



**OTTO VON HABSBURG FOUNDATION**  
Annual Report  
2024

Publications of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation 16.

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Published by Gergely Prőhle

Archive photos:  
Otto von Habsburg Foundation, Otto von Habsburg Collection,  
Photo and Audiovisual Collection

ISSN 2732-3366  
ISSN 2939-5453

Printing and binding by Pauker Holding Ltd.  
Managing Director: Dániel Vértes

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Funded by



2025

# OTTO VON HABSBURG FOUNDATION

## Annual Report 2024



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# Introduction

The smiling couple photographed in front of a Japan Air Lines plane are Otto von Habsburg and his wife, Regina. On 3 September 1966, they set off from Paris for Tokyo, where Otto had already been a returning guest, as the Imperial Court and other institutions had welcomed his advice, international experience, and political acumen since 1962. We decided on this picture for the cover of our fifth Annual Report because, for the first time since the beginning of the Foundation's activities in 2019, we had the opportunity to showcase a Japanese version of our "Otto von Habsburg – Life and Heritage" exhibition outside of our continent and to hold a conference on our namesake's extensive international network and the relationship between Japan and Europe. Against this background, the lasting influence of Otto von Habsburg on his acquaintances and how his ideas influenced the formation of the foreign relations of modern Japan became more evident.

The visit to Tokyo, supported by the local Hungarian Embassy and Cultural Institute, was part of a series of events we organised to mark Hungary's presidency of the Council of the European Union. Our encounters in the Far East proved in practice what Otto von Habsburg had so often articulated: in a global context, Central Europe, and Hungary in it, can only make their voices heard and assert their interests as members of a larger community, the European Union.

Within the framework of our programmes for the Hungarian EU Presidency, we also hosted, in cooperation with the National Archives of Hungary, the leaders of the national and foreign ministry archives of the EU Member States. These meetings were a fitting reinforcement of our efforts to make our activities – the archival work in particular – increasingly part of the international academic circles. The intercontinental attention towards the legacy of Otto von Habsburg has been further enhanced by the continuing progress in processing and digitisation, providing easier access to our Collection, and thus facilitating the development of our institutional connections.

We are thrilled that, in light of our ongoing endeavours, more members of the Habsburg family are gradually placing their trust in us by donating smaller or larger quantities of documents and objects to the Foundation. In 2024, the most substantial addition to our Collection was the arrival of the Heinrich Degenfeld bequest. The tutor and later secretary of Otto von Habsburg was the family's most trusted confidant for more than fifty years, and his heritage contains a wealth of remarkable archival material and artefacts. One of the most intriguing among these is the travelling altar of Emperor Joseph II, which – as a tribute to our outstanding partnership over the years – we have bestowed on the Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma. By this gesture to the monastic order, we have made a symbolic restitution of the former dissolution imposed by the "King with a hat".

We are grateful for the support of the Prime Minister's Office and the Bethlen Gábor Fund, as well as for the goodwill and dedication of our colleagues and friends who contribute to our work with their advice, speeches and essays. Among them, Professor János Martonyi, former Foreign Affairs Minister of Hungary, whose writings we published in French on the occasion of the jubilee of his birthday, entitled *La Continuité de l'Histoire*, to express our hope that, like Professor Martonyi's volume, the work of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation is bringing us closer to understanding the growing complexity of international relations in our time.

ISTVÁN NAGY  
Chairman of the Board

GERGELY PRÓHLE  
Director



Visiting the Daitoku-ji Buddhist Temple.  
On the left is the adventurous Seigen Tanaka, Otto's confidant,  
alongside Archduchess Regina. 1966.

# THE COLLECTION

The Hungarian National Assembly decreed that the legacy of Otto von Habsburg ought to be preserved by adopting Act XCIX of 2016. Subsequently, a government resolution was issued to establish a foundation bearing the name of the former heir to the throne and Member of the European Parliament.

The tangible heritage, comprising more than 100 linear metres of documents, 11 000 books and 30 000 photographs, arrived in Hungary in autumn 2018. The primary task of the Foundation is to process, digitise and make this material accessible.

In recent years, we have developed the operational structure and have gained many new records. Twelve of our colleagues explore each part of the collection with great precision and, at the same time, with an interest in the larger historical context, making it available to the broader public.



## ARCHIVES

The processing of the documents continued in accordance with the Collection Base Structure adopted in 2021. In some cases, we deviated slightly from the sorting plan while taking archival criteria into account, both in terms of processing and digitisation. As a result, the content, year range and classification of the documents in the storage units have been clarified several times. Meanwhile, this year has brought a substantial increase in our holdings: with the arrival of the so-called Degenfeld bequest (described in more detail on page 21), a large number of archival sources have been acquired. The sorting and the damaged material's preparation for restoration began immediately; in 2024, we completed the decontamination of one crate, around one linear metre of documents.

Following the archival work and the resulting articles, studies, conference presentations, and various press reports, several researchers and academics approached our Foundation. The Research Regulation effective from 1 January 2022 applies to the collection; access to the records is provided in digital format, which are published following the Data Protection Regulation.

In 2024, although there were personnel changes, the work in the archival collection continued with the same number of members as in the previous year. In the absence of archivist BEÁTA VITOS-MERZA on maternity leave, senior archivist ESZTER GAÁLNÉ BARCS, research fellow BENCE KOCSEV, ANETT HAMMER-NACSA, and ESZTER FÁBRY, archivists, as well as part-time archivists PIROSKA KOC SIS, ZOLTÁN ÓLMOSI, and PÉTER MATOLCSI, who arrived at the beginning of the year, have made considerable progress. On 1 september, we welcomed senior archivist ÁDÁM SUSLIK PhD from the National Archives of Hungary, replacing GERGELY ISTVÁN SZŰTS PhD. With his professional knowledge and experience, the new colleague contributes significantly to the processing and the preparatory work for research on the heritage.

### Sorting, Processing, Digitising

The work in the different sections was supervised monthly, and tasks were allocated according to the established practice of previous years. Meetings were held regularly to discuss professional matters, while the excellent working environment ensured an ongoing dialogue on the organisation, processing and digitisation of the collection.

The digitisation of archival sources continued in the workshop of the Benedictine Archabbey of Pannonhalma as well as in our collection: the Foundation digitised 24 800 pages, while 9 841 electronic reproductions of pages were made in Pannonhalma. In total, **34 641 pages were digitised** during the year. Both physical and digitised versions of material returned from off-site locations were examined.





Each year, we process an increasing proportion of the holdings, either in part or in full; moreover, our digital content management site expanded considerably during the year. While many documents are freely available online, the Foundation's internal digital content database –

which comprises material accessible under our Research Regulation – has developed tremendously. By the end of the year, **171 kilometres of text, 6 461 volumes, and 66 092 pages** had been catalogued and made available to researchers on our website. The registers produced are also recorded in Excel spreadsheets for greater data security.

Under the lease agreement concluded in 2022, part of the library material and the archival documents already processed are stored in the Pest County Archives of the National Archives of Hungary, to which we have access at any time upon prior consultation.

## Developments in the Collection Units

The sorting and organisation, which began in 2021, continued on the archival material held under the title HOAL I-1 “Documents and correspondence relating to the family”. Some particularly valuable family papers arrived damaged, which were separated for restoration.

This year, the correspondence of Robert von Habsburg (1009 pages) and Rudolf von Habsburg (75 pages) was sorted at item-level and has been digitised. We also undertook the organisation and cataloguing of the documents of the Chamber of Archduke Charles Franz Joseph (1907–1910), the files of the secretariat of the Archduke – Charles I (IV) as monarch – (1918) and the official documents of Archduchess Zita (1913–1915). A total of 18 665 pages were sorted, of which 5 077 pages were catalogued in detail and prepared for digitisation.

The transcription and translation of the handwritten diaries, marked HOAL-I-1-d, which were donated to our Foundation, also progressed: in 2024, seven of the German-language diaries, dating from 1918 to 1928, were transcribed, which involved the copying of nearly 1000 pages of handwritten material for better legibility.

The processing of HOAL I-2-b, Otto von Habsburg's general correspondence with individuals and organisations – formerly “Secretariat Files” – has also advanced significantly. For the international and Hungarian correspondence from the 1950s onwards, which is arranged partly chronologically and partly alphabetically, we compiled an item-level directory and a continuously expanding index of names, as well as sorted the material and prepared this part of the collection for research and digitisation. Two years after the start of this project, we registered the records of 730 additional individuals and organisations, raising the number of identified correspondents to 2965, thus contributing to the unravelling of Otto von Habsburg's network of contacts. The overall quantity of documents sorted in the reporting period was 40 boxes, 4.8 linear metres, and nearly 40 000 pages.

This section represents the largest part of the archives, and although it is being sorted in chronological order, we extracted and prepared the material of several noteworthy correspondents for digitisation. We made electronic copies of the correspondence of prominent Hungarian émigrés such as József Mindszenty, János Zichy, Antal Lejár, and William Gelsey. We also organised Thomas Chaimowicz's voluminous correspondence (1779 pages), which provided source material for the article on him, presented on page 96. In addition, we prioritised the materials on which our exhibitions have drawn, such as that of Seigen Tanaka (561 pages) and Adam Fergusson (91 pages). We also devoted special attention to collecting, organising and making available the exchange of letters of people associated with the Mont Pelerin Society, such as Friedrich August von Hayek, Fritz Machlup, Ludwig von Mises and Arvid Fredborg, who had played a crucial role in the economic and political history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

At the same time, the digitisation of the “Hungarian-related correspondence of Otto von Habsburg 1988–2011”, labelled HOAL I-2-c, which was compiled in 2022, also proceeded. Throughout the year, the unit, alphabetically arranged by correspondents and comprised of nearly 49 000 pages from some 5 500 partners, was prepared, catalogued in detail, tagged with metadata and uploaded to the database. During the organisation of other files, new documents belonging to this collection had been found, classified in the appropriate place, and subsequently digitised.





The condition of the fax papers in these folders, dating mainly from the 1980s and 1990s, is deplorable, with several being almost illegible. To salvage them, we are transcribing these pieces.

The HOAL-I-3-b-Europa Berichte “European Parliament Reports” (1292 pages) from Otto von Habsburg’s term in the European Parliament 1979–1999 have been processed and uploaded to the electronic platform of the Foundation’s archives.

In 2024, we also completed the item-by-item revision and made Otto von Habsburg’s speeches in HOAL-I-4-b available for research. To date, a total of 190 addresses have been catalogued, digitised and uploaded to the Digital Archives, providing our researchers with 2,445 additional pages of documents.

Lastly, processing the material registered under the title “Reports on Foreign Policy Affairs 1952–2009” (HOAL I-7) further advanced. The duplicates, which currently account for a quarter of this unit, were separated. Simultaneously, the processing and metadata addition on the reports compiled by Otto von Habsburg according to geographical criteria also carried on. In 2024, all the catalogued records up to 1974 from the “Reports on Foreign Policy Affairs” have been made digitally available, resulting in a total of 2677 pages publicly accesible on our website.



[archivum.hoal.hu/](http://archivum.hoal.hu/)



## LIBRARY

Otto von Habsburg’s collection of books, newspapers and articles is a valuable part of the material entrusted to our care. The assemblage includes publications by our namesake, his writings that appeared in print throughout the decades of his career, the literature he used for work – at least part of it –, the volumes he received as gifts from admirers and friends and the newsletters and documentation sent to him in his numerous positions in various organisations. The periodicals are also comprised mainly of press products related to him; some of his articles can be found in those or as newspaper clippings.

### Bibliography Developments

We reviewed the volumes of the Austrian legitimist periodical *Die Krone* (1953–1967) and its successor, *Aktion – Österreich Europa* (1967–1968), and recorded the bibliographical data of nearly 470 articles.

We arranged Otto von Habsburg’s articles chronologically (1953–1988) instead of the previous ordering by journals. We also compiled the bibliographic data of the writings from 1953 to 1978 to publish them on our website.

Furthermore, we reviewed and sorted out literature relating to his father in Georg von Habsburg’s library; we prepared a digitisation plan and coordinated the digitisation process, and the resulting material was uploaded to the Foundation’s Digital Archives. By the autumn of 2024, all of Otto von Habsburg’s books and pamphlets in our care were made available.

Additionally, we are keeping track of the growth of the Arcanum and Hungaricana databases.

### Acquisition of Holdings

We registered the books related to our Foundation’s activities by Hungarian or foreign publishers that we had purchased or had received as gifts. Subsequently, 10 boxes of publications not strictly relevant to the collection, as well as a number of duplicates, were transferred to an external storage room.

We also assembled and organised the reference library material: this comprises publications acquired in the course of the Foundation’s work on Otto von Habsburg, the Habsburg family, the European Union or conservatism, and which are frequently used during our endeavours exploring the collection.



## Content Analysis

The content of the writings and articles published in periodicals such as *Vorarlberger Nachrichten*, *Magyar Nemzet*, *Magyar Hírlap*, and *Új Európa* was further researched. The inclusion of subject headings and metadata of the books uploaded to the Digital Archive have been completed.

## Book Processing

Another 780 volumes from Otto von Habsburg's library were entered into the Qulto Collection Management Database, with keyword additions to the records created.

## Writing, Translating, Proofreading

Alongside the official duties of a librarian, our colleague FERENC VASBÁNYAI contributed to the drafting, proofreading, translation and editing of the articles published on the Foundation's website. Similar tasks were carried out for this year's publications: the *Annual Report* on our activities in 2023 and the *Trianon Encyclopaedia*, published jointly with the Trianon 100 MTA Research Group and the Ludovika University Press.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC AND AUDIOVISUAL COLLECTION

The photographic archive of around 30,000 pictures accounts for a significant part of Otto von Habsburg's bequest. The collection contains a broad spectrum of 20<sup>th</sup>-century photographic techniques: from glass negatives and *cartes-de-visite* ('visiting cards') through transparent slides, black-and-white negatives, and polaroids to digitally captured images developed on paper – over 100 years of photographic technology.

In January, our annual "Start to the Year in the Collection" event explored the links between photography, historical documentation and political awareness. The photo book entitled *99 Years – 99 Photos. Photographs from the Life of Otto von Habsburg*, which had been published last year, was presented by László Csorba, Professor Emeritus of Eötvös Loránd University. A round-table discussion followed on photo archiving issues with the participation of representatives of the profession; our report on the event can be found on page 107. In the same month, intense publicity was generated by the introduction of nearly 120 images from our collection, with descriptions and names of the individuals featured, to the Fortepan Online Photo Archive. This was accompanied by Szilveszter Dékány's article on the Fortepan Weekly Blog, "*Photographs of Otto von Habsburg's Youth from Coronation to Bombing*".

We organised the photo archives' section on the First World War in February and March. There were many overlaps with the previously established collection of Charles I (IV) and Franz Joseph, whilst several new images of wartime and everyday life in the camps were also catalogued. Most of the photos were taken during visits to the front. Among the photo albums, a prominent number are various memorial albums compiled for Charles I, which have considerable source value. This unit of the collection contains 1099 photographs, including the one taken 110 years ago on a journey described in the article "*Fates Condensed into a Moment – Unravelling the Layers of a First World War Photograph*" on page 64.

We had begun processing the Franz Joseph Collection in July and completed it by the end of the year. A special highlight is the *carte-de-visite* collection (146 items in total), which includes 19<sup>th</sup>-century items of photographic historical significance. These depict figures not solely from the House of Habsburg but also from other ruling dynasties. Among the contributors are several photographers of international renown, such as Lipót Strelisky, Dr. Székely (i.e. József Székely) and Franz Mándy, who later was based in Bucharest. KARL-KONSTANTIN VON HABSBURG catalogued the visiting cards depicting his ancestors when he was working as an intern at our Foundation.







During August and September, we refined the metadata for images already uploaded to the Otto von Habsburg Digital Archive to improve and make the search process more efficient for researchers.

In the autumn, we completed the inventory of the Artúr Tormássy estate acquired by our Foundation. He had taught the Hungarian language to Archduke Charles, and his heritage includes, in addition to photographs, a variety of documents (telegrams, postcards) sent by the young Archduke Charles to Artúr Tormássy in Hungarian.

A remarkable milestone was reached in September, with the photographic processing work **exceeding the figure of 20,000 catalogued items**: we have descriptive data on the geographical location, the year, the related persons and additional information for this number of images.

The photo digitisation project launched in 2022 systematically digitises photographic material from different decades yearly. After last year's inventory of 3 600 pieces, this year 6 200 photos were digitised in high quality with the help of Tripont Foto Video Ltd. during November and December.

At the end of the year, Georg von Habsburg provided us with around ten boxes of material, some of which contained photographs. The donation is significant because the photos mostly chronicle the youth of his mother, Princess Regina of Saxe-Meiningen, a period from which there was hitherto limited material in our archives. In addition, he handed over a substantial amount of audiovisual footage of Hungarian-language recordings, mainly VHS tapes, related to Otto's visits to Hungary around the fall of the regime. The processing of these videos will be ongoing in 2025.

SZILVESZTER DÉKÁNY and ZITA LŐRINCZ were responsible for the progress of this collection unit.

## GROWTH IN THE COLLECTION

Since its establishment, the Otto von Habsburg Foundation has sought to further enrich its collection with objects and documents relevant to its namesake. We have made several significant acquisitions this year as well, for which we have set up a new storage room.

### With Clockwork Precision from Switzerland – The Arrival of the Degenfeld Heritage

On 30 April, JEAN-FRANCOIS PAROZ, Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to Hungary and his colleague, ZSUZSANNA TORMÁSSY, visited our Foundation. The meeting was prompted by the receipt of the Heinrich Degenfeld heritage, which arrived in Budapest with the Embassy's help and contains many documents and items related to our namesake.

Count Heinrich von Degenfeld-Schonburg (1890–1978) was the family's most trusted confidant; a tutor of Otto von Habsburg during his childhood years in Spain and remained a general trustee and adviser of the former Crown Prince until his passing. Count Degenfeld left his career as a teacher to join the family early (1923) and devoted his life to that mission. He also served as secretary to the Archduke, enabling the Count to witness the events that transpired around them directly. Among his bequest are many small objects from Otto von Habsburg's youth, as well as documents from the Crown Prince's university years and some of his correspondence before 1945.

Ambassador Paroz, a historian himself, was browsing through the various pieces and papers with great interest. He was glad that the diplomatic mission he led had been able to contribute to the development of our collection. The Otto von Habsburg Foundation, preserving the memory of the last heir to the throne of the dynasty, which was originally seated in the Habsburg Castle (Habichtsburg) in Switzerland, is grateful to the Ambassador and the Swiss diplomatic service for their valuable assistance.





## The Imprint of a Life Spent in Service of the Habsburg Family

With that, the largest collection growth in the history of our Foundation took place this spring. The bequest of Count Heinrich von Degenfeld contains a considerable body of documents and objects that were either entrusted to his care or donated to him; however, these were presumably once the property of the Habsburg family and are perfectly complementing the Otto von Habsburg heritage we hold.

The vastly diverse material, transported here in 37 storage units, was placed in a new, separate room. The sorting on the basic level began as soon as it was received. The members of the 'task force' – ESZTER BARCS, SZILVESZTER DÉKÁNY, ESZTER FÁBRY, GERGELY SZÚTS ISTVÁN – were primarily focused on drawing up an inventory of the new acquisitions, according to the structure of our collection. During the processing work, we were delighted to have the opportunity to show these exceptional pieces to family members, such as Georg von Habsburg, Board Member of the Foundation, Eleonore von Habsburg and her husband, as well as to have the valuable help of Karl-Konstantin von Habsburg, son of Georg von Habsburg, who actively assisted us in the cataloguing process.



The storage units used for transport are suitcases made of various materials, elaborate travelling trunks – most covered with inscriptions bearing the history of journeys –, and metal filing cabinets and cartridges. The containers comprise approximately 5,5 m<sup>3</sup> of material, including some 20 linear metres of documents. Each holding unit is a mixture of archival, photographic and audiovisual material, as well as objects and books for the library. An overview is in progress while the daily collection activities continue as well. Due to the disorderly state of the bequest, it will take some time to process it in a professional manner. The first inventory, drawn up for internal use, contains more than 400 titles, and in the course of documenting the work, nearly 1200 photographs have been taken by our colleagues.

Our archive has been extended with documents and correspondence relating to the Habsburg family from the

19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and records from the life of Charles I and Zita of Bourbon-Parma. The collection has also been enriched with correspondence from the American period, along with reports on foreign policy affairs from the 1940s and 1950s. Another significant part of the endowment is the exchange of letters connecting to the Hungarian émigré community.

The received items include records relating to family, economic, financial, accounting, and real estate matters, as well as diaries of the family's life from different years. In addition to their value as sources, the certificates of awards and honorary citizenships are also of aesthetic worth. However, the material must be evaluated from the point of view of conservation before being processed in depth. We engaged TAMÁS PELLER, a conservation expert at the Petőfi Literary Museum, in this undertaking.

Regarding the photographic material, the Heinrich von Degenfeld bequest is an invaluable addition, as through the Count, we have the opportunity to glimpse into the family's everyday life. Our collection has been enriched by material from periods from which only very sporadic sources had been available previously. These include photographs of Otto von Habsburg's childhood, images of Archduchess Adelheid visiting Austria in the 1930s, and material from Otto's 1934 road trip to Scandinavia with Major Count Alfons Pallavicini. There is also documentation of the former Crown Prince's travels

and lecture tours to the United States during the Second World War, pictures of Empress Zita and the family's day-to-day life in Canada in the 1940s, as well as photographs of the 1947 voyages to Africa and the Middle East. We have also discovered unopened envelopes containing enlargements of photos taken in the 1940s in the US, with Otto at various social events in the company of politicians, actors and public figures.

The storage units (travelling trunks) in which the valuable objects arrived are considered antiques themselves, and further elevate our collection. We also received some personal belongings of Otto von Habsburg and his family from different periods of their lives. The student cap worn during Otto's university years in Leuven is a unique item, whilst cigarette cases, wallets, clothes, household and other textiles have also been recovered from the chests. Special mention should be made of the family's and Count Degenfeld's sacred objects and icons.







Furthermore, medals, decorations, badges, and pins were added to our collection, as well as smaller and larger gifts of widely varying quality presented to the family. Another intriguing part of the acquisitions is some personal items belonging to Countess Marie-Therese Korff Schmising-Kerssenbrock, the children's governess.

The Foundation's library has also been enhanced with rar-

ities: handwritten and painted missals, one from Funchal, presented to Otto von Habsburg, and another from the sister of Zita of Bourbon-Parma. The crates also hid some issues of foreign newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *Paris Match*, and *Le Patriote Illustré*. Although some of these were used as packing material, they nevertheless could hold valuable information. Moreover, we have obtained complete collections of newspaper articles, which may serve as sources for a variety of family events or, for example, for the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Last but not least, we secured copies of Otto von Habsburg's doctoral dissertation in French, published in 1935.

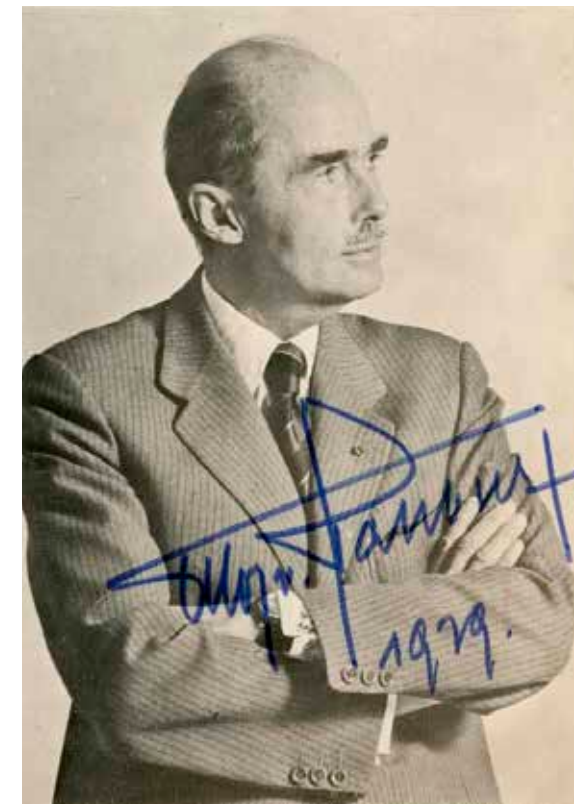
The received heritage is an integral part of the materials entrusted to the Otto von Habsburg Foundation in 2018, and we intend to continue the processing work with great care following the appropriate preparations by uniting the components that belong together. Our aim is to make the photographic material and archival documents available for research in digital form after preserving and organising them, with the approval of the Access Committee. This work will undoubtedly be a time-intensive process. However, it could make a decisive contribution to a better understanding of the life of our namesake and certain events in 20<sup>th</sup>-century history.



## Documents from Berlin

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung head office invited the Director of our Foundation to Berlin for a panel discussion. The topic of the exchange of views on 19 March was the role of the period of regime change in European historical consciousness and the significance of those experiences in shaping the future of our continent. The German federal government will soon set up a research institute in Halle on the subject, and it is counting on the experience of the countries of the Central European region during the preparatory work. The discussion in Berlin, moderated by Joachim Klose, former KAS Dresden Office Director, was also attended by Carsten Schneider, State Minister for the Eastern Länder, Professor Johanna Wanka, former Federal Minister of Education, and Marek Pravda, Polish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

On that occasion GERGELY PRÖHLE also visited KNUT ABRAHAM (CDU), a former colleague of Otto von Habsburg, who had been our guest in Budapest several times. He thanked us for our publication, *99 Years – 99 Photos. Photographs from the Life of Otto von Habsburg*, and shared with us some documents which, he said, were a glimpse of the more extensive collection of files he had been keeping for decades, recounting his work with our namesake. The original photographs, advertisement papers from the European election campaign 45 years ago, newspaper articles, and other records have found their appropriate place in our archives.





List of Items Obtained During the Year

Without a doubt, the Degenfeld heritage is the most significant addition to the collection this year, but we have also been enriched by several other items.

We are grateful to the more than ten contributors who donated photos, newspaper cuttings, brochures and medals. Furthermore, we thank BALÁZS KÁDI for his help in expanding our collection of objects.

Documents, posters and promotional material from KNUT ABRAHAM.

ADAM FERGUSSON’s memoirs, which can be read on page 134.

DEZSŐ PAPP’s photographs of Otto von Habsburg in colour

Betamax cassettes on the funeral of Queen Zita (1989) and interviews with Otto (1990) from KATALIN REVICZKY

The estate of ARTÚR TORMÁSSY, tutor of Charles I, consisting of photographs and papers

A postcard depicting Otto sitting on a crate with Hungarian ornamentation.



Otto von Habsburg signing a book on Dezső Papp's photo



A photo card with Crown Prince Otto von Habsburg and his tutor, Pál Zsámboky; Zsámboky's autograph on the reverse, 1922



Otto medal, the work of Dezső Seregély



Artúr Tormássy and Archduke Charles in the Augarten Palace in Vienna



Vitreous enamel Otto badge with the Holy Crown on top



Greeting card in Hungarian by Archduke Karl for Artúr Tormássy



Otto plaque, the creation of sculptor István Kiss Zombori, 1925



# PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS

## External research, creation of databases, and professional networking

While the processing and digitisation of the nearly 700 boxes of material is underway, our Foundation also works to further the cause of greater understanding and promotion of the oeuvre in additional ways. Whether it is through articles and essays, interviews with Otto von Habsburg's contemporaries, mapping the materials of domestic and national archives related to our namesake, or welcoming the representatives of the academic community to our archives, we endeavour to follow the example of the last heir to the Hungarian throne, who built up his network of contacts with great perseverance throughout his life, by carrying out our tasks in cooperation with an extensive range of partners, seeking opportunities for meetings and open dialogue.



## ORAL HISTORY

No tangible memory can tell a story as well as someone who personally knew Otto von Habsburg. Consequently, the Foundation seeks to interview former colleagues and acquaintances of its namesake about their recollections of the last heir to the Hungarian throne.

## Portrait of a British pro-European MEP

Last year, for our exhibition in London and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Winston Churchill's birth, we sought to explore Otto von Habsburg's British connections. In this context, we had the opportunity to meet ADAM FERGUSON in person on the occasion of our event in June, about which more details are given on page 89. During our visit to London, we interviewed the British politician with Scottish roots about his literary work, his activities in the European Parliament and his decades-long relationship with Otto von Habsburg. His recollections and our colleague's commentary can be found on page 134.

## PRESS AND MEDIA COVERAGE

Following in the footsteps of our namesake, who shared his knowledge in many different media throughout his career, we are also trying to broadcast the results of our efforts in various ways. Our colleagues had the honour of having their writings related to Otto von Habsburg included in academic volumes and journals, as well as being featured in radio and TV interviews throughout this year.

## As a Returning Guest on the RTL Klub Channel

Our Director appeared on RTL's *Morning Show* again for the second time to promote our photo book and the "Start to the Year in the Collection" event we organised. This part of the programme can be viewed by scanning the QR code.



## On the Online Platform of the Journal Országút

On the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hungary's accession to the European Union, Gergely Próhle's article, *Exiting the Negative Spiral*, was published, an English translation of which is available on page 82.

## Radio Note on the Anniversary of the Passing of Otto von Habsburg

*The reflections of Gergely Pröhle were on air at Kossuth Radio on 4 July, the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of our namesake:*

When 13 years ago, on 4 July 2011, Otto von Habsburg, the last heir to the Hungarian throne and Member of the European Parliament for 20 years, died at the age of 99, a life that was rich in twists and turns and, one could say, adventurous, came to an end. The four-year-old boy, who was at the funeral procession of Emperor and King Franz Joseph and whose father, Charles I (IV), became the successor to the throne after the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, witnessed multiple regime changes during his long life. His life was repeatedly threatened, and he certainly could have lost his personal integrity, moral fibre, faith and optimism. But that was not the case.

He had been brought up as Crown Prince, yet when it became apparent that he would never reign, he devoted his public career to shaping the fate of Europe. He paved the way for his motherland, Austria, to join the EU and did much to prepare for the 2004 enlargement, which led Hungary into the European Union. For his commitment and faith, it was a special grace of God that he was blessed to have lived to see it all, and his passing came four days after Hungary's first EU Presidency concluded on 30 June 2011.

We know that the current term of our Presidency, which began on 1 July, takes place in entirely different circumstances from the last one. The position of our continent has shaken considerably since then, the tasks have multiplied, and the great question remains as to how we can develop the political will that could bring about a substantial improvement, enhancing Europe's internal condition and external competitiveness. In January 2011, in an article published in the pages of *Heti Válasz*, János Martonyi, referring to the objectives of our EU Presidency at the time, translated the term 'honest broker' – the expected role of any country holding the Presidency – into 'benign shepherd', which gained wide acceptance at the time. Therefore, those who bark at the flock are not sheepdogs but, instead, caring shepherds who lead them.

A vital task of the Hungarian EU presidency is to guide the country like a shepherd by explaining reasonably that the Hungarian family policy is not an ideological bludgeon but a factor of European competitiveness. Furthermore, the Hungarian stance on migration – even if the radical language sometimes suggests this – is not a rigid and militant method of keeping away unfortunate people who want a better life but a sober understanding of the limits of social integration. The emphasis on the significance of Christian values is, in many cases, not a blatant, mindless rant, but, in all our fallibility, a representation of a time-honoured form of human coexistence that is still up to date in the modern world as well. We are looking for allies to acknowledge this.

During his official visit to Vienna yesterday, President of the Republic of Hungary Tamás Sulyok placed a wreath at the resting place of the last Hungarian heir to the throne and MEP in the legendary Capuchin Crypt. He did so three days after the start of our EU presidency and four days after the formation of the political group Patriots for Europe, established in Vienna.

Although the Austrian, Czech and Hungarian founders of the new political party formation or the presidential wreath placed on the coffin of Archduke Otto could be signs of indulging in nostalgia for the monarchy, given the actors and the circumstances, we can be assured that this was not the case. On the contrary, it meant that regional cooperation in Central Europe remains crucial. As a remarkable member of his family and a representative of modern Europe, Otto von Habsburg was a pragmatic politician who understood that the necessity of preserving national identity and the commitment to the cause of European integration are not mutually exclusive but rather, reinforce each other. In his speech in Székesfehérvár in May 2004, as the first European elections in Hungary were approaching, he urged his audience to “*be patriots, but above all, Hungarians, because if one is not a good Hungarian, one cannot be a good European.*” Let us take these words as an encouragement today!





Our Foundation on the Pages of the Journal of Archives All Year Round

The 2024 issues 2, 3 and 4 of the *Levéltári Szemle* (Journal of Archives) included articles written on the work of our Foundation and by our colleagues as well. This year’s second release of the quarterly archival journal, jointly published by the National Archives of Hungary (MNL), the Association of Hungarian Archivists and the Council of the Leaders of Hungarian Archives, features a review (pp. 69–70) of our book *99 Years – 99 Photos. Photographs from the Life of Otto von Habsburg*, written by archivist Krisztián Bodnár (MNL Archives of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County).

In issue 3, Eleonóra Kovács, Chief Archivist (MNL Scientific Directorate), wrote a report on the 2024 meeting of the Council of the Leaders of Hungarian Archives held in Kaposvár (pp. 95–100). In the article, the author refers to the presentation of SZILVESZTER DÉKÁNY, Senior Collection Fellow at the Otto von Habsburg Foundation, who gave an overview of our work and projects; our report on the event can be found on page 46.

Last but not least, a joint article by Szilveszter Dékány, Senior Collection Fellow, and BENCE KOCSEV, Research Fellow, entitled – *Questions of the Throne in Tokyo. Research in the Archives of the Imperial House in Japan* – was published in issue 4 of the journal (pp. 65–71), in which our colleagues wrote about their unique experiences in the country of the Far East this autumn.

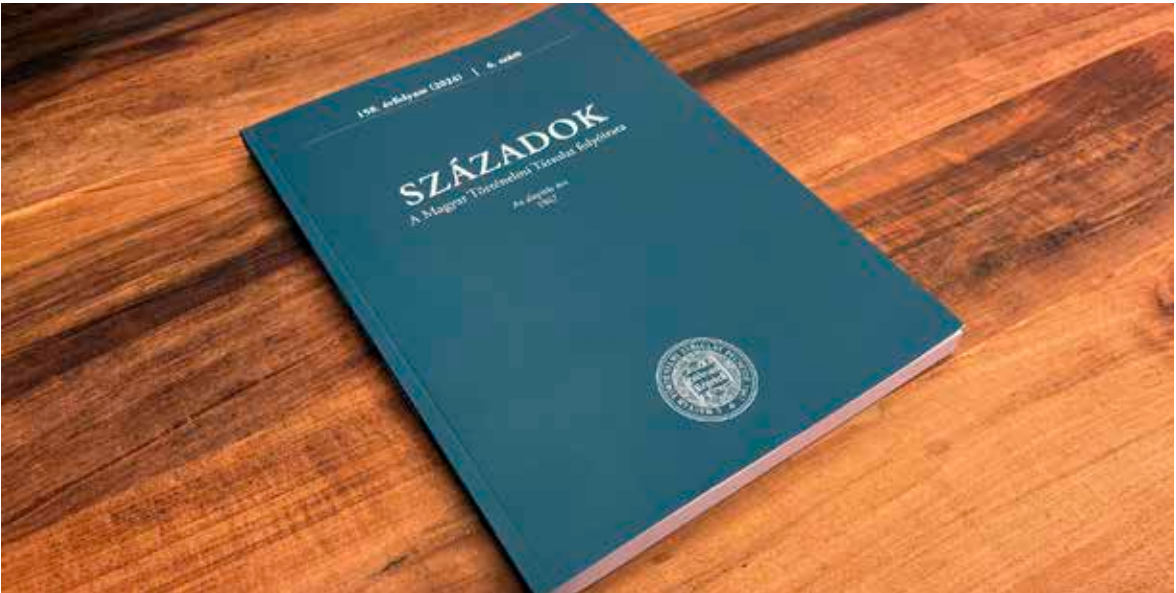


Otto von Habsburg in the Századok Magazine

The essay by our Deputy Director Gergely Fejérdy, titled *Passport Issues of Otto von Habsburg (1919–1949)*, was published in this year’s issue 6 of *Századok* (Centuries). The article in the prestigious journal of the Hungarian Historical Society uncovers some scarcely or never known aspects of Otto von Habsburg’s life, mainly from the period of the Second World War. Our colleague based his study, among other materials, on the documents in the Archives Diplomatiques de Royaume de Belgique Ministère des Affaires étrangères (Diplomatic Archives of the Kingdom of Belgium’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs), which sources had not yet been the subject of scientific research.

The exiled Habsburg family lived in Belgium between 1929 and 1940. For seventeen years, the namesake of our Foundation held a travel document issued by this Western European country. Thanks to his Belgian diplomatic passport, he had managed to flee to the United States to escape the German offensive and later returned to the European continent in November 1944. The document later caused a major stir overseas after a member of Congress called for its revocation – as it turned out, mainly at the instigation of the Czechoslovak émigré government in London. The Belgian authorities were uncomfortable with the matter, and after the war, they opposed the resettlement of Otto von Habsburg in their country, who became a complete stateless person for a short period after his attempt to return to Austria in 1946. Finally, thanks to his extensive network of contacts, he was granted a passport by the Order of Malta and the Principality of Monaco.

The unique approach of the study offers intriguing insights into Otto von Habsburg’s life during the Second World War and the years that followed, and gives a new perspective on the context of the international relations of the period.





# EXTERNAL RESEARCH

As Otto von Habsburg had to spend his early years in exile and later became a lecturer and a member of the European Parliament, he travelled to many parts of the world. Consequently, we can find references to our namesake in countless places abroad. Our Foundation deems it essential to explore the material of other collections in order to gain a more complete understanding of the network of contacts and remarkable life of the last heir to the Hungarian throne. To this end, our colleagues embarked on several research trips in 2024.

## The Imperial Archives of Japan



During the Foundation’s trip to Tokyo in September, which is detailed on page 138, SZILVESZTER DÉKÁNY and BENCE KOCSEV went to examine the Archives of the Imperial Household Agency (IHA), the state organisation representing the imperial family, which preserves valuable material on Otto von Habsburg’s visits to the Imperial Court.

Investigating the close ties between our namesake and the Japanese imperial family has revealed a wealth of new information, even though it proved challenging because the IHA catalogue is only

available in Japanese. However, with the help of our Japanese nexus, the delegation quickly overcame this and was able to access an excellent database: the library, archives and mausoleum sections are searchable separately and simultaneously as well, with a vast amount of data; the library alone contains over 70 000 titles. Among the material in the archives, we had previously identified some documents related to Otto von Habsburg, which we had requested three weeks before our arrival. In addition, we submitted the names of the researchers and reserved the research rooms in advance. Nevertheless, upon reaching the Imperial Palace, our colleagues were only allowed to enter the building after a thorough registration procedure, escorted by armed guards. However, soon after receiving their research room slippers, they could browse the requested materials.

It became apparent from the documents examined that even the first meetings with the former Crown Prince had not been merely protocolary courtesy visits but had contributed to provid-

ing the Emperor, seeking his place in the substantially changed political environment after the Second World War, with a comprehensive overview of the tumultuous international relations. A few decades later, albeit in a very different world political context, Emperor Akihito, who succeeded Hirohito on the imperial throne, also benefited considerably from our namesake’s foreign policy reports. Therefore, the meetings both fostered dynastic relations and highlighted the international political significance of Otto von Habsburg. The Archives of the Imperial House is a unique repository of material, and the reviewed papers provided an exceptional source for understanding the East Asian aspects of the global Cold War and the post-Cold War world order, as well as a glimpse into a particular segment of the Archduke’s elaborate global network of relations.

