. I met Rob a few times when he came to pick his wife up, or drop her off, and once, he asked that I and my girlfriend Alicia come to their house for dinner. This was undoubtedly the best thing that happened to me at the deli.

Dinner was fantastic, but the conversation we had was even better. We spoke a little of politics, a little of weather of course, and more importantly we spoke of life in our respective homelands, comparing the things we liked and disliked, contrasting common phrases and daily occurrences; I'd never been outside America then, and talking with these Hungarians, went home thinking about the differences, yes, but more about the similarities, imagining myself in a country where I didn't know the language, with people like my newfound friends walking the streets, and maybe even people who were something like the people I knew. Over the year that Orsi and Rob were in America, we had dinner several times at each other's houses, and Alicia and I grew to like them very much, so we were understandably sad when they left, and we were also determined to stay in touch. E-mail allowed

us to speak about their readjustment to their country, the way things looked after a time living in a very different land. The following summer, in 2004, we went to visit our friends in their country, and here I think we realized how our hospitality had been lacking, because we met their friends, their family, they showed us their towns and offered information, help with the language – and other Hungarians we met were as welcoming, without knowing us beforehand. I am to this day unable to imagine that my first trip abroad could have been any better. When the time came for us to go home, we were sad again, but pleased with our travels and even more determined to stay in contact.

This time it was our turn to look at our homes with new eyes, seeing things in a brighter light, thinking of different lives half a world away. I don't think we learned to like America less, we rather learned to like Hungary as well. And so, this year, in June, I'm taking a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certification course, after which I hope to join Alicia, who has already been teaching English to Hungarians for several months."

So, that is it. "Seeing things in a brighter light, thinking of different lives half a world away" as Ben puts it. I wish everyone could have similar experiences.

Attempts at the Revision of the Treaty of Trianon in the Light of American Hungarian Relations in the Interwar Period

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The following paper will offer an insight into the results of my doctoral research project I carried out as a Fulbright student in the US. As part of this extensive inquiry, the essay below will assess images Hungarians fostered about the US during the interwar period with the definite purpose to underline their significance in the formation of political and diplomatic relations between the countries. These Hungarian images of America gave rise to popular illusions regarding Hungary's political expectations toward the US, especially in terms of the revision of the Treaty of Trianon, and within this scope they were to make American views of Hungary, and consequently American action favorable toward Hungary. Such image-making efforts, however, did not yield the expected results. These images had no lasting influence on the American mind, and even less on American politics toward Hungary between the two world wars.

1. Some Preliminary Thoughts

When I was honored to become one of the Hungarian grantees of the Fulbright Scholarship Commission for the academic year 2002/2003 to Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, I can say without exaggeration that my dearest academic dream had come true. The Fulbright scholarship meant (and still means) for me a great opportunity. Opportunity, on the one hand to live in the country whose culture and history I have been both learning and teaching for almost seven years by now. Immersion into everyday America, life in a truly multicultural household of seven students of various ethnic backgrounds in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and visits to places from the Niagara Falls through Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlantic City to Richmond helped me experience the country and her culture first hand, and understand them better.

On the other hand, the Fulbright grant provided me the opportunity to further my academic goals and do research for my doctoral dissertation titled *Attempts at the Revision of the Treaty of Trianon in the Light of American Hungarian Relations in the Interwar Period* at various American research libraries, archives and institutions.

Due to the very nature of my inquiry, it was imperative for me to carry out research in the US, and get access to archival, as well as library materials otherwise not accessible in Hungary. I was affiliated to the Center for Russian, East and Central

European Studies at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and the American Hungarian Foundation, both in New Brunswick, NJ, where I could study various primary as well as secondary sources. Besides this, my project included research at the Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton University; at the Sterling Memorial Library, Manuscript and Archives at Yale University; at the Manuscript and Archives of Syracuse University where I had the chance to consult the personal papers of respective American diplomats and ministers to Hungary in the interwar era, among them e.g. Joshua Butler Wright, John Flournoy Montgomery and Nicholas Roosevelt. Research on State Department materials (with special respect to Record Groups 46, 59 and 84), Congressional records, the presidential papers of Warren G. Harding, Calvin C. Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, and the personal documents of Secretaries of State Bainbridge Colby, Charles Evans Hughes, Frank B. Kellogg, Henry L. Stimson and Cordell Hull, as well as the papers of other makers of diplomacy during the period in focus, i.e. Senator William E. Borah of Idaho, became possible in Washington, D.C., where both the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, and the National Archives and Records Administration were abundant treasures for such sources.

