

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 1, 2020

"SEMI-OFFICIAL HUNGARIAN EFFORTS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR TERRITORIAL REVISION IN THE 1920S" BY ÉVA MATHEY

Éva Mathey, assistant professor of the North American Department, the Institute of English and American Studies, University of Debrecen, teaches American history and culture. Her special fields of research include American society and political culture during the period between the world wars, Hungarian-American relations with special emphasis on the interwar years, and diplomatic history, and her interest also extends to the history of the American woman. She earned a PhD in American Studies from the University of Debrecen in 2012. She is editor of the *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*. Her articles both in Hungarian and English have been published in journals such as, for example, *Aetas*, *Studii de limbi si literatură moderne*, *Eger Journal of American Studies*, *Hungarian Studies Review* and *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*. Her monograph on Hungarian revisionist efforts toward the US has recently been published by Debrecen University Press. Email: mathey.eva@arts.unideb.hu

Abstract: The revision of the Treaty of Trianon and, thus, the rectification of Hungary's post-World War I borders were important national concerns for Hungarians during the interwar period—a program which had to be implemented rather cautiously, given Hungary's fragile international status after the Great War. Trianon generated a great amount of Hungarian propaganda concerning territorial revision for domestic as well as international circulation with the purpose to expose the adverse consequences of the treaty, explain its injustices, generate a positive image of the country, and ultimately win support for revision. Since the possibilities of official, governmental revisionism were rather limited until after the second half of the 1920s, revisionism found new, semi-official channels. Notwithstanding the fact that Hungarian revisionist policies and propaganda were mostly directed toward Western European countries, especially during the 1920s, Hungarians also targeted the United States, the country of fair play and democracy, which—reinforced by a variety of often misconceived political, historical, and cultural tenets—was considered by Hungarians as a potential ally in their efforts to revise the Trianon borders. This essay presents some important mainstream, non-governmental, yet front-line contributions to revisionist propaganda aimed at the United States, such as the efforts of Counts István Bethlen, Pál Teleki and Albert Apponyi to present the nature of such revisionist endeavors and explain why such revisionist hopes were unfounded.

Keywords: Hungary, United States, interwar period, semi-official revisionism, Trianon

The revision of the Treaty of Trianon and, thus, the rectification of Hungary's post-World War I borders were vital national concerns for Hungarians during the interwar period. Such a program, however, had to be, and indeed was, carried out very carefully and cautiously, given Hungary's fragile international status and rather limited scope of action due to the obligations and restrictions of the peace treaty which prohibited any kinds of revisionist and irredentist propaganda activities (Glant 43-56) that would pose a threat to the postwar *status quo*. Prime Minister István Bethlen expressed the essence of this policy best when he said in an interview that "Hungary must adopt an attitude of watchful waiting pending the future development of international relations."¹ While Hungarians were impassioned over revision and generated overt irredentist propaganda which demanded the government to take concrete and immediate political steps toward this end, Bethlen's government adhered to the "sit back and look on" approach.²

A telling aspect of the policies of the various Hungarian governments during the interwar period was their relation to revisionist propaganda. Trianon generated an outpouring of Hungarian propaganda concerning territorial revision for domestic as well as international circulation with the purpose to expose the adverse consequences of the treaty, explain the injustices done to Hungary, create a positive image of the country and ultimately win support for revision. Bethlen emphasized that "he [and his government] had no [...] objection to private organizations keeping the question alive."³ While feeding Hungarian public opinion with what it wanted to hear he also moderated revisionist, irredentist expectations. Official Hungary during the Bethlen era could follow a gradual and carefully formulated revisionist program with peaceful and diplomatic means. Since the possibilities of official, governmental revisionism were rather limited until after the second half of the 1920s, revisionism found new, semi-official channels—which the Hungarian government, and Bethlen himself, tacitly accepted and supported. US Minister to Budapest Joshua Butler Wright's report to the State Department sheds light on this attitude as follows: "As I have frequently pointed out in past dispatches, while the Government is scrupulously abstaining from any participation in these [propaganda] activities it is far from discouraging them."⁴ Hungarian revisionist policies and propaganda, as Miklós Zeidler explains in *Ideas on Territorial Revision in Hungary*, were directed toward Western European countries mainly during the interwar years (88-124). This notwithstanding, especially during the 1920s, Hungarians also targeted the United States, seen by Hungarians as a country of fair play and democracy, and considered it as a potential ally in her efforts to revise the Trianon borders. Such expectations stemmed from a variety of political, historical, and cultural tenets including, among others, the belief that the US did not wish to dismember historic Hungary based on President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points of January 1918 and the idea of political self-determination under Point Ten in particular. Hungarians also believed, however mistakenly, that the US refused to sign the Treaty of Trianon and the separate US-Hungarian peace treaty of 1921 did not mention Trianon because Americans did not accept the harsh terms of the treaty. The highly favorable image that Lajos Kossuth generated overseas during his visit in 1851-52 and his political and cultural legacy also strengthened Hungarian such anticipation—best demonstrated by the Kossuth Pilgrimage in 1928 to pay tribute to the great Hungarian and unveil his statue in New York.⁵ Despite the fact that the American policy of political isolation from the affairs of Europe following World War I rendered such hopes rather unfounded, these ideas reinforced Hungarian revisionist expectations toward the US between the world wars.

Within this context, this essay presents some important mainstream, non-governmental, yet front-line contributions to revisionist propaganda aimed at the United States, such as the efforts of Counts István Bethlen, Pál Teleki and Albert Apponyi.