## Hohenzollerns and Habsburgs

OSKAR PRINZ VON PREUSSEN, Grand Master of the Order of Saint John and his wife AUGUSTE ZIMMERMANN VON SIEFART visited our Foundation on 9 May. The Prince of Prussia, living in Munich, is the great-grandson of the last German Emperor, Wilhelm II, and a successful businessman who has held senior positions in private and public media companies. He knew our namesake and corresponded with him, as did several members of his extended family. The princely couple listened with great interest to our report on the work of our Foundation and the management of the collection because the Hohenzollern dynasty is faced with dilemmas similar to those of the Habsburgs in the preservation, processing and research of the material in their care. Our guests offered to organise a visit to their family archives in Hohenzollern Castle during our exhibitions on Otto von Habsburg’s life in Stuttgart and Metzingen.

The visit in spring by the Grand Master of the Order of Saint John provided our colleagues with the possibility to explore the family stronghold near Bissingen, where part of the archives of the former imperial house can be found. The few days the members of our Foundation spent in Baden-Württemberg in October offered an excellent opportunity to cultivate relations with other collections. In addition to visiting the ancestral home of the Hohenzollerns, GERGELY PRÖHLE and BENCE KOCSEV attended a conference in Stuttgart on Otto von Habsburg’s European legacy, the events of 1989, and the development of Hungarian-German relations, and took part in the commemoration of German Unity Day in Metzingen, which are detailed on page 142.

The backbone of the corpus in the Hohenzollern Palace consists of the economic papers of the







Ministry of the Royal House (Ministerium des königlichen Hauses) and the Court Chamber (Königliche Hofkammer), supplemented by documents from the various court offices dating up to 1918, as well as some files and photographs from the family bequests. During the visit, it became clear that the former German dynasty faced some challenges and dilemmas in preserving, processing, and researching the archives accumulated over the centuries, which our Foundation could help address.

Viewing the records relating to our namesake was a fascinating experience, revealing that in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Hohenzollerns also recognised that Otto von Habsburg's commitment and vision were essential for the future of the continent; moreover, the imperial ideal he represented, adapted to modern political circumstances, could play a pivotal role in the unification of Europe.

## Return to Madeira

Our English-language publication *Exiled on Madeira*, about which more information can be found on page 104, made its debut in Funchal on 16 October 2024. Following the book launch, which is reported on page 165, our Foundation's leaders, GERGELY PRÓHLE, Director, and GERGELY FEJÉRDY, Deputy Scientific Director, were received by the Bishop of Funchal, MsGR. NUNO BRÁS DA SILVA MARTINS, who showed them the records of the months of the royal family in Madeira and of the beatification process of Charles, kept in the diocese archives.



Furthermore, our Madeiran hosts indicated that they would support the publication of our book in Portuguese and would be glad if our Foundation could contribute to the interior decoration of the imperial and royal family's renovated residence in Funchal:

In 2022, we visited the 19<sup>th</sup>-century villa Quinta do Imperador, the home of the exiled family and the place where the last Hungarian King and Austrian Emperor had passed away. On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Charles I, the building, which has a distinctly Mediterranean feel, was in a dilapidated state, having been ravaged by fire in 2016. At the time, we were told of plans by the Regional Government of Madeira to turn it into a museum of Romanticism, but there was no sign of construction yet. By now, however, the entire restoration of the villa has been completed. Our colleagues were given a thorough account of the exhibition's concept by the people responsible for the project. They asked for the Foundation's help in preparing the part of the display that would recall the daily life of the imperial family.

## Research in Latvia

In November, fellows of our Foundation, LAURA BALÁZS and BENCE KOCSEV, participated in a joint exhibition opening with the local Hungarian Embassy in the Latvian capital, about which our report can be found on page 148. Their stay in Riga was also an opportunity to cultivate contacts with collections, such as the Latvian State Archives, where they had the chance to get acquainted with the institution's history and some Hungarian-related materials.

A particularly noteworthy part of the Archives' collection is the material of Latvian emigrants who left for the West during the Second World War and the Soviet period, which is currently being processed and digitised. These may even include the papers of individuals who corresponded with Otto von Habsburg for a shorter or longer period, making exploration of this an exciting professional task for the future. This visit was made possible thanks to MĀRA SPRŪDŽA, Director of the Latvian State Archives, whom we had met in Budapest on 14 October, when she had attended the meeting of the leaders of European Archives, about which more details are provided on the next page.





# PROFESSIONAL ARCHIVAL RELATIONS

Collaboration with national and international public collections supports the Foundation’s primary purpose; we have maintained close ties with some archives for many years. Among the Hungarian institutions, the most noteworthy are the Hungarian National Archives in Budapest (MNL) and its Pest County Archives. This autumn, our cooperation included hosting the heads of the national archives of the EU member states (EBNA) and the directors of the ministries of foreign affairs of the member states and the institutions of the European Union (EUDiA).

## Leaders of European Archives at our Foundation



and the methodology of our work on the heritage of Otto von Habsburg, which aims to follow international archival standards in all its aspects.

Several directors expressed their interest in bilateral consultations and considered it important to compare the material in our collection with relevant documents held by their institutions. In addition to visiting the premises of our Foundation, the guests were also given the opportunity to view the most interesting parts of the Evangelical-Lutheran National Collection located within the building: the Archives, including the Last Will and Testament of Martin Luther and the impressive Podmaniczky-Degenfeld Library. The evening ended with a dinner at the Opus Jazz Club.

The European Board of National Archivists (EBNA) assembles the heads of the national archives of the EU Member States. As part of their meeting in Budapest, they visited our Foundation on 14 October.

The country holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union hosts a conference for the leaders of national archives every six months. The organisers of the meeting in Budapest decided to include a visit to our Foundation in the programme. We were delighted to welcome the guests, to whom we presented our archival activities

# Conference of the Diplomatic Archives of the European Union

On 7 November, the European Union Diplomatic Archives (EUDiA) held its professional conference in cooperation with our Foundation. EUDiA is an international organisation that brings together directors of archives of the ministries of foreign affairs of the member states and the institutions of the European Union. On the occasion of Hungary’s Presidency of the Council of the EU, the National Archives of Hungary hosted a two-day event in Budapest.



GERGELY PRÓHLE, Director of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation, welcomed our guests. The former diplomat detailed our activities regarding the heritage of the former crown prince, a man of great versatility: a historical figure, a sovereign political thinker, a political analyst, an active networker, a Member of the European Parliament, and a committed European. After his remarks, ZOLTÁN SZATUCSEK, Director of Innovation and IT at the National Archives of Hungary, outlined the specificities of diplomatic sources, the importance of cooperation between the members of the organisation and the results achieved so far (in the research of cross-border events such as the Spanish Civil War or the Cold War).

On behalf of our Foundation, GERGELY FEJÉRDY and BENCE KOCSEV gave a lecture. While our Deputy Scientific Director presented the most crucial stages of Otto von Habsburg’s life, Bence Kocsev used the example of the 500 pages of correspondence between our namesake and Henry Kissinger to illustrate how the tasks of preservation and research reinforce each other.

On the basis of an agreement between the respective authorities of the two countries, for some years now, the National Archives of Hungary has been keeping digital copies of the documents of Hungarian war prisoners who had been taken to Russia and the Soviet Union during and after the two World Wars. DÁNIEL MIKLÓS presented the relevant First World War database of the National Archives, mentioning the heroic efforts of Mihály Jungerth-Arnóthy (1883–1957), a diplomat who had helped 80 000 of our compatriots return home in the early 1920s. JÁNOS FŐCZE summarised the surviving Second World War documents relating to some 700 000 people. He drew attention to the peculiarities of the data recording by the Soviet and Hungarian authorities and the resulting potential pitfalls in the process of identification and classification.

The second panel focused on the latest developments supporting archival processing. ISTVÁN SZALONTAI of Stratis Management and IT Consulting Ltd. spoke about the possibilities of extrac-





tive and generative data mining of documents, presenting the prototype of their latest product. PÉTER KÖRÖSI-SZABÓ from the Alfréd Rényi Mathematical Research Institute showed how artificial intelligence could be integrated into archiving processes: their RAG (Retrieval Augmented Generation) application can reduce the

“noise level” of documents to an average of about 6.5%, which is significantly lower than competing tools. KATA ÁGNES SZÜCS, representing the National Archives of Hungary, introduced the audience to new methods of automated data mining from manuscript documents that could be considered a treasure trove for historical research.

During the section following the lunch break, a heated exchange of views ensued between the participants on the issue of the declassification of EU and NATO documents. Subsequently, the book entitled *“European Union – Forging a Union for Peace”* was presented. The volume, which contains short essays on the most important figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who had promoted a united Europe, was edited by the National Archives of Hungary, with the contribution of our Foundation to the chapter on Otto von Habsburg; our review of this publication can be found on page 45.

At the end of the eventful day, Gergely Pröhle guided the participants through the premises of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation.

*Photos: National Archives of Hungary*

## COOPERATION

We continue to expand the network of our Foundation’s professional partners year by year, striving to develop closer links with prominent institutions in Hungarian and foreign public collections.

Among our existing nexuses, we would like to emphasise that the Royal Palace of Gödöllő has been a dedicated and generous supporter of our work for many years, and we remain grateful to the Benedictine Archabbey of Pannonhalma. From abroad, we must mention our partnership with the Russell Kirk Center and The Heritage Foundation in the USA, the collaboration with the European University Institute in Florence, and our long-standing and unchanged good relations with the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv in the Austrian capital.

### Symbolic Restitution in Pannonhalma

On 15 November, in the Basilica of the Pannonhalma Archabbey, which was celebrating the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment, we presented the monastic community with the travelling altar of Emperor Joseph II at the traditional St Martin’s Day celebrations. The event was attended by the President of Hungary, Tamás Sulyok.

In 1786, the “King with a hat” – an epithet he was given when, in the 1849 Declaration of Independence, the Hungarian National Assembly proclaimed that Joseph II was not a true King of Hungary because he had never been coronated with the Crown of Saint Stephen – temporarily closed down the Benedictine Monastery of Pannonhalma.

In his speech, Gergely Pröhle recalled the many facets of Joseph II’s ecclesiastical policy and its ideological background and presented the extraordinary artefact preserved in the bequest of Otto von Habsburg. The Director’s address can be read on page 224.



## Returning American Researchers

As a key figure in the post-Second World War conservative intellectual and political landscape, Otto von Habsburg played a crucial role in shaping the dialogue between American and European thinkers and policymakers. His insight, erudition, charisma, excellent linguistic skills and inspiring optimism enabled him to be, to some extent, a shaper of transatlantic relations as a mediator. While European to the core and committed to the idea of an independent and autonomous Europe, in the Atlanticism-continentalism debate of the 1950s and 1960s he was a proponent of the first approach.



His contact with the diverse American public – especially with influential thinkers who greatly defined the character of 20<sup>th</sup>-century conservatism, such as Russell Kirk, William F. Buckley Jr, L. Brent Bozell, and Frederick Wilhelmsen, as well as a number of prominent Republican-leaning politicians and background figures, including Edwin J. Feulner, Barry Goldwater, David Rockefeller, and Henry Kissinger – offer valuable lessons not only for the history of ideas and political thought but also for contemporary public discourse. His close ties with leading figures in American public life endured to the end of his life. Alexandra Wilhelmsen, the daughter of the philosopher mentioned above, described the

relationship between her family and the former Crown Prince as one based on “shared values and commitments”. She stressed that working in different fields, *“we all felt that we were contributing to the same common goal: the revival of the Western tradition and the re-establishment of a just social order.”*

To unravel this transatlantic connection and to learn more about John Lukacs’ early career, American researchers visited our Foundation in the summer of 2024. RICHARD GAMBLE, Professor at Hillsdale College, who first had come to Budapest for the conference to mark the centenary of John Lukacs’ birth, reported on page 175, returned to Hungary four months later with one of his talented students, ETHAN BOURGEOIS. During their nearly one-and-a-half-month stay, they worked on mapping the traces of the Hungarian-born historian and processing some of the American-related material in our Foundation’s collection. The extensive archival material contains essential clues to understanding the events and dynamics of the global Cold War and also illustrates that the American conservative milieu is much more diverse than often simplistic political interpretations suggest. It also reveals that Central European impulses have had (and in some ways still have) a major influence on the landscape of this world. The image that emerges from the documents, challenges, in many ways, the prevailing myths of Protestant dominance in US public life.

The partnership between our Foundation and Hillsdale College, with the support of donors of Hungarian descent and the professional coordination of Professor Gamble, will hopefully continue in the future, and we look forward to welcoming students interested in the topic in the years to come.

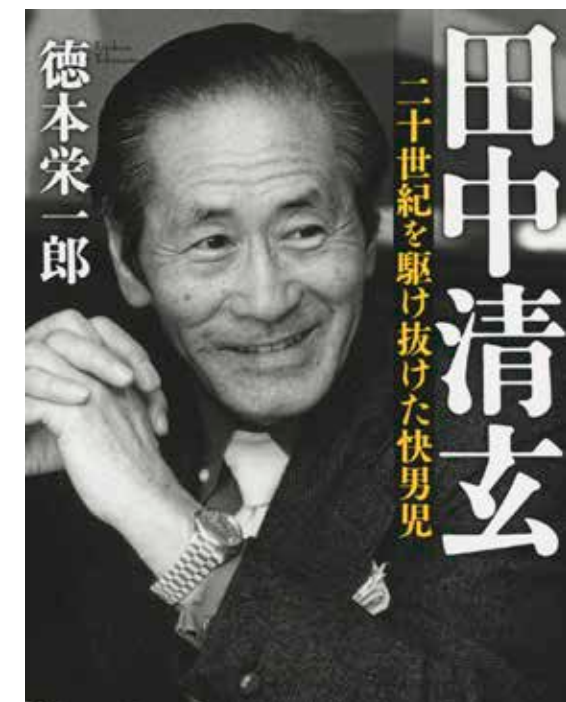
## A Researcher from Japan in our Archives

EIICHIRO TOKUMOTO, who had recently published a book on the life of Seigen Tanaka, an important Japanese nexus of Otto von Habsburg, visited our Foundation. The aim of his research in Budapest was to explore in more detail the links between our namesake and the decision-makers of the island country.

Our archive offers a rich and diverse range of material relevant to the international field, providing a basis for understanding the nature, characteristics and complexities of the global Cold War and the world order that followed and also serves as a valuable reference for contemporary international political discourse and practice. The documents reveal that, although Otto von Habsburg’s political legacy is primarily significant in a European context, his horizons extended far beyond our continent. One interesting aspect of his global political aspirations is that, following the cataclysm of the Second World War, he placed particular emphasis on the development of international relations between Japan and the transatlantic region, thus contributing to the reaffirmation of the island country’s prestige and reputation, and the development of economic relations and political cooperation.

From the 1950s onwards, the Archduke was a frequent visitor to Japan, where he was in close contact with leading politicians, including several prime ministers, as well as members of the imperial family and business leaders. From the late 1970s, as a Member of the European Parliament, he devoted considerable attention to deepening cooperation between the Far East and the Old Continent. Through his close friendship with Friedrich August von Hayek and the great minds of the Austrian School, and his membership of the Mont Pelerin Society, Otto von Habsburg became deeply involved in the economics of Japanese reconstruction, facilitating the relationship between the Nobel Prize-winning economist, who was very popular in the Far East, and Japanese business leaders.

Exploring these links was the ambition of Eiichiro Tokumoto’s visit to our Foundation in April. Our guest, who had worked as an economics correspondent for the Reuters news agency in the 1990s and later as an investigative journalist,



The Tiger of Tokyo: The Life and Times of Seigen Tanaka by Eiichiro Tokumoto.



looked through the documents relevant to Japan and related material from our photo collection. Through his research, he sought to gain a more detailed picture of the transnational networks shaped considerably by the former Crown Prince and the connected political and economic decision-makers in the United States, Europe and Asia.

During his stay in Hungary, Mr. Tokumoto also studied in depth Otto von Habsburg's role in the preparations for the Pan-European Picnic. In addition to researching archival sources, he visited meaningful places for the historical memory of Otto von Habsburg in Hungary, including the memorial site in Sopronpuszta, where the Picnic had been held.

His time in the Hungarian capital was useful not only for exploring the records in our collection – and thus for a more precise dissection of our namesake's extensive network of contacts and international political activities – but also for the realisation of our Foundation's exhibition in Tokyo in September.

### Cooperation with the Royal Archives of Morocco

On the International Francophonie Day, 20 March, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco included a selection of our Foundation's photographs in their roll-up exhibition illustrating Moroccan-Hungarian relations. Subsequently, on 9 August, BAHJA SIMOU, Director of the Moroccan Royal Archives, and her colleague visited our Foundation.

This was the second time we established important contacts with a significant public collection of the North African country, following last year's visit by the Director of the National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco. We presented to Ms. Simou the work of our Foundation, our collecting and processing practices, and our documents and photographs related to Morocco. With great interest, the Director browsed through the reports and newspaper articles written by Otto von Habsburg on her country. She was delighted to discover herself in a photograph taken during our namesake's visit to Rabat.

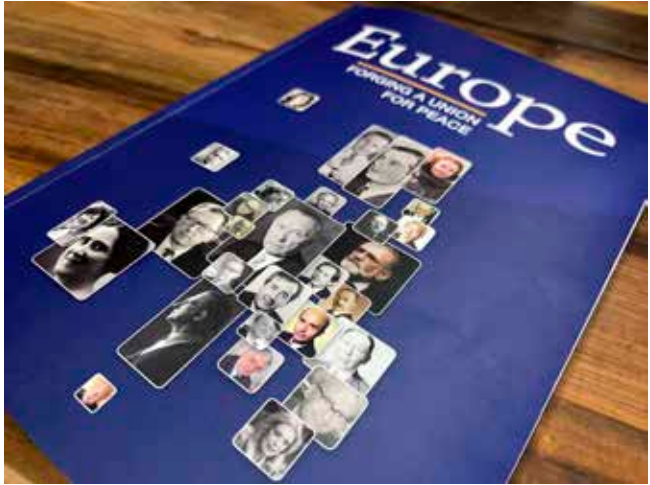
The head of the Royal Archives proposed a cooperation agreement for the publication of Otto von Habsburg's writings on Morocco and an exhibition in Rabat on his life. As a farewell gift, the Director was given our publications about our namesake, as well as the recently published volume *La Continuité de l'Histoire* by János Martonyi, about which more on page 102.



### European Union – Forging a Union for Peace

The European Union Diplomatic Archives (EUDiA) and the Hungarian National Archives (MNL) unveiled their internationally collaborative publication, *Europe – Forging a Union for Peace*, at the event held at our Foundation on 7 November. The volume, published by the MNL in honour of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, was compiled with the participation of our Senior Collection Fellow, SZILVESZTER DÉKÁNY, while our Research Fellow colleague, BENCE KOCSEV, authored the chapter on Otto von Habsburg.

In her foreword to the book, María Oliván Avilés, President of the European Archives Group, reflects on the 15 years of the organisation she chairs, referring to archives as the custodians of our shared past, which, by joining forces across Europe, can do much to help citizens of member states develop their identity by providing a way of learning about the roots of their families, the region they live in, or their broader community. The strategic objectives for the coming years (2025–2030) are to ensure that collections continue to promote democracy and maintain the public's trust in archives in the digital age. At the same time, efforts should also focus on securing the independence of archival work, clarifying the position on artificial intelligence, contributing to the data-driven economy and facilitating the seamless digitisation of public services.



The kaleidoscopic compilation contains 35 portraits in chronological order, and the institutions that hold the records of these individuals encompass the whole of the European Union. Most of them are politicians who played an active role in the continent's momentous events over the past 100 years: the building of the new world order after the First World War, the humanitarian efforts during the Second World War, the creation and operation of European institutions, the dismantling of the Iron Curtain and the integration of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe: Raoul Wallenberg, Konrad Adenauer, Alcide De Gasperi, Simone Weil, Jacques Delors, Otto von Habsburg representing Hungary, Lennart Meri, Vaclav Havel, Vitautas Landsbergis, Franjo Tuđman, Bronisław Geremek, Fabrizia Baduel Glorioso, Niels Erik Nørlund Ersbøll, Georgi Mihov Dimitrov, Thor Heyerdahl, Melina Mercouri, Max Petitpierre, W. B. Yeats and Alexandre Lamfalussy.

# MEETING OF ARCHIVISTS

The main focus of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation’s work is the processing of the heritage of our namesake. We are committed to achieving this objective by adopting the most advanced methodology and meeting the highest professional standards. We, therefore, consider it crucial to regularly discuss with the field the innovations and experiences that may arise.

## Reporting on the Work of the Foundation to the Leaders of Archives

This year, our Foundation was honoured to receive an invitation to present itself as an institution at the Annual Meeting of the Council of the Leaders of Hungarian Archives (MLVT) in 2024. The Council of the Leaders of Hungarian Archives was founded in 1994 and is a prominent professional organisation of archivists. Through its membership, it fully represents the county archives operated as affiliated institutions of the National Archives of Hungary, the city archives maintained by the municipalities, and the other registered public and private collections: the university and specialised archives, as well as the ecclesiastical archives.

The Meeting was held in Kaposvár, Hungary, between 23–25 May. On behalf of our Foundation, SZILVESZTER DÉKÁNY, Senior Collection Fellow, described Otto von Habsburg’s document and audiovisual collection. An integral part of the heritage is the photographic archive of about 30,000 items that not only offers a comprehensive account of the life of Otto von Habsburg, but also contains unique portraits of members of the Habsburg family. The collection includes pictures taken by both professional and amateur photographers. Our colleague mentioned the world-famous photographer Juan Gyenes, born in Kaposvár, whom Otto von Habsburg had

known personally, as Gyenes had made several series of photographs of him in Spain.

Our colleague gave an overview of the collection: he outlined the structure of the heritage and the processing of letters, books, photographs and audio-visual material. The audience could identify the individuals in the photos, which were taken on the occasion of Otto von Habsburg’s visit to Kaposvár in 1992.



## Our Colleague Gave a Presentation at the Itinerant Archivist Meeting

The Association of Hungarian Archivists held the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Hungarian Archivists between 30 June and 3 July 2024, the most important event of the archival profession in Hungary. Our Foundation was represented by four of our members – ESZTER BARCS, SZILVESZTER DÉKÁNY, PIROSKA KOCSIS and ZOLTÁN ÓLMOSI.

For the first time in the meetings’ history, the city and archives of Senta in Vojvodina hosted the event, which offered an excellent opportunity to learn about the work of archives in the motherland and the southern region.

In accordance with the location of the travelling meeting, the main topic of the convention was cooperation with archives beyond the borders. The sessions (international, source publication, information technology, conservation, history of education and science, archival pedagogy, and economics) covered different areas of archival matters.

On the last day, the archives in Vojvodina presented their work, including an overview of the southern colleagues’ activities and the prospects for development, with many lessons for the participants.

During the three-day programme, our colleague Piroška Kocsis delivered a colourful, illustrated lecture entitled “*Fűzéradvány, the Károlyis’ Gem Stone – Secrets and Legends of the Castle*” in the “Castles and Fortresses” source publication section. Several members of the Károlyi family were in close contact with Otto von Habsburg; therefore, the address also enhanced our Foundation’s representation at the meeting.

About 150 archivists from Hungary, abroad, and other European countries attended the event. In addition to the official programmes, encounters and discussions with fellow archivists presented an opportunity to share the work of our Foundation with a broader professional audience.

*Photos by The Association of Hungarian Archivists’ Annual Meeting 2024 – Zenta*





VISITS

TAMÁS SULYOK, President of the Constitutional Court

TIBOR NAVRACSICS, Minister of Public Administration and Regional Development

RÉKA VARGA, Member of the Constitutional Court, Dean of the Faculty of Public Governance and International Studies of the Ludovika University of Public Service

MIKLÓS M. NAGY, Head of Helikon Publishing

LORÁND ERŐSS, General Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, Neurology and Neurosurgery

SUSAN HANSSEN, Professor at the University of Dallas and JEFFREY NELSON, Executive Director of the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal

BARON VINZENZ VON STIMPFL-ABELE, Procurator of the European Order of St. George, and members of the Order

STEPHAN BAIER, former colleague and biographer of Otto von Habsburg

WALBURGA HABSBURG DOUGLAS, Vice-President of the Pan-European Union, daughter of our namesake;

RAINHARD KLOUCEK, Secretary-General of the Austrian Pan-European Movement; members of the Movement, including CARLOS URIARTE SANCHEZ, Professor of Constitutional Law at the Rey Juan Carlos University in Madrid; and representatives of the Hungarian Pan-European Union

KARL VON HABSBURG, the first-born son of our Foundation’s namesake, and his daughter, GLORIA VON HABSBURG

KARL-KONSTANTIN VON HABSBURG, grandson of our namesake, son of Georg von Habsburg

HUBERT VÉDRINE, former French Foreign Affairs Minister and CLAIRE LEGRAS, Ambassador of the French Republic to Hungary

LADISLAV CABADA, Vice-Rector for Research, Development and Quality, Prague Metropolitan University

JEAN-FRANCOIS PAROZ, Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to Hungary and his colleague, ZSUZSANNA TORMÁSSY

OSKAR PRINZ VON PREUSSEN, Grand Master of the Order of St John and his wife, AUGUSTE ZIMMERMANN VON SIEFART

ELEONORE D’AMBROSIO-HABSBURG, daughter of the present Head of the House, Karl von Habsburg, her husband, JÉRÔME D’AMBROSIO and their son, OTTO D’AMBROSIO, great-grandson of the namesake of our Foundation

VILMOS TÉREY, Chief Adviser to the Constitutional Court of Hungary

EIICHIRO TOKUMOTO, journalist

RICHARD GAMBLE, Professor at Hillsdale College and his student, ETHAN BOURGEOIS

NIALL BUCKLEY, PhD student at Trinity College Dublin

FRANÇOISE PONS, journalist

CSABA SZABÓ, Director General and ZSUZSANNA MIKÓ, Deputy Director General of the Hungarian National Archives

ANDREA POREMBA, Former Personal Secretary to Baron William Gelsey

BAHIJA SIMOU, Director of the Moroccan Royal Archives

Members of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Political Education Forum Berlin

HIKARIKO ONO, Ambassador of Japan to Hungary

FRANÇOIS LAFRENIÈRE, Ambassador of Canada to Hungary

PAUL LEONARD FOX, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Hungary

ASTRID HARZ, Ambassador of the Republic of Austria to Hungary

HUBERTUS KNABE, Historian, Former Director of the Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial

Members of the Via Habsburg – In the Footsteps of the Habsburgs Association

CHRISTIAN GEINITZ, Editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and VALÉRIE NIQUET, Senior Researcher at the Foundation for Strategic Research

MARIA-PIA KOTHBAUER, Ambassador of the Principality of Liechtenstein to Hungary

JEAN GRAFF, Ambassador of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to Hungary

EGILS LEVITS, Former President of the Republic of Latvia

LUDGER KÜHNHARDT, political scientist, journalist and political consultant

LORD ALTON OF LIVERPOOL, Member of the House of Lords, and DAVID CAMPANALE, journalist

FRANÇOIS KERSAUDY, Former Professor at the Panthéon-Sorbonne University and his wife, EMELINA KERSAUDY

PÉTER KORNISS, Kossuth Prize and Pulitzer Memorial Prize-winning photographer

Members of the Order of the Golden Fleece and representatives of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta

CAREY ROBERTS, Professor and Associate Dean of Liberty University

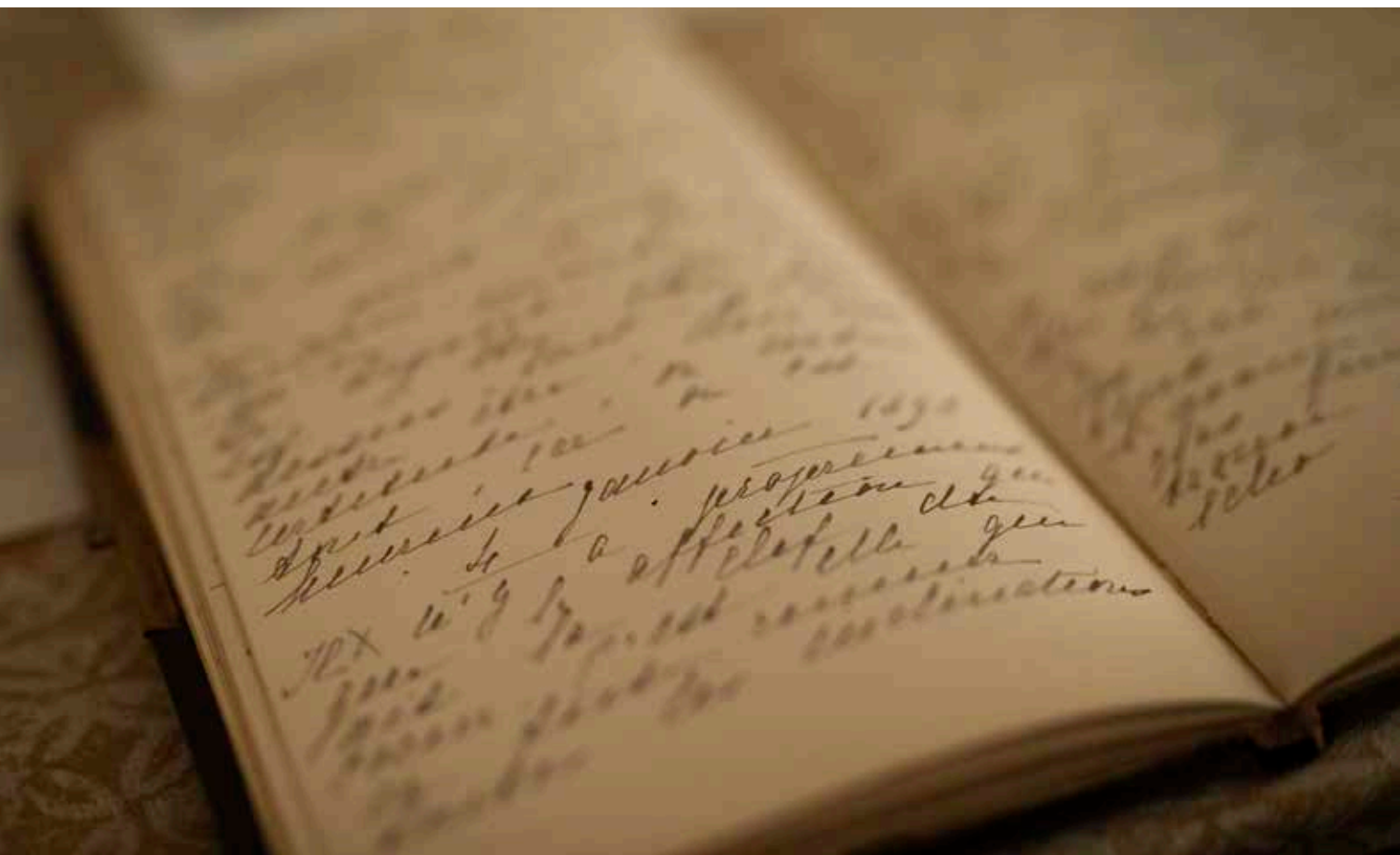






# UNFOLDING COLLECTION

The following pages feature essays published on our website, based on documents held in our collection, as well as articles related to the life of Otto von Habsburg.



## STUDIES

GERGELY FEJÉRDY

### ALLIANCE AND DISAGREEMENT

In memory of Jacques Delors

**The politician, who passed away on 27 December 2023, played a key role in shaping the trajectory of Europe during the period of regime change – alongside our namesake.**



Although the former president of the European Commission and Otto von Habsburg were political rivals, they held each other in mutual esteem and agreed on many issues. A fundament of their respect and appreciation for each other was their shared experience and commitment of public life as devout Christians.

The two politicians knew each other well. 45 ago, in 1979, they were elected together to the European Parliament for the first

time. Delors, who was 13 years younger than Otto, took seat 171 in the Strasbourg Parliament for the French Socialist Party (PS), while the former heir to the throne became a member of the European People's Party from the list of the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) in the European People's Party. For two years, they were members of opposing factions, but they spoke frequently, as Otto von Habsburg was also in contact with representatives of other political parties. And throughout his 20-year career in the European Parliament, he always paid particular attention to his French colleagues.

Jacques Delors joined the political party led by François Mitterrand in 1974. After the PS came to power in 1981, he was appointed as minister of economy and finance. During this period, Otto von Habsburg was critical of Delors and the work of the Paris government. He noted ironically in his articles that the French finance minister's biggest problem was that Germans worked too hard and did not regard socialism as the key to their future.<sup>1</sup> Delors was elected president of the European Commission in 1984. Otto von Habsburg commented on this event as well, saying that although the French politician was experienced, he was not convinced that all the commissioners were adequately prepared.<sup>2</sup> He also wrote a letter to Delors, at that time referring to his previous public activities as exemplary.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Der Franc auf Talfahrt. *Vorarlberger Nachrichten*, May 7, 1983

<sup>2</sup> Gegenschlag der Bürokraten. *Vorarlberger Nachrichten*, October 13 1984

<sup>3</sup> Otto von Habsburg Foundation, Otto von Habsburg Collection, HOAL, I-2-b, Jacques Delors, Pöcking, 21 December 1984

They exchanged messages several times during the second term of the directly elected European Parliament. Since 1986, Delors has regularly provided financial support to the International Pan-European Movement, chaired by Otto von Habsburg. The former heir to the throne repeatedly used the following lines to express his gratitude: *“I can assure you that, the Pan-European Union will do its utmost to promote our common ideal of a united Europe, as it has always done.”*<sup>4</sup> Otto von Habsburg asked the president of the European Commission to personally assist him on a number of issues, for example, he urged him to provide humanitarian aid to Romania.<sup>5</sup> Delors responded directly to these requests, sometimes in French and sometimes in German, and sought to accommodate them.

In 1989, when the French politician was re-appointed to the European Commission, the former Crown Prince, criticising some of the petty manoeuvring that went on in relation to appointments, remarked that *“given the present bad system, it is surprising that the European Community still has a relatively good Commission.”*<sup>6</sup>

However, Otto von Habsburg expressed his slight disappointment with the French politician in 1989, believing that he was trying to promote a trade treaty with the Soviet Union by bypassing the European Parliament. He, therefore, initially supported the idea of the EPP submitting a motion of no confidence towards the Delors-led Commission, but in February 1990, he called the measure a “demagogic manoeuvre” and did not vote for it.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Otto explicitly appreciated the French politician’s understanding of East-Central Europe, which was being liberated from Soviet occupation. In a speech to the European Parliament on 12 September 1990, he thanked the President of the Commission on behalf of his political party for drawing attention to the economic difficulties caused by the Gulf Crisis, which had affected not only the countries of the Middle East but also those of the former Eastern bloc. *“I would like to say thank you to President Delors. In particular, I would like to extend my personal gratitude to him for drawing Parliament’s attention to the fact that the crisis is having a major impact on the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, something that has been somewhat forgotten in recent times.”*<sup>8</sup>



Otto von Habsburg, who was a member of the European Parliament’s Political Affairs Committee from 1989 to 1994 and chairman of the delegation in contact with Hungary, was deeply concerned about the region and paid attention to all statements relating to it.

In the early 1990s, though, the former Crown Prince criticised Delors’ policies. Otto von Habsburg complained that the President of the European Commission had made it difficult for Austria, and later the other countries of the region, to make progress in the enlargement process and sometimes even obstructed it.<sup>9</sup> He agreed that reforms were necessary for the more efficient functioning of the European Community – hence his support for the Single European Act initiated by Delors and later the Maastricht Treaty – but he certainly did not want these processes to hinder the enlargement process.

Overall, despite the fact that their positions in communication, their political interests and their party affiliations sometimes put them at odds, the two politicians were fundamentally much closer than one might think at first sight. Jacques Delors and Otto von Habsburg shared similar views on most of the far-reaching European issues. This is confirmed not only by letters held in our Foundation’s archives but also by the French politician’s words at the funeral service for Otto.

Jacques Delors was buried in Fontaine-la-Gaillarde, Burgundy, on 6 January 2024. (This event received much less coverage than the ceremony held the day before in the courtyard of the Invalides in Paris.) The Archbishop of Dijon, Antoine Hérouard, who conducted the service, eulogised him at the funeral mass: *“In his many commitments and functions, Jacques Delors sought to live out a concrete form of attention to the most vulnerable, to the people most in need, a dimension of solidarity.”*<sup>10</sup> The Archbishop quoted a speech given by the former President of the European Commission in Bruges on 17 October 1989, where Delors himself invoked the words of Robert Schuman: *“We will not succeed in Europe on the basis of legal or economic expertise alone [...] if we fail to give Europe soul and direction in the next 10 years, we will lose our cause.”*<sup>11</sup>

Undoubtedly, Otto von Habsburg believed so too.

<sup>4</sup> HOAL, I-2-b, Jacques Delors, Pöcking, 22 January 1988

<sup>5</sup> HOAL, I-2-b, Jacques Delors, Pöcking, 18 December 1987

<sup>6</sup> Das europäische Jahr. *Vorarlberger Nachrichten*, 7–8 January 1989

<sup>7</sup> Demmerle, Eva – Baier, Stephan: *Habsburg Ottó élete*. Budapest, Európa, 2003, 479.

<sup>8</sup> *Otto von Habsburg im Europäischen Parlament 1979–1997*. III. [München], [Hanns Seidel Stiftung], [1997], Nr. 3–393/130. (A collection compiled for Otto von Habsburg’s 85<sup>th</sup> birthday, which has not been released to the book trade.)

<sup>9</sup> Die Stunde Österreichs. *Vorarlberger Nachrichten*, 12–13 May 1990; and Europäische Wiedervereinigung. *Vorarlberger Nachrichten*, March 16–17, 1991

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.diocese-dijon.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/34/2024/01/obseques-de-jacques-delors.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2002/12/19/5bbb1452-92c7-474b-a7cf-a2d281898295/publishable\\_fr.pdf](https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2002/12/19/5bbb1452-92c7-474b-a7cf-a2d281898295/publishable_fr.pdf)



# A UNIQUE FOREIGN POLICY PERIODICAL

Új Európa, Munich

The Új Európa journal, printed in Munich between 1962 and 1983, was, in many senses, a unique product of Hungarian political emigration. It was perhaps the only publication of the post-war decades with an exclusively foreign policy orientation, examining political and economic phenomena in a broader – European and global – context.

The most eminent representative of this approach was undoubtedly Otto von Habsburg, who provided the financial backing for the periodical and defined its philosophy: with over a hundred articles, he gave direction and scale to the *Új Európa*, offering a role model and an example to follow for the readers, driven from their homeland, to consider issues of grand policy from a more comprehensive perspective.

For nearly two decades, the paper’s image was shaped by the editorial work of Emil Csonka, who was in constant consultation with Otto von Habsburg, who determined the direction of the journal.<sup>1</sup> Csonka was born in Szombathely in 1923. He attended literature, history and sociology classes at Pázmány Péter University. In 1944, he held high positions in the youth organisation of the Arrow Cross Party and the propaganda secretariat of Szálasi – therefore, he fled to the West. From 1951, for three decades, he worked for Radio Free Europe.<sup>2</sup> He took over the editorial reins of the journal in November 1963, and from then on, his cooperation with Otto in maintaining the outlet and ensuring an adequate standard of publication proceeded smoothly. Due to the former Crown Prince’s network of connections, *Új Európa* soon became an instrumental forum for information on foreign policy in the Hungarian emigrant community.<sup>3</sup> Although the reputation of Csonka among Hungarians abroad was, to say the least, not unanimously favourable,<sup>4</sup> Otto trusted him, appreciated his diligence and organisational skills, and did not object when his editor wrote a book about him in 1972, and a few years later about his mother, Empress Zita.<sup>5</sup> He praised his former colleague upon his untimely death with the following words: “...*We seldom find anyone who was such an ardent patriot as Emil Csonka, who expressed this patriotic spirit in such a wide range of literary and other activities.*”<sup>6</sup>



## Political journalism of Otto

The hallmark of Otto von Habsburg’s writings in *Új Europa* is to outline a broad-brush tableau and then approach the specific topic from an elevated perspective. His recurrent themes are the United States, the Soviet Union and East-Central Europe, China, the Far East, and European integration – although it is hardly an exaggeration to claim that the author delineates the contours of world politics in the background in nearly every instance. He returns in several articles to the politicians he considers prominent and to personalities he feels close to, such as Konrad Adenauer, Charles de Gaulle, Salvador de Madariaga, Richard Nixon, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, József Mindszenty, Leo Tindemans, Franz Josef Strauss and Sándor Márai. The essays range from one to four pages in length, with only a few occasional multi-part pieces – usually extracts from his forthcoming books. In honour of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, a compilation about him was published in the sixth issue of the 1982 edition. In the following, I wish to highlight a few of Otto von Habsburg’s thoughts to encourage further research. (For details of his publications and the contents of the thematic booklet, see below.)