During my stay in the US I had the chance to attend several academic forums. The regular lectures and panel discussions at Rutgers and the American Hungarian Foundation, the two conferences- the Fulbright Students' Conference in

February 2003 in Washington, D. C. and the conference of the American Hungarian Educators' Association in April 2003 at Columbia University, New York, were excellent occasions to participate in academic exchanges of ideas, meet and learn from internationally acknowledged scholars.

Professionally I benefited from the "Fulbright experience" to the greatest extent. Without the Fulbright grant it would have been impossible for me to carry out my dissertation research project in the US, thus without this opportunity I would not be able to fulfill my most important professional aim, the completion of my doctoral dissertation. All of my currently taught courses have also benefited from/been facilitated by my studies in the US. I have collected additional material for my formerly taught courses, and developed curricula for new ones as well. A new survey lecture course on American Studies, and new seminars on US social and diplomatic history in the interwar period are the results of my studies as far as my educational responsibilities are concerned.

Besides the numerous professional ones, my one-year stay in the US also yielded benefits of more personal nature. "The American adventure" was an unforgettable lifetime experience for my husband and me. Since we got married shortly before our leave for the US we like to think of it as our honeymoon as well. Both of us consider the scholarship a privilege that made possible for us to enrich our lives, and meet excellent people. Our flat-mates: Chris, Vincenzo, and Wendy;

the Marreros, Lisa, George and Jose, who "adopted" us within the compass of the Rutgers Hospitality Program, and above all Irene and Mickey Schubert who treated us as their daughter and son are still very good friends.

It is an honor to belong to the Fulbright Alumni; an honor already earned, and to be earned in the future. I do hope that my dissertation soon to be submitted and defended will prove my professional and personal commitment, and will strengthen my position as a worthwhile member of the Fulbright community.

2. My Dissertation Research Project

Academic research on Hungarian-American relations within the scope of American Studies in Hungary, and in the US is substantial and significant due to the contribution of internationally acknowledged Hungarian and American-Hungarian scholars like Anna Katona, Julianna Puskás, Béla Várdy, Zoltán Fejs, Nándor Dreisziger, Péter Pásztor, Tibor Frank, and Tibor Glant, etc. That notwithstanding, the history of American Hungarian relations in the interwar period has only been partly written. Furthermore, although research on Hungarian revisionist policies toward Britain and France has been extensively done (i.e. Mária Ormos, Ignác Romsics, Miklós Zeidler), the (possible) role of the US in the revision of the Treaty of Trianon so far has not been devoted enough attention. My doctoral dissertation titled *Attempts at the Revision of the Treaty of Trianon in the*

Light of American Hungarian Relations in the Interwar Period proposes to fill both gaps, and to do a substantial part of the research analyzing American Hungarian diplomatic relations in the interwar era in the light of the revision of the Treaty of Trianon. In the following I intend to offer a short insight into the results of my research project and present one significant aspect of my doctoral inquiry. The following account is the product of my work done at libraries and archives in the US.

2.1. Hungarian Images of the US in the Interwar Period

The following analysis will assess images Hungarians fostered about the US during the interwar period with the definite purpose to underline their significance in the formation of political and diplomatic relations between the countries. These Hungarian images of America gave rise to popular illusions regarding Hungary's political expectations toward the US and within this scope they were to make American views of Hungary, and consequently American action favorable toward Hungary. Such image-making efforts, however, did not yield the expected results. These images had no

lasting influence on the American mind, and even less on American politics toward Hungary between the two world wars.