István Bethlen's essay, "Hungary in the New Europe," published in the prestigious scholarly journal, *Foreign Affairs* was an important contribution to the American debate about Hungary's future. In numerous articles before 1924 *Foreign Affairs* had dealt with postwar Hungary; when Hungary still carried the bad reputation as a result of the Bolshevik revolution as well as due to the widely publicized "white terror" and the revisionist, conservative and legitimist overtones of contemporary Hungarian public life. Hungary essentially was considered to be "the question mark" of Central Europe (Bowman qt. in Romsics, *Foreign Affairs* 909), with its ability to integrate into the community of democratic nations in Europe unclear. In "Dismembered Hungary and Peace in Central Europe," Oszkár Jászi gave a rather negative description of the Hungarian state of affairs. Jászi labelled Hungary the "danger zone of Europe," (Jászi 270) refused to support what he considered the conservative, oligarchic and anti-democratic political program of the Horthy regime, and explicitly challenged the success of the Bethlenian consolidation program (Jászi 278-279). Within this context Hamilton Fish Armstrong, the editor of *Foreign Affairs*, offered Bethlen the opportunity to present the official Hungarian viewpoint.

Armstrong's first choice fell upon Pál Teleki, who could not take such an opportunity due to his appointment to the frontier delineation committee of the League of Nations dealing with the Iraqi borders. Upon Teleki's recommendation, Prime Minister Bethlen accepted the invitation to contribute to the journal and wrote "Hungary in the New Europe" (Romsics, *Foreign Affairs* 919). It was imperative to counter the grim picture of Hungary in earlier publications, so Bethlen's essay was indeed an exercise in conscious image-making.⁶ He presented the learned intellectual readership of *Foreign Affairs* with a Hungary which had the "historical mission [...] of acting as the intellectual, political and economic link between East and West," and ready to fulfill this role (Bethlen, "Hungary in the New Europe" 454). Summing up "the chief agenda on the program facing Hungary in the immediate future—the Hungary which [...] has suffered the vicissitudes of the Great War and a series of revolutions, and which is now confined within the narrow frontiers unjustly imposed on her by the Treaty of Trianon," Bethlen pointed out four principal issues: (1) "economic and financial reconstruction, (2) a democratic reorganization on the basis of the principle of a gradual and sound evolution, (3) the organic linking up of Hungary and all Hungarians with western culture, and in connection herewith (4) the settlement of the minority question." (454) Appealing to US business circles his treatises demonstrated that Hungarian economic vitality was soon to assert itself, and even in its present "form and structure Hungary offer[ed] the most favorable field conceivable for the investment of foreign capital. The industrial, commercial and agricultural possibilities open [t]here to foreign capital and foreign enterprise [were] practically unlimited. [...]. The guarantees in view of political and social conditions" were "Hungary's desire and deliberate endeavor to maintain peace," (455, 458) and "to attain success exclusively by peaceful development [...]" and by "the principle of democratic progress." (455) The fact that for a thousand years Hungary endorsed a constitutional framework, and since 1848 a parliamentary form of government, Bethlen claimed, provided sufficient proof to the effect that "Hungary [...] during the whole course of her history ha[d] always been an enthusiastic admirer of the great ideas of liberty." (455-456).

"Hungary in the New Europe" depicted Hungary as a country following the program of peace, reform and democratization. Bethlen's essay, however, did not address the question of treaty revision; given the very nature and purpose of the essay such a move would have been unwise. This notwithstanding, he made repeated references to the "erroneous and general belief [...] of powerful statesmen exercising a decisive influence in the affairs of the world" that Hungary was only "an Austrian province," (450) to "the narrow frontiers unjustly imposed on [Hungary]," and to the situation of Hungarian minorities "cut off from their fatherland" (450, 454, 457). It was of utmost importance for Hungary to win America's

support. In light of the fact that Hungary applied for a League of Nations loan in the mid-1920s, the need for such supportive attitudes toward Hungary in the West was even more obvious. This is not to say that Bethlen did not consider advocating the cause of revision abroad important. His position as prime minister, as well as Hungary's fragile political status in the postwar power structure rendered such ventures difficult. The four lectures he delivered in England in November of 1933 prove, however, that not only did Bethlen view revision as a vital concern, but he also considered it to be imperative to inform the international public about it. But that he could only do after he had resigned his premiership in 1931.⁷ Count Pál Teleki, one of the most prominent members of political and academic circles in interwar Hungary, both as a politician and a scholar worked on a long-term, carefully formulated plan for territorial revision. (Ablonczy, "Teleki Pál" 15)⁸ Like practically every Hungarian, Teleki believed that the postwar settlement was most unfair, the contradictions and injustices of the peace treaty rendered the revision of the "[en]forced peace" (Teleki, "A trianoni békeszerződésről" 68; Teleki "Időszerű nemzetközi kérdések," 236) an imperative demand. At the same time, he advised to follow a cautious and realistic revisionist program. As he argued: "[w]e cannot hope more than it is advisable, or as it would be expected from us to do [...]. We have to think in the long term [...]. It is not wise to live for the moment" (Teleki, "Külügyminiszteri bemutató beszéd" 51).⁹ For Teleki, revisionism did not necessarily mean *resitutio in integrum*,¹⁰ (Teleki, "Időszerű nemzetközi kérdések" 236) it was not guided by the "rigid insistence on the situation before the war, because it would be utopian." (Teleki, "Magyarország helyzete" 187). But by taking political, social changes as well as economic necessities into account, he considered the revision of the peace to be part of a large-scale plan of European revision. As a realistic politician he knew that Hungary had to make certain sacrifices and renounce some territorial claims for the benefit of European peace and stability in the long run.¹¹ Revision, Teleki argued, was not only in the interest of the defeated powers, nor was it their problem only, but it was a general European concern. (Teleki, "Időszerű nemzetközi kérdések" 236) If treaty revision became a possibility, he argued, it would and could only mean in a much wider European context "the revision of the European settlement and the revision of the new European balance of power. For this to happen, though, Europe should also recognize that the peace treaties are not *noli me tangere*, not unchangeable."¹² For his plan the consent and the help of the great powers were absolutely indispensable.