Otto’s first article appeared in the first volume. In the October issue, he commemorated the Hungarian Uprising, cautioning that its lessons were relevant to the fate of the whole continent:

<sup>1</sup> Their correspondence, which comprises about 700 documents and is awaiting processing in the Manuscript Collection of the Petőfi Literary Museum, was reviewed by Miklós Veres (Új Európa – Emil Csonka and Otto von Habsburg’s relationship. In: *Habsburg Ottó és a rendszerváltozások*. Ed. Ferenc Vasbányai. Budapest, Otto von Habsburg Foundation, 2021, 72-83.)

<sup>2</sup> “...*Emil Csonka was among the most prolific colleagues; he worked with ease and speed, which was considered a major advantage in radio work...*” as his former colleague noted. Gyula Borbándi: *Magyarok az Angol Kertben. A Szabad Európa Rádió története*. Budapest, Európa, 1996, 425.

<sup>3</sup> Borbándi, Gyula: *A magyar emigráció életrajza 1945–1985*. Bern, Európai Protestáns Magyar Szabadegyetem, 1985, 292.

<sup>4</sup> Deák, István: *Maratoni életem. Emlékirat*. Pécs, Kronosz, 2023, 248–249.

<sup>5</sup> Habsburg, Ottó. *Egy különös sors története*. Munich, Új Európa, 1972. And *Zita története. Az utolsó magyar királyné*. Munich, Új Európa, 1975.

<sup>6</sup> *Az emigráns magyar* [The Hungarian emigrant]. *Új Európa*, 1983, 1, 3.

*“Above all, we must create unity in Europe within the free world itself. In the days of the Revolution, the Hungarian people’s cries for help were directed to this Europe as well. They who stood in that lost position believed in the European ideal, while the West only talked but otherwise remained inactive. There can be no doubt nowadays that if a United Europe had become fact and reality in 1956, the course of events would have been radically different.”<sup>7</sup> A decade and a half later, on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Revolution, he addressed once again the responsibilities and duties of the whole of Europe, warning the prosperous democracies against the dangers of complacency and reminding them of their obligations to the oppressed nations of East-Central Europe: “Freedom will triumph if we, who enjoy its benefits, do not treat it as guaranteed, but act ceaselessly for the immortal ideals for which 20 years ago the Hungarian nation stood up for, and defied the armoured tanks of tyranny with their bare hands.”<sup>8</sup>*

The Hungarian theme was constantly present in his writings: on the occasion of anniversaries and individuals, he regularly expressed his thoughts on the motherland, emigration, and the relations between the region and Europe within the field of the great powers. He sought encouragement in each event, to set an example for his readers. The fate of Mindszenty – through his personal involvement, the legitimist conviction of the Prince-Primate, and their meetings after the Archbishop’s departure to the West – provided a perfect example: *“Mindszenty’s path is straight as an arrow, from start to finish. In the eight decades of his life, we find neither sly compromises nor ambiguous agreements with those in power. Naturally, this is not to the liking of the alleged diplomats, the schemers in office. They disguise their shortcomings as prudence, and the witness – the martyr, for whom faith is a sacrifice and not a sinecure – such a witness is an eternal reproach to the opportunists”<sup>9</sup>*; he addressed the Cardinal’s supporters and critics.

The question of returning the Holy Crown home was doubtlessly the one that stirred the Hungarian community the most in the 1970s: the Carter administration’s gesture elicited a reaction from Hungarians worldwide. Otto von Habsburg was against the diplomatic action of the United States. Nevertheless, as so often in his life, he proved to be a gifted oracle: *“Today, the dictatorship still rejoices with great triumph that it has achieved a tremendous foreign policy success, and it cannot be denied that the present American course has delivered this victory to the doorstep of this tyranny. However, just as the »Mindszenty affair« has taken on different dimensions from those intended by its directors, it cannot be ruled out that the Crown will also assert its independence, that it will surpass the diplomacy of the Soviet colonial empire on the Danube, and that the Holy Crown will enter into a strong and lasting alliance with the Hungarian people on Hungarian soil.”<sup>10</sup>* In 1979, revisiting this subject, he assessed it as follows: *“...what has been happening for a year, since the return of the Crown, is a kind of blessed complicity in the absence of free elections, a type of referendum against foreign occupation, against dictatorship, respectfully in favour of a multi-party system, parliamentary democracy, freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of association, freedom of the press and expression – in support of human rights. A referendum to restore normalcy to life along the Danube. A silent protest, a clear signal of a nation’s will to live. It is a referendum, as was the movement of the*

*Hungarian emigrant community, when it focused and continues to focus the world’s attention on the cause of Hungarian independence through the Crown, tenaciously, consistently, and ceaselessly. The same resolve, purpose, and spirit at home and abroad – one nation in all parts! What the history of the last years of the Crown has taught us, and what this history testifies to, is nothing less than that there is Hungarian national unity, even in adversity. It is a reassuring phenomenon.”<sup>11</sup>*

He repeatedly warned that the improvement of the financial living conditions of a society – as it happened in the West – should not be regarded as the ultimate purpose of human existence. Faced with the mounting challenges of the 1970s, he urged a return to the moral principles that had defined Europe’s identity from the outset and the imperative to rediscover them: *“The cause of the decline of the »Old World« is not material. Western Europe is rich, being the second largest economic power in the world. Its human resources are not to be underestimated: two hundred and fifty million talented people, a population greater than that of either America or the Soviet Union. The decadence of Europe can be perceived on the planes of spirit, character and morality.”<sup>12</sup>* The opportunity to participate actively in politics emerged when he was elected, from the top prominent position of the CSU list, a member of the European Parliament in 1979, which, for the first time in the history of integration, decided on the representation of member states by direct votes of citizens. As usual, he was looking forward to the challenge with high hopes and, in fact, saw in it the promise of fulfilling a dream: *“Victory is not impossible. There is a way to secure a Christian future for Europe once again. Neither our faith nor our continent is destroyed. Our values will only perish if we give them up. Let us remember: Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing.”<sup>13</sup>* However, for those endeavouring to unite Europe, the time of idleness, of ‘dolce far niente’, is gone forever. *Triumph and defeat are both in our hands. We are responsible for our actions towards God, the future generations of Europe, and European Christian civilisation.”<sup>14</sup>*

One could quote at length from the writings of Otto von Habsburg, but I hope these few passages have sparked the reader’s interest. If so, one should be aware that within the public collections, only the National Széchényi Library holds the entire collection of the emigrant journal; some of its volumes are available in electronic form on the Arcanum Digital Library (for the period between 1966 and 1983) and on the website of *Új Látóhatár* [New Horizon] (for the issues of 1968–1970). On the latter site, an informative introduction by its editor, Pál Szeredi, places the press product on the intellectual and political map of the period.

In our Digital Archive, you can find all of Otto von Habsburg’s articles published in *Új Európa* by scanning the QR code. We wish you a pleasant browse!



7 A magyar forradalom nem lezárt esemény [The Hungarian Revolution is an Ongoing Affair]. *Új Európa*, 1962, 6, 6.

8 A magyar ötvenhat és a mi felelősségünk [1956 in Hungary and Our Responsibilities]. *Új Európa*, 1976, 6, 10.

9 Mindszenty neve örök. Az ember, aki mer nemet mondani [Cardinal Mindszenty's Name is Eternal. The man who dares to say no]. *Új Európa*, 1974, 2, 7.

10 A Szent Korona és a magyar nép [The Holy Crown of St. Stephen and the Hungarian People]. *Új Európa*, 1978, 2, 14.

11 Még egyszer a Szent Korona: a második népszavazás [The Holy Crown and the Hungarian Society of Today]. *Új Európa*, 1979, 2, 13.

12 Mindszenty neve örök. Az ember, aki mer nemet mondani. *Új Európa*, 1974, 2, 7.

13 Otto quotes John Stuart Mill. The sentence is often wrongly attributed to Edmund Burke.

14 Milyen Európát akarunk? [What Kind of Europe Do We Wish For?] *Új Európa*, 1978, 6, 8.



REMEMBERING A WORLD GONE BY

On 21 February 2024, 35 years ago, Sándor Márai passed away at his home in San Diego. To mark the anniversary, we recall the figure of one of the most influential Hungarian writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through his correspondence with Otto von Habsburg.



Otto von Habsburg at the exhibition opening on the occasion of the Márai Centenary in the writer's home  
Kosice, 11 April 2000

Your Royal Highness,

Not many people left who can say that they were there on one November<sup>2</sup> morning in 1916 at the so-called Uri Street in the Castle District of Buda and saw the court chase drive through the line of revellers with the royal couple arriving from the coronation ceremony. But I was there as a sixteen-year-old teenager, and in the vehicle, I saw the crowned Hungarian king with the queen by his side, and I saw a boy (in an attila<sup>3</sup>, I believe) leaning on the knee of the lovely young queen; and at the sight of him the crowd shouted loudly, “The heir to the throne.” The carriage drove away, but the memory persisted.

This was one of the last great moments when many hoped that the royal couple would be able to find a way out of the horrendous quagmire of war. And many of us regarded the child with hope, trusting that he would have the means and the strength to fulfil his calling. It was not to be, but the memory remained strong and vivid.

Now, when Your Majesty is celebrating his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, as an old witness, I reminiscence about many things, and I shall not fail to wish Your Majesty bodily and spiritual vigour for a long time to come,

Yours sincerely,  
Sándor Márai

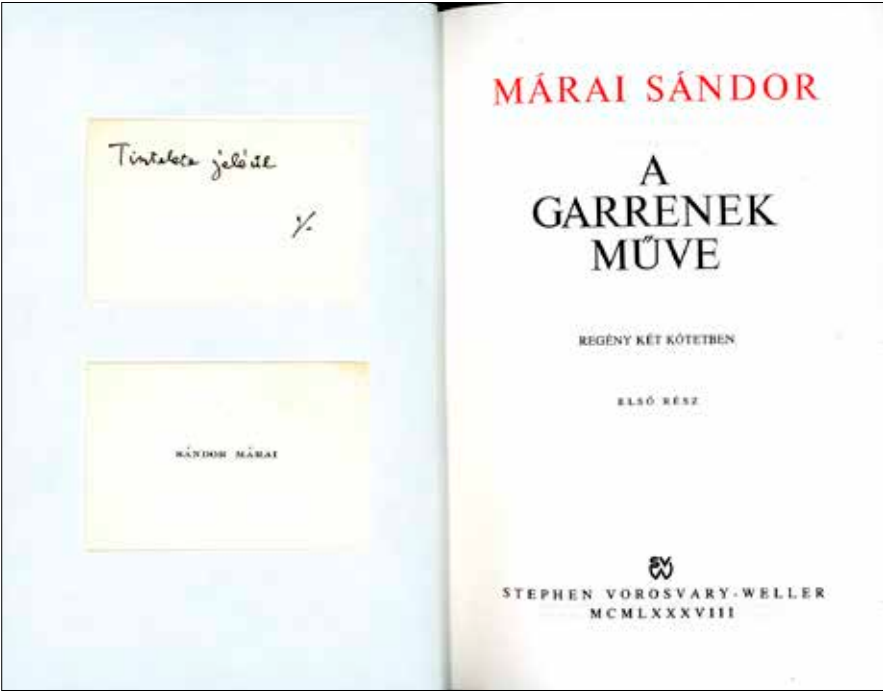
1987 brings another tragedy for the Hungarian writer, who had chosen emigration four decades earlier: after losing his faithful companion Lola in the previous January, their 46-year-old foster son János dies unexpectedly in the spring. He spends his days in complete solitude, with dwindling physical strength and a fading spirit. He seldom writes in his diary, no longer writes books, only reads lines and short passages, and has not listened to music for years. “I am cold. Summer is over, which was no summer; life is over, which in the end has brought nothing but grotesque old age and absurd death,” he ruefully confesses.<sup>4</sup>

In this state, memories become more precious. Especially the anniversaries and birthdays. On his own – which he has been marking with Roman numerals for some time – he makes a brief summary every year; on his name day, he takes a “roll-call” to determine who is still alive among the participants of the last Sándor (Alexander) Day they spent together in 1944. But he also commemorates Lola each year, their child, Kristóf, who died at a few months old, and the date of their departure from Hungary.

<sup>1</sup> HOAL I-2-b-Márai Sándor. The Hungarian text was presented verbatim. I want to thank Tibor Mészáros and Csaba Komáromi of the Petőfi Literary Museum for their help in providing access to the Márai letters preserved by the institution.  
<sup>2</sup> Márai inaccurately recalls the date of the coronation of Charles IV and Zita, which was held in Buda on 30 December 1916.  
<sup>3</sup> A traditional white Hungarian short coat.  
<sup>4</sup> *A teljes napló, 1982–89* [The Complete Diary, 1982–89]. Budapest, Helikon, 2018, 367.

His lines to Otto von Habsburg were not prompted by a sense of nostalgia for the Monarchy. Márai does not primarily look back on the greatness of the political system and the impressive economic achievements of the dualist state but laments the cultural atmosphere of the time and the lack of an outlook on life and a lifestyle worthy of human beings in the private and public circles. Among the dozen or so documents of his exchange of letters with the former Crown Prince between 1977 and 1988, largely confined to birthday celebrations and acknowledgements of the volumes they sent each other, this is the only one in which he refers to the “Bygone Empire”, on the pretext of their one – and only – personal encounter.

In his diary kept from 1943 onwards, he dwells longer on Otto’s person only once.<sup>5</sup> The entry is from 1979, at the end of their stay in Salerno: “*Habsburg Ottó könyve: Jalta, és ami utána történt* [the book of Otto von Habsburg: Yalta and what happened afterwards]<sup>6</sup>. *Among European role-players, this one remaining Habsburg is a rare person who deserves credit. His erudition, cosmopolitanism, courage in exposing and speaking out against the treachery of Yalta, his refined taste and magnanimous tact, all combined, are a rare phenomenon. I agree with almost everything that he rejects and denies: communism, the tainted pseudo-democracy... However, then comes the threshold where the reader halts, when he not only says what he does not want but also states what he does want: a Christian Europe. Here, the reader coughs and closes the book. No wonder that a Habsburg is religious; his*



A Garrenek műve [The Work of the Garrens] from the library of Otto von Habsburg, with the name card of Márai enclosed

5 At Emil Csonka’s request, from 1964, he contributed to the *Új Európa*, a journal backed by Otto von Habsburg. On this issue, see Ferenc Bodri: Márai Sándor jelenléte a müncheni Új Európában. [Sándor Márai’s presence in the Munich New Europe.] Forrás, 1992, 7, 38–50.  
6 See: *Jalta és ami utána következett. Válogatott cikkek, tanulmányok* [Yalta and what followed. Selected articles and studies]. München, Griff, 1979.

*background, upbringing, everything puts him on the clerical side. Nothing to be surprised that such an exceptionally well-educated and astute statesman [wanted] a European confederation – which is being hammered out, and which is the last hope that the whole of Europe will not become some sort of Finlandised Russian colony (it will be anyways, even if the Soviet empire abandons communism, because this enormous power, armed to the teeth with imperialism, is now imposing its weight on the loosely knit bundle of nation-states in Europe). So, what is the »Christian Europe«? When was Europe truly Europe – in the Faustian sense: a searching, exploratory, dialectical Europe?»* – Márai wonders to himself, reflecting back on one and a half thousand years of history with a sombre assessment.

His pessimism becomes understandable in the light of his fate. By this time, the writer followed day-to-day political events with waning interest. Therefore, he paid no attention to the European Parliament elections of that year, which substantially changed the future of the continent and marked the beginning of a new phase in Otto von Habsburg’s political career. Márai was already bidding farewell to the Old World: “*My relationship with Europe, now, as the moment of perhaps final departure approaches: not »disappointment«, worse. Indifference.*”<sup>8</sup>

At the age of 88, he lived to hold his magnum opus that came out of the press of István Vörösváry in Toronto. In the novel sequence, Márai evoked – and thus recreated – the atmosphere that emanated from the bourgeois world, which had irrevocably sunk with 1914, and which he experienced most strongly in Kassa (today Košice) and Kolozsvár (today Cluj-Napoca), and which he commemorated in several works, including *Egy polgár vallomásai* [Confessions of a Bourgeois], and *Embers*, and perhaps most successfully in *Szindbád hazamegy* [Sindbad Returns Home]. He sent a copy of the book to Otto von Habsburg as well. This letter of appreciation below from the former Crown Prince, who, in the decade since the Yalta Book, became a leading European politician, is the last known piece of correspondence between the two.

On 22 October 1988.

Esteemed, dear Márai!

*I gratefully thank you for having been kind enough to send me your wonderful new edition of your two-volume work “The Work of the Garrens”. I came to know about it through a newspaper article, and I am all the happier to have it in my possession. I hope to find some time to read it over the Christmas break – I know I will enjoy it immensely.*

With repeated thanks and lots of good wishes,

Warmest regards,  
Otto von Habsburg

Four months after receiving the letter, the writer’s earthly existence came to an end on 21 February 1989.

7 *A teljes napló, 1978–81* [The Complete Diary, 1978–81]. Budapest, Helikon, 2017, 124.  
8 *Ibid.*, 171.



## FATES CONDENSED INTO A MOMENT

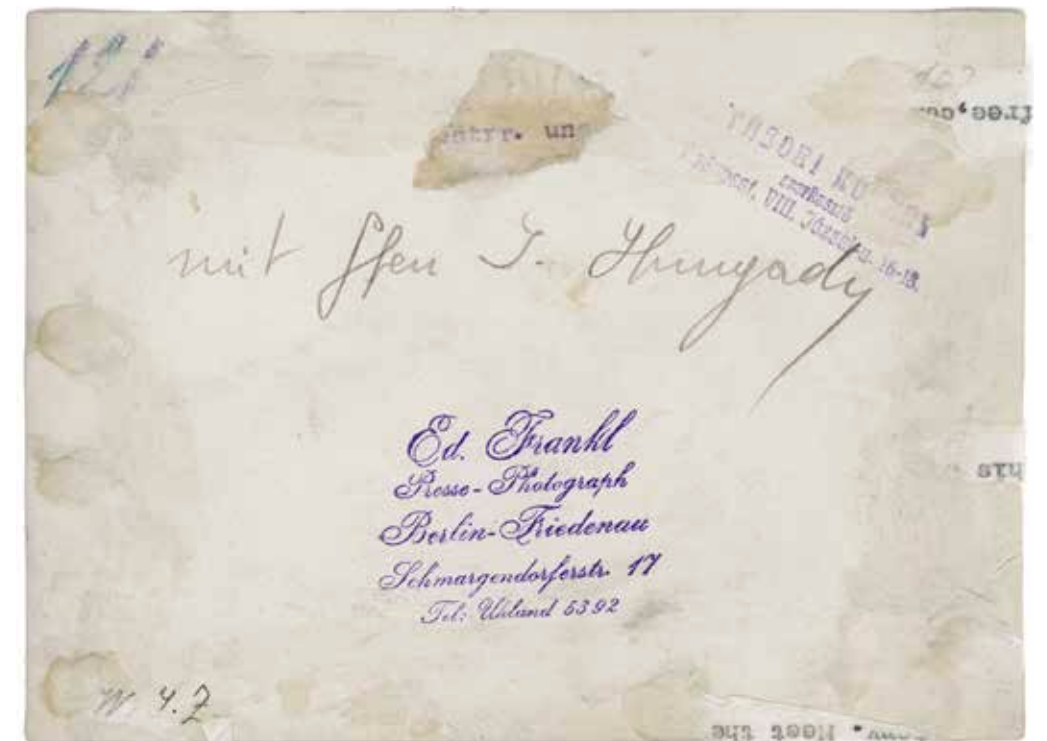
### Unravelling the Layers of a First World War Photograph

In many cases, only fragmentary information about the source data is available in the course of the processing work on the collection. The following article outlines the cataloguing procedure for a photograph taken 110 years ago.

The Otto von Habsburg Foundation's photographic collection consists mainly of images related to our namesake but also includes a substantial amount of material on the last Hungarian royal couple, Charles IV and Zita. Entrusted in our care are official portraits taken during Charles' childhood, showing the Habsburg family's everyday life or dating from his curtailed reign. However, most of the pictures depict military events: visits to the front, medal bestowals, scenes from field life, and army parades.

While working on the unit called "The First World War Collection", we came across the following photograph of Charles in his military uniform in the company of Count Joseph Hunyady. Count Hunyady was already Charles' aide-de-camp when he was heir to the throne, and after his accession to the crown, he served as the Major-domo. He remained loyal to him after the collapse of the Monarchy, following him to Switzerland and then Madeira. He supported his former king throughout and was his most trusted confidant until his passing in 1922. This high-quality image captures a rare moment, as, apart from a few blurred battlefield shots, the two of them are mostly photographed later, during the years of exile. However, this shot was certainly taken earlier, and judging by the buildings, it was somewhere in the Monarchy. The inscriptions on the reverse of the photograph included no specifics either, but they did provide some additional intriguing information, impelling us to follow this lead for identification.

In the history of humankind, the First World War was the first major military conflict to be thoroughly documented through photographic and motion picture techniques. All the belligerents used visual means to record the events to inform, influence and spread propaganda to the masses. Alongside official government activity, Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy commissioned civilian photographers to create imagery supporting war aims. One of them was the press photographer Eduard Frankl from Berlin. He was a civilian employed by the military authorities, and from 1914 onwards, he travelled the battlefields, capturing both the military and civilian aspects of the war. Although Frankl handed over his negatives to the German and Austrian army headquarters, he kept the positive copies for himself and resold them. His clients were primarily editors of weekly newspapers or magazines throughout Europe, who could use these newsworthy images as illustrations. The stamp of Frankl's photographic studio appears on the back of our picture as well; thus, we can assume the source, but there is another stamp on it, indicating that it was also used in Hungary.



Front and back of the photograph  
Ref.: HOAL I-5-a 2-4



Kornél Tábori (originally Tauber) was a legendary figure of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, one of the pioneers of crime journalism and author of popular volumes on the Budapest underworld. His diverse interests – and his well-chosen subjects – led him to publish a series of volumes ranging from the confiscated letters of Lajos Kossuth, through humorous political anecdotes, to the spiritists of Pest – and he was also the first to translate the detective stories of Sherlock Holmes. He is credited with the first nationally published album of socio-photographs as well: *Egy halálraítélt ország borzalmaiból, razzia a budapesti nyomortanyákon* [From the Horrors of a Death Penalised Country, Raids on the Slums of Budapest], in which he captured the impoverished Budapesters living in increasingly deprived conditions after the war. During the First World War, Tábori himself worked as a war correspondent, and in 1915, as editor of the *Pesti Napló*, he published *Háborús album. A világháború történelme képekben* [A War Album. The History of the World War in Pictures], which depicted the war events and everyday life in 1914–1915. The volume was a massive success with *Pesti Napló* subscribers, who wrote hundreds of letters thanking the paper for the “precious gift”. In his foreword, the editor points out that they tried to collect images from the broadest possible range of sources and that the selection was made with Hungarian aspects in mind. In addition to the “professional” battlefield reporters, pictures were also obtained from several private individuals, agencies and German newspapers. In the book, Tábori borrowed our picture taken by Eduard Frankl, put his stamp on it as editor, and published it with the inscription “Crown Prince Charles Franz Joseph in front of the headquarters, accompanied by Count Hunyady”. The time and place of the photograph were not specified, and, as the location of the headquarters changed frequently due to the movements of the front, many possibilities could be considered for its identification.

The exact location of the photograph was finally determined by another picture from Tábori’s publication, also by Eduard Frankl, which also appears in a Polish location photo database. It was taken on the Eastern Front at Galicia and depicts a street in the small southern Polish town of Nowy Sącz with high-ranking military officers. A few blocks away, with recognisable architectural features, the place of our picture can be identified. At the time he received the picture, Tábori had no idea that 30 years later, he would be murdered in another town in Lesser Poland, the nearby Oświęcim (Auschwitz). Neither did he know that in 2010, a memorial plaque would be unveiled in his former residence at 16 Krúdy Gyula Street in Budapest in honour of his son, György Tábori, “an outstanding figure in international theatre”.

We also managed to solve the question of the date of the photograph: since the Austro-Hungarian Army High Command (*Armeeoberkommando*) was stationed in Nowy Sącz from 13 September to 11 November 1914, we can assume that the photo was taken during this period. These were difficult days of the war, and the Austro-Hungarian forces could only withstand the Russian onslaught with great effort. Military successes and temporary relief were brought only by the breakthrough at Gorlice, which came soon after. Captain Karol Wojtyła, an officer of the Monarchy, fought in the battle, which took place about 40 km from Nowy Sącz. The father of the future Pope John Paul II – as the Holy Father himself told Queen Zita, according to Archduke Rudolf’s recollections – named his son Charles out of respect for the monarch – who would beatify his father’s emperor 90 years after the image was taken.



Location of the picture today (Jan Długosz High School No 1)

How did this photograph end up in the Otto von Habsburg collection? At the moment, we do not have a clear answer. As in many other cases, it is possible that an admirer or correspondent sent Otto the picture of his father and Count Hunyady. Nevertheless, the lesson to be learnt is that in the course of processing the collection, the examination and identification of historical photographic documents leads through many layers to be unravelled, illuminating many details of Central European history and the specific interweaving of human destinies.



## THE DIPLOMAT WHO SAVED OTTO VON HABSBURG'S LIFE

In memory of Aristides de Sousa Mendes

Our Foundation commemorates Aristides de Sousa Mendes, who passed away 70 years ago on 3 April 1954. The Portuguese diplomat, as his country's Consul General in Bordeaux, was instrumental in 1940 in helping to escape Otto von Habsburg and his family, who were accused of treason and persecuted by Nazi Germany.



The period of overseas emigration during the Second World War was a notable milestone in Otto von Habsburg's emerging public career. His political and diplomatic efforts in Washington demonstrated his strong commitment to the successor states of the Monarchy and the future of Europe, while also revealing the contours of his later political views. However, the most captivating aspect of the biographical narratives covering the war years is not the account of the former Crown Prince's political and networking activities, but rather the perilous journey Otto von Habsburg undertook in the spring of 1940 – fleeing from the castle of Steenockerzeel through France, Spain, and Portugal to the United States. At the heart of these stories is the Portuguese diplomat Aristides de Sousa Mendes, who played a pivotal role in the success of their escape.

The Consul General – who saved the lives of countless refugees, including many of Jewish descent, by issuing Portuguese visas en masse against the explicit orders of the political leadership

in Lisbon when France was invaded in 1940 – remained unknown to his country and the broader international public for decades. His lifesaving work was not recognised until 1966 when the Yad Vashem Institute bestowed him the title of Righteous Among the Nations. By contrast, his rehabilitation in his own country could only take place in 1988, nearly a decade and a half after the “Carnation Revolution”, the fall of the Portuguese authoritarian regime.

Otto von Habsburg understood that the Consul General's act of Christian charity, which saved the lives of thousands of people, was not without lessons and that he, too, had a vital role to play in commemorating and perpetuating his heroic deeds. Maintaining his memory and passing on this slice of history and family legacy from one generation to the next has proved successful, as the daughter of the former Crown Prince, Michaela von Habsburg, recalled a few years ago about how Sousa Mendes was a crucial figure in the family legendarium. She explained that the diplomat was featured so frequently in her father's reminiscences that it felt like the special guest sat at the dinner table with them in the evenings.

Born in 1885 into a wealthy, devoutly religious family, Sousa Mendes' commitment to public service and his multigenerational experience of active participation in political life contributed significantly to the future diplomat's work. Following a law degree at the prestigious University of Coimbra, he joined the foreign service alongside his twin brother César, also a distinguished humanitarian, who served as ambassador to Warsaw during the Second World War. His diplomatic career fell on turbulent times in domestic politics, and the succession of rapid changes also substantially impacted the country's foreign policies. The final days of the Portuguese Monarchy saw Sousa Mendes abroad in his first posting, while the events of 1910 and the advent of authoritarian government under Salazar's Estado Novo also unfolded during his time outside the country. At the zenith of an eventful career in the foreign service, he was appointed head of the Portuguese Mission in Bordeaux in 1938 after numerous overseas and European assignments. He was there when France was invaded in 1940, which radically transformed the hitherto predictable diplomatic routine.

Witnessing the desperate plight of the masses fleeing the advancing German army, the diplomat – against the express prohibition of his government – issued visas to Portugal on a massive scale, thus playing a vital role in the escape of Otto von Habsburg and his family in 1940, who were accused of treason and persecuted by Nazi Germany. This valiant action made it clear that for him, the defence of the dignity of human life was not just an abstract legal norm but a fundamental duty stemming from his Christian faith and personal and professional socialisation. Regardless of their religious, ethnic, political or financial status, he endeavoured to help people in difficulty, including Salvador Dalí, who fled to France after the Spanish Civil War, and the writer Aladár Tamás, who had a distinguished diplomatic career in the 1950s and 1960s, many members of the French branch of the Rothschild family and many politicians, artists and scientists who later rose to prominence, as well as many ordinary people. The number of those rescued has subsequently been the subject of intense historical debate. Still, even without precise figures, it remains clear that the political, intellectual and cultural history of Europe and the United States owes a great deal to Sousa Mendes' 1940 stand. For example, Dalí's arrival in America played a crucial role in making New York one of the artistic centres of the post-war years, and it also enabled European

émigré governments and critical figures in post-war reconstruction to leave the Old Continent on Portuguese visas.

However, the diplomat's disobedience, which put the need to help those in a vulnerable situation above loyalty to the political leadership in Lisbon, was not without consequences: he was suspended in the early summer of 1940, and disciplinary proceedings were initiated against him. Although he was aware that the final verdict was not in the hands of the transient earthly power but in God's, his period of persecution, which he bore with dignity, took its toll on his health. He died penniless, neglected and forgotten in the spring of 1954.

When Otto von Habsburg was approached to write about a life-changing encounter with a person in a multi-authored publication to be compiled for the 1987 *Kirchentag*, a traditional event of German evangelicalism, he decided on Sousa Mendes. On the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the former diplomat's death, we honour one of the forgotten heroes of wartime manslaughter with a translation of this essay. The original version of the text, the correspondence with the editors and the letters between Otto von Habsburg and Antonio de Moncada de Sousa Mendes, the grandson of the diplomat, are preserved in the Foundation's archives. Since 2010, the Sousa Mendes Foundation, named after him, has been dedicated to the memory of the former Consul General, also dubbed the "Portuguese Wallenberg".

## Soldier Known unto God

It was 1940, in the tempestuous days of the collapse of France. Hundreds of thousands of people, including large numbers of refugees from Hitler's empire, were forced into increasingly restricted spaces. The French public administration had mostly collapsed, and the situation on the front was murky.

The only option for the refugees was to cross the Spanish border. This proved a poor consolation because the Spanish, shortly after the end of the Civil War, were not willing to accept foreigners at all. In addition, some of the refugees were leftists who had fought against Franco.

Passing the French border was also tightened. The only people allowed to leave France were those who could prove that they would be accepted elsewhere, an almost unachievable demand in the chaos that prevailed.

I myself had to deal with the issue of Austrian refugees in the first place. There were tens of thousands of us, most of whom were sent to the area around Lectoure. The people were frightened and hopeless. Their chances of survival seemed slim; they were no longer counting in days but hours.

In this desperate situation, one man stepped into the breach: the Portuguese diplomat Dr de Sousa Mendes, head of his country's Consulate General in Bordeaux. He had received strict instructions from his government not to grant visas.

Portugal was weak, fearful of Adolf Hitler's inexorably advancing troops, and unwilling to incur



The Habsburg Family in America (1943)

the dictator's wrath. Meanwhile, the Spaniards were willing to let through only those whose passports contained a destination. Dr de Sousa Mendes was a devout Christian and a soulful man. He, therefore, decided to defy the orders of his government. He granted Portuguese visas to all refugees without further examination.

I personally handed the passports of the refugees to Dr de Sousa Mendes, who provided those with Portuguese visas upon my request, and then the Spanish representative, Propper y Callejon, allowed passage through his country. The Portuguese consulate was kept open round the clock during these days. The consul general himself worked non-stop for forty-eight hours. All the telegrams from Lisbon, with instruction reminders, ended up in the waste-

paper basket. The efforts of Dr de Sousa Mendes saved the lives of more than 30,000 people. He did not ask whether they were Christians or Jews, Austrians, Germans or other Europeans. He was acting from a sense of Christian duty and humanity. When the task was completed, and the troops of the Third Reich arrived, Dr de Sousa Mendes was immediately discharged.

Since then, many have boasted about their actions – except for the Portuguese. Although his dismissal severely affected him, and he lived in extreme poverty, he rarely mentioned his heroic deeds. He wanted no earthly reward. He was content with having fulfilled his duty to God and humanity.

To this day, Dr de Sousa Mendes is almost universally forgotten, remembered by few. The most beautiful epitaph for him is expressed in the words of a man whose life he saved: *"Thank God, there are no unknown soldiers before the eternal Judge."*

*Annotation: HOAL I-2-b-Rainer Meier (the text was published in Telegramme aus Lissabon 68-70 In: J. Rainer Didszuweit u. Rainer Meier: Niemand ist allein. Begegnungen. [Neubuch] im. Auftr. d. Arbeitsstelle '87. d. Evang. Kirche in Hessen u. Nassau für d. Kirchentag in Frankfurt*



## “WHOEVER IS NOT A GOOD HUNGARIAN CANNOT BE A GOOD EUROPEAN.”

Twenty years ago, on 1 May 2004, Hungary became a member state of the European Union. Otto von Habsburg, who had strived throughout the years of the Cold War to reunite the continent divided by the consequences of the Second World War, saw the enlargement as a significant opportunity, offering a wealth of new prospects.



The former heir to the throne believed that by joining the EU, Hungary would be able to re-integrate into Western civilisation, to which it had always belonged. No other option even occurred to Otto von Habsburg. As a member of the Pan-European Movement, which he had been president of since 1973, and as a member of the European Parliament from 1979 to 1999 as a politician of the Bavarian CSU, he frequently spoke out for Hungary.

Even before the fall of the Iron Curtain, he had addressed the Hemicycle in Strasbourg several times in Hungarian, expressing his conviction that “there is a language and a nation which should rightly have its place in the ranks of this European Parliament.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Otto von Habsburg Foundation, Otto von Habsburg Collection, HOAL 1-2-c-Bánó Attila, Pöcking, 17 July 1995 (Otto von Habsburg’s answers to Attila Bánó for the Hungarian weekly news magazine *Reform*.)

The former Crown Prince followed closely the preparations of Hungary for the accession to the European Economic Community, as vice-chairman of the European Parliament’s Delegation for Relations with the Countries of Eastern Europe from 1987 to 1989. In this capacity, he played a role in enabling Hungary to establish diplomatic relations with the EEC on 26 September 1988, the first of the Eastern Bloc countries to do so.<sup>2</sup> Re-elected in the summer of 1989, Otto von Habsburg was chairman of the European Parliament’s Delegation for relations with Hungary until 1994, and then, during the last five years of his mandate, until 1999, he served as chairman and then vice-chairman of the joint body of the Interparliamentary Committee of the European Union and the European Union Committee of the Hungarian Parliament (Delegation to the EU-Hungary Joint Parliamentary Committee).

In October 1989, the former Crown Prince was in Strasbourg and Brussels, campaigning for financial support for Poland and Hungary. We quote from his notes at the time: “In my opinion, it is scandalous that we are currently allocating aid amounting to 12.5 billion ECU to the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries that fall under the Lomé Convention, while the bureaucracy objects to even 300 million to Hungary and Poland combined.”<sup>3</sup>

It certainly seemed to Otto that there was no other reassuring alternative for the Carpathian Basin than the Euro-Atlantic integration. In 1999, he called Hungary’s accession to NATO a crucial and indispensable step. This is what he said in the Hungarian press about the event 25 years ago: “This development is very advantageous for us, and I was very pleased with the wisdom of the Hungarian people to vote in favour of it by such a large majority in the referendum.”<sup>4</sup>

He had always been a tireless advocate for the integration of the countries of our region into Europe. He had repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that EU accession had been progressing slower than anticipated due to the reluctance of the old member states, and was pleased when negotiations were finally successfully concluded in 2002. He was also able to establish close cooperation with the Committee on European Integration Affairs of the Hungarian Parliament (the successor of the Committee on European Community Affairs), which had been founded on 28 June 1994 and chaired by the future Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The Hungarian politician notified Otto von Habsburg of the appointment in a letter, expressing his hope that the former Crown Prince would be re-elected by the European Parliament in 1994 as the Chairman of the Delegation for relations with Hungary and that they could work together in the future. This wish came to reality.<sup>5</sup> Otto von Habsburg had the opportunity to serve one more term and support Hungary’s accession to the EU. Official meetings and exchanges of letters were a regular part of the process, in which, among others, Enikő Győri, later ambassador and member of the European Parliament, played an important role as the secretary of the Committee on European Integration Affairs of the Hungarian National Assembly. In 1998, Otto von Habsburg sent a letter to Viktor Orbán, by then prime minister of Hungary, informing him that he would not be running for another mandate in the European Parliament at the age of 86, on the advice of his doctors. In 1999, he wrote to the head of the government: “I want to promise you that I will do everything in my capacity in the future, as I have done in the past, to ensure that our country becomes a full member of the European Union as soon as possible. I know from our past cooperation that this is a matter close to your heart as well, and I hope that under your term as Prime Minister, this will come to pass.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Baier, Stefan – Demmerle, Eva: *Habsburg Ottó élete*. Európa, Budapest, 2003, p. 450, 452.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 468.

<sup>4</sup> „Én vagyok a magyar ügyek előadója.” Tapolcai beszélgetés Habsburg Ottóval. [“I Am the Spokesperson for Hungarian Affairs.” Conversation with Otto von Habsburg in Tapolca.] *Déli Hírlap*, 25 March 1999

<sup>5</sup> HOAL 1-2-c-Orbán Viktor, Budapest, 25 July 1994

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: Pöcking, 11 January 1999

A Magyar Köztársaság  
Miniszterelnöke

Fotokópia az  
Dr. Georg genhicht

O-KI 43/1999

Otto von Habsburg úr,  
az Európai Parlament tagja

Hindenburgstraße 15  
82343 Pöcking  
Ausztria

Budapest, 1999. január 6.

Tisztelt Elnök Úr!

Mindenekelőtt kérem, engedje meg, hogy szívből jövő jókívánságaimat tolmácsoljam Önnek, s kívánjak egyúttal sok sikert az előttünk álló 1999-es esztendőre.

Nagyon megtisztelő a számomra, hogy bizalmasan tájékoztatott elhatározásáról. Bizom benne, hogy az Ön számára kedvező döntést hozott, s így egyúttal bővülni fog azon lehetőségek száma is, melyek révén Magyarország európai uniós integrációja érdekében továbbra is együtt dolgozhatunk.

Európai uniós ügyekben - mint ezt Ön bizonyára tapasztalhatta is - mindig készségesen álltam az Ön rendelkezésére. Ezt az együttműködést nem pozíciók, hanem személyes meggyőződés vezette, ezért a Magyar Köztársaság jelenlegi miniszterelnökeként is támogatni fogom Önt új megbízatásának teljesítésében.

Rám, mint együttműködő partnerre a jövőben is számíthat annak érdekében, hogy hazánk, Magyarország mihamarább az Európai Unió teljes jogú tagjává válhasson.

Jó egészséget kívánva szívélyesen üdvözl:



Orbán Viktor

Orbán Viktor

Dep

Pöcking, 1999. január 11.