As compared to previous images, Hungarian perceptions of the US did not change significantly. The Promised Land image, as well as that of democratic America, "the guardians of the laws and humanity,"¹¹ embedded in the Hungarian consciousness by Lajos Kossuth, provided the building blocks. But while the first had lost its attraction, mainly due to strict immigration restriction laws in the US, the second had become even more notable and served a higher national/nationalistic and political purpose, the revision of the Treaty of Trianon. Trianon and the revision of the Treaty of Trianon became the single most important national issue for Hungarians during the interwar period. Regardless of social, economic, or political backgrounds the revisionist cause united the whole nation. The "Trianon syndrome"¹² had become a national psychosis, which gave rise to popular yet unfounded beliefs and expectations

11 See Lajos Kossuth's speech at the Corporation Dinner at Irving House, New York, December 11, 1851, quoted in Bakó, "Kossuth," 128; *Dedication of a Bust of Lajos (Louis) Kossuth. Proceedings in the U. S. Capitol Rotunda. March 15, 1990. 101st Congress, 2nd Session* (U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1990), 51.

12 See Steven Béla Várdy, "The Impact of Trianon upon the Hungarian Mind: The Nature of Interwar Hungarian Irredentism," in Steven Béla Várdy and Ágnes Huszár Várdy, Eds., *The Austro-Hungarian Mind: At Home and Abroad. East European Monograph Series* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989): 149-169.

in terms of the revision of the Treaty of Trianon. Certain Hungarian misconceptions, such as American rejection to sign the peace treaties, Secretary of State Lansing's resignation, the fact that the American Hungarian separate peace did not mention the Trianon boundaries, etc. projected the belief that the United States of America was the sole ally, who sided with the Hungarian cause. This explains why the US had become such an important topical issue in the popular, the academic, the official and political discourse. Although "[a] lively interest has always been felt in Hungary for every manifestation of American thought,"¹³ after the First World War, due to the above outlined special circumstances, the US got into the focus of attention on a much larger scale, and Hungarians vested even greater interest in America.

As previously, during the interwar period one traditional source of information on the US was the travelogues: Dr. László Szabó's book, *Az igazi Amerika* [The Real America], Dr. Zoltán Bíró's travelogue titled *Amerika. Magyarok a modern csodák világában* [America: Hungarians in the World of Modern Wonders], or Dr. Ferencné Völgyesi's account *Újra itthon. Tanulmányút Amerika és Európa 17 államán át a háború kitörésének izgalmai között* [Home Again. A Study Tour through 17 Countries of America and Europe amidst the Excitements of the Outbreak of the War] were popular readings.¹⁴

13 István Gál, *Hungary and the Anglo-Saxon World* [Magyarország Anglia és Amerika] (Budapest: Officina, 1944), 36.

14 That all these three accounts were popular readings

Some other contributions to travelogue literature about the US were Elek Máthé's *Amerikai magyarok nyomában* [In the Wake of American Hungarians]; and Erzsébet Kol's *Tiszaparttól Alaszkáig* [From the Banks of the Tisza to Alaska], which gives account on the natural beauties, the flora and the fauna of the US.¹⁵

Serious academic interest in America also rose, which was both the cause and effect of the images Hungarians projected of the US. Subjects on the US were included in the university curricula as well. One good example for this is Pál Teleki's lectures on American geography, economy and politics. Another significant manifestation of the emerging interest in America is Jenő Horváth's book titled *A modern Amerika története, 1492-1920* [History of Modern America, 1492-1920]¹⁶ published

is demonstrated by the fact that all of them had been published twice in the respective period. Dr. László Szabó, *Az igazi Amerika* [The Real America] (1st ed. Pallas Irodalmi és Nyomdaipari Rt.: Budapest, 1925, 2nd ed. Pallas Irodalmi és Nyomdaipari Rt.: Budapest, 1928); Dr. Zoltán Bíró, *Amerika. Magyarok a modern csodák világában* [America: Hungarians in the World of Modern Wonders] (1st ed. Budapest: Hungária Könyvkiadó Vállalat, 1929, 2nd ed. Budapest: Hungária Könyvkiadó Vállalat, 1930); Dr. Ferencné Völgyesi, *Újra itthon. Tanulmányút Amerika és Európa 17 államán át a háború kitörésének izgalmai között* [Home Again. A Study Tour through 17 Countries of America and Europe amidst the Excitements of the Outbreak of the War] (1st and 2nd eds. Budapest: Hornyánszky, 1939).