To carry out such a carefully formulated program of revision Teleki emphasized the importance of civic and political education, as well as well-conducted campaigns to explain Hungary's cause. He warned the nation against harmful propaganda, and did not consider pamphlets and postcard-campaigns effective at all, as he believed they addressed only the masses, and were absolutely incapable of enlightening and influencing the decision makers abroad (Ablonczy, *Teleki Pál* 236). His program focused on persuasion strictly through scientific and academic means and addressing the learned intellectual public.

Between April 1921, when Teleki resigned his premiership, and May 1938, when he again accepted a position in the government as minister of education, and soon as prime minister, Teleki returned to academic life and social work to pursue the policy of revisionism. His elitist views determined the scope of his political and social activities; and as a scholar and active member of public life Teleki became head or member of several prominent scientific and social organizations which were established, at least in part, to promote revisionism. Such societies were, for example, TESZK (Társadalmi Egyesületek Szövetségének Központja/Center for the Association of Social Organizations), Magyar Szociográfiai Intézet (the Institute of Sociology under the aegis of the Hungarian Academy of Arts and Sciences) and Államtudományi Intézet (the Institute of Political Science). After Count Albert Apponyi's death Teleki served as head of the Magyar Külügyi Társaság (Hungarian Foreign Affairs

Society); and of the Hungarian Territorial Integrity League, succeeding Lajos Lóczy as president. Teleki also promoted the Hungarian cause as a publicist and a contributor to *Magyar Szemle* (1927-44) as well as to its foreign language satellites, *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie* (1932-44) in French and *The Hungarian Quarterly* (1936-44) in English, and *Külügyi Szemle* [Foreign Policy Review] (1930-44), which was also published in foreign languages. Teleki considered these prestigious journals to be among the best ways to inform foreign public opinion and promote the revision of the treaty abroad. Furthermore, Teleki, as one of the most prominent members of Hungarian political life and a person of international fame, received many invitations to speak both in Hungary and abroad. He accepted such offers with pleasure, as good opportunities to inform the learned public about Hungary's post-war plight. Teleki's lectures during his tour of the United States in 1921 took place in the context of this international effort.

In 1921 Teleki was invited by President Harry August Garfield of Williams College at Williamstown, Massachusetts to lecture on Hungarian geography and politics in the framework of the summer courses at the university.¹³ The series of proposed lectures were part of the institute's general summer project to provide information to academic and scholarly circles about the state of affairs in Central Europe ("Miért megy gróf Teleki Pál Amerikába?" 1) During his stay in the US in August and September, Teleki delivered eight lectures on various topics ranging from Hungarian constitutional history and the political evolution of the Hungarian state through geography and Hungary's geo-political status to the problems of nationalities before and after the war. All Teleki's American lectures were published in 1923 in New York with a preface written by Lawrence Martin, Teleki's long-time friend and fellow-geographer, under the title *The Evolution of Hungary and Its Place in European History*.¹⁴

This occasion created an opportunity for him to address directly a group of American and European professionals from academic and intellectual circles, an "audience of [...] high class and keen interest," (Teleki, *The Evolution of Hungary* v). among whom his old American friends and acquaintances as well as European diplomats could be found (Ablonczy, *Teleki* 215).¹⁵ Teleki emphasized that his journey to the US was strictly of a private and academic nature and his visit did not serve political ends, let alone propaganda ("Miért megy gróf Teleki Pál Amerikába?" 1-2). He repeatedly pointed out that he did not go to the US as a politician, but as a scholar ("Teleki Pál amerikai útjáról," 1). And although Teleki's lectures were meant to serve strictly scholarly and academic purposes, the talks gave him the opportunity to speak up in favor of the revision of Trianon indirectly. "It is not my intention to plead the cause of Hungary," he said in his first lecture. "Advocacy and pleading will avail but little to advance the work of world-regeneration imposed on us by the Great War. Only knowledge will do this, a thorough knowledge of the relations existing between different nations. This thorough knowledge was lacking at the time when peace was made" (Teleki, "Geographical Outlines" 2). His lectures were intended to provide this knowledge and enlighten his American audiences about vital issues concerning Hungary ("Teleki Pál amerikai útjáról," 1-2). Obviously, treaty revision could not be disregarded, even if it was addressed only in an indirect way.

Teleki's American lectures thus reflected their author's convictions concerning the revision of the treaty. Based upon "mutual understanding" and a "dispassionate consideration of the facts," he called on members of the international community to settle their differences (Teleki, "Geographical Outlines" 4). Placing Hungarian and central European political, economic and social problems in the international context, he argued that peaceful and gradual conflict resolution in that region was the vital interest not only of the small nations in the heart of

Europe, but that of the US as well (Teleki, "Geographical Outlines" 4-5). Within this larger framework, several of Teleki's talks focused on two important issues: the Hungarian economy and its geopolitical aspects before and after the war, that is "the dismemberment of an economic unit of long standing," and the controversial question of ethnicity (Teleki, "The Economic Situation in East Central Europe after the War" 188).

Teleki's American talks, though indirectly, served the purposes of covert propaganda for the Hungarian cause. In one of his lectures, "The Racial or Nationality Problem As Seen by a Geographer," he argued, for example, how mistaken it was to settle the Central European problem without genuinely considering the Wilsonian idea of national self-determination (Teleki, "The Racial or Nationality Problem As Seen by a Geographer" 242).