Tisztelt Miniszterelnök Úr!  
Kedves Dr. Orbán!

Hálás köszönettel vettem január 6-án kelt baráti levelét. Nagyon örültem neki, főleg azért, mert Ön is úgy érzi, hogy az a lépés, amelyet sajnósan úgy orvosi mint baráti tanácsra tennem kellett, együttműködésünkön nem változtat, sőt esetleg megengedi, hogy ez most még közelebbi legyen.

Igérni akarom Önnek, hogy amit a jövőben tehetek, meg lesz téve úgy mint a múltban, hogy hazánk minél előbb az Európai Unió teljesjogú tagja legyen. Eddigi együttműködésünkől tudom, hogy ez Önnek is szívügye, és remélem, hogy éppen miniszterelnöki vezetése alatt ez a lépés meg is történik. Ahogy mondtam, amit tehetek, az meg lesz téve, de szeretném reményemet aláhúzni, hogy most még közelebb jutunk egymáshoz, mivel elvárható, hogy sokkal gyakrabban tartózkodhatok otthon, mint ez a múltban lehetséges volt. Másrészt nem fogom feladni a nemzetközi kapcsolatokat, hogy ezeket is Magyarország szolgálatába állítsam.

Önnek munkájában ebben az évben sok kiváló sikert kívánva,

meleg üdvözléssel,

HABSBURG OTTO



The former heir to the throne was aware of Hungarian concerns rooted in the historical past, but always sought to allay them. Whenever it was raised in any forum that the preservation of national identity and freedom in Hungary, a country that had just attained independence, could be threatened by the EU accession, Otto von Habsburg was firm in his disagreement: *“I do not believe that joining the European Union will diminish the national identity of the new member states. I do not think it is realistic because, first of all, I know Hungarian émigrés. The majority have kept their Hungarian identity. There are, of course, others who have lost it. This is understandable, as our language is not easy, and if you speak English for a long time, it is easier to speak English than Hungarian. There is another reason as well: our language is a citadel. If we look back at history, we were the only nation that survived among the nations that came from Asia – precisely because we kept our culture and settled in Europe – we owe this to King St. Stephen. Hungary had belonged to the West from the very beginning, and it endured despite the fact that our nation had been torn apart many times, and few Hungarians had been left. There were hardly any people of pure Hungarian origin remaining, but we assimilated others. Neither was Kossuth entirely Hungarian, having Slavic roots, nor was Sándor Petőfi, who was also of Slavic origin. This demonstrates that we shall have faith in the future.”*<sup>7</sup>

Otto von Habsburg attached particular importance to Hungary’s entry into the European Union with well-prepared representatives. In March 2003, he addressed the President of the Hungarian Parliament, Katalin Szili, with the following words: *“If needed, I could offer advice in personal conversations with future members of the [European] Parliament, which might be of value. I make this suggestion because I strongly believe that Hungarians could have a great say in the European Parliament in the future, and I want to ensure that we do our utmost to make this a reality. In this regard, perhaps the best example is 19 November last year, when, thank God, our MEPs were outstanding in terms of their entry into the European Parliament and stood their ground very well, while the Czechs, unfortunately, did not do quite as well, something that is still talked about today.”*<sup>8</sup>

In the first months of 2004, Otto von Habsburg visited several Hungarian towns and villages, where he made important statements and gave advice on the accession to the European Union, some of which are still worth considering today. First and foremost, he repeatedly stressed that the most crucial benefit of joining the EU is that it provided security. In his view, belonging to a community of 400 million people brings adequate protection. He underlined the importance of EU membership when faced with external threats, especially given the proximity of Russia, a country that could be unpredictable and prone to dictatorship. A recurring thread in his speeches was: *“Accession is not an economic but a security issue.”*<sup>9</sup>

He often referred to his view that the culture of the Hungarian nation of 15 million could be maintained and strengthened by “blurring” the borders, as there was no real prospect of altering them. *“By joining the EU, the unity of the nation can be achieved. After the catastrophic events of Trianon, Hungarians may once again form a cohesive community, and the Danube basin shall become united again (...) Not everything will be as it was before 1914, but the Hungarians have been given the opportunity to survive and retain their language.”*<sup>10</sup> He stated many times that *“Hungary is the heart of the Danube basin. However, this comes with a responsibility, not just pride.”*<sup>11</sup>

7 “Otto von Habsburg is our strength”. Interview with Otto von Habsburg by András Vincze. BBC Hungarian broadcast, 11 June 2002.

8 HOAL I-2-c-Szili Katalin, Pöcking, 27 March 2003

9 Rákosi, Gusztáv: Kis folyósokon nagy dolgok dőlnek el. Habsburg Ottó, a Páneurópai Unió elnöke Paksra látogatott. [Great Decisions Are Made in Narrow Corridors. Otto von Habsburg, President of the Pan-European Union, Visited Paks.] *Tolnai Népiújság*, 26 January 2004, p. 5

10 Magyarország – a hadak útjának közepe, Kárpát-medence szíve. [Hungary – In the Heart of the Carpathian Basin, at the Crossroads of Armed Forces.] *Hídlap*, 27 January 2004, p. 4

11 Nagy, Márta: „Felelősség a Duna-medencében.” [Responsibility in the Danube Basin.] *Kisalföld*, 29 April 2004, p. 9

The former heir to the throne issued the latter statement referring to the role of Hungarians in helping their “historic partners”, the Croats and Romanians, to enter the EU as well.

Upon the accession to the EU, Otto von Habsburg advised that the new member states should place emphasis on learning foreign languages. He delivered a speech in Székesfehérvár in May 2004, as Hungary’s first European Parliament elections were approaching, and he said: *“I propose that we elect politicians who speak several languages. Based on my twenty-five years of experience, a person who is able to communicate with everyone will be treated by each individual as a «fellow countryman» and will find it much easier to represent Hungary’s interests.”*<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, he added that *“we must be patriots, but above all Hungarians, because if you are not a good Hungarian, you cannot be a good European.”*<sup>13</sup>

In 2004, the 92-year-old former Crown Prince made no secret of the fact that there would be difficulties after accession, but he believed that EU membership would bring about the advancement of Hungary in the long term. He also warned that *“Hungaro-pessimism should not get hold of the nation, as history has already proven that there exists no power that could extinguish the Hungarian spirit”*. This became the motto of his many public speeches of this period: *“Let us finally give up our Hungaro-pessimism and be courageously optimistic and hopeful.”*<sup>14</sup>

This encouragement should be borne in mind today, twenty years after our entry into the EU, as well as the above-revived remarks and advice of Otto von Habsburg from two decades ago.



12 A nyelv mindenekelőtt. Habsburg Ottó 25 éve dolgozik az Európai Parlamentben. [Language Above All. Otto von Habsburg has been Working in the European Parliament for 25 Years.] *Fejér Megyei Hírlap*, 27 May 2004, p. 4

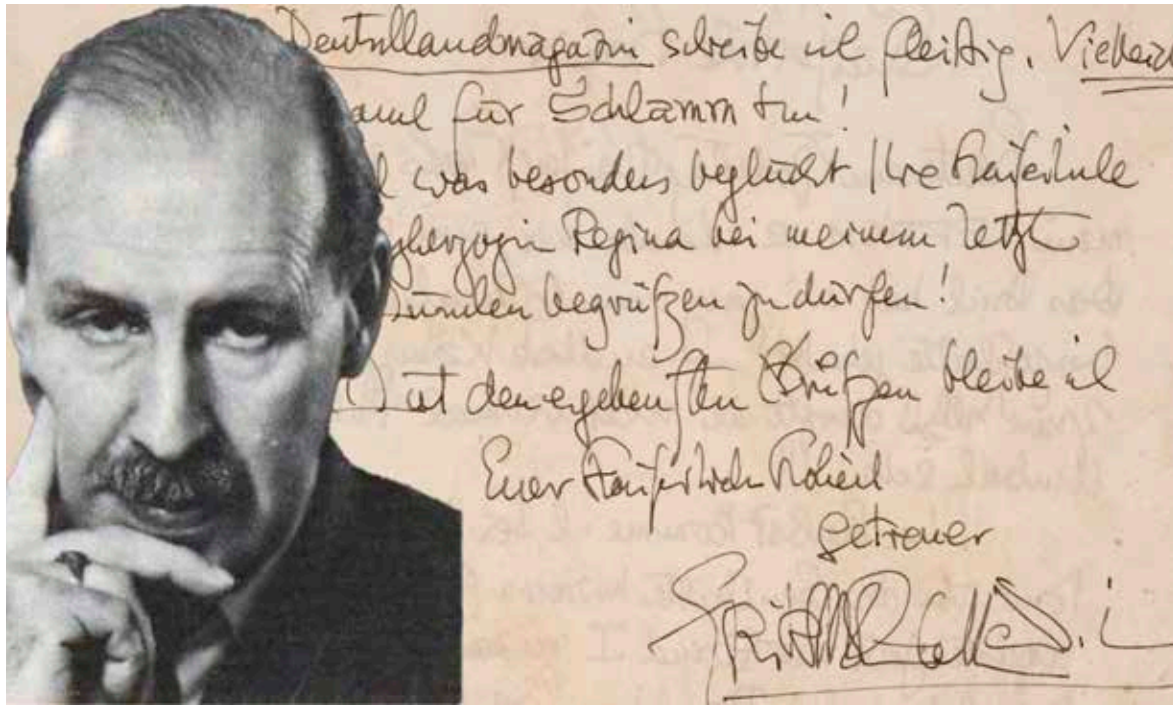
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14 Habsburg Ottó szerint szakítani kéne hungaropessimizmusunkkal. [According to Otto von Habsburg, We Should Put Hungaro-Pessimism Behind Us.] *Aszódi Tükör*, 1 February 2004, p. 4.



## A REACTIONARY LIBERAL KNIGHT OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The Austrian political scientist, world traveller, publicist and writer Erik Maria Ritter von Kuehnelt-Leddihn (1909–1999), a friend and ally of Otto von Habsburg, died twenty-five years ago on 26 May.



Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn was born into a Catholic Austrian family of intellectuals. His exceptional linguistic talent became evident early on: he was able to express himself verbally in eight languages, including Hungarian, Russian, and Japanese, and read in eleven more.<sup>1</sup>

At sixteen, he was already writing articles for *The Spectator* in London. He studied law at the University of Vienna, then came to Budapest at age twenty and attended political science classes at a university in the Hungarian capital. In 1930 and 1931, on assignment for the Hungarian newspaper *Magyarság*, he visited the Soviet Union twice; he reported his experiences in a series of articles, and on his return, he gave lectures.<sup>2</sup> His writings appeared in the following years on the pages of Catholic newspapers such as *Korunk Szava* and *Magyar Kultúra*. His sole Hungarian-language book to date was published at this time – not surprisingly, given its subject and spirit – in the book series of the magazine of the New Catholic Movement<sup>3</sup>, which was followed by

<sup>1</sup> The sources are contradictory in terms of the exact numbers.

<sup>2</sup> These trips were not without dangers, yet an assassination attempt was made against him in Budapest on the Danube bank (*Magyarság*, 18 October 1930, 11.).

<sup>3</sup> Jesuiten, Spiesser, Bolschewiki. *The Gates of Hell. An Historical Novel of the Present Day*. Translated by I.J. Collins, Sheed & Ward, 1933.

around half a dozen foreign editions. From 1935, he attended theological courses in Vienna while pursuing his doctorate in political science, which he defended in Budapest in 1936.<sup>4</sup>

Between 1937 and 1947, he was a teacher in the United States. As a journalist, he experienced the Civil War in Spain. At the war's end, he worked at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia, where John Lukacs succeeded him as professor of history upon his return home. In 1947, he settled with his family in a village near Innsbruck, but without breaking with his former way of life. In the following decades, he travelled the world, visiting some 80 countries on five continents, many of them several times, and all the states of the USA.

In 1952, with the publication of his work *Liberty or Equality* in English, unanimously considered by his critics as his magnum opus, he immediately became an essential figure in the conservative camp forming overseas. As Edwin J. Feulner, later president of The Heritage Foundation, recalled the intellectual encounter: “I read *Liberty or Equality* by Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn in 1959 when I was a young man, which proved to be one of the most formative books of my life.”<sup>5</sup>

Leddihn argued that the two concepts in the title are incompatible: the more widespread the prevalence of democratic principles in a society – when a community becomes a mass democracy – the greater the risk that the majority opinion will suppress minority voices and interests. Democracy, by creating equality of rights, inevitably has political, cultural and ultimately, ethical consequences – and its egalitarian characteristics bring it into conflict with the values that individuals or social groups perceive as expressions of freedom. The author sought to situate the problem in the domain of political trends, governmental forms, and schools of intellectual history. In the concluding chapters of the book, he examined the impact history of Protestantism on the region of the source of national socialism.

Along with Russell Kirk's 1953 book, *The Conservative Mind*, it was perhaps this work that most inspired American political thought in the following decades, paving the way for the great political turn of the late 1970s (Kirk wrote the foreword to the 1993 edition of *Liberty*...). In 1955, William F. Buckley Jr. invited Leddihn to join the fledgling *National Review*, a working relationship that lasted with the weekly conservative journal for more than three decades.

His network of contacts with intellectuals is comparable to that of Otto von Habsburg and, in many respects, coincides with it. The correspondence between the two spans nearly half a century. In addition to the American thinkers already mentioned, he was friends with Europeans or eminent figures with a European background, such as Friedrich August von Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, Wilhelm Röpke, Alexander Rüstow, and Ernst Jünger. He participated in meetings of the Mont Pelerin Society from its foundation in 1947; in the 1980s and 1990s, he (also) worked as a research fellow at the Acton Institute and the Mises Institute.

<sup>4</sup> His dissertation was entitled *Anglia belső krízise* [Britain's internal crisis].

<sup>5</sup> The quote is written on the back cover of the 1993 edition.



His relationship with Otto von Habsburg

A knight who could trace his lineage back to the Middle Ages, Kuehnelt-Leddihn, born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, remained faithful to the ideal of monarchy all his life. The elements of Austrian Catholicism, which emphasised the divine origin of the kingdom, promoted aristocratic government based on the power of the few and maintained the need for universality, (might have) seemed anachronistic even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, yet in his ideological framework, they formed a coherent, harmonious whole. Therefore, his sympathy for the last heir to the imperial throne and his adherence to Otto von Habsburg’s principles of the spiritual and political unity of the European nations on Christian grounds is understandable. Our Foundation preserves the exchange of letters between the two men from 1953 to 1998. They convey a perfect identity of views, a camaraderie and friendship, and a close nexus of their families. Below is an excerpt of their correspondence, penned in Leddihn’s brisk handwriting:

Their professional association became, if possible, even closer in the 1970s, when Leddihn regularly contributed to the periodical *Zeitbühne* and, from 1980, its successor, *Europa*.

In addition to the above, our collection includes a few volumes dedicated to Otto von Habsburg with the distinctive handwriting of the author. Some of these were written in Hungarian.

He remained active until the end of his life, culminating in a monumental, thousand-page autobiography.<sup>6</sup> Three of his most influential books – *The Menace of the Herd*, written under the pseudonym Francis Stuart Campbell during the war, *Liberty or Equality*, and *Leftism* – are all available online.<sup>7</sup>

His reception in Hungary

For decades after the war, his name did not appear in print in Hungary, and only readers of emigrant newspapers (*Új Európa*, *Mérleg*, *Bécsi Napló*) could encounter his writings in Hungarian-language publications. Although he gave three lectures in Budapest in 1990<sup>8</sup>, in the fever of the regime change a few days after the formation of the freely elected Hungarian Parliament, these went without resonance. His oeuvre is slowly being unearthed; Gábor Megadja and Zoltán Pető deserve special recognition for their research.

We hope this article has piqued readers’ interest in the less-known life and work of Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn. As we process the material in our archives, we will soon publish further details of his relationship with Otto von Habsburg and his contribution to European and American political science and the history of intellectual thought.

6 *Weltweite Kirche. Begegnungen und Erfahrungen in sechs Kontinenten 1909–1999*. Christiana-Verlag, Stein am Rhein, 2000.  
7 Francis Stuart Campbell: *The Menace of the Herd or Procrustes at Large* (Bruce Publishing, Milwaukee, 1943), *Liberty or Equality. The Challenge of Our Time* (Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho, 1952), *Leftism: from de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Marcuse* (Arlington House, New Rochelle, New York, 1974; a second edition with the revised subtitle: *Leftism Revisited: from de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Pol Pot*. Gateway, Washington D.C., 1990).  
8 He spoke about Europe’s mission at the Austrian Institute on 8 May, about Luther at the Raday Institute two days later, and on Marx at the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on 14 May. (*Magyar Nemzet*, 8 May 1990., 8.).

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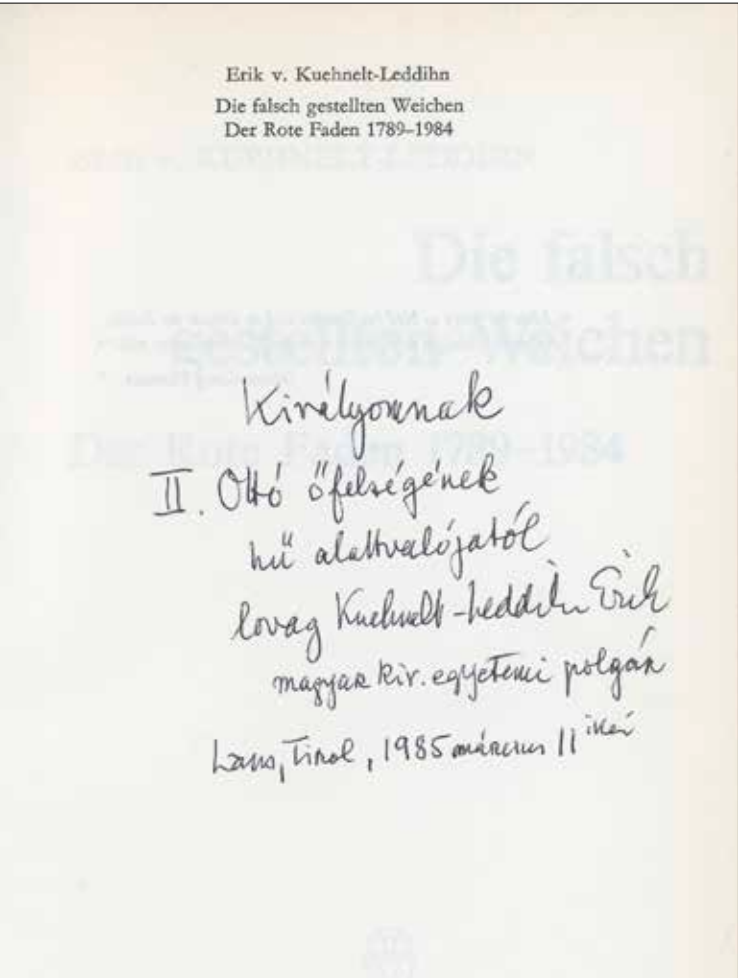
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The sources in this article are available on our website.



Transcription: To my King, His Majesty Otto II, from his loyal subject, the Knight Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, a Royal Hungarian University fellow. Lans, Tirol, 11 March 1985.

## EXITING THE NEGATIVE SPIRAL

**With our accession to the EU, a centuries-old Hungarian aspiration was realised: to participate institutionally in shaping the destiny of Europe. In addition, the country received support comparable to the Marshall Plan. Yet, our relationship with the Union has entered a negative spiral.**



When Hungary became a member state, I had already been working as a diplomat in Bern for a year and a half, a country where the civil revolution had won in 1848 and where the federal system had led to a highly successful integration model. Outside the EU. Supporters and opponents of EU membership were roughly equal in strength among the Swiss, although the Swiss banking system had just become

EU-compliant, and its transparency did not benefit the EU's image in the Alpine country. Our entry into the European Union did not attract much interest either, and the celebrations were not held in an elegant concert hall, but at the residence of the ambassador of the Czech Republic, almost exclusively in a diplomatic circle. The majority of the European ambassadors accredited to Bern were seasoned veterans nearing the end of their careers. Thus, during our usual conversations, there was an opportunity for substantive exchanges, and the twists and turns of Swiss political life always provided moments of frustration within the EU ambassadorial circle, which, I admit, sometimes surprised me. Although I have never felt, and still do not feel, any sense of inferiority or defiance towards Western politicians and diplomatic colleagues, when I encountered the lecturing gestures towards Switzerland, I sometimes wondered what many of them might think of us.

### “I find it absurd.”

I did not have to wait long to find out. We were around midnight on the day of Hungary's accession when an ambassador of a relatively small EU founding member state, who was in his 60s, turned to me and said quite plainly, “*You know, Gergely, I like you as a person, – he began, – we*

*always have a good chat, we both know history, I know how much injustice your country has suffered behind the Iron Curtain, but for Hungary to join our club now, I find it completely absurd, and I don't think it will end well.*” The experienced colleague's voice was monotonous, laconic rather than impetuous, as if he had been preparing to utter the frank sentence for a very long time. I found it difficult to speak. It would have been an inept gesture to try to respond with a humorous remark, but there was no point in being angry with him either. I recalled the negotiations of previous years, which had their own particular atmosphere. My years in Berlin were the time when we knew that the key to many doors in Brussels had to be sought in the German capital; when we were often the first of the states seeking to become members to bring a negotiating process to a close; when, on one of his frequent visits to Berlin, Gyula Horn, who was revered as a saint in Germany, banged his fist on the table and demanded that he be informed immediately about the exact date of our accession. And then I remembered the words of János Martonyi, whom the otherwise not always friendly Joschka Fischer had always listened to with wide-open eyes whenever the future of Europe had been discussed. Just so, the image of Ferenc Mádl, receiving an honorary doctorate at the University of Heidelberg, came to my mind, with the professors around him in an almost sacred reverence for a man who they knew had been concerned with the fate of the Old Continent even during the years of the communist regime. But I could also mention Péter Gottfried, chief advisor of the prime minister, or my predecessor as ambassador, Péter Balázs – both of whom were widely recognised experts on EU affairs. But most of all, of course, I was thinking of what I had heard in my own family: there was never, not for a moment, any doubt that, civilisationally, rationally and emotionally, we belonged to where so many people, including our relatives, had gone in 1956. Then, this man came to tell me that this accession was absurd for him and that it would not end well.

### Always five years away from becoming a member

I could not get this short conversation out of my head for a long time. What annoyed me the most was that this man certainly was unaware of what we should have actually been worried about. After all, compared to many other new member states, Hungary's economy was not exactly on an upward trajectory when it joined the EU: the handouts of the Medgyessy Government and the eye-wash of the first Gyurcsány Government in terms of economic policy indicated that things would be different for us than in Poland, let alone the Czech Republic, where economic growth had taken off with accession. At the time, we often quoted former Polish Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka: “*It is just strange that we are always five years away from joining the EU*”, as the one and a half decades from the change of regime to accession had been a long time indeed. Moreover, in many enlargement scenarios, our country had consistently been considered at the top of the list, we had been the first to conclude trade agreements with the European Economic Community, but in the end, for various geopolitical, historical and economic reasons, the round of the ten states was decided. In other words, regardless of the set of criteria, the decision on when and which countries would become members of the European Union was ultimately based on political factors.



## Clear commitment to the EU

On a historical scale, of course, a few years are of little significance, and there is nothing to obscure the fact that Hungary's membership was the will of the overwhelming majority of Hungarian society. This is unquestionable even in the light of the experience of our twenty years in the European Union, which has not been without controversy. In conclusion, it is important to state that the actuality of our membership, as well as the latest Eurobarometer data, according to which seventy-seven per cent of Hungarians believe that our country benefits from being a member of the EU and only one in sixteen thinks that it causes detriment, indicates a firm basic position and a clear commitment to the EU, despite all the political upheaval, domestic bureaucracy and withholding of resources by Brussels.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that emphasising the historical meaning of the twentieth anniversary should not lead us to lose sight of the apparent problems. Just as we cannot overlook the fact that there were no meaningful government commemorations on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May or on Europe Day – coincidentally, the Feast of the Ascension –, the country was preoccupied with the visit of the Chinese President. Nor can we say that the EU of today is still the same as it was twenty years ago; we ourselves could even call certain developments and political statements 'absurd', and probably even my old colleague, the former ambassador to Bern, would agree with us, particularly if he compared the situation of the EU today with the intentions of the founding fathers or even with the European politics of the time of Helmut Kohl and François Mitterand.

The EU funds that had come in on our accession had been used to make up the shortfall rather than to achieve spectacular growth, given the weakness of our economy. Less than two years later, after the 2006 protests in Hungary, the country was in a state of political paralysis, with domestic political struggles and economic woes distracting attention from the possibilities of common assertion of interests, and the Hungarian government's economic policies led to the country being swiftly faced with a critical EU disciplinary instrument: the infringement procedure. Those who had seen EU membership as a way of revising the unjust decisions of Trianon found that the Union could not be counted on to give any meaningful, direct attention to the rights of national minorities.

## Success in separating political accusations from legal arguments

A crucial moment was when, after Fidesz had achieved a two-thirds majority in 2010, José Manuel Barroso, who was otherwise on good terms with Viktor Orbán, refused to ease the restrictions on the government's scope of action, leaving the leadership of the country to resort to alternative methods under duress of the infringement procedure. The introduction of bank- and other taxes sparked a major outcry from influential business circles, making them actively lobby at the EU level for the abolition of the system of 'levies'. This was compounded by the European debate on the new Hungarian Media Law, which was not unrelated to the perceived or real grievances of the banks, as many of the media owners had links to them. Regardless of the real significance of the financial wrongs and the strictness of the media law, the two measures have succeeded in uniting the pro-market liberal, more right-wing forces with the mainstream left-wing movement advocating human rights and freedom of speech. This was a unique achievement. The debate on the fundamental laws and the new Constitution had to be conducted in this light, or rather in the shadow of it. It should be noted, however, that in the vast majority of cases, it proved possible to separate the political accusations from the legal, professional arguments concerning Hungarian legislation and, thus, to reach an agreement with the Commission. The constant debate did not, of course, improve the mood of the negotiating parties on either side, but the domestic side found that the struggle

with Brussels, the sovereignty battle, strengthened the 'national base' in Hungary and led to more and more victories in elections.

The increased flow of migration in 2015 opened a new chapter in our confrontation with mainstream European communication. The firm opposition of the Hungarian government, the concrete act of building a fence, combined with a political campaign that had been brutal in its refusal to allow the entry of migrants, had made Hungary subject to a wave of political criticism, the repercussions of which could little be mitigated by the fact that a few years later the Hungarian position on the protection of borders was basically incorporated into EU documents. The extent to which political communication aspects had determined the course of the discussion on Hungary was well illustrated by the 2017 Angela Merkel–Martin Schulz debate on German public television. It was rather peculiar, to say the least, that in a German domestic policy debate, 'the Hungarian case' was repeatedly brought up as a bad example that had to be fought against. The vilification of the Hungarian government has taken on a life of its own, somewhat detached from the actual political developments, based on half-truths, with the help of clearly devious political advisers.

## The slogan he chose was 'Strong Europe'

The same happened at home. The rapid pace of political communication, its tendency to be vociferous, the use of reductive terms and, in general, the constant campaign rush have put the discourse on the Union and relations with the West in a negative spiral. In Hungary too, and not without cause. As it is undeniable: Europe, with its deteriorating economic competitiveness, its departure from traditional Judeo-Christian values in social coexistence, and its legitimate but often over-ideological commitment to climate change and sustainability, is not without good reasons being criticised by the government and the prime minister who chose 'Strong Europe' as the slogan of the widely acclaimed Hungarian EU Presidency in 2011.

We could and should analyse at a greater length the development of the disputes between the EU and Hungary on such vital issues as corruption, the Russian–Ukrainian War or the independence of institutions, especially higher education. Each of these is an important, fundamental matter for Hungarian civic consciousness, representing a kind of civilisational base. It is crucial to see how Hungarian government policy and the European Union will deal with these issues, and whether they will be able to exit the negative communication spiral and move forward in a sensible direction that will serve the healthy development of Hungarian society, the economic prosperity and competitiveness of the country and Europe.

There can be little doubt that Hungary has gained a lot from the last twenty years of its membership in the EU, and the numbers of progress speak for themselves. We owe this to our own efforts and the work of tens of millions of taxpaying citizens of Western Europe. Hungary may be right about many things when it comes to defending traditional European values, but we should not delude ourselves in vain with the recently recurrent notion of a 'self-reliant nation'; without allies, we can hardly assert our position widely.

Without denying the importance of transatlantic and eastern connections, we cannot delay any further in reinforcing our relations both with the countries we have been institutionally linked to for 20 years and with the EU itself. In other words, we have to break the negative spiral; we need to make it clear that our policy stands by our principles but is open to compromise. Especially because we are only a truly relevant partner in the East and overseas if we are a successful member of the European Union.

## POLITICS AS A VOCATION

**Four and a half decades ago, on 10 June 1979, Otto von Habsburg became a member of the first directly elected European Parliament.**

For twenty years, the former heir to the throne worked with great dedication for the unity of the Old Continent, democratic values, and reinforcing Europe's influence in world politics. With his outstanding diplomatic sense and commitment, he had a major influence on European politics, particularly in preparing the integration of the Central European countries.

*“At least here, one has the feeling of working towards a worthwhile cause.”* At the end of October 1979, Otto von Habsburg concluded his letter to Nobel Prize-winning economist Friedrich August von Hayek with this statement, informing his friend that he would resume his public duties as a member of the European Parliament starting that summer. This brief sentence highlights the former Crown Prince's deep conviction that the newly instituted direct elections to the European Parliament held the potential to significantly influence and shape the political and economic trajectory of the continent, offering a renewed opportunity for Europe to assert its role in global affairs and respond more effectively to the challenges it was facing.

The early summer of 1979 was indeed a milestone in the history of European integration. Although the European Economic Community (EEC) had gained considerable economic and political importance over the years, it was criticised for the democratic deficit of its institutions. A number of concepts and strategies to remedy this – in particular to reform the role of the Parliament and the way it was elected – had been drawn up since the late 1950s, but conflicts of interest between the European institutions had long prevented their implementation. These conflicts were finally resolved by separating, at least temporarily, the issue of the election of the Parliament from the question of the extension of institutional powers. The first direct elections, initially scheduled for autumn 1978, took place almost a year later, in June 1979, when the citizens of the EEC, which at the beginning of the decade consisted of nine member states, including Britain, Ireland and Denmark, were able to decide for the first time who would make up the 410-member body. In order to increase democratic legitimacy, not only the political elite but also representatives of civil society – churches, trade unions and various social initiatives – did much to mobilise voters and create a kind of European demos: popular politicians ‘toured’ neighbouring countries, European festivals and concerts sought to reinforce the idea of an imagined European community. In the elections, held between 7 and 10 June, 62% of the 184.5 million citizens eligible to vote participated.

The inaugural session of the new European Parliament was held a few weeks later in Strasbourg, where MEPs elected Simone Veil of France as President. Veil was, in many ways, a symbolic figure. She had survived Nazi concentration camps, was a women's rights activist after the war, was committed to Franco-German reconciliation and had a strong commitment to the success

and further enlargement of European integration. Twice re-elected Simone Veil and Otto von Habsburg were fellow MEPs until 1993.

For our namesake, winning a seat in the European Parliament was not a self-evident possibility, especially as he was not a citizen of an EEC member state until 1978. Eventually, he was able to stand for election in the Federal Republic of Germany, within the district of his residence in Pöcking, holding the *Staatsbürgerschaft*. Eventually, he was elected to the European Parliament in third place on the list of the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU), which won eight seats in the 1979 elections. His candidacy – although the idea, according to a CSU legend, had come from the party's *éminence grise*, Heinrich Aigner – was a conscious decision by Franz Josef Strauss. The politician, who had become minister-president of the Free State of Bavaria after serving as a federal minister in Bonn, knew that the leading party of the South-German state, which, thanks to the industrial modernisation of the 1960s and 1970s, had been emerging as an increasingly important federal and international political actor, could only maintain its prominent position if it not only kept pace with the changes in the socio-economic structure of the time, but also if its political ambitions and horizons were able to extend beyond the confines of local public life. Otto von Habsburg proved to be the perfect choice to achieve this latter goal, as his exceptional international outlook and unparalleled political and diplomatic experience enabled him to effectively represent Bavaria's interests beyond the borders of the region, and his unique charisma made him one of the most popular European politicians in his party.

The ‘cosmopolitanism’ of Otto von Habsburg, however, starkly contrasted with the obscure internationalism espoused by the Social Democrats – and their leading candidate, former Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt – who had centred their campaign around undermining the former Crown Prince's credibility. His realism and pragmatism, subtly interwoven with moralistic considerations, remaining loyal to traditional Christian values and rejecting all forms of political extremism, while supporting further deepening and widening of European integration, resonated well with the preferences of the Bavarian electorate. A seasoned expert in democratic politics, the former Archduke had already shown in his first campaign that tradition and modern public engagement could not only coexist but also complement each other. His historical and dynastic experience proved to be a valuable asset for the development of the region, the country, and the continent. Some of the documents related to Otto von Habsburg's activities in the European Parliament are preserved in our Foundation's archives. The accurate interpretation and processing of these sources are greatly supported by the recollections of his former close associates. We also maintain strong ties with several of Otto von Habsburg's former assistants, many of whom have





generously donated items from the European election campaigns to us. Recently, Knut Abraham – a current Member of the Bundestag (CDU) who worked with our namesake between 1987 and 1996, from 1994 in Brussels – sent us a recording of Otto’s election speech from March 1979, along with posters and other campaign materials. Our growing collection of artifacts and the ongoing processing of archival materials allow us to accurately portray the political profile of the former heir to the throne who later became a Member of the European Parliament.

From the documents in our Foundation’s archives, emerges the image of a man who sought consensus, engaged in dialogue with his political opponents, but always remained true to his principles. Otto von Habsburg entered European politics at the time of the so-called Eurosclerosis, and worked to promote a united, Christian and social Europe during the period of regime change, the 1990s and during the euphoric era of the Maastricht Treaty.

Among his many speeches, proposals and resolutions, the best known and most characteristic are those relating to the dismantling of the Iron Curtain, the situation and political transformation of Central and Eastern Europe, including the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the unification of the two German states, and in particular the enlargement of the European Union to the East. However, his support was far from being confined to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe: he strongly stood by the enlargement rounds of 1981 (Greece), 1986 (Portugal, Spain) and 1995 (Austria, Finland, Sweden), arguing that the accession of each new member state would further stimulate and strengthen the European project.

However, his scope of interest was even broader than that, focusing on many other areas in addition to enlargement. His work was particularly significant in promoting the cause of European security and the creation of common European institutions, but he was also deeply involved in economic, social and environmental issues.

Although our namesake was not one of the ‘founding fathers’ and never held a leading European political position, he played a prominent role in the history of integration through his two-decade-long parliamentary career. Around the time of the regime change, Otto von Habsburg, interviewed by Chatham House’s magazine, confessed with deep conviction:

*“I thank God that I am Member of the European Parliament.”*

His words truly reflect his commitment and passion for a united and democratic Europe, and his parliamentary activities continue to inspire political thinking and practice both domestically and in Europe.

To mark the anniversary, our Foundation was commemorating the committed service and legacy of its namesake in Europe through a series of professional and public events at home and abroad.

BENCE KOCSEV

## SOVEREIGNTY AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

### A Portrait of a Pro-European British MEP

We had the privilege of meeting Adam Fergusson personally on the margins of our June event in London. The former member of the European Parliament graciously received us at his London residence, where, in the course of a long interview, he reflected on his public service career and shared invaluable perspectives into the political landscape of Britain and Europe during the later phases of the Cold War. The discussion provided a compelling exploration of the first directly elected European Parliament’s inner workings and power dynamics, highlighting the roots of contemporary challenges to European integration, particularly Brexit, and their lasting impact on the continent’s trajectory. The meeting unveiled not only the captivating personality of a prominent figure in the European conservative iconostasis but also that of a true Renaissance man; Fergusson’s home reflected his profound appreciation for the fine arts and music, which beautifully complemented his political and intellectual insights.



*“In my proposed resolution to dispose of an ‘empty chair’ in the plenary hall [of the European Parliament] to symbolise nations within Europe temporarily unable to exercise their sovereignty, Mr Fergusson has been a staunch ally. As rapporteur for the resolution, he fully supports this initiative,”* Otto von Habsburg noted in a 1980 report to members of the International Pan-European Movement. The gesture, aimed at symbolically representing the countries of Central and Eastern Europe under Soviet control, emphasises the importance of the advocacy of Adam Fergusson, who, during his five years in the European Parliament, played a crucial role in promoting numerous initiatives closely linked to Otto von Habsburg’s vision of a united and free Europe.

Adam Fergusson, much like Otto von Habsburg, regarded his involvement in public affairs as a vocation deeply rooted in his family heritage. His ancestors had been prominent figures in Scottish and British public life for centuries, yet his political socialisation was most significantly shaped by the public service careers of his immediate forebears. His father, Sir James Fergusson, held the position of Director of the Scottish National Archives for two decades and served as the

Lord Lieutenant of his home region; his grandfather, Sir Charles Fergusson, attained the rank of general in the British Army and served as Governor of New Zealand; while his great-grandfather, Sir James Fergusson, combined a long parliamentary career with roles as Secretary of State for Home and Foreign Affairs and as Governor of New Zealand, South Australia, and Bombay.



Visit of a delegation from the European Hungarian High School (Kastl) in July 1990  
Photo by EUROPARL Multimedia

Fergusson pursued his higher education at Cambridge University, earning a degree in history before beginning his career in journalism at prominent British newspapers. Initially focusing on economic and foreign affairs reporting, he gained broader recognition through two of his books: *The Sack of Bath. A Record and an Indictment* (1973), a polemic writing that reinvigorated Britain's architectural preservation movement, and *When Money Dies. The Nightmare of the Weimar Collapse* (1975), a bestseller on economic history examining the hyperinflation and financial collapse of the post-

First World War Germany. The latter gained renewed global attention during the 2008 financial crisis for its insights into the fragility of monetary systems and the political and social consequences of economic turmoils.

The 1970s brought Fergusson not only literary but also political successes: from 1979 to 1984, he represented the British Conservatives in the European Parliament, having won a traditionally Labour-held constituency. His political credo closely mirrored those of Otto von Habsburg, with a strong focus on human rights, minority protections, and the vision of a united Europe. These shared goals were symbolised by the “empty chair” initiative at a time when the prospect of a common European home seemed a distant dream.

As a prominent member of the European Democrats – the predecessor to today's European Conservatives and Reformists – Fergusson played a key role in shaping the common foreign and security policies, as well as the increasingly unified European market and institutions. As a member of the Political Affairs Committee (now the so-called AFET, the Committee on Foreign Affairs), he advocated for a firmer stance against the Soviet Union and Eastern European communist regimes, particularly in response to events in Afghanistan and Poland. At the same time, he was sceptical about the strengthening of economic bonds between the European Economic Community and the socialist bloc. Throughout these efforts, he found strong support from the informal political coalition around Otto von Habsburg, which was instrumental in securing parliamentary backing for several key initiatives. *“The cooperation between the four leading figures of the non-*

*socialist factions – de la Malène (Gaullists), Fergusson (Conservatives), and Haagerup (Liberals) – is now so effective that it can almost be described as unified action,”* Otto wrote about this inspiring example of cross-party and cross-national collaboration.

Aside from their efforts in Strasbourg, one of the most significant moments in the relationship between Otto von Habsburg and Adam Fergusson took place during Otto's 1983 visit to Fergusson's constituency in Strathclyde West, Scotland. Over the course of the two-day visit, Otto met with numerous representatives from the local political and economic elite, captivating them with his charisma, elegance, and humour. In a letter of appreciation, Fergusson wrote: *“You have won yourself an enthusiastic and large Scottish following and have genuinely inspired many of the party members with ideas about Europe, which they have never heard – or never understood.”*

Throughout their collaborative efforts for the cause of European unity, they consistently cautioned against the dangers of a rigid, false dichotomy between the purely sovereigntist (independent nation-states) and federalist (centralised superstate) interpretations of the unification. They argued that such polarisation overlooked not only viable but also pragmatic and constructive alternatives for European cooperation, emphasising the importance of a balanced approach that could address the complex challenges facing Europe without resorting to extreme positions—an argument that remains highly relevant in the ongoing political discourse today.