15 Elek Máthé, *Amerikai magyarok nyomában* (Budapest: Dante, 1942), and Erzsébet Kol's *Tiszaparttól Alaszkáig* [From the Banks of the Tisza to Alaska] (Budapest: Magyar Királyi Természettudományi Társulat, 1940).

16 Jenő Horváth, *A modern Amerika története, 1492-*

by the Szent István Társulat [Saint Stephen Society], a well-established Catholic mainstream publishing house and literary association in contemporaneous Hungary. While on the one hand the book was to satisfy Hungarian interest in the US, on the other hand Horváth also wished to make an impression with it on the Americans. In a letter addressed to Joshua Butler Wright, Minister of the US to Hungary between 1927 and 1933, Horváth “offer[s] the book in the interest of the Minister and to his country.”¹⁷ The same purposes were served by István Gál’s book, *Hungary and the Anglo-Saxon World* [Magyarország Anglia és Amerika] published somewhat later in 1944.¹⁸

Jenő Pivány’s seminal book titled *Hungarian-American Historical Connections from Pre-Columbian Times to the End of the Civil War*¹⁹ also represents vested interests in America; nevertheless, his book bears even greater importance in terms of our inquiry. Firstly, Pivány’s work demon-

strates the significance of Hungarian contributions to American history. This effort was mostly underlined by problems of Hungarian loyalty in the US during the First World War and, at the same time, by some identity problems of Hungarian Americans and their search for a usable past after the war. In this respect the book was a message to Hungarian Americans. Secondly, Jenő Pivány’s *Hungarian-American Historical Connections from Pre-Columbian Times to the End of the Civil War*, by presenting the historical connections between the US and Hungary emphasized the shared sentiments and past of the two nations. He tried to demonstrate that there was a strong historical and ideological bond between them, which idea in the interwar period, by way of historical example, was one of the cores of Hungarian political expectations toward the US. Such often alluded historical examples and parallels believed to have bound the nations were the following: The American War of Independence, the cause of the colonists to break away from the mother country was put in parallel with the cause of the freedom-fighter Hungarians of 1848/49. Lajos Kossuth,²⁰ who was named the Hungarian Washington and his historical legacy were seen as a powerful bond between the nations. Emphasizing, and at the same time thus appealing to such sentiments were to underpin Hungarian beliefs that the US was to support the Hungarian revisionist cause. Later the American

20 On the significance of Kossuth in American Hungarian relations see Tibor Frank, “Az emberiségnek közös sorsa van. Kossuth az Egyesült Államokban, 1851-52” [Humanity Has a Common Fate. Kossuth in the United States, 1851-52], *Rubicon* (1992/2): 33-36.

Civil War history also served such purposes, especially so when Hungarian contribution to the victory of the Union was highlighted by works such as Ödön Vasváry’s *Lincoln’s Hungarian Heroes. The Participation of Hungarians in the Civil War, 1861-1865*.²¹ The Northern cause to get back the unlawfully seceded territories of the South came to be identified with that of Hungary’s revisionist cause.

Such Hungarian images of the US, as well as the images Hungary liked to project of herself in America were manifested in popular traditions Hungarians started to observe during the interwar period. All were cordial gestures toward America. The most spectacular of this kind was the annual celebration of Independence Day, that is the July 4th by Hungarians in the City Park, at the statue erected by American citizens of Hungarian origin in 1906 in tribute to George Washington. Washington, just like Kossuth, had become a symbolic figure; and his political career came to be viewed in the eyes of Hungarians as the apotheosis of America’s grand democratic experiment. Therefore, it is not surprising that Washington enjoyed great reverence.

Diplomatic documents in the American National Archives and Records Administration provide information on and descriptions of Independence Day celebrations in Budapest.²² Below, a

21 Ödön Vasváry, *Lincoln’s Hungarian Heroes. The Participation of Hungarians in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Washington, D.C.: n. p., 1939).