His carefully formulated revisionist plan reflected the idea of gradual change and respect for the principle of national self-determination. And although Teleki met President Warren G. Harding and Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, as well as Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, and obviously the Hungarian public attached great significance and much hope to meetings with such important American leaders, these visits were only acts of courtesy and lacked any practical result (Magyarics 72). No further official steps followed Teleki's visit and political realities in the US, which adhered to the policy of political isolationism toward Europe, did not meet his indirectly declared expectations. ("Teleki Pál amerikai útjáról" 1-3)¹⁶

Teleki's lectures, due to their academic nature, attracted only a limited number of people: teachers, researchers, and university students. ("Miért megy gróf Teleki Pál Amerikába?" 1). Its press coverage, to some extent, reflected the limited interest American audiences mustered for issues relating to Hungary. Teleki's reputation as a premier geographer never faded in the US, but this did not help yield any practical political results for Hungary (Magyarics 74).¹⁷ Teleki's revisionist efforts were conducted through unofficial channels. Following the mid-1920s, however, Teleki opened a new and separate channel by working in close cooperation with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace until after the outbreak of World War II on the survey of the effects of the Great War.¹⁸

Another Hungarian of international fame and reputation who had the opportunity to address Americans and cultivate greater understanding of Hungary's situation was Count Albert Apponyi. Nevertheless, on his third and final visit to the US he also failed to win any American support for revision. Within his means Apponyi worked ardently to promote the cause of revision after 1918 until the end of his life in 1933. The basic tenets of his revisionist concept, corresponding to those which most (semi-) official circles also represented, comprised the program of reconciliation in internal political and economic affairs and their wise administration in order to "command the respect and sympathy of the civilized world," and, on this basis, to realize the revision of the treaty through peaceful means exclusively.¹⁹ Apponyi, aware as he was of the postwar political realities and the basic principles of contemporary US foreign policy, projected some popular expectations toward the US in terms of America's power to secure favorable peace terms for Hungary as well as to alter the postwar settlement. In a 1919 pamphlet, "The American Peace and Hungary," seeking to appeal to the Paris peace negotiations, Apponyi gave voice to his belief, or rather his hope, that "America [was] in honor bound to uphold" the principles proclaimed by President Wilson "against the spirit of imperialism which seem[ed] to have only changed sides." "America's participation in the war," Apponyi said,

has been announced to the world as for international justice, brotherhood, permanent peace and disarmament. It is a moral impossibility that announcements of such purport should afterwards prove mere humbug, as they certainly would, should America consent to international settlements wrought with iniquity and bequeathing to future generations the legacy of hatred, unrest and permanent militarism. There are symptoms indicative of aberrations in the peace policy of the entente, which would give the lie to Wilson's principles. We trust America will not tolerate such indignity. (Apponyi, *The American Peace* 3)²⁰

Apponyi wrote the essay at Christmas 1918. By then the fact that Wilson's original Fourteen Points no longer provided the basis for the armistice and the peace talks in terms of Hungary's future had already been communicated to Foreign Minister Gyula Andrassy, and the dismemberment of the Monarchy was a foregone conclusion. It is very unlikely that Apponyi did not know about it.

Like Teleki, Apponyi enjoyed a good reputation in the United States. In 1904 he represented Hungary in St. Louis at the conference of the Interparliamentary Union, and seven years later, in 1911, he visited the country upon the invitation of the Civic Forum and the Peace Society. On this occasion he was even honored with an invitation to address the US Congress. Later, when he served as president of the Hungarian Foreign Affairs Society and the Hungarian American Society, official Hungarian circles considered Apponyi a potentially successful spokesman for the Hungarian cause. To this effect, Count László Széchenyi, the Hungarian minister to Washington, asked dr. Imre Jósika-Herczeg to arrange Apponyi's third tour (between September 28 and November 13, 1923) to the US "as official circles at home deemed it very desirable that Apponyi again would turn the sympathies of the American nation toward us, the decisive influence of which on Hungary's future has already been clearly recognized" (Jósika-Herczeg 76).²¹

A committee of scholars, judges, bankers, editors, lawyers and businessmen was formed to organize Apponyi's visit. Among the organizers one can find Robert Erskine Ely, the director of the League for Political Education and president of the Civic Forum and the Peace Society, Samuel MacCune Lindsay, professor of political science at Columbia University, Professor Stephen P. Duggan, director of the Institute of International Education, and Nicholas Murray Butler, director of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The letter of invitation addressed to Apponyi was posted on May 29, 1923 and requested him to deliver lectures and inform the American people about the state of affairs in central Europe (Jósika-Herczeg 75-76).²²

Budapest and the Hungarian Legation in Washington tacitly approved of Apponyi's tour, but, understandably, distanced themselves from it as they "wanted to avoid giving [Apponyi's] lectures an official character at all costs" (Apponyi, *Élmények és emlékek* 163). This was clearly demonstrated by the fact that Count Széchenyi did not attend Apponyi's welcome reception to avoid unfavorable reactions that an overtly revisionist, semi-political lecture tour would have incited in American political circles. Széchenyi, however, was assured the Americans would welcome Apponyi on informal and unofficial occasions.

Although Apponyi pointed out repeatedly that he was not on an official mission and his tour had nothing to do with any government business,²³ the tacitly accepted aim of his visit was to gain American support for Hungary's application for a League of Nations loan which was deemed decisive for Hungarian economic stabilization and reconstruction. Within this framework, however, Apponyi found a good opportunity to extend the scope of his speeches to include the revision of the Treaty of Trianon. The twenty lectures and ten speeches delivered by Apponyi in six weeks at various forums and at different places in the US (as well

as Canada) during his stay brought large publicity for the Hungarian question, but at the same time failed to influence official America's opinion regarding treaty revision.²⁴

Given that the direct aim of his visit was to win support for the loan, Apponyi's lectures centered primarily on economic questions. Convinced about the interdependent nature of the European economies,²⁵ Apponyi, like Teleki, argued that "[t]he condition of Eastern Europe [was] the key to the Continental problem and Hungary, in turn, [was] the key to Eastern Europe. A pacified, contented Hungary would do much to preserve the general atmosphere of peace, which [was] so sadly lacking in Europe."²⁶ "My subject [was] Central Europe, my object [was] Hungary," he said in his memoirs (Apponyi, *Élmények* 161). In his farewell address Apponyi declared that "Hungary was the main focus among the topics of my lectures, but put in the context of the problems of world politics. As my principal aim was to stress that the Hungarian problem is not a negligible, purely local one, as few of the Hungarians might suggest, but our race [...] is a decisive factor in the reconstruction of the learned world which the peace treaty failed to achieve."²⁷ And, therefore, he said, the work of peace was still to be done, and in due time the revision of the treaties would prove a necessity, for which, however, times were not yet ripe.²⁸