After his time in Parliament, Fergusson spent five years serving as a special advisor on European affairs to Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe, another British acquaintance of Otto von Habsburg. In this role, he worked alongside a senior Tory who supported deeper European integration, despite facing opposition from sceptical voices within his own party and resistance from his Prime Minister. During this period, he did not lose touch with his former ally: Fergusson maintained his active involvement in the Pan-European Movement, where he served as a prominent member and vice president. In a letter written in the early 2000s, Otto once again expressed gratitude to his former ally: *“The enlargement of our Union to ten more nations has marked the historic success of all those, who, like you, have worked untiringly for a united Europe, which will mean a great step ahead for all Europeans. Your efforts have not been in vain.”*

Hungary, a member of the European Union for over two decades, owes much to the tireless efforts of Otto von Habsburg and Adam Fergusson, whose work played a crucial role in the country's successful integration into the European community.



Adam Fergusson and Otto von Habsburg,  
Loch Lomond, Scotland, cca 1983



The interview with the former MEP offers valuable insights into numerous events and processes that are often overlooked or only briefly touched upon in the biographies of Otto von Habsburg and the available sources on the history of the European Parliament. The edited transcript of the June interview, along with the decades-long correspondence between the two politicians, is now available in the Foundation's digital archive. Below is Adam Fergusson's brief memoir, which served as the guide for the conversation in June.



### Strasbourg from 1979

Europe was so different in those first 10 years of the European Parliament. We had no reason to suppose that the Iron Curtain would ever disappear. Although the Cold War, frightening at times, was coming to an end — with Star Wars, Ronald Reagan abetted by Margaret Thatcher had turned it into an economic more than a military confrontation — the 40-year-old division of East and West [of Berlin, of Germany, of Austria-Hungary, of Europe] seemed permanent. We all lived next to a gigantic prison.

This was the decade which ended with the Pan-European Picnic at Sopron, the escape of 661 East Germans, and the tearing down of the Berlin Wall. I cherish a real piece of the Iron Curtain — a few inches of barbed wire — which Walburga brought home.

Otto von Habsburg and I were both elected as MEPs in 1979 to the first elected European Parliament. He seized the opportunity of this new but untried theatre and used it superbly to challenge the negative thinking about the East — even though many back in the 1980s thought the hope of a reunited, democratic Europe any time soon was either unrealistic or plain stupid.

This was the decade that saw Russian aggression in Afghanistan; the European Currency Unit (the ECU) started the slow development into the Euro and, with the Economic and Monetary Union, the Single Currency. In the EP, we planned and pushed for the Single Market. Today's European Union, once the European Common Market, was still the European [Economic] Community of 12 nations. The Maastricht Treaty, which established the European Union in 1992, was still to come.

It was in those years that the EP became important in ways unintended by those who framed its constitution: its benches contain, and contained no government as such: The Council of Ministers made the decisions; the Commission in Brussels made the proposals; we could only draw up reports expressing our opinions. [True, we did have some power over the budget]. We suddenly discovered that, by withholding our opinion on a Commission proposal, it could not go forward for Council approval. It was a short step towards changing a proposal and daring the Council to accept the changes.

We had power, after all.

However, there was a subtler consequence of establishing a common parliament in that symbolic place, Strasbourg, where French and German frontiers met. If anyone — any statesman, president, human rights activist, trouble-maker — wanted to speak to all of Europe, here was the finest platform, a continental forum more focused than the United Nations in New York. What other single place could fighters for liberty like Sakharov come to, to be heard? When the Falklands War broke out in 1982, here was where Europe rallied loudest in Britain's support. From here was launched the mightiest condemnation of Russia's invasion of Afghanistan. Here were sounded the most effective appeals for the release of Nelson Mandela.

And that was the significance of Otto von Habsburg's call for a symbolic empty chair to be placed in the plenary chamber for an annual debate on foreign policy — a reminder that the Europe of the Yalta agreement (by Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt in 1945) was temporary and that there would be room for all Eastern Europe people when they were set free. The proposition was scorned by many on the Left in the Parliament — how easy it was to scoff that attendance was often so poor we didn't need any more empty seats. But east of the Iron Curtain, the people heard, took notice, and took heart. Europe had spoken.

Otto von Habsburg had contrived that I should be the rapporteur for this report. I consulted him about how to define Europe, especially its eastern borders. "As widely as possible," he said at once. That included Russia as far as the Urals, but Turkey remained a grey area as ever.

Indeed — where does Asia start?

The early Strasbourg parliaments were also where national statesmen, out of power at home, could meet privately. Some used it as a sort of garage. Mr Chirac was a member for a matter of months. So was Willi Brandt. I recall seeing a historic trio — a Bismarck, a Habsburg, and Signor Rumor — all hobnobbing together.

Otto von Habsburg was an extraordinary man. His oratorical command of language was tremendous — he spoke at least eight tongues fluently (if you count Latin), and it was widely believed he spoke every one of the old Habsburg empire.

And he was such a good friend. He came to Scotland to speak to my electorate there — and overwhelmed them with his charm and humour. And he came again, to London, where I was also a candidate. He had a presence and a modesty that commanded total respect, admiration and affection.

Adam Fergusson, June 2024

PÉTER MATOLCSI

# OTTO VON HABSBURG AND ST. STEPHEN’S DAY, 20 AUGUST

To celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> of August, St. Stephen’s Day, also known as the Hungarian State Foundation Day, the following article, based on a century-old diary entry, explores the connection between our namesake and the Hungarian national holiday, while also considering how Otto von Habsburg, the last heir to the Hungarian throne, was the successor to the thousand-year-old vision of the first Hungarian King.

“We are a unique nation in this world, because Saint Stephen founded a state that was able to survive for a thousand years.”<sup>1</sup> – said Otto von Habsburg in his speech in Nagymaros on 20 August 1994, thirty years ago, indicating the great importance he attached to celebrating St. Stephen’s Day in Hungary. But even when he could not do so, during his time in exile, he commemorated every year the founder of the state, the first Hungarian king, St. Stephen of the Árpád dynasty.

Shortly after the death of the founder of the state, the conscious cultivation of his memory began, for which the subsequent turbulent decades and the difficulties of the succession to the throne provided a suitable basis. It was a remarkable achievement of King Ladislaus I that on 20 August 1083 Pope Gregory VII canonised King Stephen – together with Gerard, former bishop and martyr of Csanád and the son of Stephen, Prince Emeric, who had died at a young age. From then on, the notion of the Regnum Marianum, linked to Stephen, made the date particularly important in defining the country’s Catholic self-image, gradually transforming it from a Catholic feast day into a public holiday. In 1686, Pope Innocent XI elevated St. Stephen to the rank of a universal saint of the Church. In 1771, however, Pope Clement XIV decreed that the feast should be removed from the liturgical calendar, but it was he who intervened to ensure that the founder of the House of Habsburg-Lorraine, Maria Theresa, could bring St. Stephen’s Holy Right Hand back home and that Hungarians could continue to officially celebrate 20 August. Following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, Franz Joseph abolished the prohibition of celebrating St. Stephen’s Day and made it a public holiday in 1891. In 1938, during the commemorative year of St. Stephen, the National Assembly officially declared 20 August a national holiday, and after the “intermezzo” of state socialism, the national holiday in honour of the founder of the state was restored by Article VIII of the 1991 Act.<sup>2</sup>

The last Crown Prince of the House of Habsburg-Lorraine, Otto von Habsburg, also had many ties to this day. After the tragic death of the last Hungarian King, Charles IV, on Madeira, the royal family moved first to Madrid in 1922 and then to Lequeitio in the Basque Country in 1923. During the exile, the former court parish priest of Charles IV, Pál Zsámboky, and Benedictine monks (Vendel Solymos, Róbert Vlasics) were among those commissioned to teach the children Hungarian. This meant not only learning the language itself, but also getting acquainted with the history of Hungary and the significance of national holidays.

The diaries, held at our Foundation and currently under processing, are the primary source of information on the years of exile of the imperial and royal family, giving a detailed account of the

children’s daily life and insight into the preparations for St. Stephen’s Day. An added peculiarity is that these documents were not the work of one hand alone: many of them were written by Count Heinrich August von Degenfeld-Schonburg, one of the most loyal aides of the family, while a number of these diaries were kept by Countess Marie-Therese Korff Schmising-Kerssenbrock (‘Korffi’), one of the governesses of the children.



One of the diaries, written by Heinrich Degenfeld-Schonburg in 1924, contains details of his stay in Lequeitio on 20 August. A hundred years ago, on the occasion of St. Stephen’s Day, their teacher, Vendel Solymos, was teaching the Crown Prince and his siblings Hungarian religious songs, which they had begun practising two days earlier. The Hungarian songs were sung during the Holy Mass on the feast day, accompanied by Father Solymos on the harmonium.<sup>3</sup>

Over the years, the children have become accustomed to singing in Hungarian on St. Stephen’s Day. A diary entry by one of the ladies-in-waiting, Viktoria von Mensdorff-Pouilly, dated 20 August 1928, bears witness to this: “In honour of St. Stephen, the Highnesses received Holy Communion for the homeland and for themselves, with Father Andlau preaching. At the Holy Mass they sang Hungarian songs, which they had been practising diligently during the previous two days, and which His Majesty [Otto] knew exceptionally well.”<sup>4</sup>

It was also due to his upbringing that Otto von Habsburg understood well the significance of the holiday in Hungarian identity. We know from his later Hungarian correspondence that after the fall of communism he frequently attended the Processions of the Holy Right in Budapest, and that he accepted several invitations to participate in the celebrations organised by Hungarian municipalities on this occasion.<sup>5</sup> This, no doubt, was connected with the fact that for Otto von Habsburg, King Stephen was not only a saint, a Hungarian royal precedent, but also a person who had set an exemplary programme. Stephen I strengthened the Kingdom of Hungary by bringing it firmly into the Western, Latin Christian community. This was in line with Otto’s ambition in the 1980s and 1990s for Hungary to regain its sovereignty as part of a Western, democratic European community defending Christian values.

The date of the Pan-European Picnic, organised thirty-five years ago under the patronage of Otto von Habsburg, which led to the fall of the Iron Curtain, did not fall on 19 August by chance. The opening of the Austro-Hungarian border on 20 August 1989 marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the European nations, and helped Hungary to return to the path set by St. Stephen with his political credo dating back almost a thousand years.

<sup>3</sup> „Heute, am Tage des hl. Stephan, empfangen S.M. u. Erzbg. Robert die hl. Kommunion während der von P. Solymos um 8h celebrirter hl. Messe. – Um 9h las P. Andlau die hl. Messe, während derselben wurden ungarische Lieder gesungen, P. Solymos spielte am Harmonium.“ – HOAL I-1-d-35 6 May 1924 – 20 August 1924.  
<sup>4</sup> „Die Hoheiten opferten die hl Comunion auf zu Ehren des hl. Stefan für die Heimat und für sich, so auch die hl Messe mit einer Predigt von Pater Andlau. In der hl Messe wurden Ung. Lieder gesungen die schon in den 2 letzten Tagen fleißig geübt werden u besonders S.M. gut kannte.“ – HOAL I-1-d-40 19 August 1928 – 6 October 1928.  
<sup>5</sup> Beyond the event of the article’s introduction, for example, the Municipality of Tiszaújváros invited Otto, who was awarded the honorary citizenship of the city, to the 20<sup>th</sup> of August celebrations on several occasions between 1995 and 2006 (HOAL I-2-c-Farkas Zoltán)

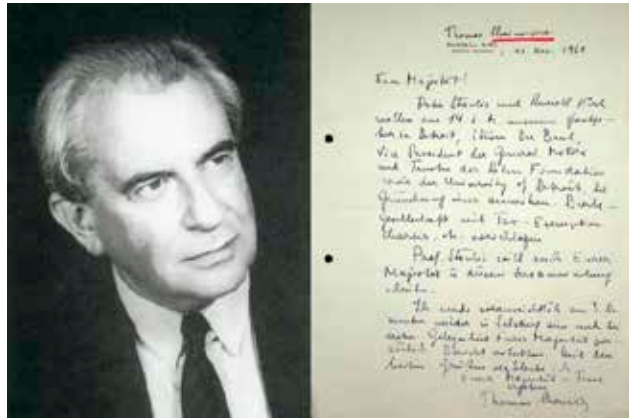
<sup>1</sup> Quote from a speech given by Otto von Habsburg in Nagymaros, 20 August 1994. Let us uphold the legacy of the Saint King, the faith, and the Hungarian nation! *Nagymarosi Hírek*, 1994.09.01. 1.  
<sup>2</sup> Szóts, Zoltán Oszkár: Augusztus 20. jelentésváltozásai – az ünnep története 1038-tól napjainkig. [Changes in the Meaning of 20 August – The history of the Holiday from 1038 to the Present Days] *Újkor.hu*, 20 August 2022.



## PHILOSOPHER OF FREEDOM AND THE BALANCE OF POWER

One hundred years ago, on 31 August 1924, Thomas Chaimowicz, Otto von Habsburg's close friend and steadfast ally, was born.

The Austrian philosopher, almost unknown in our country, is an inevitable figure in European conservative thought. He was born in Vienna in a Jewish family of textile merchants. At the end of February 1939, he emigrated with his relatives to Latin America through Prague and Amsterdam. As a student at the Escuela Normal Superior in Bogotá, he focused on social and economic science and Latin language. He completed his graduate degree in the United States on a scholarship at Southern College, Birmingham, Alabama. He earned his doctorate in literature and philosophy from the Jesuit-run University of Colombia in 1949.



After returning to his homeland, he studied classical philology and history at the Universities of Vienna and Innsbruck, obtaining a doctorate in philosophy in the latter in 1953. Afterwards, he began working as a lecturer at the University of Salzburg. His two decades of teaching – after an extended tenure as a consultant for an American bank – was crowned by his appointment as Professor of Roman Law in 1986.

His name first appears in the material in the Habsburg Otto Foundation's collection from 1958, in the Graz-based monarchist publication *Die Krone*, which supported the former heir to the throne. The topics of his short essays were drawn from classic political philosophical themes: power, the (legal) state, freedom, tradition, history, modernity and revolution – often on the same page as the articles on foreign policy written by Otto, who concealed his identity behind the pseudonym Diplomaticus.

Their voluminous exchange of letters evidences their friendship. Our Foundation maintains a corpus of nearly 1800 pages of correspondence between 1958 and 2000, which testify to their intense intellectual relationship (they sometimes mailed each other multiple letters in one day!). Otto von Habsburg and Thomas Chaimowicz shared similar views on world politics, the history and future of Western civilisation, and, in particular, Europe. Their mutual trust is reflected in the philosopher's involvement for several years in the education of Otto's children.<sup>1</sup>

The Edmund Burke Society was founded in Salzburg in 1960 at the initiative of Chaimowicz. The organisation aimed to research the writings of the British politician known as the “father of conservatism” and to promote his ideals. Between 1960 and 1969, he edited the Society's journal, the *Österreichische Akademische Blätter*, published in Vienna, which featured publications of prominent European and American intellectuals such as Wilhelm Böhm, Friedrich Engel-Janosi, Friedrich A. von Hayek, Willy Lorenz, Ludwig von Mises and Peter Stanlis. He and Russell Kirk became close friends. In addition to the above, in the 1970s, Chaimowicz was a frequent contributor to the *Zeitbühne*, a journal linked to Otto by a thousand ties.

The main work, published in 1985, *Freiheit und Gleichgewicht im Denken Montesquieu und Burke. Ein analytischer Beitrag zur Geschichte der Lehre vom Staat im 18. Jahrhundert*<sup>2</sup> is based on the premise that knowledge of the intellectual accomplishments of the past – in our case, of antiquity – is essential to understanding the present. Chaimowicz explores the influence of the ideas of the ancient authorities in the works of Montesquieu and Burke, with a particular focus on the relation between balance and freedom. Without balance, he argues, the freedom of the human community cannot exist – or at least is impaired – and can only be guaranteed and promoted by established traditions. Burke took this idea further when he spoke out against the abstract notions of the French Revolution, which threatened tradition and, thus, balance. Chaimowicz traces the source of Montesquieu's ideas to Tacitus and Pliny the Younger. The concept of power-sharing and mixed government was discussed by the French author (also) in his smaller-scale work, *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and their Decline*, which was analysed in detail in Chaimowicz's book. Only a step away from Montesquieu is Burke, who incorporated the views of his French aristocratic contemporary into his argumentation on the dangers of the revolution. Kirk wrote the foreword to the volume's English edition.<sup>3</sup>

The Austrian thinker summarised his oeuvre in a Salzburg publication shortly before he passed away in 2002.<sup>4</sup> His scholarly career, his role in shaping continental conservatism in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – not least his relationship with Otto von Habsburg and the formal and informal networks he established – offers a wealth of intriguing insights for future research.



Thomas Chaimowitz's writings in the journals *Die Krone* (1953–1967), *Österreichische Akademische Blätter* (1960–1969), and *Zeitbühne* (1972–1979) can be viewed by scanning the QR code.



The Chaimowicz couple in the company of Russell Kirk (New York, 1964)

<sup>1</sup> Kirk, Russel: *The Sword of Imagination. Memoirs of a Half-Century Literary Conflict*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1995, 208.

<sup>2</sup> Springer Verlag, Wien–New York, 1985 (Forschungen aus Staat und Recht, 68.)

<sup>3</sup> *Antiquity as the Source of Modernity: Freedom and Balance in the Thought of Montesquieu and Burke*. Transaction, Somerset, NJ, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Chaimowicz, Thomas: *Heimkehr aus dem Exil. Salzburg. Geschichte & Politik*, 2000, 4, pp. 253–345.

## THE CHAMPION OF THE FREE MARKET

Friedrich August von Hayek was awarded the Nobel Prize 50 Years Ago

In commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Friedrich August von Hayek's Nobel Prize in Economics, awarded in December 1974, we seized this occasion to reflect on his connection with Otto von Habsburg and to explore key aspects of our namesake's profound involvement with the field of economics and economic scholarship.



Friedrich August von Hayek, 1962, Knokke, Belgium  
Ref.: HOAL 15A 6-9

In November, the well-known American weekly magazine *Newsweek* published a thought-provoking opinion piece. The brief article, written by the president of a prominent American conservative think tank, highlighted the potential benefits of the new administration's envisioned protectionist economic policies, particularly in terms of tariffs. The article argued that these measures could help stimulate domestic industries, protect jobs, and reduce trade imbalances. From a European – and by extension, Hungarian – perspective, it painted a rather concerning picture of

the future, even though the proposed measures are likely intended primarily to curb Chinese exports. Whether the program behind these ideas is underpinned by coherent and, perhaps more importantly, practically implementable economic considerations, remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the article provided intriguing evidence of how Republican positions have recently shifted from advocating for free-market principles to endorsing protectionism, along with a growing acceptance of government intervention in economic affairs.

To be sure, a republican or conservative identity – although these two concepts do not always fully overlap – does not necessarily entail embracing tariffs, quotas, or other forms of centralised regulation as effective tools of economic policy, let alone their enthusiastic advocacy. On the contrary, the emphasis on the freedom of market economies has long played a central role in shaping the identity of these political and intellectual traditions. For instance, Russell Kirk, a prominent figure in the conservative milieu of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, argued – albeit not without reservations – that the independent functioning of markets fosters individual liberty and the creation of economic prosperity. Similarly, William F. Buckley Jr., who maintained close ties with our namesake, lamented in his seminal work, *God and Man at Yale*, that the curricula

of prestigious American universities in economics were dominated by textbooks promoting Keynesian doctrines while largely ignoring the contributions of economists advocating free-market principles. William F. Buckley, founder of *National Review*, delivered a prescient critique in the early 1950s, with the liberal economic policies he championed only gaining widespread prominence and political institutionalisation several decades later, notably through the political ascendancy of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. This transformation which, broadly speaking, led from interventionist economic policy to the adoption of free market principles, was symbolically encapsulated in the awarding of the 1974 Nobel Prize in Economics. The intellectual “hinterland” and perspectives of the two laureates could scarcely have been more divergent: Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal, a leading theorist of the welfare state and a prominent figure within the prevailing economic paradigm, stood in stark contrast to Friedrich August von Hayek, a staunch advocate of free-market capitalism. Hayek's recognition – whether intentionally or not – heralded a paradigm shift, marking the decline of interventionist, state-driven economic policies that had long held sway. However, this change in perspective cannot be solely attributed to the Austrian-born economist, as it was profoundly influenced by the Mont Pelerin Society, an intellectual forum that Hayek not only helped to found but also led as its president until 1961.

The Society, established in 1947 at the Hotel du Parc on the Mont Pèlerin near Lausanne, Switzerland, was deeply shaped by the upheavals of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The disintegration of empires and the ascent of nationalist and authoritarian regimes fostered a turbulent intellectual environment that profoundly influenced the vision of its founders. Motivated by a determination to resist the encroachment of collectivist ideologies, they sought to preserve and champion the fundamental principles of individual liberty and market-driven economies. Although its members held diverse views, they were united by a fundamental conviction that interventionist and collectivist trends posed a grave threat to the ideals of democracy, international order, the sanctity of private property, and individual freedom.

Against this background, they believed that supranational economic institutions offered a more stable and effective alternative to fragmented nation-states, which had not only failed to safeguard market freedoms and protect private property but, in extreme cases, had directly subsumed these under state control. The Society's remarkably diverse founding membership included representatives of the Austrian School of Economics and their American followers, German ordoliberal economists, key architects of the Austrian and Italian economic miracles, and prominent social scientists.



Otto von Habsburg, Friedrich August von Hayek, and the economist's wife, Helene Bitterlich, during a break at the Mont Pelerin Society meeting in Oxford. The photo was taken by Fritz Machlup in 1959. Ref: HOAL 15A 5-33



Otto von Habsburg’s staunch anti-communism and his deep interest in economic affairs naturally drew him to the Society, of which he officially became a member sixty-five years ago, in December 1959. His ties were particularly strong with the prominent figures of the later generation of the Austrian School of Economics, who played a pivotal role in shaping the organisation’s (early) character. The correspondence preserved in our Archives between our namesake and renowned economists such as Friedrich August von Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, and Fritz Machlup provides fascinating insights into their relationships. Interestingly, their exchanges spanned beyond narrow economic policy discussions, delving into broader Austrian and European public affairs. For example, in the early 1970s, Otto endeavoured, albeit unsuccessfully, to persuade Machlup – then a professor at Princeton University – to accept a nomination as president of the Austrian National Bank. Besides these “daily matters”, the letters provide valuable glimpses into their shared concerns regarding the political and economic challenges facing Europe during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Otto von Habsburg recognised the complexity and diversity within the neoliberal ideology advanced by the Mont Pelerin Society – an intellectual tradition far more nuanced and multifaceted than the often pejorative connotations associated with the term in everyday discourse. He understood that the “humanised economic thinking,” as Russell Kirk described it, of thinkers like Wilhelm Röpke, was likely more conducive to fostering social cohesion than the market fundamentalism of the Chicago School. At the same time, he understood that the Society provided a unique and effective platform for challenging what he described as the “arrogance of planners and bureaucrats.”

“No state can ensure economic justice if its political system does not guarantee freedom,” Otto von Habsburg declared during his address at the Society’s 1961 annual meeting in Turin, Italy. This profound insight – that political and economic freedom are inseparable – was, in fact, the key factor that forged a shared understanding between European and American conservatives and the (neo)liberal thinkers of the Mont Pelerin Society. Within the overlapping networks of these intellectual circles, we find not only Otto von Habsburg but also many of his closest allies, including the aforementioned Russell Kirk and William F. Buckley Jr.; Edwin J. Feulner, founding president of The Heritage Foundation and later president of the Society in the late 1990s; the influential American journalist Henry Hazlitt; as well as non-American figures such as the “reactionary liberal” Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn (see page 78), and Belgian businessman Henri de Lovinfosse.

Initially comprised almost exclusively of European and North American members, the Mont Pelerin Society gradually extended its influence, evolving into a more global entity, thereby also creating new opportunities for Otto von Habsburg to expand his network. Among his most distinguished East Asian connections was Seigen Tanaka, whom he encountered at one of the meetings of the Society. Over time, the Archduke himself also played a role in fostering relationships across East and Southeast Asia, thereby contributing to the organisation's international growth and enhancing its global prominence. A prime example of this was his 1962 article in the *Asahi Shimbun*, which introduced principles and mission of this community to a broader Japanese audience, significantly raising its profile in the region.

Notably, Japan held special significance for both Otto von Habsburg and Friedrich August von Hayek: the former heir to the throne was a frequent visitor to Japan, while Hayek, who also cultivated deep professional and personal ties within Japan’s intellectual and economic circles, prepared for his Nobel Prize acceptance speech as Tanaka’s guest in Tokyo. As our namesake noted in a letter from the early 1980s, “*It is peculiar that while we live relatively close to each other, we somehow end up meeting in Tokyo.*”

After being elected to the European Parliament in 1979, his participation in the Society’s annual gatherings became increasingly sporadic. This was primarily due to practical reasons: the meetings often coincided with the start of the European Parliament’s autumn political season. Nevertheless, Otto von Habsburg’s two-decade parliamentary career was profoundly influenced by the principles championed by the Mont Pelerin Society, as evidenced by his speeches and policy proposals. A notable example is his stance during the renegotiation of the Lomé Convention, initially signed in 1976 to govern trade and aid relations between the European Economic Community (EEC) and countries in the Global South. In this debate, Otto von Habsburg argued against centralised solutions and the prioritisation of aid, instead advocating for strengthening the trade component. He emphasised that only trade, rather than dependency on aid, could ensure genuine economic development and preserve the sovereignty of nations in the long term.

“Only a consistent, freedom-oriented economic policy can create prosperity for all,” stated the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in a recent editorial, quoting Ludwig Erhard, who had a close relationship with Otto von Habsburg. As Minister of Economic Affairs and Chancellor, Erhard played a key role in Germany’s post-war economic recovery. Like him, Otto von Habsburg believed that economic policy should avoid constant interventions. Respect for free-market principles, individual freedoms, and decentralised decision-making – whether described as the “invisible hand” or subsidiarity – could ensure lasting prosperity. Of course, there are limits to these principles, as markets do not operate independently of other social institutions. Nonetheless, adherence to these should not be misconstrued as an expression of liberal dogmatism or a form of globalist idolatry; rather, it represents a well-considered and legitimate conservative perspective.



Otto von Habsburg officially became a member of the Society in December 1959. The official notification was signed by the then-president, Friedrich August von Hayek. Ref.: HOAL-I-2-b-Friedrich August von Hayek

# PUBLICATIONS

Our range of books now numbers more than a dozen. This year, we added to our foreign language titles.

## LA CONTINUITÉ DE L'HISTOIRE

Few Hungarian foreign ministers held the French language and culture in such high regard as János Martonyi. From early on, as a university student and partially thanks to his father, he learned the language of Victor Hugo and familiarised himself with the rich cultural tradition. As a lawyer, university lecturer and diplomat, he was a keen practitioner and promoter of the language. János Martonyi's vast knowledge of the Francophone world was instrumental in intermediating between the French and Hungarian cultural scenes. France honoured this francophilia in 2001 with its most prestigious award of Grand-officer of the Légion d'Honneur.

After retiring as an active politician, János Martonyi remained a prominent figure in Hungarian public life as a legal scholar and author of historical essays. His decades of international experience, expertise and perspective on history provide insight into the developments over the centuries, which can facilitate international public awareness and understanding of our country and its past. We, therefore, considered it essential to publish an extended French version of János Martonyi's book, *Nemzet és Európa. Emlékirat helyett*, printed in Hungarian in 2021, followed by the English edition, *Nation and Europe. In Lieu of Memoirs* in 2023. Thus, the present volume is not merely a translation of the work in Hungarian but also includes several recent speeches, studies and articles that have not appeared in any other language. An excellent summary of János Martonyi's vision of the world, combining patriotism, nationalism, conservative-libertarianism and Euro-Atlanticism. His thoughts, expressed more than twenty-five years ago as minister of foreign affairs, still resonate today. *"The essence of Europe lies in diversity. If this diversity, with its many cultural and linguistic traditions, is lost, or just diluted, Europe will lose its identity. Consequently, European unity cannot and will not exist without national identity, without the survival and strengthening of the nation."*



The contents of the book have been selected according to two main criteria. On the one hand, it examines Europe, Central Europe, and Hungary from the perspective of past centuries and, on the other hand, from the context of regionalism and globalism. We endeavoured to make the historical context, with some minor additions, understandable for a French-speaking audience.

It is often said that the character of the Old Continent was defined by three hills: Golgotha in Jerusalem, the Acropolis of Athens, and the Capitoline in Rome. The latter appears on the cover of the book since Roman law, the legal thinking that was based on it, and the European integration that began here with the Treaty of Rome are perhaps the most vital themes of János Martonyi's oeuvre. The author stresses the necessity of returning to the historical foundations of the European Union, bringing Otto von Habsburg into the circle of European founding fathers of Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman and others. Who, as the former Crown Prince of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and with 20 years of experience as an MEP, realised that Europe cannot be built without historical, cultural and spiritual foundations. The Otto von Habsburg Foundation honoured the 80 years of János Martonyi with this publication.





## EXILED IN MADEIRA

Our acclaimed book, *Exiled in Madeira. Documents on the Last Months of the Life of Charles of Austria-Hungary*, published in Hungarian in 2022, have been released in English.



2022 was notable for a double anniversary: while we celebrated Otto von Habsburg's 110<sup>th</sup> birthday with a series of events, we commemorated the centenary of his father's death with an exhibition and two new publications. In the spring, the fate of the last Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary was discussed at a conference in Gödöllő, while in the second half of that year, we assembled a collection of mostly previously unknown sources on the final months of Charles's life.

The publication of our Foundation's colleagues – Gergely Fejérdy, Gergely István Szűts and Ferenc Vasbányai – entitled in Hungarian *Száműzöttként Madeirán* covers the events of the final months of Emperor Charles's exile, primarily from the perspective of Otto von Habsburg and his family. 'Beato Carlos d'Austria' – or 'Blessed Charles of Austria', as he is still known in Madeira – is portrayed in this

volume, above all, as a private person, a husband and a father. On the island, the overburdened monarch, who had reigned in an extremely turbulent period, was able to enjoy a meaningful family life for the first time.

This year, the volume was also published in English under the title *Exiled in Madeira, Documents on the Last Months of the Life of Charles of Austria-Hungary*. It was presented on 16 October 2024 in a venue befitting the book: in Funchal, the capital of the Portuguese island, with the support of the Madeira Regional Government. Our report on the event can be found on page 165.

The documents in the work include extracts from the diaries of Charles and the daily notes of the governesses of the royal children. The written sources are supplemented by photographs, most of which have never been seen by the public before, taken in the family's immediate surroundings, primarily by local photographers. The selection of images draws mainly on the unique collection of the Madeira Photography Museum, as well as on pieces from international public collections, allowing readers to enjoy a rich variety of material. The English edition is intended to offer a broader international audience a better understanding of the life and figure of the last Austrian Emperor and King of Hungary.

The back of the book provides an overview of the volume's contents:

*A lost world war, a crumbling empire, social cataclysm, a state of civil war. The confiscation of the wealth of a dynasty that, for half a millennium, had ruled over provinces, continents and dozens of nations left the family at the mercy of the victorious powers. After two years of rule, this was what the last Austrian Emperor and Hungarian King faced in 1918–1919.*

*The book deals only tangentially with major political issues, providing instead a glimpse into the daily life of a royal family in exile. Where the trifles of relocation override the bitterness of lost power and influence, paramount importance is given to the health of the seven children – and the still unborn eighth – who represent the future. Where much-vaunted words like honour and service take on new meanings.*

*Charles passed away on Madeira on 1 April 1922, knowing that at least those closest to him did not regard his short life as a failure. He had settled his accounts with himself and his Creator and, by holding himself up as an example to his heir, first-born Otto, he showed how a Christian monarch bears misfortune and leaves life on earth with humility and reconciliation. With faith and a clear conscience.*

*And that was probably the most important thing he could leave him.*



Zita and her family arriving at Funchal Cathedral to attend the funeral mass for Charles (27 April 1922)  
Photo by Museu de Fotografia da Madeira – Atelier Vicente's



# PROGRAMMES

Alongside the processing and preservation of the heritage, the identification and acquisition of additional documents, and the expansion of professional relations, we believe that the cultivation and promotion of Otto von Habsburg's intellectual legacy is paramount. With this aim in mind, we have organised numerous exhibitions, conferences, and book launches both at home and abroad this year as well.



Our colleagues, Zoltán Ólmosi, Piroska Kocsis, Lili Baranyai, and Lili Herczeg, at the event held on the occasion of the 13th anniversary of the death of our namesake at the Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma. We commemorated Zoltán Ólmosi on page 230.

## START TO THE YEAR IN THE COLLECTION PHOTOGRAPHY – HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION – POLITICAL AWARENESS



On the occasion of the Hungarian Culture Day, our Foundation invited the staff and heads of public collections to its annual kick-off event for the second time, this year to present our photo book on the life of Otto von Habsburg.

On 22 January, at the Chapel of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary at Szentkirályi Street, GERGELY PRÖHLE gave his welcoming address to a packed audience. The Director of the Foundation praised the initiative of the

late pianist and diplomat Árpád Fasang, to remember the birth of the Hungarian national anthem by celebrating the Hungarian Culture Day. This year marks the 35<sup>th</sup> commemoration based on Fasang's idea. Then, speaking about our publication, *“99 Years–99 Pictures. Photographs from the Life of Otto von Habsburg”*, he thanked the editor, SZILVESZTER DÉKÁNY and all our colleagues involved, as well as the work of Helikon Publishing House. Turning to the volume's contents, he commented on the political consciousness of our namesake, evident from the photographs, with which the successor of the dethroned Monarchy shaped himself into a committed democratic advocate of European unification. This process was documented by illustrious photographers of Hungarian origin, such as Juan Gyenes, Nicolas Müller and Paul Almásy, whose works contributed to the international recognition of Hungarian culture and art. Gergely Pröhle stressed that our Foundation continues to perform its tasks to the highest professional standards and – after expressing his appreciation for the interest shown by the numerous professionals from the field of public collections who attended our event – he outlined the achievements of the past year in the processing of the heritage.

According to TIBOR NAVRACSICS, Minister of Public Administration and Regional Development, Otto von Habsburg is an example of how ideals can be represented in politics without formal positions of power, solely through the authority of personality, with immutable moral and mental capital, and with a captivating intellectual charisma. Not only the throne but readiness and commitment are the very attributes of royalty.





It is instructive – he reminded us – how the last heir to the Hungarian throne sublimated the experience of governing the Monarchy – a truly tangible expertise – into the ideal of a united Europe.

The compilation of a photo album is a great responsibility, emphasised LÁSZLÓ CSORBA, Professor Emeritus at ELTE, when presenting our book. One tends to be more critical of material that one merely reads, and nowadays, the thought-forming power of images is particularly immeasurable. The 99 moments in Otto's life, selected with unerring photographic flair, are a vivid reflection of the personality of the former Crown Prince – he commended.

After the laudation, a round-table discussion took place with the participation of representatives of the field, where BEATRIX LENGYEL, Head of the Historical Photographic Department of the Hungarian National Museum; LIPÓT RÉPÁSZKY, Chief Executive Officer of the National Audiovisual Archive; and PÉTER BAKI, Director of the Hungarian Museum of Photography and the Mai Manó House – Hungarian House of Photographers, answered questions from our colleague Szilveszter Dékány, Senior Research Fellow: what are the methodological distinctions in the management of a photo collection compared to other types of records? How can documentary photography become an artistic image? What is the difference between capturing a historical moment and experiential photography? What is their

opinion on using artificial intelligence in the processing of photo collections? What is the current state of training and education of photo archivists? How will photo archiving be carried out in their institutions in 30 years?

To conclude the evening, Gergely Próhle quoted Professor Tamás Freund's congratulatory letter addressed to our Foundation: *"It appears that even a few details can come together to form a whole, and the 99 photos reveal the image of a public man whose heart and spirit are pure, who nevertheless became a dominant*

*figure through his creative power, who supports politics above nationalities, who loves his family and his home,"* wrote the President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.



## CONFERENCES

The Foundation's activities primarily focus on preserving, processing, and making the sources and documents related to Otto von Habsburg's life and work broadly known. In addition to the publications and events reflecting on the oeuvre of our namesake, our programmes focus on international diplomacy, European integration, Christian Democratic politics, and Central European cooperation.

### John Lukacs 100

On 31 January, our Foundation and the recently established John Lukacs Institute of the Ludovika University of Public Service celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the renowned historian and namesake of the latter institution with an international conference.

*"We are not only creatures of the past but also creators of the future"* BALÁZS ORBÁN quoted John Lukacs in his welcoming speech. The Prime Minister's Political Director stressed the significance of learning about the past, which is a moral obligation, especially for those who, like the students and teachers of the University, have chosen the service of the public as their vocation. *"The next construction phase is underway to place the University in the international arena."* Their task is to represent the "Hungarian voice" and the appropriate strategy for tackling crises in the international discourse on the shifting world order. In the face of the ideological turmoil of Western civilisation and its obsolete theoretical constructs, there is no better example of the cultivation and transmission of universal, value-laden knowledge about the past than the legacy of John Lukacs, the politician stated.

The Rector, GERGELY DELI, introduced the newly launched institute, which had been created by the merger of three former departments: the Institute for American Studies, the Institute for Strategic Studies and the Institute for Strategic Defence Research. Its mission is to preserve its namesake's intellectual legacy, coordinate strategic research and promote a more active Hungarian participation in international academic life. GERGELY PRÓHLE, Programme Director of the Institute, presented the audience with a selection of photographs of the John Lukacs Lounge, which he had actively participated in setting up at the University a few years ago: the historian's belongings, his hand-made furniture, his medals, his sheet music and especially his books, sought to bring the multifaceted personality of the historian closer to the students. He also showed an exchange of letters between Otto von Habsburg and John Lukacs, which contains relevant insights into the diversity of the American conservative camp.





On behalf of the family, ANNEMARIE L. COCHRANE, who lives overseas, greeted the assembled guests, honouring her father's memory from a recording.

*"Unreadable history is no history at all"* – PÁL HATOS reminded the audience of a historian's prevailing responsibility. He implied, with the words of Johan Huizinga, that nowadays, due to the increasingly mechanised science industry, we are inundated with a plethora of historical writings, yet only very few

of them are written in a meticulous, individual manner, the kind of which Lukacs had always striven to create. For him, respect for history was, essentially, a respect for freedom, and it was not by chance that he believed that knowledge in this area was not an individual but a collective achievement; to borrow Paul Ricoeur's words, *"History is an unpaid debt"*.

*"Historical consciousness means learning to pay attention to our own moral imagination and to perceive the memories of others, of things we lack first-hand experience of,"* – JEFFREY NELSON echoed a fellow American historian in the introduction to his lecture. John Lukacs's seminal work *Historical Consciousness* (1968) has aroused the interest of American conservative thinkers since its publication. Invoking the image of a literate historian, the Russell Kirk Center's Executive Director looked back to the beginnings in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. He sees the 20<sup>th</sup>-century "reincarnation" of the figure in the image and role of T. S. Eliot, George Orwell, G. K. Chesterton, Kirk and Lukacs, whose vocation was to defend "the old truths and rights", continuity and constancy, against the temptations of progress and innovation. For Lukacs, historiography is an act of reconstruction, a moral deed which, freeing the Word from the grip of ideologies and positivism, can lead its reader to a new kind of humanism, a sort of wisdom, in literary form.