Hungarians, mainly Kossuth émigrés, served both the Northern as well as the Southern cause. A good example for the latter is Béla Estván.

22 See M708 Records of the Department of State Relating

presentation and short analysis of three speeches delivered at different Independence Day celebrations illustrates first the importance Washington’s figure and the democratic and liberal ideals he once stood for had among Hungarians, and second, shows how these celebrations served a nationwide revisionist propaganda campaign.

The first one is Count Albert Apponyi’s closing speech on July 4, 1921. Apponyi was speaking as president of the Hungarian American Society founded earlier the very same day. Apponyi’s eulogy is a perfect representation of the rhetoric of the above-assessed set of Hungarian images of America. For this reason let us quote the text extensively:

No more fitting day could have been chosen for the founding of the Hungarian-American Society than the birthday of American independence. This is a proof that the Hungarian nation is seeking symbolic relationship with American ideals. The Budapest monument of

to Internal Affairs of Austria-Hungary, 1912-1929, RG 59 Records of the Department of State, National Archives and Records Administration. Hereinafter referred to as RG59, NARA. M709 Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations Between the US and Austria-Hungary and Hungary, 1921-1929, RG59, NARA; and M710 Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations Between Austria-Hungary and Other States, 1920-1929, RG59, NARA. See also RG84.2 Records of Diplomatic Posts; Austria-Hungary, 1837-1955 and Hungary, 1920-1955; Records of Consular Posts, 1790-1963; Austria, 1866-1955 and Hungary, 1862-1935. Records of Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State.

Washington incorporates two ideas; the clear recognition of the basic principle on which the greatness of the American nation rests and the feeling of the permanent relationship with the American nation. As far as this relationship is concerned the American conception of freedom is probably different from the Hungarian, but the form is not essential inasmuch as it is the coefficient of external circumstances and changed according to epochs and peoples. The essential feature is the identity of spirit and character and this is the bond between the two nations. The common ideal in the character of both nations is their love for freedom and independence. [...] Humanity erects monuments in the honor of those whose memory it desires to preserve throughout generations and if this monument immortalizes an idea, as indeed the monument of Washington actually does, it is that we will remain true to this immortal idea in all our misfortunes and distress. This statue stood unharmed and respected in the course of the tragic war just as did the statue of Kossuth in Cleveland during the same time, and here as well as there the people had the feeling that the ideals immortalized by these monuments must outlive the war. [...] The fate of a nation which cherishes high ideals is just as immortal as the ideals themselves and nothing can break the spirit which they radiate and if the Americans desire the learn European conditions and ask themselves which people it is whose character shows the most similarity to their own which nation it is which throughout the centuries has fought for freedom, for culture and progress, and has made the most sacrifices for human ideals,

then there is only one answer to this and upon this answer Hungary bases its claim to the sympathy of America. American benevolence has accomplished wonders in the alleviation of personal suffering. The remembrance of this wonderful work will live on as flame of eternal gratitude in the heart of the Hungarian nation. The nation itself however demands no charity, but justice, and if America does justice to other nations it does justice to itself at the same time because it has remained true to its noble ideals.²³

Masterfully applying the art of speech Apponyi appeals to the American sense of legacy for democratic ideals, and while doing so, he covertly expresses the expectations his nation cherishes toward Washington's nation. The second speech is an explicit expression of the revisionist cause. Ulysses Grant-Smith's memorandum to the secretary of state dated to July 16, 1920, calls the Department's attention to a speech delivered by Field Bishop Zadravec, which he addressed to Captain James W. Pedlow, the representative of the American Red Cross in Hungary. In Zadravec's tribute to Washington "a plea is made to aid Hungary to regain her lost provinces."²⁴

²³ Count Albert Apponyi's speech at the Washington Monument on July 4, 1921, Budapest. Transcribed on the basis of Ulysses Grant Smith's Memorandum to the Secretary of State, July 6, 1921, Roll# 21, M708 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Austria-Hungary, 1912-1929, RG 59, NARA.