He voiced his belief that the economic prosperity of Central Europe also depended on the revision of the peace treaties.²⁹ Viewing the treaty as a settlement by force, Apponyi stated that Hungary expected international public opinion to initiate rectification of the injustices done to her.³⁰ In this respect he considered the contribution of the US essential. Peaceful political support was badly needed to settle these problems, and the US had a historic opportunity to lend such support.³¹ Cleverly appealing to American political sentiments Apponyi explained that Europe was looking for "somebody or someone who can lift the rulers of nations to a higher standard of wisdom, whose influence can disentangle them from the prejudices and differences in which their better judgment is still implicated. As a Hungarian and as a European," Apponyi continued, "I came to America to look out for that somebody, and [...] I take the liberty to say that before the greatest nation of modern times, before the nation whose existence rests on principles of right, liberty, equality and brotherhood, expands the most glorious mission, the greatest opportunity that ever history offered to a great nation."³² In his very last lecture for the League of Political Education, Apponyi emphasized that the Paris treaties required revision because the US entered the war to make it the very last one, and these treaties would not serve this purpose. His conclusion was that peace was yet to be made and the treaties inevitably needed revision.³³

As an assessment of his tour, Apponyi stated that he found understanding and attracted the sympathy of several influential members of his audience, "Hungaro-ophile Americans whom Hungary can always count on."³⁴ But practically that was all. Count Széchenyi and Counselor of the Legation János Pelényi organized several meetings for him with prominent politicians and influential businessmen during his stay in the US. Apponyi met President Calvin Coolidge "who to a very great extent ha[d] a say in the reparations of the injustices done in Hungary." He also met Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, West European Desk Officer in the State Department William R. Castle and his wife, former President and Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court William H. Taft and Secretary of State Hughes. At the dinner given by Count László Széchenyi in Apponyi's honor, the Hungarian aristocrat met almost all the other members of the incumbent cabinet (Jósika-Herczeg 110).³⁵ Adolph S. Ochs, the owner of *The New York Times*, and Hamilton Fish Armstrong, president of the Council of Foreign Relations, also paid a visit to see the "Grand Old Hungarian." In Chicago Apponyi met Charles G. Dawes, "the father" of the Dawes plan.³⁶

Everybody welcomed the great statesman warmly, acknowledged his personal political achievements and appreciated the message he brought, but these connections failed to secure any meaningful results.³⁷ The only exception was winning some financial support for the

medical clinics in Budapest from the Rockefeller Foundation³⁸ and the sympathies of American businessmen who “had taken a speculative chance in buying up the claims of Austrian and Hungarian aristocrats to landed property expropriated by the succession States at bargain-basement prices.”³⁹

Professor Duggan designated Apponyi’s visit a “veritable triumph,” and explained what a great advantage it was to have a man of Count Apponyi’s great ability and wide experience explain to them the problems of Europe.⁴⁰ Duggan also stated how fortunate it was that his message was delivered mostly to a university audience, and students among whom were those who would control the destinies of the United States in years to come (Jósika-Herczeg 19-20).⁴¹ His cordial words, however, were only the expression of appreciation toward a great friend. In reality, official US turned a deaf ear to the Hungarian problem. For example, at the luncheon given by Széchenyi in Washington, discussion of the treaties and the European situation took place only after the official representatives had left (Apponyi, *Élmények és emlékek* 167).

Jósika-Herczeg evaluated Apponyi’s tour as a roaring success, which should be understood in the context of the psychological state of contemporary Hungarian society. According to Jósika-Herczeg, the fact that the US turned toward Hungary with sympathy and trust was due to Apponyi’s enlightening lectures in the States, which changed Americans’ opinion about Hungary for the better. America, he argued, understood and acknowledged the “serious and absolutely inexcusable injustices done to Hungary in Trianon” (73, 144). And since “America is the center of the world” due to her economic and political power, sooner or later she would enforce the revision of the peace treaties (143). Although during the time of his trip Apponyi himself did not judge the time right and ripe for revision, Jósika-Herczeg expressed his belief that the time was soon to come when Hungary’s cause would triumph. He firmly believed that in this process “America not only would play an important role, but the US would be the country [that] would initiate revision, who due to her economic power [...] would be able to force European countries to capitulate at her will” (73). Such assessment clearly demonstrated how high Hungarian hopes ran in connection with America’s help. All that, however, amounted only to wishful thinking.⁴²

WORKS CITED

Archival sources

- RG 59: Decimal Files of the State Department: M708 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Austria-Hungary, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (NARA).
- *Gróf Albert Apponyi Iratok*. Levél- és Kézirattár, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár.

Secondary sources

- Ablonczy, Balázs. “Teleki Pál.” In Ignác Romsics, ed. 1998. *Trianon és a magyar politikai közgondolkodás 1920-1953*. Budapest: Osiris.
- Ablonczy, Balázs. 2007. *Pál Teleki. The Life of A Controversial Hungarian Politician*. Wayne, NJ: Hungarian Studies Publications.
- Apponyi, Count Albert. 1919. *The American Peace and Hungary*. Budapest: Hungarian Territorial Integrity League.
- Apponyi, Albert gróf. 1933. *Élmények és emlékek* [Experiences and memories]. Budapest: Atheneum.