Recounting the creation and reception of *Historical Consciousness*, Hillsdale College professor RICHARD GAMBLE revealed that during the decade and a half of writing the book, Lukacs had sought the opinions of only a few good friends – such as Russell Kirk, Dwight Macdonald, George Kennan and Owen Barfield – who had repeatedly dissuaded him from abandoning what he had often regarded as a hopeless task. Gamble, who has long planned to pen a biography of Lukacs, sees the ambition of the author of *The Historical Consciousness* as returning man to the centre of the universe in the context of a new kind of humanism in today's post-



materialist, post-Cartesian, post-scientific world. His speech is published on page 175.

In her address, SUSAN HANSSEN placed Lukacs in a coordinate system defined by three fundamental trends in 20<sup>th</sup>-century American thought. According to these, the Hungarian historian arrived in the New World with the seventh wave of immigration, which enriched its scholarly life with the output of Central and Eastern European intellectuals, includ-

ing Albert Einstein, Leo Strauss, Hannah Arendt, Jacques Maritain, Czesław Miłosz, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Eric Voegelin. In the fields of humanities, they renewed the continent's thinking on natural law. They awakened interest in ancient political philosophy while working to preserve, not overthrow, the Christian liberal tradition of the West. The second current of ideas was the 'third spring' of the revival of English Catholicism, in which Christopher Dawson, Mortimer Adler and Graham Greene were Lukacs's 'fellow travellers', many of whom not only achieved success in literature but also gained a place in academia. Thirdly, the speaker referred to the conservative heyday of the 1980s, which, thanks to the concerted policy of the Anglo-Saxon powers, had brought about the fall of communism in 1990. Together, these influences shaped the image of Lukacs as a conservative Catholic intellectual, the professor at the University of Dallas believes.

WILFRED MCCLAY, Professor at Hillsdale College, spoke about his personal experiences with the celebrant in a video message. He reminisced about their acquaintance when, as a history student at Johns Hopkins University, he had been asked to review Lukacs' book *Outgrowing Democracy. A History of the United States in the Twentieth Century*. After its publication, the author contacted him by letter and later extended his friendship to him. McClay recalled that Lukacs had described himself as a reactionary and idealised 19<sup>th</sup>-century bourgeoisie, arguing that it had been feasible – or at least possible – to try to turn back the clock through historical consciousness. He learned from the Spanish-born American historian Georges Santayana that *"any tradition is better than any reconstruction"*.

In another video message, DAVID CONTOSTA, who honoured the professorship of John Lukacs, recounted the historian's career and the magnitude of his oeuvre with a variety of personal stories, with particular emphasis on his two seminal volumes, *Confessions of an Original Sinner* and *The End of the Twentieth Century and the End of the Modern Age*. Lauding the work of his predecessor, he praised Lukacs's greatness as a historian and also his linguistic qualities and ingenuity, and not least, his sense of humour.





MIKLÓS M. NAGY, the Editor-in-Chief of Helikon Publishing House, likewise knew Lukacs well and translated many of his books into Hungarian. On the one hand, he proved that the historian (also) had outstanding literary talent, and at the same time, he sought to explain why, despite this, not as many people in Hungary read his books as he deserved. Nevertheless, his writing has it all: for verbal creativity, meticulous observation and description of details, nuanced characterisation and aphoristic style, all of which are even more impressive in Hungarian than in English. Perhaps it is the genre and the political unclassifiability – a fundamentally likeable phenomenon that can be easily explained by the personality and biography of the author – that lies behind this observation, pondered M. Nagy. His essay is published on page 180.



The American participants engaged in round-table discussions with the Hungarian guests and reflected on Lukacs' thoughts. The panel, chaired by FERENC HORKAY HÖRCHER, focused on the historian's appreciation of the role of personality in shaping history. In this context, they explored Lukacs' assessment of 20<sup>th</sup>-century US history, particularly the performance of certain presidents and parties. They concluded that if they had to name a single of Lukacs' 'heroes', it would undoubtedly be Winston

Churchill, as he embodied both the characteristics of the aristocratic politician and the intellectual statesman. According to Associate Professor MÁTÉ BOTOS (Pázmány Péter Catholic University), Lukacs valued the British politician's vision and Ronald Reagan's sincerity while sharply criticising his populist statements. However, regarding the upcoming US presidential elections, MÁTÉ GALI (MCC School of Social Sciences and History) did not think it likely that Lukacs would vote for the Democratic president if he could.

The last thematic section of the event, "The Mavericks of History: John Lukacs and George F. Kennan", was introduced by philosopher MIKLÓS POGRÁNYI LOVAS. The Senior Analyst at the Center for Fundamental Rights (Alapjogokért Központ) defined Soviet politics, fundamental to both historians, as the culmination of Marxist ideology, Russian spirituality and progressive thought. In his presentation, TIBOR GLANT, a professor at the University of Debrecen, described the members of the American historical community who had emigrated from Hungary alongside Lukacs. The list of names is considerable – István Deák, Péter Sugár, István Várdy, Dénes Sinor, Károly Gáti, Péter Pásztor and others – but beyond the community of origin, the differing emphases of their careers are also clear. BENCE KOCSEV, a colleague of our Foundation, based on the correspondence of George F. Kennan and John Lukacs, asked his interlocutors to what extent the two men's status as outsiders of their professional guilds had been a consciously assumed or forced condition. Lukacs repeatedly expressed his conviction that a humanist could not be specialised but must be able to navigate a broad spectrum of disciplines (the most intense example of



MÁTÉ DÖMÖTÖR performed the favourite melodies of John Lukacs on piano.

Photos by Zoltán Szabó

## A Milestone of European Democracy

"Serving the European integration" was the title of the panel discussion we organised at the Ludovika University of Public Service on 5 March.

We commemorated the appointment of our Foundation's eponym to the body representing the continent's nations in the 1979 elections, the first time European countries had voted their representatives directly to the European Parliament. This marked the end of a long process that had begun in the 1930s when Otto joined the Pan-European movement, eventually becoming its vice-president in 1957 and president in 1973. Under his leadership, the International Pan-European Union became an instrumental force for the continent's unification and actively contributed to the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe. Following her father's footsteps, his daughter, Walburga, is currently the vice-president of the Union.

KARL VON HABSBURG and his daughter, GLORIA VON HABSBURG, came to Budapest for the event. The President of the Austrian Pan-European Movement, accompanied by the Austrian and Hungarian leaders of the organisation, visited our Foundation and shared with us some letters written by French President Charles de Gaulle and Austrian Chancellor Joseph Klaus to his father in the early 1960s.







At the afternoon event, GERGELY PRÖHLE welcomed the guests. He reminded that the anniversary was crucial in the political history of our namesake because it was the first time in his career that he took part in a democratic election. Such an opportunity is rare in the life of crown heirs. However, half a millennium of family tradition enabled Otto von Habsburg to ‘reprogram’ his personal ambitions, and the supranational pan-European ideal opened the way for him to work for the future of the whole continent.

ALINE SIERP, a professor at Maastricht University, outlined the broader political context of the 1979 event. She reviewed the beginnings of the institution of the European Parliament in 1951 and detailed the impact of the election campaign and the result on the internal politics of the FRG. She pointed to Otto’s conscious role-building, evidenced by the receipt of the Robert Schuman Prize (1977) and German citizenship (1978).

During the round-table discussion, the lessons of the European Parliament’s past and present were analysed, with the intent of providing forward-looking ideas for the institution’s future. WALBURGA HABSBURG DOUGLAS, Vice-President of the Pan-European Union, began by recalling the main political focuses of her father’s politics and his relationship with Franz Josef Strauss. RAINHARD KLOUCEK, Secretary-General of the Pan-European Movement in Austria, spoke of the extent to which the ideas of the movement had permeated the European institutions through Otto’s person, notably through his long chairmanship of the Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee. Our Spanish guest, CARLOS URIARTE SANCHEZ, Professor of Constitutional Law at the Rey Juan Carlos University in Madrid, explained the responsibility of his country, the former world empire – which was increasingly pressing and stretching beyond Europe into South America and large areas of Africa.



Participants expressed the most intense opinions in the debate on the common foreign and security policy. They all voiced their belief in a stronger shared policy and echoed Otto’s words of 30 years ago about the threat posed to our continent from the East. In her closing remarks, ENIKŐ GYŐRI, Hungarian MEP, summarised the short-term tasks ahead for the EU institutions in

four points: We will only be successful if we can strengthen our economic, political and military forces (for the last five years have been a waste of time in this respect); we must adhere to the principles governing the functioning of the institutions, which have operated the system since its foundation, albeit with some hitches; to renounce our civilisational aspirations, i.e. to judge countries, nations and communities based on ideologies; and, finally, to pledge our faith in the further enlargement of the Union (Western Balkans and Eastern Europe).



*Photos by Dénes Szilágyi*

## V4 33 – EU 20: Visegrad and European Cooperation

In continuation of the practice of the past years, in the spirit of Otto von Habsburg’s commitment to the Central European idea, our Foundation, together with the John Lukacs Institute of the Ludovika University of Public Service, supported by the Visegrad Fund, organised a meeting on 4 April to celebrate the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Visegrad Cooperation and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the accession of the concerned countries to the European Union, which was simultaneously the opening of the College of Visegrad+ Weekend University programme.

GERGELY PRÖHLE greeted the students and lecturers from the Visegrad countries and the Hungarian participants. He recalled his experience in the early 1990s, when he realised how important it had been for the integration of the region after the fall of the Iron Curtain that intellectuals from the East-Central European countries had developed an extensive personal network in the spirit of Central Europeanism preceding the regime change. Such networks need to be established among today’s youth as well – this is what the College of Visegrad+ Weekend University aims to do.

GERGELY DELI, Rector of the Ludovika University of Public Service, underlined the importance of the existing and continuously expanding network of relations with the Visegrad countries, which had been a priority in the life of the University from the very beginning and had





created a network of institutions, governmental bodies and private individuals. Only through this can our collective responses to the contemporary challenges – such as environmental policy, security policy and the utilisation of artificial intelligence – be realised, with the active participation of the rising generation.

Regarding our attitude to the conflicts of our time – the war between Russia and Ukraine, the further enlargement of NATO and the EU – MÁRTON UGRÓSDY noted that “*we are all prisoners of geography*”. Given our geopolitical situation, these are matters of great urgency, which call for a redefinition of the principles of cooperation. What we need most today is to make our voices heard on these pressing issues because we cannot expect others to articulate our interests, – warned the Deputy State Secretary of the Political Director’s Office.

“*Visegrad is dead*”, began PETR MAREŠ, Executive Director of the International Visegrad Fund, with the provocative line. He reminded us that our view of history could never be objective but rather a subject of interpretation, which was particularly true regarding the events of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries in Central Europe. It is enough to recall the circumstances surrounding the end of the First World War, which a few years ago meant something radically different for the citizens of some countries in our region. The ‘generational experience’ of communism is slowly fading into the past, but the intervening period since the regime changes is more complex than we realise. That is why it is so vital that decision-makers be aware of the ideas present in our society, which reflect on the world around us. As an illustration, Mareš showed data from public opinion polls in the V4 countries conducted over the past 20 years regarding the region’s “mental map”, which, perhaps most importantly, revealed a demonstrable sense of trust and solidarity among the people living here – despite everything. We can only hope to build on this existing potential for cooperation in the coming years.



In the panel discussion following the keynote lecture, LADISLAV CABADA, Vice Rector of the Metropolitan University of Prague; DOMINIK ŠOLTYS, Professor of Law at the Pavol Jozef Šafárik University; PIOTR SZWEDO, Head of the OK-SPPPO Center for Foreign Law Schools (Jagiellonian University, Krakow); and IVÁN BÁBA, former State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, shared their personal experiences of the frequently

brought up common identity of the region; and ways in which they consider it possible to give practical content to this virtual reality for today’s young people.

The Ambassadors’ round-table was moderated by ANDRÁS DÉNES NAGY, Coordinator of the College of Visegrad+ programme. EVA DVOŘÁKOVÁ, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Hungary; GABRIEL SZÓKE, Head of the V4 Department of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic; SEBASTIAN KĘCIEK, Ambassador of Poland to Hungary; and ZSÓFIA LÉGRÁDI, representative of Krisztina Varju, Deputy State Secretary for the Development of European Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, discussed the future of the V4. They all agreed that exchange programmes and cross-border cooperation are fundamental cornerstones of the region’s internal unity.

In her closing remarks, LILIANA ŚMIECH, Director General for International Affairs at the Ludovika University, implied that the opening event of the College of Visegrad+ Weekend University was a reminder of the relevance of continued relations within the four countries, which responsibility shall be passed on to posterity. “*This will be the mission of the College of Visegrad,*” concluded Śmiech.



Photos by Dénes Szilágyi

**Will Europe Face Changes? – On the Newly Elected European Parliament’s Composition**

In his welcome address, GERGELY PRÓHLE recalled the historical fact that Otto von Habsburg had become a member of the continent’s highest decision-making body almost 45 years ago to the



very day of the event – on 10 June 1979. The former crown prince was innately confident in a democratic environment, and with his “natural poise” and fluency in seven languages, he represented the idea of a Europe based on Christian values, thus contributing to the conservative turnaround of the 1980s.

The first speaker was political scientist BOTOND FELEDY, who outlined the results of the elections: he highlighted the strengthening of the People’s Party and



the visible decline of the Green and Liberal factions. The Deputy Director of the Jesuit European Social Centre addressed the events that had profoundly affected life on our continent over the last five years – the financial and economic crisis, the pandemic, the war between Russia and Ukraine, and the Green Deal – and which had created a palpable sense of uncertainty among ideologues of different political movements.

Even the views of the same camp have fragmented to such an extent that it appears even more challenging to form a major consensus on certain issues in the new body. However, climate change, war, social solidarity, the economic situation and migration require urgent solutions.

ISTVÁN HILLER, Member of the National Assembly representing MSZP (Hungarian Social Democratic Party), acknowledged that as a Hungarian politician, advocating social democratic principles was not the most soul-stirring commitment these days. Although the European elections were on a continental scale, the effects of these elections were felt in more than one member state: governments fell in Belgium and France, and leaders of failed parties resigned en masse. To interpret these phenomena, the historian drew on the research of a new movement, the *Klimageschichte*, which revealed striking parallels between the climatic conditions and the evolution of political-social-demographic relations over the last 1000 years in Europe. Hiller concluded by talking about the mass psychological concept of the “culture of forgetting”, which influences social consciousness and washes people’s experiences out of their minds within three lifetimes at the latest. This may (also) explain the spread of discourse on war across Europe and the intensification of war rhetoric.

ENIKŐ GYÓRI, incumbent MEP of Fidesz underlined the high participation in the elections across Europe. According to her, the Hungarian centre-right would win the elections in Hungary with 2/3 of the votes cast even today. Looking back on the struggles in Brussels over the past five years, she raised the issue of discrimination in Hungary and predicted no change in this respect for the forthcoming period. What we need most, she believes, is to stand up for our convictions even more consistently in the future, when possible, and to represent the interests of all Hungarians. She added that it was crucial whether we could start clarifying some of the matters close to our hearts during our Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which had begun on 1 July.

During the polemical moments of the discussion, some guests commented on István Hiller’s question regarding the possibility of a left-wing viewpoint system based on traditional social democratic foundations, which could attract the masses while, in the meantime, would free itself from the ballast of extreme liberal ideological components. The socialist politician also cautioned against further loosening of Hungary’s ties with the EU and the Atlantic, based on the trend of recent years.



## From Debrecen to Sopronpuszta

Our Foundation, in collaboration with the Hungarian-German Institute of the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC), organised a conference to commemorate the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Otto von Habsburg’s lecture in Debrecen.

The idea of the Pan-European Picnic, which was to be a turning point in the history of Central Europe, was conceived in the ‘Cívis City’ in June 1989 at a dinner held in honour of Otto von Habsburg. We commemorated this pivotal occasion on 20 June at the former reception venue – the iconic Arany Bika Szálló (Golden Bull Hotel) – in the MCC Debrecen Center.



BENCE BAUER, Director of the German-Hungarian Institute for European Cooperation, called the attention of the young people present to the fact that the Picnic had sown the seeds of German reunification, which then had taken root with the definitive demolition of the Iron Curtain and the large-scale release of East German refugees to the West, ultimately bearing fruit with the fall of the Berlin Wall. However, it is also true, that the subsequent events on the western borders eclipsed the initiative of the city. The recognition of the equal role of Debrecen and Sopron nevertheless offers an opportunity to override the rigid historical patterns of the Western-Eastern, Kuruc-Labanc, Catholic-Protestant dichotomies and to achieve the Hungarian-Hungarian unification yearned for through the centuries.

In his welcome speech, the mayor of the city, LÁSZLÓ PAPP, in addition to the evocation of German-Hungarian relations in the past, emphasised the positive examples of the present and the promising prospects for future development.

The next to address the audience, GÁBOR TURI, described himself as a “historical side character”. The former deputy mayor of Debrecen conveyed the late Kádár-era atmosphere of the seventies and eighties to the numerous young listeners. He explained that, in that tumultuous milieu, seeking ways of change, Otto von Habsburg had presented an alternative to authentic Europeanism during his visit as a conservative “*who would implement the reforms that the Left only prattled about*”. Moreover, by signing a petition to close the Soviet military airfield on the outskirts of the town, the former heir to the throne declared his solidarity with the citizens.

GERGELY PRÖHLE, referring to another recent anniversary – the reburial of Prime Minister Imre Nagy and his fellow martyrs of the 1956 Revolution on 16 June 1989 – highlighted the multifaceted, compromising nature of the regime change. He urged the younger audience to draw on historical analogies to place opposing views in a global framework of understanding, such



as the contemporary pro-sovereignty and pro-integration debates. And to bear in mind that even the most noble autonomy policies are doomed to failure without allies.

The keynote addresses were followed by a panel discussion, during which MÁRIA FILEP, LUKÁCS SZABÓ, and GÁBOR TURI, the initiators of the event 35 years ago, answered whether this was how they had imagined the future of Hungary and Central Europe in 1989. PÉTER DOBROWIECKI, Head of Research at the Hungarian-German Institute, moderated the conversation.



Photos by Mathias Corvinus Collegium Foundation

**Under the Aegis of the Patron Saint of Europe – Reflections on the Hungarian Presidency**

On 30 June, at the vigil of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Otto von Habsburg Foundation organised a commemorative event in Pannonhalma Archabbey on the occasion of the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of its namesake.

The sacred site of the Benedictine monastery on the Hill of St. Martin has been standing for a thousand years. Its monks have led a devout and diligent life based on the rule of the patron saint of Europe for centuries, and their spiritual and educational contribution to Hungarian history is well known. They were also the teachers of our namesake in exile. There is no better symbol of Otto von Habsburg’s attachment to the Order than his heart urn kept in the Basilica. Moreover, the remains of the Prince and Princess of Lónyay were laid to rest there as well. The wife of Elemér Lónyay



was the ill-fated Crown Prince Rudolf’s widow, a descendant of the Belgian royal family. This ties us to the present: on 1 July, Hungary took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from Belgium. In light of the above, we could not have found a more appropriate venue to express our gratitude for the freedom and prosperity of the continent and to appeal to the Most High for help for the future – the words of GERGELY PRÓHLE set the tone for the event.

In his welcome speech, Archabbot CIRILL T. HORTOBÁGYI reminded the audience that the European Community had been founded on former enemies’ mutually recognised economic interests. In our age, however, in a world that has become fragile and vulnerable, financial support has become insufficient. We can only build on the wealth of spiritual life, which alone can create peace within and around us. The legacy of Otto von Habsburg is honoured best by those who strive for peace, – the Archabbot cautioned.

Our namesake was defined by his humanity, sense of duty and unwavering faith in his truth, – lauded his former colleague, STEPHAN BAIER. Otto von Habsburg’s biographer recalled that in keeping with the dynasty’s tradition, Charles I (IV)’s son had envisioned a diverse, tolerant and orderly empire and had extended this concept to the whole continent, imagining a legal and defensive area that should work ceaselessly to achieve peace (hence the title of his 1995 book *Friedensmacht Europa*). His commitment to service, with responsibility and humility, is reminiscent of medieval kingship, yet it is not an anachronism, as his vision has proved a safeguard against totalitarian regimes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Baier’s lecture can be found on page 192.

GERGELY FEJÉRDY, Deputy Director of our Foundation, conveyed to the audience the details of Princess Stéphanie’s life in relation to Hungary. He mentioned the excellent relationship between the daughter of King Leopold II of Belgium and the family of Otto von Habsburg. He also detailed the crucial role she had played in Belgian-Hungarian relations and its positive consequences up to the present day.



JEROEN VERGEYLEN, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Hungary, followed a similar theme in his speech referring to the values shared in the political arena on behalf of his country, which was stepping down from the presidency of the Council. He provided a series of historical examples to illustrate the links between the two countries since the early modern period, which had become particularly intense in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: after the world wars, thousands of Hungarian children were taken in by Belgium for longer or shorter periods, and the assistance to refugees of the 1956 Revolution became a new benchmark in that process.

According to the Ambassador, their presidency was based on the proverbial Belgian willingness to compromise, which originated in the balancing policy of the Habsburg regime. Jeroen Vergeylen awaits the continuation of this approach from his Hungarian counterparts in the second half of 2024: to seek ways of agreement on competitiveness, the Green Deal, issues of defence and the economy, the war in Ukraine, enlargement and internal institutional reforms. In the Benedictine Archabbey, the diplomat concluded that there was no empty phrase to remind Europe’s leaders of the responsibilities and values of St. Martin, St. Benedict, and Otto von Habsburg. His lecture is published on page 186.

Otto von Habsburg was a European federalist who firmly believed in European cooperation. The content of this statement, which initially seemed self-evident, was elaborated by TIBOR NAVRACSICS, Minister of Public Administration and Regional Development. A genuine integration can only be reached through working together based on mutual bipartism, where the participants strive for a shared goal for the common good sought by all. Europeanism preceded the national narratives. Therefore, authentic national and European ideas cannot oppose each other – instead, they presuppose, complement and enrich each other. A voluntary association of nations – a federation – is born from the cooperation of equal partners. And if the members do not lose sight of subsidiarity, it protects them from the harmful effects of hierarchy. The ‘legacy’ of an ethnically neutral framework of cooperation in a multi-ethnic empire could thus become a model of unification for Otto von Habsburg – and a lesson and a warning for present and future generations.

Photos by Zoltán Szabó

### Visitors from Saxony



On 29 August, a 50-strong delegation from the Saxon Zentrum für Kultur/ Geschichte visited our headquarters in Szentkirályi Street.

Otto von Habsburg had many ties with Saxony. Perhaps the most significant of these is that his grandmother, the mother of Emperor and King Charles, Princess Maria Josefa of Saxony (1867–1944), daughter of the future King George I of Saxony, had a profound influence on his upbringing. The deeply religious woman,

who had lost her dissolute husband early in life, became a family role model who, through her origins, also represented Saxony’s historical and political ties with Austria. In the Prussian-Austrian War of 1866, Saxony fought on the side of Austria. After the defeat, Franz Joseph I himself asked the victorious Chancellor Bismarck to allow Saxony to retain its relative independence. These historical connections, including centuries of dynastic relations, inspired the lines of Otto von Habsburg in his book *Damals begann unsere Zukunft*, which the Foundation plans to publish in Hungarian in the near future.

Director GERGELY PRÖHLE welcomed the visitors from Saxony and introduced them to our activities. Our guests then inspected various correspondence between Otto von Habsburg and several prominent figures, as well as selected highlights of Otto von Habsburg’s library and the kneeling cushion used at the coronation of Charles IV and Zita. Upon concluding their visit, they were shown an authentic copy of Martin Luther’s will at the National Lutheran Archives, and they also stopped by the Esterházy Péter and Gitta Library.

The visit was not only of professional interest but also a first step towards a jointly organised exhibition on the history of the relations between the Saxon ruling house, the Wettins and the Habsburgs.

### Exchange of Views Among Foundations

On 4 September, a group from the Political Academy of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, KAS) led by JOACHIM KLOSE visited our Foundation.



The objective of the week-long trip, organised at the time of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, was to enable the participants to understand better the political and social processes taking place in Hungary and to allow them to compare their personal experiences with the – mostly negative – news and commentaries regarding Hungary in the German press. Joachim Klose, former head of the KAS representation in Dresden, was always committed to ensuring that our bilateral relations do not fall victim to political communication.

GERGELY PRÖHLE presented the background of the establishment of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation and the lessons learned during the past five years of its operation. In his presentation on the oeuvre and intellectual legacy of Otto von Habsburg, he repeatedly referred to the stance taken by our namesake concerning the most pressing political issues of our time and the motivation behind his activities towards strengthening European integration. The participants were from the western and eastern provinces in equal numbers, which was reflected in the diversity of questions and comments. Those from the eastern regions were more understanding of the policies of the Hungarian government and more critical of the functioning of the European institutions. In the context of the Russia-Ukraine war, Otto von Habsburg’s famous 2005 lecture was met with great acclaim, in which he had warned of the dangers of President Putin’s vision of a superpower, ahead of his time and in contrast to the then mainstream opinion in Germany.

In the course of the visit, the possibility was raised – in confirmation of the timelessness of our namesake’s views – to organise a series of joint events in the near future in Berlin on topics such as subsidiarity or the dilemma of a values/interest-based foreign policy.





Via Habsburg with a Stop in Gödöllő and Budapest



Our Foundation took part in the programmes of the Via Habsburg Association on 7–8 November.

The Via Habsburg, or “In the Footsteps of the Habsburgs” Association, was founded in 2001 by French, German, Swiss, and Austrian partners with the aim of preserving the artistic and cultural heritage of the 800-year-old Habsburg family.

The organisation seeks to cooperate with institutions that have a connection

with this historical dynasty. It brings together 70 member institutions, mostly museums in castles, palaces, monasteries, and other buildings that were once the residences of the Habsburg family or were built by them. It supports cultural tourism, promotes the preservation of historical memory, and facilitates and encourages research on the Habsburg family. In 2014, the Via Habsburg was certified as a “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” in recognition of their work.

The Royal Palace of Gödöllő was the first in Hungary to join the Via Habsburg Association network on 13 October 2023, an event attended by our Foundation as well. At that time, the plan was formulated to organise a conference in collaboration with the respective institutions in the autumn of 2024. As a result, an international symposium entitled “Exceptional Women and their Role in the Habsburg Family” was held on 7–8 November.

The Austrian and Hungarian speakers, as well as a large number of interested guests, could listen to a lecture by GERGELY FEJÉRDY, Deputy Scientific Director of our Foundation, titled “*The Role of Queen Zita in the Upbringing of Otto von Habsburg and his siblings*”, and to a presentation by our colleague BENCE KOCSEV on the life and legacy of Princess Regina of Saxe-Meiningen, wife of Otto von Habsburg.



Photos: Otto von Habsburg Foundation, Royal Palace of Gödöllő

Aristocracy of the Spirit – Churchill 150

To commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Sir Winston Churchill, our Foundation organised an event jointly with the John Lukacs Institute of the Ludovika University of Public Service. The conference, entitled “Polyhistor in World Politics – Winston Churchill 150”, was held on 22 November, with the participation of distinguished Anglo-Saxon guests.

PAUL FOX, His Majesty’s Ambassador to Hungary, welcomed the audience in the Széchenyi Ceremonial Hall of the Ludovika University. The diplomat outlined the most significant milestones in Churchill’s eventful career. He is considered by posterity as the greatest British politician and man, a bewilderingly versatile personality who, in 1940, with a military, journalistic, historical and political background, was confronted by his true vocation, which was arguably also the greatest challenge of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Perhaps no one at that moment could have had a better combination of personality traits – skills and abilities, ambition and intuition, a view of history, political instinct, and experience – to meet the challenge than he had. Yet the message of his stance is not the requisite of a bygone era but remains painfully relevant today: the war that is once again raging on European soil after 85 years calls for a renewed unity of democratic forces.



Director GERGELY PRÓHLE described the encounters between our namesake and the British Prime Minister. They had a conversation in Quebec in 1944, when Churchill, analysing the issues of the post-war European settlement, referred to the security of the seaport of Trieste as a key issue for British world politics and in respect of the road to India. His observation only reinforced the respect that the last Crown Prince of Hungary had already had for him: only those politicians who knew both history and geography were considered serious statesmen by Otto. Their subsequent interactions are evidenced by a two-volume autograph biography of the Duke of Marlborough, which the former Prime Minister – who was to retake office in the same year – sent as a present to Otto and Regina on the occasion of their wedding in May 1951. As Programme Director of the John Lukacs Institute, Pröhle drew the audience’s attention to two artefacts: a Churchill bust that stood on Lukacs’ desk and a cigar sent by the former Prime Minister’s daughter to the author of several works on his father. Both of them arrived in Budapest among the Hungarian-American historian’s personal belongings and are on display at the Ludovika University of Public Service.

In his opening address, LORD DAVID ALTON OF LIVERPOOL, a member of the House of Lords, compared Winston Churchill’s worldview with that of Otto von Habsburg. Both carried historic names, influencing the destinies of their families, homelands and, on occasion, the continent – and, in Otto’s case, perhaps the whole known world at the time. Then, at the dawn of the



20<sup>th</sup> century, they witnessed the fall of empires, the rise of autocratic regimes and the ascent of totalitarian ideologies and powers – all of which they resolutely opposed. The reason for this is that the descendant of the Habsburg dynasty embraced the monarchy's principle of “live and let live”, which, for centuries, had ensured the peaceful coexistence of peoples, minorities, ethnic groups, languages, and cultures under the crown, thus achieving a brilliant diversification.



Meanwhile, the English aristocrat inherited the tradition of a parliamentary democracy capable of balancing world politics. In 1946, on behalf of the victorious British, Churchill assessed the post-First World War settlement: *“If the Allies at the peace table at Versailles had allowed the Hohenzollerns, Wittelsbachs, and Habsburgs to return to their thrones, there would have been no Hitler.”*

National Socialism posed a threat to both of them as individuals. Having survived the Great War's cataclysm and seen the continent's moral-physical destruction, they were motivated by similar considerations to embrace the notion of a common Europe. It is true that, although Churchill supported the idea of a Danube federation and considered the creation of common European institutions – the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, not least a common military force – essential, he remained an Atlanticist as a Briton: he never ceased to emphasise the ties to the United States and observed with concern the isolationist tendencies overseas. He remained faithful to his words about European politics written in the 1930s: *“We are with Europe, but not of it.”* He believed a nation could only be sustained internally by a society built on the rule of law and externally by a strong federal system.

Although Churchill ascribed a purely moral importance to Christian doctrine and did not acknowledge its transcendent nature, he appreciated Otto von Habsburg's defence of the Christian faith. Throughout his career, he never wavered in his emphasis on the dominant Christian roots of Europe and his acceptance of the principle that democracy was rooted in Christianity.



The speaker suggested it might be time to combine the British politician's vision of the nation-state with the former heir to the throne's proposal for a Christian renewal of Europe. A political programme that would provide guidance on the challenges of our time while helping the British people find their place in Europe's future.

GEORGE H. NASH spoke about Churchill's reception and influence in America. The Senior Fellow at the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal began his lecture with an impressive list of figures: Churchill wrote around three dozen volumes, and his unpublished collection of speeches runs to 10,000 pages. More than a thousand books have been written about the politician's career, and the number of published studies and articles on him is incalculable. Professor Nash's speech can be found on page 214.

Historian GÉZA JESZENSZKY traced the British Prime Minister's policy towards Central Europe as it had evolved over the decades. The region's nations remember Churchill primarily for his actions during the Second World War and his role in the subsequent settlement, while Jeszenszky's presentation provided a much broader background, shedding light on the impact of Churchill's Hungarian-born childhood friend Leo Amery, a crucial figure in shaping the politician's views on the Balkans and the Danube Basin. The former Foreign Affairs Minister and Ambassador's address is published on page 202.



Churchill's foremost French ally during the war was Charles de Gaulle, who refused to negotiate with the Germans from the outset – whom the British prime minister described as “a fighting man of great valour, a man of reputation and a strong personality”. A lecture on their turbulent relationship was given by FRANÇOIS KERSAUDY, former professor at the Panthéon-Sorbonne University, available on page 210.

John Lukacs' American biographer, Professor at Hillsdale College, RICHARD GAMBLE, analysed Lukacs' image of Churchill. Lukacs sent a card in January 1965 after attending the British prime minister's funeral with his son. The photograph was taken in Newfoundland in August 1941 and depicts Churchill sailing towards Britain shortly after signing the Atlantic Charter with President Roosevelt. In his nuanced psychological portrait, Professor Gamble sought to answer the question of what this gesture, this stand, had meant to his own nation, to Europe, to Central Europe, to Hungary and to the writer himself – a gesture that Lukacs then strove to reciprocate in newspaper articles, interviews, studies, reviews and half a dozen books. *“History is not a record of life but life itself: because we are neither human animals nor perpetual slaves. In the long and slow and sad music of humanity he once sounded an English and noble note which some of us were blessed to receive and to remember.”*

The conference sessions concluded with panel discussions moderated by KATALIN BOGYAY, President of the UN Association of Hungary, and former BBC editor DAVID CAMPANALE.

Photos by Zoltán Szabó



Representatives of the Order of the Golden Fleece at our Foundation



Members of one of the oldest and most prestigious knightly orders visited our Foundation on the day of St. Andrew, patron saint of the order. They were accompanied by delegates of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

The Distinguished Order of the Golden Fleece was founded in 1429 by Philip III the Good, Duke of Burgundy, and was later inherited by the House of Habsburg. Following the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), the Or-

der split into two branches, a Spanish and an Austrian. Our guests travelled to the Hungarian capital with the eldest son of Otto von Habsburg, Karl, the head of the Austrian branch.

The members of the Order were welcomed by Director GERGELY PRÖHLE, who gave a presentation on the activities and mission of the Foundation. GERGELY FEJÉRDY, Deputy Scientific Director, described the collection in general, SZILVESZTER DÉKÁNY spoke about the photographic archive, Archivist ESZTER FÁBRY presented the diaries of the last Hungarian monarch's family, and BENCE KOCSEV focused on a particular segment of our namesake's network of contacts.

On behalf of the family, KARL VON HABSBURG thanked the Foundation for providing an overview and for the excellent work it carried out. The members of the knightly orders, most of whom were here for the first time, toured our premises enthusiastically and examined the photographs and documents prepared for them.

The occasion was attended by several of Otto von Habsburg's children and grandchildren; the Order members came from many European countries. The former European royal family and its descendants remained prominent pillars of the Order of the Golden Fleece: Otto von Habsburg himself became a member in 1916 and was its Grand Master (Sovereign) from 1922 to 2000. At the turn of the millennium, his son Karl took over this position from him.

Our Foundation preserves several documents relating to the former Crown Prince's knighthood. It is clear from these that throughout his life, Otto von Habsburg persisted in his commitment to the initial vocation of the organisation: to defend Christian values as its primary objective.



EXHIBITIONS AND DISCUSSIONS ABROAD

Following in the footsteps of the globe-trotting former Crown Prince, our Foundation visited several countries and two continents this year. On these occasions, we organised conferences with local experts and diplomats, and opened site-specific exhibitions including detailing the relationship between our destinations and Otto von Habsburg. Our travelling roll-up exhibition on the life and heritage of the last heir to the throne is now available in ten languages.



**The Era of Otto von Habsburg and his Political Legacy – Our Foundation Visited Osijek**

On 25 March, an exhibition opening and a conference was held at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Osijek.

Throughout his political career, Otto von Habsburg devoted great attention to the countries that had once been part of the Habsburg Monarchy; therefore, he had a special relationship with Croatia as well. During the turbulent period of the dissolution of the Yugoslav federal state in the 1990s, he consistently advocated the country’s right to national self-determination and, after the organisation of independent statehood and the start of democratic transition processes, he contributed much to the international diplomatic recognition of the new entity and its subsequent integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. Although Croatia’s accession to the EU was not realised before his passing, the country’s admission was the crowning achievement of the political mission that Otto von Habsburg had undertaken to create a free and united Europe.

Following the Foundation’s last event in Zagreb in autumn 2022, our next activity in Croatia took place in March this year at the Faculty of Humanities of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek. The choice of venue was not a coincidence, as Otto von Habsburg had been to Osijek and its vicinity several times at the invitation of the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Croatia (HMDK) and was later granted honorary citizenship of the Slavonia town and an honorary doctorate from the local University.

IVAN TROJAN, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, talked about the responsibility of the university as a distinct institution of the social public sphere, stressing that it not only serves educational purposes, but also is an essential forum for shaping public thinking in the broader society. JÁNOS MAGDÓ, Head of the Consulate General of Hungary in Osijek, praised the historical role and local and regional importance of Otto von Habsburg, highlighting his efforts for the political and economic development and EU accession of the now independent country. ZSOMBOR LÁBADI, Head of the Department of Hungarian Language and Literature at the University, focused on the potential for proficiency in languages skills to be transformed into political capital, pointing out how successfully Otto von Habsburg had used his linguistic skills to coordinate national interests and assert minority rights.

The panel discussion, which analysed Otto von Habsburg’s involvement in the broader European and local (Hungarian and Croatian) public sphere, was joined by the Director and Deputy Director of our Foundation; Pavo Barišić, former Minister of Education, Head of the Department of Cultural Studies and Philosophy at the Faculty of Croatian Studies of the University of Zagreb and President of the Pan-European Union; and historian Albert Bing, Associate of the Croatian



Institute of History. ELDINA LOVAS, Adjunct Professor at the Department of History of the University of Osijek, moderated the discussion.

“If Otto von Habsburg could see us, he would smile”, – began GERGELY PRÓHLE, who evoked the most remarkable moments of the former Crown Prince’s life and political socialisation. Our namesake was one of the visionaries of the Europe without borders as we know it today – he underlined. Although Otto von Habsburg did not formally enter politics until 1979, he had been involved in European (and global) public life long before then, actively shaping its development and doing much to liberate the countries of Central and Eastern Europe from communist rule and to integrate them into Europe. GERGELY FEJÉRDY presented Otto von Habsburg’s work in the broader context of more comprehensive historical and political transformations, focusing on “global moments” such as 1918/1920, 1945, 1956 and 1989. Otto von Habsburg’s far-sighted political thinking, broad intellectual horizons, and human qualities enabled him to have a truly exceptional career, culminating in his activities in the European Parliament between 1979 and 1999.

PAVO BARIŠIĆ and ALBERT BING highlighted the relevance of our namesake in Croatia, describing his position in the Croatian collective memory. His multi-level identity, political and historical experience, resilience in crisis management, and commitment to the country’s development made Otto von Habsburg a defining figure in Croatian politics in the late twentieth century. He paid close attention to the successor states of the former Monarchy. Throughout his political career, he consistently defended the right of sovereignty of the Central European nations and contributed much to their European integration. His work for an autonomous and prosperous Croatia and its inclusion in a united Europe are pivotal parts of his political legacy.



At the end of the round-table discussion, Gergely Próhle presented the work of our Foundation and invited everyone to visit our exhibition, “Life and Heritage”, displayed at the University. In conclusion, SÁNDOR JAKAB, Honorary President of the HMDK, recounted Otto von Habsburg’s visit to Osijek and his personal experiences.

Drávatáj TV recorded the event, which can be viewed by scanning the QR code.





## Central Europe is our Past and Future



Our exhibition on Otto von Habsburg opened on 19 April at the Regional Museum of Celje. In the 1980s, our namesake was also an important supporter of Slovenia's independence and, later, its accession to the European Union. His dynastic legacy gave him a responsibility to create a Central European community at the heart of Europe, and the message still rings true today that we must build Central Europe together by finding the connection points that bind us.

MATIJA KOVAČ, Mayor of Celje, stressed that he was very pleased that on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Slovenia's accession to the European Union, an exhibition on Otto von Habsburg, who had been an important supporter of the country's independence and the integration of Europe, was being opened in the historic town. This event also provided an opportunity to present the city's rich historical heritage and to strengthen ties with Hungary and Veszprém, now a twin city of Celje.