²⁴ Ulysses Grant Smith's Memoranda to the Secretary of State, July 16, 1920, Roll# 21, M708 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of

We have been robbed, despoiled, ransacked by others. This is why we are hungry, this is why we beg. It is not for us to blush at sinful misery. Let those feel shame who have reduced Hungary to the State of the beggar of the world. A free country is here today, to celebrate its freedom. America, classical home of Freedom, the land of the most awful, most unimaginable oppression turns to thee today. [...] When you come home you will relate of the gratitude felt by Hungary [...] to your free country. But you will also relate that our gratitude to your free country would be still greater for help accorded to us to get our free Mother Country back again.²⁵

George Washington's figure and ideals were merged in a peculiar way to serve the same revisionist aims on another occasion. Reporting to the State Department Joshua Butler Wright accounted on the speech delivered by Consul General Ernest Ludwig, one of the vice presidents of the Hungarian American Society. Wright attached the copy of Ludwig's speech to his report, in which Ludwig gave voice to the following ideas:

[...] perhaps some happy day may come when America will be in the position to throw its weight and influence into the balance in order that Hungary may again be what it

was. Perhaps to some of you this may seem preposterous, but we Hungarians feel in our innermost hearts that, had George Washington lived in those fateful days of the war and the peace negotiations which led to Trianon, Hungary would never have been sacrificed on the altar of greed, wanton lust and ignorance. [...] When we, therefore, think and speak of George Washington we think of him not only for what he did to his own country, we love him not only for what he gave to mankind, but also because to us he seems to be that symbol of international world justice which we trust will some day return to Hungary what was wrongfully wrested from her. Let me ask you all to join with me in the three rousing cheers for America, the land of freedom, America, the land of ideals and America, the land that has given the world George Washington.²⁶

On the same occasion the Hungarian American Society read its open letter addressed to President Coolidge. Bridging the past and the present in the letter, the speech evoked President Coolidge as "the successor of that great hero [Washington] and the head of the free and therefore happy American nation" whose people "helped to liberate the national hero of Hungary, Louis Kossuth, whom the Americans called the "Washington of

Austria-Hungary, 1912-1929, RG 59, NARA.

²⁵ Bishop Zadravec's speech on July 16, 1920 at the Washington Monument in the City Park, Budapest. Attached to Ulysses Grant Smith's Memorandum to the Secretary of State, July 16, 1920, Roll# 21, M708 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Austria-Hungary, 1912-1929, RG 59, NARA.

²⁶ *Approximate Text of the Speech Made by Consul General Ernest Ludwig at the Celebration before the George Washington Monument on July 3, 1927.* Attached to Joshua Butler Wright's Memorandum to Secretary of State on July 7, 1927. Roll #21, M708 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Austria-Hungary, 1912-1929, RG59, NARA.

Hungary [...]” Reminding the president and his nation of such bonds, the letter expressed the hope that such reminiscences still had greater meaning for the Americans.²⁷ From the above it becomes clear how desperate Hungarian attempts were at reinforcing favorable images of America and of themselves.

The extent to which such ideas were mutually shared by Americans also needs to be looked at. As the July 4th celebrations were cordial gestures toward the US, the representatives of the US Legation were always invited to these events. Interestingly enough, while Ulysses Grant-Smith passes a somewhat vitriolic comment on the Hungarian attitude displayed on one occasion when he says: “[i]t is perhaps characteristic of these people not to be able to refrain from injecting political matters whenever possible, even to the extent of bringing political questions on an occasion so far removed from such matters [...]”,²⁸ there are examples for utterances that seem to reinforce the assumptions about the strong historical bond and commitments between the two nations. Minister Wright’s words he shared with his audience at the July 4th

27 Quoted from “Celebration of Independence Day in Budapest,” *Pester Lloyd* (July 4, 1927). Enclosed to Joshua Butler Wright’s Memorandum to Secretary of State on July 7, 1927. Roll #21, M708 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Austria-Hungary, 1912-1929, RG59, NARA.