- Apponyi, Count Albert. 1935. *The Memoirs of Count Apponyi*. New York: MacMillan.
- “Apponyi and Central Europe.” *The New York Times*, November 18, 1923.
- “Apponyi Pleads Cause of Hungary.” *The New York Times*, September 30, 1923.
- “Apponyi Sees Aims of War Unattained.” *The New York Times*, October 4, 1923.
- “Apponyi to Lecture Here.” *The New York Times*, August 26, 1923.
- Bethlen, Count Stephen. “Hungary in the New Europe.” *Foreign Affairs* 3 (1924-1925), 445-458.
- Bethlen, István. 1934. *The Treaty of Trianon and European Peace. Four Lectures Delivered in London in November 1933*. London: Longmans, Green and Co.
- Bowman, Isiah. 1921. *The New World-Problems in Political Geography*. Yonkers, NY: New World Press. 225-230.
- “Count Apponyi’s Farewell Message.” *The New York Times*, November 13, 1923.
- “From Count Apponyi.” *The New York Times*, October 11, 1923.
- Glant, Tibor. “Some Facts about Hungarian Propaganda for Territorial Integrity Abroad, 1918-20.” *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*. Vol. 2, No. 1. 1996, 43-56.
- “Hungary to Send Apponyi Here.” *The New York Times*, January 14, 1921.
- Jászi, Oszkár. “Dismembered Hungary and Peace in Central Europe.” *Foreign Affairs* 2 (1923-1924), 270.
- Jósika-Herczeg, Imre Dr. [1926. Apponyi és America \[Apponyi and America\]. New York.](#)
- Magyarics, Tamás. 1989. “Count Pál Teleki’s and Count Albert Apponyi’s Mission in the USA in the First Half of the 1920’s.” In Charlotte Kretztoi, ed. *Americana Hungarica* Budapest: ELTE, 1989, 69-78.
- Éva Mathey. 2021. “Trianon, the Question of Revisionism and the United States of America.” In Róbert Barta; Róbert Kerepeszki; Krzysztof Kania, eds. *Trianon 1920-2020. Some Aspects of the Hungarian Peace Treaty of 1920*. Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Történelmi Intézet, 45-60.
- “Miért megy gróf Teleki Pál Amerikába?” [Why does Count Teleki go to America?] *Pesti Hírlap*. July 26, 1921.
- Romsics, Gergely. “A *Foreign Affairs* és Magyarország 1922-1939” [The *Foreign Affairs* and Hungary]. *Századok* Vol. 133, No. 5. 1999, 895-958.
- “The Glorious Task.” *The New York Times*, April 22, 1921.
- Teleki, Pál. “A trianoni békeszerződésről” [On the treaty of Trianon]. In Ignác Romsics, ed. 2000. *Teleki Pál: Válogatott politikai írások és beszédek*. Budapest: Osiris, 65-88.
- Teleki, Pál. “Időszerű nemzetközi kérdések a politikaföldrajz megvilágításában” [Contemporary international question in light of political geography]. In Ignác Romsics, ed. 2000. *Teleki Pál: Válogatott politikai írások és beszédek*. Budapest: Osiris, 224-248.
- Teleki, “Külgyminiszteri bemutatkozó beszéd” [Acceptance speech as minister of foreign affairs]. In Ignác Romsics, ed. 2000. *Teleki Pál: Válogatott politikai írások és beszédek*. Budapest: Osiris, 51-64.
- Teleki, Pál. “Magyarország világpolitikai és világgazdasági helyzete a múltban és a jelenben” [Hungary’s status in world politics and world economy in the past and present]. In Ignác Romsics, ed. 2000. *Teleki Pál: Válogatott politikai írások és beszédek*. Budapest: Osiris, 163-187.
- Teleki, Pál. 1934. “Magyarország és az európai politika” [Hungary and European politics]. *Fiatel Magyarország*. May 1934.
- Teleki, Pál. “Európa az újonnan alakuló világban” [Europe in the newly developing world]. In Pál Teleki. 1934. *Európáról és Magyarországról*. Budapest: Atheneum, 137-152.
- Teleki Pál. 1922. *Amerika gazdasági földrajza* [American economic geography]. Budapest: Centrum Kiadóvállalat.

- Teleki, Paul. 1923. “Geographical Outlines.” In *The Evolution of Hungary and Its Place in European History*. MacMillan: New York, 1-24.
- Teleki, Paul. 1923. “The Economic Situation in East Central Europe After the War.” In *The Evolution of Hungary and Its Place in European History*. MacMillan: New York, 175-210.
- Teleki, Paul. 1923. “The Racial or Nationality Problem As Seen by a Geographer.” In *The Evolution of Hungary and Its Place in European History*. MacMillan: New York, 211-244.
- Teleki, Paul. 1923. *The Evolution of Hungary and Its Place in European History*. New York: The MacMillan Company.
- “Teleki Pál amerikai útjáról” [On Pál Teleki’s American trip]. *Pesti Hírlap*, October 8, 1921.
- Tilkovszky, Lóránt. 1969. *Teleki Pál. Legenda és valóság* [Pál Teleki. Legend and reality]. Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó.
- Zeidler, Miklós. 2001. *A revíziós gondolat* [The revisionist idea]. Budapest: Osiris.
- Zeidler, Miklós. 2007. *Ideas on Territorial Revision in Hungary, 1921-1945*. Boulder, Colorado: Social Science Monographs.

NOTES

¹ Count István Bethlen’s interview quoted in Wright’s Memorandum on “Hungarian Affairs in August 1928” to the Secretary of State, September 8, 1928. Roll# 10, M 708 RG 59, NARA. [↵](#)

² Brentano’s Memorandum on “The Political Situation in Hungary at the End of 1922” to the Secretary of State, December 31, 1922. Roll# 5, M708 RG59, NARA. [↵](#)

³ Bethlen’s speech in *Pesti Napló*, August 26, 1928. Quoted in Wright’s Memorandum to the Secretary of State, September 8, 1928. Roll#10 M708 RG59, NARA [↵](#)

⁴ Wright’s Memorandum on “Hungarian Affairs in November 1928,” December 6, 1928. Roll#10 M708 RG59, NARA. [↵](#)

⁵ More on these issues see Éva Mathey. 2021. “Trianon, the Question of Revisionism and the United States of America.” In Róbert Barta; Róbert Kerepeszki; and Krzysztof Kania, eds. *Trianon 1920-2020. Some Aspects of the Hungarian Peace Treaty of 1920*. Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Történelmi Intézet, 45-60. [↵](#)