GEORG VON HABSBERG, Ambassador of Hungary in Paris and Member of the Board of Trustees of our Foundation, recalled that his father, Otto von Habsburg, had been the owner of the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of Ljubljana as a child and thus had started his "military career" in Slovenia. He said that the exhibition was not only about the life of Otto von Habsburg but also about the most tumultuous century of history.

His father's perspective was shaped by his historical experiences. He was born into the Monarchy, became heir to the throne, then became an exile until he eventually found his own purpose in taking an active role in building a united Europe. For him, this meant not only economic integration but, above all, security and stability. The Ambassador highlighted two key messages that Otto von Habsburg had passed on to his children: the importance of personal experience and optimism. Finding a positive outlook is still challenging today, as it was for Otto after two world wars and many tragedies. At the same time, he lived to see Hungary and Slovenia join the European Union together in 2004, along with a number of Central and Eastern European countries. Thanking the organisers for their work, Georg von Habsburg concluded by saying that, following in his father's footsteps, we must continue to look for solutions today, bearing in mind the lessons of history.

Celje is an important place in Hungarian history, but here, in Central Europe, we are often confronted with the fact that we know little about our neighbours – TIBOR NAVRACSICS began his speech. Hungary's Minister of Public Administration and Regional Development has seen Celje as an example of how, despite old conflicts, a city could and should be a meeting point.

Otto von Habsburg, a descendant of the Habsburg dynasty, was an advocate of the Central European idea – in this sense, the event is both an intellectual and a political meeting point. The former heir to the throne believed in the power of Central European connections, in what binds us together, and that a politician, a public figure, without titles or even positions, has an influence – and indeed a responsibility. The idea of a Central European community has not always been popular throughout history, but it was always a priority for the former heir to the throne. His heritage was also an obligation to help establish this community at the heart of Europe. It is also a moral responsibility: to search for the points, the people, and the places that unite us. This was the aim behind the establishment of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation, and this is why initiatives beyond borders are so important. The meeting in Celje therefore was not only a cultural event or a commemoration but a way of creating the future – the Minister concluded.

GERGELY PRÓHLE's speech marked the end of the exhibition opening. The Director of our Foundation welcomed the efforts of the city administration to combine history with modernity. The image showing the five generations is symbolic, as it highlights the need for cooperation between and across generations and resonated with the message of the event: we must approach the challenges of the present with history as our reference point. The three generations and the picture in the background of the image below have been shaped by the twists and turns of history. The perception of Franz Joseph is controversial in Hungarian history, but it was he who laid the foundations for the modern structure of the Monarchy through the Compromise of 1867. Charles I (IV) was aware of the problems of the state he led and wanted to reform it, but the First World War brought an end to his efforts. Otto, seen in the hands of his father, grew up as a committed advocate of a modernisation that also respects tradition.

The Otto von Habsburg Foundation manages the tangible and intangible heritage of its namesake in Hungary. This legacy is the imprint of his intellectual efforts and testimony to his ability to transform the historical (dynastic) family experience into the cornerstone of the future. Gergely Pröhle expressed special thanks to Professor ANDREJ RAHTEN, who had paved the way for cooperation between the Foundation and Slovenia. Twenty years after EU accession and 45 years after the first direct elections to the European Parliament, it remains true that Central European relations can help the people of the region and of Europe to define and renew themselves. Let the continuity of this experience and Central European, European consciousness be our guide.



Five generations



## Visiting the British Capital with Otto von Habsburg



On 18 June, we presented our five-language photobook, entitled *99 Years – 99 Photos. Photographs from the Life of Otto von Habsburg*, in the UK as well. The event, organised jointly by the Otto von Habsburg Foundation and the Hungarian Embassy in London, was complemented by a panel discussion and an exhibition opening.

A large and distinguished crowd gathered for the event at the Hungarian Embassy in London's diplomatic quarter.

The occasion was attended by delegates from various nations, journalists, and British dignitaries. We were particularly gratified to be joined on our programme by ADAM FERGUSON, Otto von Habsburg's fellow MEP and friend, a renowned economist, journalist, and the author of the best-seller *When Money Dies*, as well as Otto's other correspondent, LORD ALTON, former Member of Parliament. Also present were Robert Malfatti di Monte Tretto, grandson of Count János Eszterházy, and Mátyás Sárközi, writer, translator and grandchild of Hungarian writer Ferenc Molnár.

FERENC KUMIN, Ambassador of Hungary to the United Kingdom, welcomed the audience. The diplomat presented the concept of the forthcoming Hungarian presidency of the Council of the European Union, as its objectives had been announced on the day of the event. Kumin pointed out that while the commemoration was dedicated to Otto von Habsburg, the occasion could be considered an opening ceremony for the presidency, as the former MEP's ideals aligned with the plans for the six months ahead.

The Director of our Foundation gave a presentation on the life of our namesake, his connections, and his commitment to Europe. GERGELY PRÖHLE underlined that Otto von Habsburg had always valued Britain's realistic perspective on European politics based on centuries-old traditions and that this approach was relevant for the EU even after Brexit. *"Britain has a special place in the European Union. It has always been a balancing factor, which we desperately need in the European Union today"* – Director Pröhle quoted the former Crown Prince. An entertaining slide show followed by SZILVESZTER DÉKÁNY, Senior Collection Fellow of our photographic archives, introducing our work and a selection of images from the photobook.



After the presentations, a panel discussion took place, with the participation of two of Hungary's ambassadors: GEORG VON HABSBURG, the representative of Hungary to France and Member of the Board of our Foundation, and EDUARD VON HABSBURG-LOTHRINGEN, the delegate of Hungary to the Holy See. The two family members reminisced about the former Crown Prince, his convictions and his thoughts on Europe. Georg von Habsburg emphasised his father's optimism, which had been an indispensable political source of strength for him and how the family's history, closely linked to European political history, had shaped Otto von Habsburg's concept of Europe. Eduard von Habsburg focused on the historical consciousness of our namesake, citing his wise words: *"Wer nicht weiß, woher er kommt, weiß nicht, wohin er geht, denn er weiß nicht, wo er steht"* [He who does not know where he comes from, does not know where he is going, for he does not know where he is]. He recounted how, as a young man from the Hungarian branch of the family living in Germany because of the Cold War divisions, he had been inspired by his uncle's idea that *"Paneuropa ist ganz Europa"* [Pan-Europe is all of Europe]. The third panellist was WILLIAM FRASER, Senior Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners, who elaborated on the significance of the title of the Freeman of the City, which had been awarded to Otto von Habsburg in 2007. Accompanying Otto to the ceremony was his youngest child, Georg, who regarded it as a defining experience to sing the Imperial Anthem of Austria-Hungary (*Kaiserhymne*) with members of the British royal family.



Subsequently, Franz Doppler's *Hungarian Fantasy* was performed by flautist NOÉMI GYÓRI, accompanied by DINARA KLINTON on piano. Concluding the discussions, the audience viewed an exhibition featuring the life of our eponym through a selection of photographs from our latest book.

It has been proven once again that Otto von Habsburg is held in high esteem worldwide as a statesman, a visionary and, above all, a tireless advocate of European unity and peace. In Great Britain, where he regularly visited and maintained professional and friendly relations with leading figures over decades, the conference and exhibition on the intellectual and political legacy of the former Austro-Hungarian heir to the throne and Member of the European Parliament attracted a substantial number of visitors.

*Photos by Ádám Csomor, Hungarian Embassy in London*



## “Reichenau is the Capital of Austria”



Wartholz. The town in Lower Austria was a significant landmark in Otto's childhood: he was baptised here, took his first communion and spent his first years in carefree peace. The title quotes his description of Reichenau as a six-year-old boy. Our Foundation's travelling exhibition shed light on this period of his life, while GERGELY PRÓHLE's presentation, which included a selection of photographs and documents, provided the audience with further details.

Hungary's Ambassador to Austria, EDIT SZILÁGYINÉ BÁTORFI, referring to the turning point in Otto von Habsburg's life 45 years ago, when he had been elected directly to the European Parliament, suggested that the public figures of the present day should be aware of Otto's task-oriented approach he had always maintained.

A panel discussion followed the diplomat's speech. On the Austrian side, HELMUT WOHNOUT, Director-General of the Austrian State Archives, described the defining milestones in the life of the last heir to the throne of the Monarchy from 1918 to 1979. The Hungarian participant, historian RÓBERT FIZIKER, Chief Archivist of the National Archives of Hungary, talked about the role of historical heritage and individual responsibility. According to him, Empress Zita was a decisive influence on her son during the 1930s, raising him to be a ruler. He also highlighted Otto's notion of a social people's monarchy, which at the time had been considered an antidote to the rampant totalitarianism, and a lasting historical alternative for the peoples of the Danube Basin. FRANK-LOTHAR KROLL, Professor at the Chemnitz University of Technology, recalled the post-First World War era of the decline of multi-ethnic empires and the rise of nation-states – from a German perspective.

The evening was concluded with MÁTÉ DÖMÖTÖR's piano performance of Franz Schubert's *Sonata in A minor (D. 537)*.



On 28 June, we opened an exhibition at Villa Wartholz in Reichenau an der Rax, the birthplace of Otto von Habsburg.

One hundred ten years ago, on 28 June 1914, Archduke Charles and his family were staying in Reichenau when the news of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo reached them. Charles became heir to the throne and later emperor, and Reichenau turned into an influential centre of the Empire. Villa Wartholz was soon renamed Castle



Rollup designs in Reichenau



## Dynastic Relations in the Turbulent 20<sup>th</sup> Century – An Eventful Stay in Tokyo



After nearly a year of preparation, a delegation of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation visited the capital of Japan at the invitation of the Liszt Institute Hungarian Cultural Centre.

Three years ago, Japanese journalist Eiichiro Tokumoto contacted our Foundation seeking to write a book about Seigen Tanaka, a unique figure in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Japanese history who had shared a close relationship with our namesake. We knew that Otto von Habsburg had regularly visited the Land of the Ris-

ing Sun; his correspondence, notes, and photographs in our archives thoroughly documented these trips. However, we were unaware of our namesake's significant role in forging the imperial house's international relations after the Second World War. During the preparatory work, it became clear that emphasising these historical ties would fit well into Hungary's EU Presidency programme on the island nation and provide a platform for strengthening Japanese-Hungarian diplomatic and cultural relations.

On 11 September, our publication, *99 Years – 99 Photos. Photographs from the Life of Otto von Habsburg* and the activities of our Foundation were presented at the Hungarian Embassy in Tokyo, followed by a panel discussion. Ambassador ANNA AULNER-BÁLINT said that Otto von Habsburg's commitment to European integration had significantly contributed to Hungary's EU accession negotiations, and, as a result of this process – and thanks to our two decades of membership – Hungary was holding the presidency of the Council of the European Union for the second time. The conversation between GEORG VON HABSBURG, Ambassador of Hungary to France, and EIICHIRO TOKUMOTO included a vivid recollection of the links between our namesake and Japan. Senior Japanese politicians and business people who had known Tanaka and Otto von Habsburg added their memories to the reminiscence. The remarks and questions of the ambassadors from European countries were also instructive and reflected on the relevance of Otto von Habsburg's ideas today. A memorable highlight of the evening was the performance of Japanese-Hungarian pianist MIYUJI KANEKO, who revealed that his parents had met Otto von Habsburg at the Embassy during a Bartók String Quartet concert.



The main event of our stay in Tokyo, an exhibition opening and conference organised in collaboration with the Liszt Institute, took place on 13 September at the Minato City Local History Museum. The historic venue, designed by the famous Japanese architect Uchida Yoshikazu, was built in 1938 with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation to serve as a medical research centre, and its spectacular art-deco spaces have been the setting for several movies.

The afternoon-long programme featured three key events, beginning with an exclusive guided tour showcasing the Japanese edition of our “Life and Heritage” exhibition for the guest of honour on behalf of the Imperial Family, H.I.H.

PRINCESS HISAKO TAKAMADO. The widow of Emperor Taiso's grandson, Emperor Akihito's cousin, was born to an influential cosmopolitan magnate right in the Minato district. Nowadays, as one of the most active members of the dynasty, she often performs diplomatic duties, representing the family at important events.

This distinguished visit was arranged by Georg von Habsburg, a member of the Board of Trustees of our Foundation, with whom the Princess has a cordial relationship, thus maintaining the tradition of good relations between the two dynasties. The encounter, which took place with strict adherence to protocol, also attracted attention in the local community. The occasion was attended by Ambassador Anna Aulner-Bálint and KRISZTINA MERÉNYI, Director of the Liszt Institute, as well as the Museum's Director, KAZUHIKO SAITO. The Princess expressed great interest in the details of Otto von Habsburg's life, demonstrating her in-depth knowledge of European history and contemporary political developments.



who had frequently collaborated with him on Japanese affairs. Among them was Shuntaro Tanaka with his wife, whose father, Seigen Tanaka had been one of the closest Japanese



contacts of the former Crown Prince. Shuntaro Tanaka had also exchanged letters with the Habsburg family. Our event was honoured by the presence of the representatives of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, university professors, the Director of the Austrian Cultural Institute in Tokyo, the Japanese press, many friends of Hungary, Kristó Ákos, Ministerial Commissioner for the 2025 Osaka Expo, and diplomats from the Hungarian Embassy.



Director GERGELY PRÓHLE introduced our Foundation and pointed out that this was the first time our event took place outside Europe. In the subsequent presentation on the Foundation's photo collection, SZILVESZTER DÉKÁNY emphasised the significance of the utilisation of photographs as historical sources. He also offered an insight into the highly successful volume he had edited, *99 Years – 99 Photos*, which provides a comprehensive overview of Otto von Habsburg's oeuvre and the main milestones of his career. The Deputy Director of our Foundation, GERGELY FEJÉRDY, explained the origins, development, forms and fulfilment of the former Crown Prince's European commitment and provided an in-depth analysis of his work in the European Parliament. He underlined the role of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, the founder of the Pan-European Union, born in Tokyo 130 years ago to a Japanese mother and an Austrian father. He concluded by quoting a statement by Otto von Habsburg in the European Parliament: *"The Japanese are our vital partners in politics. Therefore, we ought not always to think only of the balance of trade, but we must also consider the political partnership. [...] We must at last take the Japanese seriously. We should strive to understand each other."* Otto von Habsburg's extraordinarily extensive and varied network of contacts, which had many branches in the Far East and Japan, played a major role in building mutual understanding and strengthening dialogue. BENCE KOCSEV's closing lecture shed light on the creation of this global network, its key players, and its specific dynamics. He highlighted the factors that had greatly contributed to the development and persistence of our

namesake's broad range of connections worldwide, with multiple references to the central role of Seigen Tanaka in Japan.

After the conference, MÁRTON UGRÓSDY, Deputy State Secretary of the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office, and Georg von Habsburg officially opened the Japanese version of the "Life and Heritage" exhibition. Their speeches emphasised the specificities of Hungary's European engagement and the importance of Japanese-Hungarian relations.



Georg von Habsburg shared an anecdote with the audience: his father had always written with a Japanese pen, not only because of its excellent quality but also because should the writing instrument wear out, he would have the opportunity to return to the island country, which he was particularly fond of.

The exhibition opening was followed by a modest reception, which provided an opportunity to talk to representatives of Japanese universities and journalists. Several institutions indicated their willingness to display the exhibit on their campuses. Our event's positive reception helped promote Hungarian-Japanese relations and drew attention to the efforts of our Foundation beyond Europe.

During the trip to Tokyo, members of the Foundation delegation paid a visit to the Archives of the Imperial Household Agency, the state organisation representing the Imperial Family, which preserves valuable material on Otto von Habsburg's visits to the Imperial Court. See at page 34.

The preparations for the journey, the exhibition and the conference required a great deal of organisational and logistical effort, for which we would like to express our gratitude to Krisztina Merényi, the Director of the Hungarian Cultural Centre Liszt Institute in Tokyo and all her co-workers, the members of the Embassy, and our colleagues Laura Balázs and Lili Herczeg.



We are convinced that Japan, a modern democratic country that, at the same time, guards its traditions and dynastic system, is an essential partner for Hungary, and further strengthening the historical and cultural dimensions of our relations is a crucial element of our diplomatic endeavours.



## With Otto von Habsburg in Baden-Württemberg



Between 30 September and 3 October, members of our Foundation visited Baden-Württemberg. The first event of their stay took place at the Liszt Institute in Stuttgart.

Although Otto von Habsburg found his political home in Bavaria, he maintained good relations with neighbouring Baden-Württemberg. He was a frequent guest at the local Pan-European Union events, visited various municipalities across the state on several occasions

during the legislative election campaigns, and had close links with many leading politicians in the federal state. Therefore, the promotion of his activities has a specific regional, federal and European relevance in the state.

However, our early autumn programmes were not only important in showcasing Otto von Habsburg's political legacy but also provided an opportunity to reiterate the diversity and significance of the historical, economic and cultural ties connecting Hungary and the southern German province.

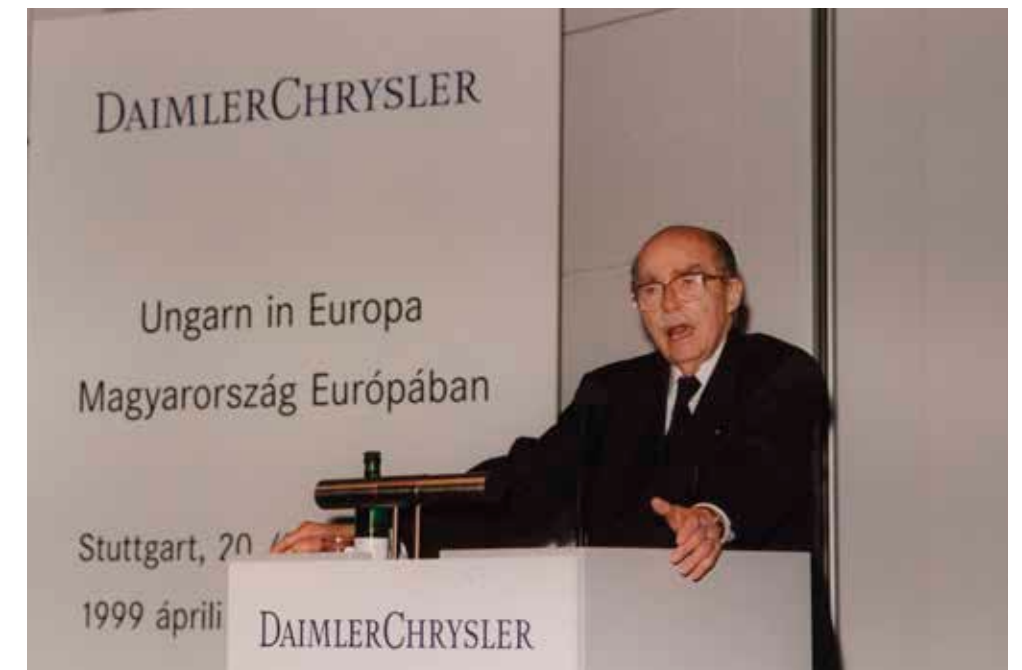
Against this background, a panel discussion was held on 30 September, organised jointly with the Liszt Institute in Stuttgart, to highlight aspects of Otto von Habsburg's extensive intellectual legacy that are particularly relevant to today's political thought and action. DEZSŐ SZABÓ, Head of the Hungarian Cultural Centre Stuttgart, recalled in his welcome speech a personal experience from November 1989, when, a few days before the fall of the Berlin Wall, Otto von Habsburg's encouragement had strengthened his belief in freedom. In his subsequent exposé, REINER MOSER, Director of the Ministry of the Interior of Baden-Württemberg, recalled the key moments in the life of Otto von Habsburg, highlighting the political legacy of the former MEP, and drew attention to its topicality.

GERGELY PRÓHLE introduced our Foundation and described the most notable connections and institutional backgrounds that had played a decisive role in the selection of speakers who all had strong ties to Hungary. During the following unconventional round-table discussion, participants reflected on excerpts from the latest book by ZSUZSA BREIER, former Hungarian diplomat and State Secretary for European Affairs of the State of Hesse, which focuses on the events of 1989. After the author readings, Gergely Pröhle moderated a panel featuring insights from politicians with an excellent knowledge of German-Hungarian relations,



CHRISTOPH PALMER, former Minister of State of Baden-Württemberg, and URSULA SEILER-ALBRING, former Federal Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to Germany.

Alongside recollecting the events surrounding the regime change, including the fall of the Berlin Wall and the official proclamation of German unity, reflections on Otto von Habsburg's work and political legacy were further elaborated, bearing valuable lessons for today's policymakers. At the same time, the current state of German-Hungarian affairs was also a key point of discussion. If an opinion poll had been carried out at the time of the accession of the Central European countries in 2004, asking Germans which country they would most welcome joining the EU, Hungary would undoubtedly have been at the top of the list – speakers noted. Although relations between the two countries had changed a lot recently, all participants agreed that, despite the current political differences and disputes, it is essential to continue the dialogue in order to improve cooperation.



Otto von Habsburg at a DaimlerChrysler symposium, 21 April 1999, Stuttgart.





The next stop on the journey was the German Unity Day event in Metzingen on 3 October, which was attended by Archduchess ANDREA VON NEIPPERG, the firstborn daughter of Otto von Habsburg, accompanied by her husband and eldest granddaughter.

*“Only those who know the past can understand the present and shape the future.”* This phrase, attributed by many to the German Social Democratic politician August Bebel and frequently used by Otto von Habsburg as well, was the opening of the address by CARMEN

HABERSTROH, Mayor of Metzingen. In a personal reminiscence, she underlined that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent German reunification had been among the defining moments of her political awakening.

MICHAEL DONT, a CDU politician representing the region in the Bundestag, quoted East German communist leader Erich Honecker, who had named the Pan-European Picnic as one of the origins of the political processes that had led to the collapse of the German Democratic Republic and the break-up of the Eastern Bloc. The politician also expressed regret that Hungary’s contribution had not received the recognition it deserved in German commemorative politics.

GERGELY PRÓHLE recalled that through his family history and later during his studies in Jena and Hamburg, he had experienced the tragedy of the German division. Otto von Habsburg, whose optimism and political vision resonated in Europe and the American continent, was instrumental in overcoming this divide. The former Crown Prince’s 1966 essay, published on our website, in which he argues that communism is unsustainable in the long term, profoundly influenced the critical figures of the subsequent Reagan administration. Otto von Habsburg had a particular political attitude, not seeing politics as a means to gain profit but rather as a means to achieve the common good based on his goals and values. Keeping his memory alive on the day of German Unity and in the face of current realities and challenges in European and world politics seems paramount.



Lastly, on 13 December, our travelling exhibition on the life of Otto von Habsburg arrived at a new venue, by the organisation of the Liszt Institute – Hungarian Cultural Centre Stuttgart. This time, our “Life and Heritage” exhibition was opened at the European School in Karlsruhe, an institution of the European Union. Dezső B. Szabó, Head of the Institute, reported on the event:

In his opening speech, LÁSZLÓ MUNKÁCSY, the recently appointed Hungarian Director of the school of more than 900 students, welcomed the strong presence of the European idea and praised the excellent cooperation between the organisers. He said that their school was attended by children from almost all EU countries, most of whose parents worked in institutions of the Union. He also stated that, building on the success of the project, the school would offer the opportunity to organise similar events in the future to every country holding the Presidency of the Council.



Conducted by their teacher, SAROLTA HUGELMANN, the school’s orchestra first played the anthem of the European Union, and later on, they performed several musical interludes to the great delight of the large audience. The choirmaster explained that the exhibition on the life of Otto von Habsburg and his tireless struggle for the European idea had been the inspiration for dedicated activities for the children: they worked together to trace the various turning points in the life of Otto von Habsburg, using sources to become better informed about him, his work and his family. One student gave an account of the projects on the occasion of the opening ceremony.

BERND POSSELT, a former close associate of Otto von Habsburg and former Member of the European Parliament, had sent a message as he was unable to attend the event in person. The representative of the CSU Presidency for relations with Central and Eastern Europe detailed the crucial role of Otto in the years of regime change and the accession process of the countries in the region.

TOM HØYEN, former Director of the Europäische Schule – previously Denmark’s EU Minister and a Member of the European Parliament – gave a detailed presentation on Otto von Habsburg’s struggle to further the cause of European integration.

DEZSŐ B. SZABÓ gave an introduction on behalf of the Liszt Institute. He expressed joy over the fact that his institution had found a new partner in the school and assured that the cooperation would continue. He considered it imperative to reach young European citizens, raise their awareness of Hungary, and acquaint them with Hungarian culture. He then shared his personal experiences with the audience: how he had met Otto von Habsburg and come into contact with the Pan-European Movement and its youth group, which at the time had been led by Bernd Posselt and one of Otto’s daughters, Walburga Habsburg Douglas. In conclusion, he thanked Gergely Próhle and our Foundation for placing the exhibition at their disposal.



## **“For me, Freedom of the Economy is the Most Important Thing.” Otto von Habsburg and the Austrian School of Economics**



On 28 October, our Foundation, together with the Embassy of Hungary in Vienna and the Federation of Austrian Industries, held a conference on the history of the Austrian School of Economics and its relevance today.

It is less well known that Otto von Habsburg not only showed a strong affinity for political issues and soon became a major actor in European and world politics but also closely followed developments in economic

theory and world economic trends. His views were affected primarily by thinkers of later generations of the Austrian school of economics, who played a major role in shaping the activities of the Mont Pelerin Society, to which he became associated in the 1950s. However, examining the links between the former heir to the throne and the prominent figures of the Austrian school is not only of historical interest; it also provides an insight into how the school influenced the economic and social policies of the second half of the twentieth century as well as into the economic challenges of our time.

Our Foundation's event in Vienna at the end of October, which took place in the historicist-style building of the Vereinigung der Österreichischen Industrie (Federation of Austrian Industries) on Schwarzenberg Square, was an opportunity to discuss all these issues. It is noteworthy that the leadership of the organisation representing the interests of industrialists and Otto von Habsburg maintained a close relationship for decades through his association with its founding President Hans Lauda, grandfather of the famous racing driver Niki Lauda, and also through Herbert Krejci, who served as Secretary-General for many years.

In his opening speech, GERGELY PRŐHLE aimed to contextualise the economic interests of our namesake and to present them in light of the former politician's wider work. He quoted from two essays by Otto von Habsburg, both of which addressed the importance of the individual and the role of the free market in the economy and underlined the significance of the principle of subsidiarity. EDIT SZILÁGYINÉ BÁTORFI, Hungary's Ambassador to Austria, who was an active participant in the conference as a diplomat and also as an economic expert, described the relevance of the event in the context of the Hungarian EU Presidency's priority of improving competitiveness. CHRISTOPH NEUMAYER, Secretary-General of the Federation of Austrian Industries, then recalled in a personal introduction his encounter with Otto von Habsburg a few decades ago at the launch of a volume he himself had actively participated in editing together with Helmut Wahnout, Director-General of the Austrian State Archives. The Secretary-General also stressed the topicality of the basic principles of the Austrian school, pointing out that the lessons drawn from historical experience are particularly valuable in meeting today's challenges.



In his keynote speech, WILHELM MOLTERER, former Finance Minister and Vice-Chancellor of Austria, pointed out that the impact of the Austrian economic school had initially been relatively limited, becoming even more marginalised after the Great Depression and only gaining in importance after the disenchantment with Keynesian economics and central planning and monetary policy in general. He underlined that the current challenges, such as the climate crisis and war, need to be placed in the

broader context of the transformation of the global order and pointed out how the principles advocated by the school could help to strengthen the resilience of today's European economies.

The subsequent reflections began with a speech by GERGELY KŐHEGYI, Deputy Head of the Institute of Economics at the Corvinus University of Budapest. He outlined the antecedents, history of influence and reception of the Austrian school of economics, highlighting the most important cornerstones of its thinking. The school emphasised the role of individuals and their personal preferences and was also averse to the mathematical description of economic correlations. BENCE KOCSEV presented Otto von Habsburg's connections with the movement's contemporaries, such as Friedrich August von Hayek, Ludwig von Mises and Fritz Machlup, on the basis of documents in the Foundation's collection. He discussed the role of our namesake in the Mont Pelerin Society, the most important lessons of the correspondence between the former Archduke and the economists who had greatly shaped the organisation and briefly shed light on the influence of the principles represented by the Society on the political positions of the former MEP.

Following the presentations, in a panel discussion introduced and moderated by Ambassador Edit Szilágyiné Bátorfi, Wilhelm Molterer and Gergely Kőhegyi analysed the lessons of the regime change in Central Europe. The participants then provided a deeper insight into how the global economic environment shapes regional opportunities and pointed out strategies that European countries could adopt to enhance their future competitiveness.



The event was enriched by the music of MARGIT VÍG, a Vienna-based artist, and her son CHRISTOPH URBANETZ, who played baroque violin and viola da gamba and was concluded by a reception.



## The Advocate of the Baltic Cause – Exhibition and Conference in Riga

The Embassy of Hungary in Riga and the Otto von Habsburg Foundation organised a conference with an exhibition opening on 14 November in the Conference Hall of the Library of the University of Latvia.

“*PanEuropa ist ganz Europa*” goes the legendary dictum of Otto von Habsburg, which, even in the face of the realities and geopolitical context of the Cold War, made it clear that the integration of the continent is far from complete without the accession of the Central and Eastern European countries. Throughout his long public career, the former heir to the throne, therefore, paid particular attention to the countries behind the Iron Curtain, including the Baltic states, which were part of the Soviet sphere of interest and statehood and became one of the most committed supporters of their sovereignty and later their integration into the European community. This political legacy was honoured by a conference in the Latvian capital, organised in cooperation with the Hungarian Embassy, where we presented an exhibition on the life and work of our namesake.

The event was preceded by a memorial mass celebrated by Archbishop of Riga ZBIGNIEVS STANKEVIČS in the St. Jacob’s Catholic Cathedral, which had changed owners several times over the centuries. The reading of the Gospel passage on the coming of the Kingdom of God (Luke 17, 20–25) was particularly fitting for the occasion, as it resonated strongly with Otto von Habsburg’s legacy. For the politician was deeply convinced and believed that the ‘heavenly Jerusalem’ was not only a distant hope for the Christian man but also an everyday reality, and he regarded his persistent work for this goal as a profoundly felt vocation and a public and political duty.

In his opening speech, ULDIS ZARIŅŠ, Director of the University Library, thanked the Embassy for organising the event and stressed the special significance of the conference in a week when Latvians were celebrating the country’s Independence Day. He pointed out that Latvia, with its



accession to the European Union, had become part of a strong alliance, in the realisation of which Otto von Habsburg had played a prominent role.

GYÖRGY URKUTI, Hungary’s Ambassador to Latvia, referring back to the memorial Mass before the conference, drew attention to the diligence with which Otto von Habsburg had applied his knowledge and talents to the building of the Kingdom of God on Earth.



He stressed that one of the objectives of the Hungarian EU Presidency was to present personalities who had played a decisive role in the creation of European unity and common freedom. Otto von Habsburg was one of the most formative politicians in this respect, whose activities had a decisive influence on the recent history of Central and Eastern Europe, including the Baltic region, and the development of European integration.

IVETA REINHOLDE, Vice-Dean of the University of Latvia, stressed that independence is not a static state but requires continuous action – it must be protected and maintained. Otto von Habsburg was committed to restoring sovereignty to the Baltic states, where the struggle for freedom had often seemed particularly hopeless.

One of the direct witnesses of Otto von Habsburg’s efforts for the Baltic cause was EGILS LEVITS, former President of the Republic of Latvia. The politician described our namesake as an extraordinary person and an exceptional politician whom he had met as a young lawyer living in exile in Germany. Shortly after their first encounter, Levits played a key role in preparing and drafting one of the first parliamentary proposals on the Baltic states by Otto von Habsburg, who at the time had already worked as an MEP.



The proposal adopted by the Assembly was not only of symbolic importance but also contributed to ensuring that the end of Soviet rule would not lead to the creation of new state formations in the region but rather to the succession of the independent countries of the interwar period, with the same territorial continuity. The speaker praised the political genius of Otto von Habsburg, who, as a representative of the Bavarian Christian Social Union, had addressed the Baltic question within the narrative of colonialism, thus successfully appealing to part of the left-wing political groups as well. His cooperation with the German Social Democrat Hans-Joachim Seeler was an exemplary demonstration of collaboration across political divides. “*Otto von Habsburg was a pro-European conservative, and one could say that he was a symbol of European unity,*” concluded the former President of Latvia.

BENCE KOCSEV, Research Fellow of our Foundation, drew attention to the particular topicality of the subject at the beginning of his presentation, reminding the audience that this year marked the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first direct elections to the European Parliament and the election of Otto von Habsburg as an MEP. The former heir to the Hungarian throne had foreseen in a visionary way that the communist regime in Central and Eastern Europe, while seemingly unassailable, was unsustainable in the long term, thus he worked with this conviction to free these countries from the Soviet shackles as soon as possible. Although Otto von Habsburg’s most significant achievements on the Baltic question were made as a Member of the European Parliament, he had been concerned with the fate of the region long before that. The conservative and Christian Democratic networks he was involved with, had already been in contact with Baltic dissident



organisations in the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States since the 1960s, and he himself had already met some of the emigre politicians during the Sec-



ond World War. During his mandate in the European Parliament from 1979 to 1999, Otto von Habsburg made considerable achievements not only through the gesture of the “empty seat” but also as a parliamentary rapporteur in raising the issue of the Baltic states from being the concern of a few dissident groups to becoming part of the European and international political discourse.

Speaking about the former heir to the throne, the ideas he represented and his

thoughts on Europe, EDUARD VON HABSBURG-LOTHRINGEN, Ambassador of Hungary to the Holy See, highlighted how the family history, closely intertwined with the history of the continent, had shaped Otto von Habsburg’s vision of Europe. He recalled how, as a young man belonging to the Hungarian branch of the family but living in Germany as a result of the Cold War divisions, he had been deeply influenced by the optimism and vision of our namesake. In the development of the Ambassador’s political thought, Otto von Habsburg emerged as a true giant whose horizons and far-sighted thinking had gone far beyond the possibilities and limitations of his time. At the end of his lecture, the Archduke recalled the Pan-European Picnic in the summer of 1989, which he himself had attended, and in the preparation of which Otto von Habsburg had played a key role. This event was not only symbolically significant as the Cold War drew to a close but also marked a concrete step towards the fall of the Iron Curtain, helping to reunite the western and eastern halves of Europe.

GUNĀRS NĀGELS, former Director of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, presented the perception of Otto von Habsburg in his homeland through the Latvian press. The first news reports about the young heir to the throne appeared very early on and then became more frequent during the period of the rise of National Socialism and the turbulence in Austrian domestic politics. During the Cold War period, the former heir to the throne attracted even greater interest in the Latvian media. The lecturer also drew attention to the difference between the perceptions of Otto von Habsburg in the Soviet and the emigrant Latvian press: while the Soviet media, using the slogans of Willy Brandt’s smear campaign, vehemently opposed his candidacy for the European Parliament and later portrayed his efforts to gain independence for the Baltic countries as wishful thinking.



The émigré press welcomed his work, stressing that Otto von Habsburg had always regarded the annexation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union as illegitimate.

RAJMUND FEKETE, Director of the Institute for the Research of Communism, analysed the implementation and spread of communist ideology in everyday life. He explained how the totalitarian system invaded the most intimate parts of people’s lives and transformed the social, economic and cultural fabric of the countries concerned. He stressed that, although Western countries had not had to live through the daily reality of communist ideologies, an understanding of this historical experience in Central and Eastern Europe was essential for European nations to understand each other’s past and present. In this respect, Otto von Habsburg’s work is particularly exemplary, as he was one of the few people on the Western side of the Iron Curtain who saw through the daily reality of communism and worked tirelessly to make the oppression suffered under communist regimes an integral part of European historical memory.



## Regina Exhibition in Meiningen



A joint exhibition of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation and the Meiningen Museums (Meininger Museen) to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Princess Regina of Saxe-Meiningen – wife of Otto von Habsburg – opened in the Thuringian town on 28 November.

Regina of Saxe-Meiningen was born in 1925 in Würzburg, as the daughter of Prince Georg III of Saxe-Meiningen (1892–1946) and Countess Klara Marie (1895–1992). She spent her childhood

with her parents and two brothers at Elisabethenburg Palace in Meiningen and at Veste Heldburg, also owned by the family. At the end of the Second World War, however, the province of Thuringia, and thus the Duchy of Saxe-Meiningen, which was situated in its territory, came under Soviet influence. The ducal family was stripped of all its possessions; her father was taken prisoner by the Soviets in 1945, where he died in January 1946; her eldest brother had already been killed on the Western Front in 1940, and Regina, together with her mother and her younger brother found refuge in Bamberg after the war, where she was able to complete her studies.



Regina started working for Caritas in Munich in 1949, and in the summer of 1950, she was trying to talk to a Hungarian refugee when a sympathetic young man came to her aid: according to family tradition, this is how Otto von Habsburg met his future wife. Their marriage took place on 10 May 1951 in Nancy. We published an article on the event with related documents preserved in the archives of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the wedding. Their harmonious marriage, which last-



ed almost 60 years, was not only filled with the loving upbringing of their seven children: Otto's active role in shaping the political face of Europe was quietly supported by Regina, who remained in the background. She accompanied her husband on countless journeys around the world, and on these visits, she was not only a spouse but an educated, intelligent, and inquisitive companion.

We prepared the exhibition together with PHILIPP ADLUNG, Director of the Meiningen Museum, and gained the support of Gabriela von Habsburg, daughter of our namesake. She provided us with various objects from her mother's estate: clothes, musical instruments, portraits, letters, and photographs – mainly from Regina's childhood – which complemented the photographs in the Foundation's archives. We displayed many pictures of the wedding of Otto and Regina and the subsequent events of their lives, as well as magazine reports, and other documents: traces

of important milestones in their shared journey and of their public appearances over several decades.

The opening ceremony took place in the chapel of Elisabethenburg, converted into a concert hall. The musical interludes – pieces by Beethoven, Bach and Franz Liszt – were performed by the talented young Korean-born pianist DEREN WANG. In his welcoming address, Director Philipp Adlung said that the town,

the seat of the Saxe-Meiningen family, the castle and the long-standing theatre – the founder of which was the great-grandfather of Regina, Prince George II – were all firmly linked to the cultural tradition of which Regina's family had been the custodian and with which she had maintained close ties thanks to her personal friendships, even during the decades of German division. After the change of regime, she took part in the cultural life of the province. At the same time, she became a member of the Habsburg family through her husband, thus bringing the Otto von Habsburg Foundation into the picture. Given the vast amount of material available, only a limited selection could be displayed in the two rooms of the exhibition; therefore, the organisers had sought to present some of the most significant aspects of Regina's personality – her family, her love of art and her sense of duty, and her role as a devoted wife and mother to her children.

GERGELY PRÖHLE, Director of the Foundation, was delighted to see how much had been renewed and realised in Thuringia's historic cities since the change of regime. He stressed that it was imperative to pass on the lessons of history to the next generations and to tell them about our personal experiences. He believes that, in Otto von Habsburg, history sees not an heir to the throne of a powerful dynasty but an intellectual thinker who took on a role as a Member of the European Parliament not for a state, but for the whole of Europe, and whose life's work still demonstrates the importance of a vision for the future. In this, he received tremendous support from his wife. Thus, Regina became part of the realisation of Otto's plans: they could see the fall of the Berlin Wall, the restoration of German unity and the creation of the European Union, as well as the possibility of further enlargement. Gergely Pröhle expressed his special thanks to Gabriela von Habsburg for her support and active help and to Director Adlung for hosting the exhibition and for its excellent realisation.



GABRIELA VON HABSBURG recalled personal memories of her mother. According to her, Regina did not make as many speeches as Otto, but humbly, in the background, she gave her husband the support he needed, was the centre and soul of the family, and set a convincing example to her children as a deeply devout Catholic. She never said bad things about others, she chose the means of kindness and love in difficult situations, and she often visited the abandoned sick and elderly. Her gentle sense of humour was the source of much laughter in the family – but never at the expense of others – and the singing together is a lasting memory for them all. Gabriela von Habsburg's recollections can be read by scanning the QR code.