28 Ulysses Grant Smith’s Memorandum to Secretary of State on July 16, 1920. Roll# 16, M708 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Austria-Hungary, 1912-1929, RG59, NARA.

ceremonies provide one such example:

I trust you will permit me to refer to the factors which we possess in common and the motives toward which we strive together –our devotion to constitutions which we equally cherish, our interpretation of liberty and our mutual hopes and aspirations. The most casual student of history of your country will soon discover that no nation is more devoted to its constitution than is yours [...]. The same student of history can not but experience the most profound admiration for a nation which as stood for over a thousand years as a proponent of constitutional liberty and a bulwark of Christianity. 29

At the end of his speech Wright further elaborates on the ideals of liberty and rights, and concludes: “[w]e have [...] seen the appalling result of the perversion of liberty into license: may God help us in combating this prostitution of the most precious privilege of mankind.”³⁰ These statements, however, should invite careful interpretation. The thesis of my doctoral inquiry, according to which Hungarian political, that is primarily revisionist expectations were unmet by the US, is also demonstrated by the fact that like expressions of American views

29 Joshua Butler Wright’s Speech at the Ceremonies under the Auspices of the Hungarian American Society before the statue of George Washington in the City Park of Budapest, Sunday, July 3, 1927. Enclosed to Joshua Butler Wright’s Memorandum to Secretary of State on July 7, 1927. Roll #21, M708 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Austria-Hungary, 1912-1929, RG59, NARA.

30 Ibid.

fell almost without exception into the category of cordial and polite diplomatic gestures.³¹ Few personal relationships, as was for example the friendship of John Flournoy Montgomery with some high-standing Hungarian politicians, may have had some effective reciprocal influence on American policies toward Hungary in terms of furthering Hungary’s cause,³² but the most characteristic feature thereof was its scarcity.

Besides literature, popular as well as academic, and the tradition of July 4th celebrations, the press in and outside Hungary played an equally important role in projecting and reinforcing, on the one hand positive images of the US, and, on the other favorable images of Hungarians to Americans. The examples below illustrate both kinds respectively.

In 1928 a certain Mr. Frank Vojnics, the Mayor of Baja and also member of the Kossuth Pilgrimage to the US in 1928, addressed a letter to the President of the US, in which he congratulated President Coolidge, “the man who stands at the head of an immense state that marches at the head of all nations,” on his article titled “Let Us Have Liberty and Peace” Mr. Vojnics read in Hungarian translation in the *Pesti Napló*. Vojnics thanked the president for the fact that “modern America values [the ideal of liberty] higher than [...] life,” and quoted President Coolidge to have written that “America feels that it has been called upon to fight for two ideals of the civilized

31 See other memoranda in M708, RG59, NARA.

32 See John F. Montgomery, *Hungary, The Unwilling Satellite* (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1947).

world: for liberty and for peace.”³³ When the State Department received this letter, William R. Castle, the East European Desk Officer in the State Department, immediately urged Joshua Butler Wright, then minister of the US in Budapest, to acknowledge receipt of the letter and more importantly to inform Mr. Vojnics that “the President is not the author of the article in question” furthermore, that “the facsimile of his signature was secured and appended to the article without his knowledge or consent; and that the article itself is an inaccurate and misleading distortion of a passage taken from the president’s book.”³⁴ It turned out that the article attributed to President Coolidge was first published in the *Berlin National Zeitung* on April 21, 1928 under the title “America’s Role in World Affairs,” and purported to be an excerpt from the president’s book, which in Castle’s note was mentioned under the title *The Practice of Freedom* published by C. Scribner’s Son.³⁵

33 Frank Vojnics to President Coolidge, April 23, 1928, Volume 43, RG84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, National Archives and Records Administration.

34 William R. Castle to Joshua Butler Wright, June 5, 1928, Volume 43, RG84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, National Archives and Records Administration.

35 Ibid. The Library of Congress Catalogue lists no such book of this title by President Calvin C. Coolidge. It may be suspected that the wrong title was included in Castle’s dispatch. The book that might be the one in question bears the title *The Price of Freedom*, and was published in London and New York, in 1924, and, as it was claimed in the note, by C. Scribner’s Son.