⁶ It can be regarded as a successful effort in light of American endorsement of the League of Nations loan for Hungary in 1924. [↵](#)

⁷ István Bethlen. 1934. *The Treaty of Trianon and European Peace. Four Lectures Delivered in London in November 1933*. London: Longmans, Green and Co. Bethlen’s four lectures (“Hungarian History and the Race Question,” “The Treaty of Trianon and the Danubian Nations,” “The Problem of Transylvania,” and “The Treaty of Trianon”) were delivered to the League of Nations Union of Cambridge University, the Near and Middle Eastern Association in London, the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Balkan Committee respectively. [↵](#)

⁸ For more see Balázs Ablonczy. 2007. *Pál Teleki. The Life of A Controversial Hungarian Politician*. Wayne, NJ: Hungarian Studies Publications. [↵](#)

⁹ Teleki warned the nation against fallacious propaganda as well. In “Nemzeti szellem-nemzeti kultúra” he says: “propaganda is the manifestation of nationalism. It can serve good purposes [...] without tact, humor and knowledge; however, we are not going to achieve any result. The stereotypical aimless wooing makes me sad.” In Ignác Romsics, ed. 2000. *Teleki Pál: Válogatott politikai írások és beszédek*. Budapest: Osiris, 212. [↵](#)

¹⁰ Teleki. “Időszerű nemzetközi kérdések,” 236. [↵](#)

¹¹ See also Lóránt Tilkovszky. 1969. *Teleki Pál. Legenda és valóság* [Pál Teleki. Legend and reality]. Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 84. [↵](#)

¹² Pál Teleki, “Európa az újonnan alakuló világban” [Europe in the newly developing world]. In Pál Teleki. 1934. *Európáról és Magyarországról*. Budapest: Atheneum, 145. Originally Teleki delivered this lecture in Vienna and Berlin in December 1933. [↵](#)

¹³ Teleki’s American lecture tour in 1921 was not his first visit to the US. In the summer of 1912, in the company of his friend and mentor, Jenő Cholnoky, Teleki served as one of the official delegates of the Hungarian Geographical Society to the Transcontinental Excursion of the American Geographical Society of New York, and for two months traveled extensively in the United States. The result of the trip was Teleki’s series of lectures on the economic geography of the US delivered first at the Commercial Normal School in 1913, and at the University of Budapest in 1922. Teleki’s lectures were published as *Amerika gazdasági földrajza* [American economic geography]. Budapest: Centrum Kiadóvállalat. On Teleki’s first US visit see also Dr. Jenő Cholnoky. 1943. *Utazásom Amerikában Teleki Pál gróffal* [My Journey to America with Count Pál Teleki]. Budapest: Vajdáné Wichman Gizella. [↵](#)

¹⁴ In an interview for the *Pesti Hírlap* Teleki spoke of about six lectures, but the collection of his American essays contained eight pieces. In another interview for the same newspaper, “Teleki Pál amerikai útjáról,” which Teleki gave upon his return to Hungary, Teleki himself explained that he had more opportunities to address the American audience, instead of six, he gave eight lectures. “Teleki Pál amerikai útjáról” [On Pál Teleki’s American trip], *Pesti Hírlap*, October 8, 1921, 1. These eight lectures were: “Geographical Outlines;” “The Making of the State;” “The Consequences of the Turkish Invasion on the Fate of Modern Hungary;” “Pre-War Economic Situation of Hungary;” “Modern Political Evolution- from the Compromise with Austria, 1867, to Bolshevism and Restoration, 1919;” “The Racial Question and Hungarian Policy;” “The Economic Situation in East Central Europe after the War;” “The Racial or Nationality Problem As Seen by A Geographer.” Teleki considered its publication as a great service for the Hungarian cause, an opportunity to spread information about the real state of affairs in Hungary. For the collection see Pál Teleki. 1923. *The Evolution of Hungary and Its Place in European History*. New York: The MacMillan Company. [↵](#)

¹⁵ Lawrence Martin, Isaiah Bowman, American geographer, geologist and meteorologist William M. Davis, former Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Tomasso Tittoni, the former Russian governor of Finland, Count Sergei Alexandrovich Korff, and the Bulgarian Minister to Washington, D.C. Stefan Panaretoff. [↵](#)

¹⁶ Also see Tamás Magyarics. 1989. “Count Pál Teleki’s and Count Albert Apponyi’s Mission in the USA in the First Half of the 1920’s.” In Charlotte Kretztoi, ed. *Americana Hungarica*. Budapest: ELTE, 71-72. [↵](#)

¹⁷ Teleki’s debate with Romania’s consul to New York, Antoine Bibescu in *The New York Herald* and *The New York Times* indicates that some people tried to discredit Teleki both as a politician and scientist. Bibescu claimed that Teleki was sent to the US by the Hungarian government, to conduct overt propaganda, and at the same time refuted several of Teleki’s statements relating to Hungary’s postwar economic situation especially within the context of Hungary’s losses to Romania as part of the postwar settlement. See the interview with Teleki in “Teleki Pál amerikai útjáról,” *Pesti Hírlap*, October 8, 1921, 2-3. [↵](#)

¹⁸ Information on the correspondence between Teleki and Nicholas Murray Butler was made available to me with the courtesy of Dr. Tibor Glant (University of Debrecen). [↵](#)

¹⁹ For more details see Count Albert Apponyi’s speech in the Hungarian Society for Foreign Affairs on April 18, 1920 in Ulysses Grant Smith’s Memoranda to Secretary of State on April 23, 1920. Roll#1 M708, RG59, NARA. An important aspect of this speech is that it was

delivered before the Treaty of Trianon was signed by the Hungarian delegation. Apponyi as the leader of the delegation knew very well that Hungary could not receive any favorable alterations in the peace terms, therefore was aware of the fact that revision of the peace terms could only be obtained in the future. [↵](#)

²⁰ See also Magyarics, “Count Pál Teleki’s and Count Albert Apponyi’s Mission in the USA,” 70. [↵](#)

²¹ See also Count László Széchenyi to Dr. Imre Jósika-Herczeg, November 16, 1923 in Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi és America*. New York, 14. As early as January 1921 *The New York Times* dealt with Apponyi’s planned visit to the US: “Hungary to Send Apponyi Here” says that “the Hungarian government has decided to send the venerable Count Albert Apponyi to the United States to present Hungary’s wishes.” *The New York Times*, January 14, 1921, 12. The article titled “The Glorious Task” well before Apponyi’s actual arrival somewhat sarcastically comments on the impossibility of “orthodox Magyar views” and the impossibility of the “glorious task” which America must lead, that is “the revision of the peace treaties, [...] in the interest of Germany and her allies.” The article ends with saying that “[...] apparently in Budapest the young men are still seeing visions and the old men dreaming dreams.” *The New York Times*, April 22, 1921, 12. [↵](#)

²² See also “Apponyi to Lecture Here,” *The New York Times*, August 26, 1923, 8. [↵](#)

²³ See for example Apponyi’s statements in “Apponyi Pleads Cause of Hungary,” *The New York Times*, September 30, 1923, 4; and “From Count Apponyi,” *The New York Times* October 11, 1923, 20. [↵](#)

²⁴ Apponyi gave lectures at Columbia University, Vassar College, Yale University, Michigan University, Amherst College, Smith College, and colleges and universities in Chicago, Cleveland, Hartford, Washington, Baltimore, Buffalo, Toronto and Montreal. Further occasions for Apponyi to speak were at the Metropolitan Club, New York State Chamber of Commerce, Vassar College, Cornell University, Ithaca, Garrett Club, Buffalo, Engineers Hall, Cleveland, University Club, Chicago, the Chicago Association of Commerce, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, City College, New York, American Manufacturer’s Association, Georgetown University, Johns Hopkins University, Columbia University, Yale University, Wellesley, Amherst College, Smith College, and the Council of Foreign Relations in New York. He gave several lectures in Canada as well, e.g. at the University of Toronto and McGill University, Montreal. Jósika-Herczeg mentions some three thousand shorter and longer articles were published in connection with Apponyi’s visit in the American press. Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 79. [↵](#)

²⁵ See also Count Apponyi’s speech at Bailey’s Hall at Cornell University on October 8, 1923. Quoted in Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 86. [↵](#)

²⁶ “Apponyi Pleads Cause of Hungary,” *The New York Times*, September 30, 1923, 4. [↵](#)

²⁷ Apponyi’s farewell in *Amerikai Magyar Népszava*, November 13, 1923. Quoted in Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 135. [↵](#)

²⁸ “Count Apponyi’s Farewell Message,” *The New York Times*, November 13, 1923, 20. [↵](#)

²⁹ Count Apponyi’s speech at the New York State Chamber of Commerce on October 4, 1923. Quoted in Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 82. [↵](#)

³⁰ Count Apponyi’s speech at Columbia University on November 1, 1923. Quoted in Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 116. [↵](#)

³¹ Count Apponyi’s speech at the Vassar College on October 5, 1923. Quoted in Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 83. [↵](#)

³² Count Albert Apponyi’s speech on October 3, 1923 delivered at the New York Metropolitan Club. *Gróf Albert Apponyi Iratok*. Levél- és Kézirattár, Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár, 105-111. See also “Apponyi Sees Aims of War Unattained,” *The New York Times*, October 4, 1923, 4. [↵](#)

³³ Count Apponyi's speech at the League of Political Education on November 12, 1923. Cited in Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 116. See also Apponyi's farewell in *The New York Times*, November 13, 1923. Quoted in Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 137. [↵](#)

³⁴ Apponyi's farewell in *Amerikai Magyar Népszava*, November 13, 1923. Quoted in Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 135, 140. [↵](#)

³⁵ Apponyi remarks in his memoirs that President Coolidge did not discuss political questions with him. In Apponyi Albert gróf. 1933. *Élmények és emlékek*. Budapest: Atheneum, 166 [↵](#)

³⁶ See the relevant parts of Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, and Apponyi. 1933. *Élmények és emlékek*. See also Magyarics. 1989. "Count Pál Teleki's and Count Albert Apponyi's Mission in the USA," 74. The Dawes plan (1924) was an economic and financial program to assist Germany and help restore and stabilize its economy. The Dawes plan was replaced by the Young plan in 1929. [↵](#)

³⁷ Professor Dr. Stephen P. Duggan, Preface to Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 19. The only exception was Dr. Michael Pupin, professor of Columbia University who, at the Council of Foreign Relations' luncheon criticized Apponyi's ideas. Dr. Pupin explained that he had to leave Hungary and immigrate to the US due to the humiliating conditions he had to suffer as a Serb from the Banat. See Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 126-127. [↵](#)

³⁸ Apponyi's good relations with Professor Dr. Flexner of the Rockefeller Foundation in Baltimore helped obtain such support. See Magyarics. 1989. "Count Pál Teleki's and Count Albert Apponyi's Mission in the USA," 74. [↵](#)

³⁹ "Apponyi and Central Europe," *The New York Times*, November 18, 1923, E6. See also Apponyi's recollections of his conversation with Mr. Lamont, banker and member of Pierpont Morgan on Hungary's economic viability following the war. Count Albert Apponyi. 1935. *The Memoirs of Count Apponyi*. New York: MacMillan, 203-204. [↵](#)

⁴⁰ Professor Dr. Stephen P. Duggan, Preface to Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 19. [↵](#)

⁴¹ See also Professor Dr. Stephen P. Duggan to Count Albert Apponyi, November 13, 1923. Quoted in Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 149-150; Robert Erskine Ely to Imre Jósika-Herczeg, December 12, 1923. Quoted in Jósika-Herczeg. 1926. *Apponyi and America*, 151. [↵](#)

⁴² Later on Count Apponyi also worked in cooperation with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and from 1923 he became Hungary's official representative in the League of Nations. [↵](#)