Pesti Napló must have slavishly published this article in Hungarian translation of the above mentioned title. In view of Castle's instructions to Wright, it becomes clear that the article published in *Pesti Napló* appeared as an original contribution despite the fact that the president never contributed to the foreign press. Sentences were redrafted into a new and misleading context; certain ideas were "badly garbled either intentionally or by translation" and ideas were actually introduced which were not in the text at all. Castle explicitly asks Wright to express the Department's astonishment at the "publication of this apocryphal article over a facsimile of the President's signature with apparently no attempt at the verification of the authenticity of the article in question."³⁶ Obviously, such an affair shed no good light on the Hungarian press in general and *Pesti Napló* in particular. The incident demonstrates the extent to which Hungarians tended, intentionally or not, to overlook issues in this case the credibility of information, for their purposes. Reinforcing the favorable images Hungarians wanted to have about the US, however, was only one side of the coin. It was equally essential to assure America that Hungary was America's friend and was of a very high opinion of her. The following cases illustrate this Hungarian attitude.

George A. Gordon's report on Hungarian affairs to the Secretary of State

³⁶ Ibid.

dated to December 1, 1926 informed the department of an article published in *Budapest Hírlap* titled "America the Unpopular." The article reported about the growing unpopularity of the USA in Europe, especially in France, due to America's unwillingness to, as the article says, "play cards again under conditions where the cards are known from their backs by everyone except themselves."³⁷ The article goes on to explain that the US did not become member of the League of Nations, which many European powers, especially France, did not like at all. What made America even less popular at that time was her insistence on claiming the payment of the war loans. Debt adjustment was an option, but the total cancellation of the debts was totally out of the question. On these accounts the Hungarian journalist exempted the US from the charges, and clearly expressed his understanding of the American approach.³⁸

Another article most friendly to the United States was published in the *Budapest Hírlap* commenting on General Peyton C. March's speech at Denver in which he made the statement that Europe hated America. Theodore Brentano's report to the secretary of state pointed out that the *Budapest Hírlap* hastened to say that the above statement did not include

³⁷ "America the Unpopular," *Budapest Hírlap* summed up in George C. Gordon' Memorandum to the Secretary of State, December 1, 1926. Roll# 1, 2, M710 Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations Between Austria-Hungary and Other States, 1920-1929, RG59, NARA.

³⁸ Ibid.

Hungary which was most grateful for the money lent by the United States for reconstruction purposes.³⁹

In the light of the above we can see that the United States of America had attracted considerable attention and interest in Hungary in the interwar period.⁴⁰ Hungarians wanted to know more about the economically and politically most powerful nation which was viewed as Hungary's potential ally for revision. For this very reason Hungarians wished to popularize America in Hungary. Both popular and scholarly literature served to meet these ends. The American and

the Hungarian past came to be looked upon as histories based on mutually shared ideals and principles of liberty and democracy; the alleged historical bond of the two nations, most often exemplified and symbolized by Kossuth, was believed to provide background for the future, and help further Hungary's territorial claims to undo "the injustices the country had to suffer in Trianon." Popular gestures, such as the Independence Day celebrations, were to strengthen the bonds of the nations, as well as create and reinforce favorable images. However, one has to view these images in light of Hungarian expectations toward the US. It was imperative for Hungarians to keep up positive images of the US. At the same time conscious efforts were made to create and (re)-establish a favorable image of Hungary and the Hungarians in the US to further Hungary's political aspirations and to counter anti-Hungarian propaganda (often expressed by prominent voices such as the British historian Robert William Seton-Watson).

³⁹ The *Budapest Hírlap* article reported in Theodore Brentano's Memorandum to Secretary of State on March 1, 1927. Roll# 1, 2, M710 Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations Between Austria-Hungary and Other States, 1920-1929, RG59, NARA.

⁴⁰ The fact that the US had become a powerful symbol is demonstrated by the following somewhat far-fetched example as well. One of Theodore Brentano's memoranda to the State Department on July 18, 1924 mentions the fact that in Hungary the American flag is used to advertise a product of the MATU Shoe Factory. Vol. 18. RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, National Archives and Records Administration.