The Mayor of Meiningen, FABIAN GIESDER, stressed that Regina had been an essential promoter of the cultural heritage created by the ducal family. Even in difficult times, she courageously kept alive her links from the old days and openly embraced the values she inherited from her family. Her husband, Otto von Habsburg, did an outstanding job as a bridge-build-



er and European above selfish national interests, and Regina did the same in her homeland by seizing the opportunities that presented themselves – and for that, we ought to be grateful. Her role has been taken up and carried on by her daughter, Gabriela.

*Photos by Sophie Morgenroth, Anna Zimmermann*



# EXHIBITIONS IN HUNGARY

For our events abroad, we strive to bring our exhibitions to countries that were significant to Otto von Habsburg, while for our domestic openings, we aim to visit places where our namesake was awarded honorary citizenship after the regime change.

## Travelling Exhibition

Our oldest exhibition, “Otto von Habsburg – Life and Heritage”, remains very popular. We often create site-specific roll-ups so that visitors can learn more about the connection of the last heir to the Hungarian throne with the town that hosts the exhibition. This year, in addition to Perkáta, our Hungarian roll-ups were also on display at the Cistercian St. Emeric High School of Buda and in Agyagosszergény as well.



# Memorial Exhibitions of Charles I (IV)

In 2022, we commemorated the centenary of the passing of Otto von Habsburg’s father. The last Hungarian King and Austrian Emperor is still a subject of great public interest, which is why we continued to evoke the memory of Charles, as well as the history of his beatification, which took place 20 years ago this year, with various exhibitions.

## Exhibition Opening in the Győry Castle of Perkáta



Both our travelling exhibitions were displayed at the occasion of the exhibition opening event entitled “Paternal Legacy – Common Responsibility. The Life and Memory of Emperor and King Charles I (IV) and Otto von Habsburg”, organised by our Foundation and the General Community Centre of Perkáta on 23 February.

EDIT LÁSZLÓNÉ SZABÓ, the head of the library of the Cultural Centre of Perkáta, welcomed the audience filling the cere-

monial hall of the castle. She expressed her gratitude to the mayor of the town, István Oláh, who was present at the event and to the support of the local government.

Director GERGELY PRÓHLE described the Foundation’s history, structure, operation and the various stages of processing the heritage from the beginning to the present day. With an illustrated presentation, he outlined the politically conscious life of our eponym, then spoke about the elements of our strategic goals and programmes: historical aspects, the European spirit, Christian values, external relations and international networking.

The nephew of the last lord of the castle also attended the event. Count JÓZSEF HUNYADY, who was brought up in Italy, reminisced with personal stories. Besides introducing the history of his family, he underlined the social responsibility and charitable activities of his ancestors, which he learnt from the stories of the locals when he moved to Hungary. The Daughters of Charity, named after St. Vincent de Paul, were invited to the village by his forebears, where they founded a school and a kindergarten.







ANIKÓ BOGÓ, Director of the General Community Centre of Perkáta, presented the local history of the castle and its utilisation. Maria Theresa granted the manor of Perkáta to the Győry family as a gift of allegiance. In 1936, Countess Terézia Győry died without any direct descendants, so the estate was inherited by Count Imre Hunyady, whose mother was Felicia Győry. After the Second World War, the castle was nationalised, and a primary school was established in

the main building; then, the community centre and library were housed in it. In 2015, the castle was renovated, and the Chinese-Hungarian Cultural Tourism Centre started its activities.

Our Foundation's Deputy Scientific Director, GERGELY FEJÉRDY, outlined the relationship between the Hunyady family and Otto von Habsburg. The son of Felicia Győry and Imre Hunyady, József Hunyady was assistant to Emperor and King Charles, later becoming the first Hungarian Chamberlain, and in 1918, he was appointed a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. József Hunyady served the royal family and helped them in exile. He played an intermediary role in the upbringing of the children, including Otto von Habsburg's, and was the official representative of the royal family in Hungary between the two world wars. Otto maintained correspondence with several descendants of the Hunyady family, and some of these letters are in our Foundation's care.

Following the speeches, the Kankalin Folk Dance Group from Perkáta performed a Hungarian dance for the audience. A special moment of the evening was when JUDIT NYITRAINÉ HEIM and LEVENTE NYITRAI – descendants of the last chief administrator of the castle, Antal Oppenheimer – handed over a donation of documents preserved in their family archives to the host institution.



At the end of the evening, the travelling exhibitions were opened and guests were given the opportunity to visit the other displays in the castle as well.

*Photos by Katalin Szarka-Áldott and Kitti Szentes*

### “To Give our Utmost...” in Tihany

In his welcome speech, Father NORBERT JEROMOS MIHÁLYI, prior of the Benedictine Abbey of Tihany, said that the “royal-guardian abbey” was a fitting place for the exhibition. This is the building where the beginning and the end of the Kingdom of Hungary meet, since it is the resting place of King Andrew I, who died in the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century, while this is also the site where the beatified ruler of Hungary spent his last days before the exile in 1921. The life of Charles, with all his efforts striving for peace, serve as a guide and a beacon for all of us – the monk concluded.



TIBOR NAVRACSICS underlined the importance of seeking peace and forging alliances based on the last Emperor and King's oeuvre. The Hungarian Minister of Public Administration and Regional Development considered that a happy nation is one whose leaders shares conscience and heart with its people – the reign of Charles of Austria was a prime example of this. The value of these ideas became clear to visitors as they strolled through the exhibition about the last Hungarian monarch, who had sought to renew the concept of Central Europe and emphasise the significance of the smaller nations.

GERGELY PRÖHLE spoke about how, in the course of processing our namesake's heritage, it was becoming more and more evident how much the paternal legacy had influenced Otto's life and activities. The Director of our Foundation highlighted the deep Christian commitment of both



of them as a prime example of this. The values pointed out by Tibor Navracsics were reflected in Otto's work to strengthen European integration. At the same time, the optimism stemming from his faith also guided his actions, thus confirming that Christian commitment and devotion to the Church are compatible with modern thinking.

The exhibition's material came primarily from the Otto von Habsburg Foundation's collection of photographs, docu-

ments, and objects. The display cases were filled with rare treasures such as Queen Zita's kneeling cushion from the coronation and plaques commemorating the event, King Charles' silver rosary and prayer cards upon which small pieces of linen used by the former monarch were sewn. Special mention should be made of the Tihany missal, which was a gift from the Abbey to the royal couple on their way into exile. Visitors could also watch original film clips from the life of

Charles and his family or play with the jigsaw puzzle designed for children.

The opening ceremony included a violin performance by ANDRÁS VAVRINECZ, followed by a reception on the terrace of the Abbey.

The exhibition was curated by ESZTER FÁBRY, Archivist of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation and the graphics were created by LAURA BALÁZS and SZILVESZTER DÉKÁNY. It was displayed in the Museum of the Benedictine Abbey of Tihany until 3 November 2024.



Photos by Gábor Halász

Commemorating Charles in a Modern Setting at Zalaegerszeg

On 29 October, we opened our exhibition “Instead of Victory Reports” in the Mindszentyneum Zalaegerszeg, concluding the series of events held on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the beatification of our namesake’s father, Emperor and King Charles.

One of the permanent exhibitions of the modern museum, opened two years ago, is dedicated to József Mindszenty, the cardinal who had faced persecution by the communist regime, the former parish priest of the Mary Magdalene Church in Zalaegerszeg, the leader of the legitimist movement in Zala, while the other one commemorates the martyrs of the communist repression of churches. The temporary exhibition arranged by our Foundation was curated by ESZTER FÁBRY and co-organised by LAURA BALÁZS. It had payed tribute to the last Hungarian King in a way that befitted the local context and highlighted the importance of Zalaegerszeg. It was there, in 1925, that the first church dedicated to the memory of King Charles was built, based on the plans of Iván Kotsis.

In 2022, our Foundation compiled and presented a travelling exhibition on the life of Emperor and King Charles for the commemorations of the centenary of his death in Madeira. As a result of our

visit to the island at that time, cooperation was established with the Regional Government of Madeira, as well as with ecclesiastical and public collections, leading to the discovery of new information relevant to scientific research on the royal family’s stay in Madeira and the circumstances of Charles’s death. Simultaneously, we received diaries from Archduchess Walburga Habsburg describing the first period of the family’s exile, which are currently being



processed by our colleague, Eszter Fábry. Thus, the exhibition “Exiled in Madeira” was created and opened first in the Royal Palace of Gödöllő and later in the Almásy Castle of Gyula, followed by the publication of a book of the same title, the English version of which was recently presented in Funchal.

The exhibition in Tihany focused on the royal couple’s last days and experiences in Hungary before their exile, while providing insight into both the historical context and the family’s personal story. The exhibition in Zalaegerszeg also traced the turbulent period after the end of the First World War and the family’s time in Madeira, but – as the local context implies – it mainly revolved around the memory and process of the beatification and the contemporary relevance and veneration surrounding the personality of Charles. The titles of the two exhibitions were deliberately chosen from the same essay written by Otto von Habsburg in 1972, on the fiftieth anniversary of his father’s death, in which our namesake had given testimony of his own faith and the transcendental aspects of his political vocation.

The opening ceremony in Zalaegerszeg began with welcoming speeches by ÁGOTA CSENGEI, Head of the Mindszentyneum, ZOLTÁN BALAI CZ, Mayor of Zalaegerszeg, LÁSZLÓ VÍGH, Member of Parliament, and BÁLINT HAVASI, Director General of the Directorate of Museums in Zalaegerszeg. Then LÁSZLÓ SZÁSZFALVI, Member of Parliament, former State Secretary for Church Affairs, and Deputy Head of the Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP) parliamentary group in the National Assembly, opened the exhibition, conveying the greetings of Zsolt Semjén, Deputy Prime Minister. László Szászfalvi – who is also a Reformed minister – followed Otto von Habsburg’s line of thought quoted in the title of the exhibition and formulated his message in the form of a biblical interpretation. In conclusion, GERGELY PRÓHLE thanked the employees of the Mindszentyneum and all those who contributed to the realisation of the exhibition. A special part of the opening was the musical performance by the choir of the Carmelite Basilica of Keszthely, singing excerpts from the rarely heard *Messe brève* (short Mass) by French romantic composer Léo Delibes.



Photos by Péter Seres  
Cover photo: Pezzetta Umberto (Zalai Hírlap)





Two of our Colleagues Were Honoured with the Blessed Charles Award

Twenty years ago, on 3 October 2004, Pope John Paul II beatified the last Hungarian King and Austrian Emperor, the father of our Foundation’s namesake, in Rome. The Golden Cross of Merit was established shortly on the initiative of the then President, GUSZTÁV HITTIG, who was also closely connected with our Foundation, at the proposal of the Hungarian branch of the Emperor Karl League of Prayers.



The award is given to individuals who “through their community activities and work, contribute to the promotion of the respect for Emperor and King Charles and the social values he embodies”. In 2004, fifty recipients were honoured for the first time. Twenty years later, on 6 October 2024, twenty-two people, including several friends of our Foundation and two of our colleagues, ESZTER FÁBRY and GERGELY FEJÉRDY, received a renewed semi-miniature version of the medal, renamed as the Blessed Charles Award.

The event took place in the ceremonial hall of the Episcopal Palace of Szombathely, right next to the suite where King Charles IV stayed between 27 March and 5 April 1921, during his first return to Hungary. The bedroom, which was open to the public on this occasion, contains a guest book signed by the last Hungarian Monarch, as well as several objects that were there during his time. The suite faithfully preserves the memory of the special guest who stayed there one hundred and three years ago on Easter.

At the ceremony held in Szombathely, Bishop JÁNOS SZÉKELY and GERGELY KOVÁCS, the current President of the Hungarian branch of the Emperor Karl League of Prayers, gave speeches and presented the award. Both speakers stressed that the award, in the spirit of the former monarch, could encourage the passing on of the values he had considered vital and the performance of community service. Bearing this in mind, one of the most crucial messages of Blessed Charles’s



life, as expressed by Otto von Habsburg on the fiftieth anniversary of his father’s death, can be recalled: *“When a man gets into the presence of his Creator, in front of Him, all that matters is the fulfilment of duties and goodwill. God does not ask people to bring Him victory reports. He grants the success. He only expects us to give our utmost.”*

BOOK LAUNCHES

Each year, our Foundation strives to contribute to the understanding of our common past and present with inspiring volumes. By 2024, we have produced more than a dozen publications, all of which have been presented to a large audience of professionals and other interested parties.

Our Internalised Trauma



The *Trianon Encyclopaedia*, a book published in collaboration between the Central European Research Institute of the Eötvös József Research Centre, the Ludovika University Press, the Trianon 100 Research Group and the Otto von Habsburg Foundation, was presented at the Ludovika University of Public Service on 19 March.

The book, written and edited by prominent experts, presents a thorough over-

view of the peace treaty and its domestic and international aftermath. It nuances the academic discourse and public debate on the historical processes and interpretations surrounding Trianon. An article by our colleague Gergely István Szűts is among the nearly 70 mini-essays that seek to explore this turning point in Hungarian history.

PÁL HATOS, Head of the Central European Research Institute of the Eötvös József Research Centre, welcomed the audience and thanked our Foundation for its contribution to the publication. In his response, GERGELY FEJÉRDY, our Deputy Director, recalled the parallels between the fate of the last Hungarian Crown Prince and that of historical Hungary.

GERGELY ROMSICS presented the volume, edited by Balázs Ablonczy, Pál Hatos, Szabolcs Nagy, Veronika Szeghy-Gayer and Csaba Zahorán, containing 71 articles by nearly 40 authors. His analysis was followed by a panel discussion, during which GÉZA JESZENSZKY, historian and diplomat, BALÁZS ABLONCZY and Pál Hatos shared some details of the project: the principles of editing the volume, the historiographical vision and methodology of the articles. They all agreed that 104 years after the event, Trianon is still only partially processed as a trauma in the collective memory of Hungarian society. Therefore, the task of historians is not only to demolish myths but also to formulate comprehensible, straightforward answers that will resonate with today’s readers. The book was intended to meet this aim, and it would be worthwhile to translate it into world languages and the national languages of the neighbouring countries.

The *Trianon Encyclopaedia* is available for purchase on the website of Ludovika University Press and in larger bookshops.

Respect for the Law Above All Else

On 5 April, our Foundation, the Association for Hungarian Civic Cooperation and the hosting institution, Ludovika University of Public Service, celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of János Martonyi with the launch of his new book, a selection of his essays in French. The event was attended by the former Foreign Affairs Minister’s friends, admirers, past colleagues, former French and Austrian counterparts, and many foreign diplomats.

GERGELY PRÓHLE, Head of the John Lukacs Institute of the Ludovika University and Director of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation, recalled his essay in the volume published for János Martonyi’s 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, in which he reviewed the celebrant’s activities as a lawyer; defending the Hungarian national interests, our region and consequently, and the unity of Europe. Martonyi, born in Cluj during the Second World War, was 45 years old during the regime change and 60 when Hungary joined the EU. His fate, therefore, illustrates the continuity of history – *La Continuité de l’Histoire* – the idea behind the title of the volume. The cover image of the Capitoline is symbolic



as well: it refers to the fundamental pillars of János Martonyi’s oeuvre: the legacy of ancient Roman law that shaped the spirit of Europe, Christianity and the Treaty of Rome that initiated the process of European integration in 1957. Further details on the publication can be found on page 102.

GERGELY GULYÁS, Minister of the Prime Minister’s Office, commended Martonyi’s contribution to forming a civil Hungary as an expert on private international law. His cooperation with Ferenc

Mádl offered a credible alternative to Hungarian society after 1990 and decisively influenced Hungary’s European integration and transatlantic engagement, which Martonyi also represented on the global stage as Foreign Minister for nine years. One cannot think of oneself as “European” without simultaneously being “Hungarian, Polish, French or Austrian”, according to the politician, who argued that national identity and Europeanism are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary concepts. All of this is based on law, which cannot be a tool for “political will-making”, he warned.

“Thumbing through the essays in this volume, it appears as an almost indisputable fact that, within the inherent chaos of history, there exists a community of values, which we must recreate and reshape again and again so that we can remain worthy of its ideals”, – cautioned PÁL HATOS in his address, which is published in its entirety on page 196, on the imperative of our community of shared destiny. The continuity of history – in Simone Weil’s words, its rootedness in time – is fragile, and each generation must work to preserve it. As a man familiar with history and a politician who took action, János Martonyi has been confronted with the dilemmas of the relation

between freedom and democracy throughout his career.

Former French Foreign Affairs Minister HUBERT VÉDRINE recalled his conversations with the Hungarian Foreign Affairs Minister, which had contributed to his understanding of “Central Europeanism”. He professes that this dialogue, along with Milan Kundera’s famous 1983 book, *A Kidnapped West: The Tragedy of Central Europe*, were the principal compasses for his insights into the region’s history.



The laudations were followed by a panel discussion with BENITA FERRERO-WALDNER, former Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria; CLAIRE LEGRAS, Ambassador of France to Hungary; LÁSZLÓ TRÓCSÁNYI, Rector of the Károli Gáspár Reformed University; and ZSOLT NÉMETH, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly. GERGELY FEJÉRDY, Deputy Director of our Foundation, moderated the panel of speakers who praised the celebrant’s work. The meeting ended with a toast by ENIKŐ GYÓRI, MEP and President of the Association for Hungarian Civic Cooperation.

Photos by Zoltán Szabó

Useful Guidelines for the EU Presidency



On 11 July, the salon of the Hungarian Embassy in Paris hosted the second presentation of the former Hungarian Foreign Affairs Minister János Martonyi’s book, *La Continuité de l’Histoire*, published jointly by our Foundation and the Ludovika University Publishers.

The event was part of the Hungarian EU Presidency’s programme in France. The book release was attended by dozens of distinguished guests, including former public figures and diplomats

such as Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Board of the Robert Schuman Foundation, or Jean-Thomas Lesueur, General Director of the French Thomas More Institute, as well as the leaders of several political think tanks. The presence of the author’s family made the evening particularly cordial.



In his welcome speech, Ambassador GEORG VON HABSBERG praised the merits of János Martonyi, drawing parallels between the former Hungarian Foreign Minister and his own father, Otto von Habsburg, through their most striking common trait: their unwavering optimism. The book was presented by ALAIN LAMASSOURE, former French Minister, and PASCALE ANDRÉANI, former French Ambassador to Hungary, with the participation of GERGELY FEJÉRDY. All participants agreed that the volume, containing lectures and longer essays, clearly demonstrated János Martonyi's patriotism and his inextricable Europeanism. The speakers also underlined that the former Hungarian Minister was a great admirer of the French language and culture and had contributed significantly to French–Hungarian relations – it was no coincidence that he published his thoughts in Molière's language. Former French Minister Alain Lamassoure gave an insightful assessment of



János Martonyi's book while highlighting the importance of the former Hungarian Foreign Minister. His speech is available on page 199.

Pascale Andréani recalled her encounters with János Martonyi from her early days as a young diplomat. She was captivated by the Hungarian Minister's broad vision of foreign policy and his historical perspective. The Ambassador said that she had come to know the former Hungarian Foreign Minister as a politician who listened to others, was

always open to dialogue and was committed to the motto of the continent: "Unity in diversity". She concluded with a short personal memory: during her years as Ambassador in Budapest, János Martonyi introduced her to Miklós Radnóti's poetry, which has become one of her favourites and motivates her to learn the Hungarian language.

The discussion also touched on the importance of culture, subsidiarity, and the Hungarian EU Presidency. Alain Lamassoure and Pascale Andréani stressed that János Martonyi is an example of how European nations should listen to each other and seek to know and understand each other. They expressed their hope that the book's philosophy would serve as an example for today's Hungarian and European politicians.

JÁNOS MARTONYI expressed his thanks for the laudatory words in his closing remarks. He explained that his book was indeed intended to raise awareness that culture and civilisation were taking a back seat to the pressing issues of economics and politics, even though these should be the priority for a nation and for Europe. He is convinced that this approach would facilitate mutual understanding and acceptance, which is so crucial in international relations. Although Europe and Hungary have endured countless setbacks, he and Otto von Habsburg have always been one of those optimists who trusted in a better future.

## Book Release in Madeira

Our latest publication, *Exiled on Madeira* (more on this volume on page 104), was presented in Funchal on 16 October. The event, which was both part of the programme series of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Hungary and Portugal, was addressed by MIGUEL ALBUQUERQUE, President of the Regional Government of Madeira, and was attended by Emília Fábíán, Ambassador of Hungary to Lisbon.



The launch of our book at the Cultural Centre of Quinta Magnólia, once a British golf club, was met with great interest. The aim of the publication was to make the international visitors to Madeira better understand the reverence that still prevails on the island for Emperor and King Charles. Deputy Director GERGELY FEJÉRDY, author of one of the volume's essays, showed several photographs depicting the life of the imperial and royal family in exile and the events leading up to it. GERGELY PRÓHLE spoke about the lessons Otto von Habsburg had been able to learn from his father, whose eldest child had been only 10 years old at the time of the funeral. Otto was influenced by Charles's ideas of government reform, which the monarch had wanted to introduce in the final hours of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for the benefit of the small nations. These ideas – with an emphasis on the principle of subsidiarity – became the political credo of the former Crown Prince when he was a member of the European Parliament from 1979 to 1999. For both Portugal and Hungary, these notions are significant in today's Europe, which is why the publication of a volume documenting the last months of Charles of Austria's life is also relevant to the six-month Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU. On the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beatification of the last Hungarian King, these connections are all the more noteworthy.

Miguel Albuquerque explained that the island retained the devotion to Charles; therefore, the atmosphere that had characterised the Habsburg family's stay on the island, as reflected in the photographs, remained unchanged. The relations between Madeira and Hungary, forged through the exile of the monarch and his family, are nowadays a source of tourism and cultural cooperation, as well as an instrument of maintaining diplomatic connections between the countries. The head of the Regional Government of Madeira recalled his encounters with Otto von Habsburg, from whom, he had learned a lot about European politics.

All three speakers expressed their gratitude for the cooperation of the Regional Library and Archives of Madeira, which holds a substantial part of the publication's source material, for the active organisational work of the island's State Secretariat for Culture and Tourism, and for the enthusiastic involvement of the Honorary Consul, PEDRO FERREIRA, who is in charge of the whole network of Madeiran–Hungarian relations. The event, which concluded with a reception in the garden, was also attended by the Bishop of Funchal, Msgr. NUNO BRÁS DA SILVA MARTINS, who, the following day, received the members of our Foundation in the diocese archives. The Madeiran hosts have indicated that they would support the publication of our book in Portuguese and would be glad if our Foundation could contribute to the interior decoration of the imperial and royal family's renovated residence in Funchal.

# ADDITIONAL EVENTS

## Evoking Past Banquets at the Saint Emeric High School of Buda



Our Foundation visited the Cistercian St. Emeric High School of Buda for a unique history lesson and to hand over a poster from 1925.

We had obtained a poster promoting the St. Emeric charity ball of 11 February 1925. This social event had been held regularly between 1890 and 1914, with the exception of a few years, and after a long break, the tradition was revived precisely one hundred years ago, on 20 February 1924. From the very beginning, the charity ball of the St. Emeric Circle of Catholic University and College Students was a prestigious event, with the patronage of Bishop Fülöp Steiner of Székesfehérvár and Count János

Zichy. The latter was a well-known politician at the turn of the century, an imperial and royal chamberlain who served twice as Minister of Religion and Education in the Hungarian governments of the dualist era.

One hundred years ago, at the 1924 St. Emeric charity ball, which was hosted at the Hotel Gellért, Count János Zichy, Catholic priest József Vass, Minister of Welfare and Labour, and Bishop Gyula Glattfelder of Csanád, the latter as the patron of the ball, were present. A few months later, the first so-called “Otto-dinner” was organised in honour of the former heir to the throne, which became an unmissable event for those who sympathised with the royal family in exile between the two wars, rivalling the St. Emeric charity ball in popularity.

These balls were also indirectly connected to Otto von Habsburg, first and foremost through the person of Count János Zichy, who was one of the founders of the St. Emeric Circle. The count played a central role in compiling the Hungarian curriculum for the heir to the throne in exile, and visited the family several times in Spain. Queen Zita had asked him to be a member of the graduation examination board, and Otto von Habsburg gave an account of his knowledge to them in 1930.

Participation in the St. Emeric charity ball was not restricted by political or religious affiliation. During the Horthy era, guests included individuals with legitimist sentiments, sympathisers or friends of Otto von Habsburg, such as members of the Andrassy and Zichy families, or the Mailath counts. In 1929, the family of Archduke Joseph August was the guest of honour at the event. In the same year, ninety-five years ago, the gates of the St. Emeric High School, later to become a renowned institution of the Cistercians, opened at the foot of Gellért Hill. The building housed a state school up until the regime change, due to the persecution of the churches after

the Second World War. The school has gradually returned to its Cistercian roots since the 1990s and recently revived the tradition of the charity balls. The events, now organised by the school’s foundation, can justly be regarded as a worthy successor to the former charity balls, both in spirit and atmosphere.

These connections prompted the Otto von Habsburg Foundation to hand over the poster announcing the St. Emeric charity ball of 1925, to the school bearing the name of the son of the first Hungarian King.

The rare print was presented by Deputy Director Gergely Fejérdy to BENCE BARLAY, Director of the high school, in the presence of the guests at the St. Emeric charity ball on 3 February. Prior to this, on 23 January, the colleagues of our Foundation also held an unusual history lesson, while our travelling exhibition on the life of Otto von Habsburg was on display at the school for several weeks.

## „Der größte politische Stammtisch der Welt” – A Political Ash Wednesday Meeting

BENCE KOCSEV represented the Otto von Habsburg Foundation at the annual Lenten event of the Bavarian Christian Social Union and the Hanns Seidel Foundation.



Ash Wednesday is an important day in the political calendar of Bavaria and Germany. The best-known and most spectacular event in Germany on the first day of the fasting period is undoubtedly that of the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (Christlich-Sozialen Union, CSU). For years, the party-affiliated Hanns Seidel Foundation (Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, HSS) has been offering its “Mitteleuropäischer Dialog” programme on the margins of this event in order to

strengthen cooperation in the wider Central European region and facilitate talks between Bavarian decision-makers and representatives of the young generation from the various Visegrad countries.

While the custom of Bavarian Political Ash Wednesday “Politischer Aschermittwoch” dates back over a hundred years, it was not until Franz Josef Strauss entered the scene in the 1950s that the event became widely known and nationally significant. The prominent CSU politician, blessed with excellent oratorical skills, inspired his growing audience on more than 30 occasions until his death in 1988, turning it from a local initiative into a leading and vibrant forum for public debate and a unique institution of national political publicity. The messages of the charismatic Bavarian prime minister on Ash Wednesday became deeply engrained in political and public thinking and had a profound impact on the political and ideological debates of the time.



Since the 1970s, Otto von Habsburg had increasingly engaged in German and European public affairs and made several appearances at this political gathering. His participation, however, went beyond the courtesy visit resulting from his close relationship with Franz Josef Strauss. It had symbolic significance: through his presence, he emphasised to party leaders and fellow politicians that tradition and contemporary public engagement were not contradictory; instead, historical consciousness, dynastic heritage, and the forward-looking policies associated with these could effectively serve the nation, the Federation, and Europe – even in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In keeping with tradition, this year’s event was held in Passau, Lower Bavaria. The keynote speaker was the incumbent party leader and prime minister, MARKUS SÖDER, whose political approach is strongly characterised by his close connection to the legacy of Strauss. Hence, he believes that the statements made on the first day of Lent – especially in an election year – have a considerable impact on the public debate. In addition to harsh criticism of political rivals, the speech, which lasted almost an hour and a half, dealt with key issues such as managing migration, the state of agriculture and the containment of right-wing and left-wing extremism. The event was attended by prominent CSU politicians, as well as members of local and regional party organisations and foreign guests.

This year, the HSS arranged its “Mitteleuropäische Dialog” programme in the context of the “Politischer Aschermittwoch” again, providing young people from the Central European region with the opportunity to engage with Bavarian politicians and public figures on the most pressing issues affecting the broader public and explore the possibilities for regional cooperation. This opportunity offers young people from the Central European region the chance to discuss current problems and the prospects for cross-border collaboration with Bavarian politicians and representatives of public life. On the eve of the Political Ash Wednesday, the participants discussed with THOMAS ERNDL, Member of the German Bundestag and Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the most important global and European issues and the likely development of the diverse relations in the Central European region. Following the core programme in the Dreiländerhalle in Passau, the participants had the opportunity to learn more about an ambitious integrated rural development project taking place in the Bavarian Forest and to have a brief exchange with STEFAN MEYER, Member of the Bavarian State Parliament, on the current political, economic and social situation in the region.

We would like to thank MARKUS EHM, HSS Regional Director for Central Europe, as well as RENÁTA FIXL and KAMILA TAKÁCS, Head and Project Assistant of the Foundation’s Budapest Office, for making it possible to participate in the event.



Otto von Habsburg at the Political Ash Wednesday event, 1989  
(Photo by the Hanns Seidel Foundation, Munich)

With Otto von Habsburg on the Tisza Bank



Gergely Pröhle was a guest of the Academic Club of the Academic Committee of Szeged, which regularly organises lectures for the members of the association and academics of the University of Szeged. On 14 May, the Director of our Foundation, at the invitation of Sándor Csernus, Professor at the Institute of History and Tibor Krisztin, President of the Academic Committee, gave a lecture entitled “European Values – Political Realities. The legacy of Otto von Habsburg today”.

GERGELY PRÖHLE presented the life of Otto von Habsburg and the work of the Foundation, which has been processing his legacy since 2018. He described the turning points that had shaped the life and personality of the last heir to the Hungarian throne. Otto was able to overcome the loss of political power and exile of his family, and through his in-depth knowledge, language skills and extensive network of connections, he exerted a significant influence on the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When he was elected to the European Parliament 45 years ago, he was given a broad democratic mandate to participate in debates and decisions affecting the future of the continent.

In the context of current world and European political developments, Gergely Pröhle thought it worthwhile to raise and discuss the following questions: what would the founding fathers of European integration, including Otto von Habsburg, think about the current state of affairs? How has the discourse on classical European values evolved in recent decades, and what is its relationship with the Realpolitik approach and the reality around us?

A lively discussion followed the presentation. The event can be viewed by scanning the QR code.



### Presidential Commemoration at the Resting Place of Otto von Habsburg



On 3 July, the President of Hungary, TAMÁS SULYOK, and his wife paid an official visit to Vienna. GERGELY PRÓHLE joined the delegation upon the invitation of the head of state.

One day before the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of our namesake, President Tamás Sulyok made the following remarks:

*“There is a perception that Hungarians are rebellious because of our nation’s strong love of freedom and the evocation of cer-*

*tain historical events. There are many examples to the contrary: of Hungarians’ love of peace, hospitality, search for compromise, empathy, and even sacrifice for others.*

*Otto von Habsburg, the late politician of the European Parliament and a member of a distinguished family in our common history – whom I had the privilege of meeting – shared the latter view of us. He had known Hungarians and had done much to change the fate of our country for the better. His memory and his efforts for Hungary’s accession to the EU are still honoured and respected in our country. His thoughts continue to be a source of inspiration for many of us today, and his openness and constructiveness represent the European spirit in its best sense.*

*As Hungary takes over the presidency of the Council of the European Union for the second time on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our country’s accession to the EU, I would like to recall the words of Otto von Habsburg, which remain valid today: »What divides us Europeans is much less important than what unites us.« The establishment and enlargement of the Union proved that the leaders of the countries had no doubts about the truth of his statement.”*

At the end of the event, Gergely Próhle handed over our book *99 Years – 99 Photos* to the President of Austria, ALEXANDER VAN DER BELLEN, and together with the presidential couple and Ambassador EDIT SZILÁGYINÉ BÁTORFI, laid a wreath at the resting place of the last Hungarian Crown Prince, Member of the European Parliament.



Photos by Sándor Palace

### Address in Florence on Otto von Habsburg’s Role in European Politics

The annual postgraduate conference of the Alcide De Gasperi Research Centre of the European University Institute in Florence was held from 4–6 September. Our Foundation was also represented at the scientific forum.

This occasion marked the fifth time the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU) and the Alcide de Gasperi Centre of the European University Institute (EUI) have organised a conference for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers. The event in the Villa Salviati – a venue with many links to the history of the Florentine aristocracy, currently managed by the EUI – addressed historiographical and methodological issues of the history of European integration, providing an opportunity to share research results and experiences and to build professional contacts.

In his presentation entitled *Political Networks and a Parliamentary Mandate*, BENCE KOCSEV, Research Fellow of our Foundation, outlined our namesake’s activities in the European Parliament not as an isolated episode of his career but as a milestone in his conscious and diligent political efforts, a fulfilment of his work ambitions. The lecture focused on the role of the conservative political networks, significantly shaped by the former Crown Prince after the Second World War, and their impact on European integration. It also shed light on how the cornerstones of the political credo of these circles had influenced Otto von Habsburg’s actions as a Member of the European Parliament.

The conference was not only interesting within its defined thematic scope, but also demonstrated the institution’s unequivocal position as a focal point for European social science research. As a prominent forum for academic dialogue, it assumes a pivotal role in connecting the European scientific community and bridging existing divides. It is therefore worth considering further strengthening institutional ties from the Hungarian side as well.



### Our Colleague at the Conference on Europeanisation

The conference “Europeanisations from the Bottom and from the Margins: Actors, Representations, and Experiences” took place at the University of Lausanne from 27 to 29 November, with the presence of our Foundation.

The event, organised for young researchers, addressed the historical, methodological and theoretical issues of Europeanisation, of political, economic and cultural processes that went beyond



the history of the political and institutional development of the European Union and its territorial borders, providing an opportunity to share research results and experiences and to build professional contacts. The two keynote lecturers of the scientific session were KIRAN KLAUS PATEL, Professor at the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich, and CHRISTOPHE CHARLE, Professor Emeritus at the Panthéon-Sorbonne University in Paris. The participants could also learn about the work and collections of the Jean Monnet Foundation.

On the second day of the meeting, our colleague BENCE KOCSEV described the ever-closer relations between Hungary and the European Economic Community. The presentation focused on the political and academic initiatives, actors, and networks that had facilitated the rapprochement of the country, a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance since the second half of the 1970s, to Western European integration.

### OTTO-DINNER DEDICATED TO SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL



On the occasion of the 112<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Otto von Habsburg's and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Winston Churchill's birth, we held our traditional Otto-dinner on 23 November at the Pesti Vigadó.

ISTVÁN NAGY welcomed the evening's guests. The Chairman of the Board of our Foundation expressed his gratitude that this year again, nearly 200 people gathered to honour Otto von Habsburg – among them members of the Habsburg family, including Georg

and Eilika von Habsburg, and Severin Meister, son of Gabriela von Habsburg; as well as members of the Board, speakers of the conference on Friday (page 125), diplomatic representatives, and leaders of Hungarian public collections and organisations. He also took the opportunity to reflect on the past year and to express appreciation to our staff for their work.

Afterwards, Director GERGELY PRÖHLE explained that this year's dinner and the previous day's conference had focused on our namesake's British connections, particularly his relationship with Sir Winston Churchill. Then, he invited FERENC KUMIN, Ambassador of Hungary to the United Kingdom, to take the stage. The diplomat recalled that our cooperation had begun with a joint conference in London in June. (Described in detail on page 134.) At that event, it was mentioned that in 2007, Otto von Habsburg had been bestowed with the prestigious 'Freeman of the City' award by the Worshipful Company of Gardeners, a body with a seven-hundred-year history, for his life-long commitment to Europe. Among the many notables present at the summer conference was Adam Fergusson, a fellow MEP, a friend of Otto von Habsburg, a renowned econ-



omist and journalist, and author of the best-selling book *When Money Dies. The Nightmare of the Weimar Collapse*. The report on our oral history interview with him can be found on page 89. The event in June was an excellent opportunity for our country to present the objectives of its presidency of the Council of the European Union, while at the dinner, we reflect on the former MEP's thoughts as we approach the end of the six-month term – the Ambassador remarked.

The dinner's guest of honour was LORD DAVID ALTON OF LIVERPOOL, a member of the House of Lords, who drew attention to the common ground between Otto von Habsburg and Winston Churchill in his address, and also shared some of his memories of our namesake. His speech can be read on page 219.

To add a dash of colour, a napkin ring with the Apponyi pattern was included in the table setting – for the first time this year. The Habsburg family had been regular customers of the Herend Porcelain Manufactory since 1855. Otto visited Herend several times, as he greatly admired the renowned Hungarian craftsmanship brand. One of the Manufactory's most popular motifs to this day is named after the distinguished diplomat and politician, Count Albert Apponyi, a prominent supporter of the former Crown Prince in Hungary, who was among the initiators of the tradition of dinners celebrating Otto's birthday in the 1920s, which were held at first in the Hotel Gellért and later in the Pesti Vigadó. Gergely Pröhle underlined that the napkin rings served as a reminder that the guests of the Otto-dinners were part of a community spanning generations, with members supporting the ideals represented by Otto von Habsburg and contributing to the preservation of the memory of our namesake by following the activities of the Foundation.



Interspersing the speeches, pianist BALÁZS FÜLEI performed Ludwig van Beethoven's Seven Variations on 'God Save the King' and, in tribute to the Scottish-born Adam Fergusson, the *Six Scottish Dances (Écossaises)*.

*Photos by Zoltán Szabó*

# LECTURES

In 2024, the events organised by our Foundation were enriched by many distinguished Hungarian and foreign guests, who delivered excellent presentations, reminiscences, and analyses. In the next chapter of our report, we included a selection of these.



RICHARD M. GAMBLE

## “MUCH SUFFERING AND MORE THAN A LITTLE JOY”

The genesis and reception of Historical Consciousness

In a letter to John Lukacs, dated June 21, 1968, George Kennan praised *Historical Consciousness* as “a work of great seriousness and importance.” Then he added a more somber note, one that could not have surprised Lukacs since they had discussed the problem so often. “*I doubt that it will commend itself to a wide circle of readers,*” he wrote. The book that Lukacs had put so much concentrated effort into for twelve years, “*demands,*” Kennan wrote, “*a corresponding effort of patience and thoughtfulness on the part of the reader.*” Two years earlier, commenting on what would prove to be the final version of Chapter One, Kennan had warned, “*I am a poor judge of public reaction, or chances of publication. What I have read has enriched me and I have no doubt that it would enrich thousands of others if they would read it. That the exercise of writing may be a lonely, and hence a discouraging one, I could well understand. It may be that what you are doing will never be adequately understood or appreciated in your time.*”

Nevertheless, in 1968, he told Lukacs that “*It is my impression that it is the most important work that has appeared at any time in this country on the place of history in Western civilization.*” He suggested that Herbert Butterfield might be the right person to review it and predicted it would find a better reception in England than in America. “*All I can do now,*” he concluded, “*is to congratulate you on the completion of this work and to express the confidence that you will never regret that portion of your life-strength that you have given to it.*”





We get a sense of the magnitude of that expended “life-strength” at the end of the postscript to *Historical Consciousness*. His words, the last of the book, are quintessential Lukacs, gathering so many threads of his historical philosophy and expressing his faith in God and the providential tempering of evil in the world. “*Coming from a religion which certainly does not promise the triumph of justice and of truth in this world,*” he wrote, “*I have often claimed to see in this condition of the historical corruptibility of evil an extraordinary gift by God Who reminded (note the implicit meaning of the historicity of our consciousnesses within this word to re-mind) us of the Word through the Incarnation; Who still conceived this world, otherwise a vale of tears, to be the best of all possible worlds for us; Who does not tempt us beyond our strength; Who made us capable of overcoming despair. Thus, it is not maudlin to admit, in conclusion, that during the composition of this work I have experienced much suffering, and more than a little joy.*” These moving words are followed by the dates, 1955–1967, indicating his attentiveness to the historicity of his own thought.

\*

I first read *Historical Consciousness* around 1986, and I have been teaching it to students at Hillsdale College for 18 years. In May, somewhat impulsively, I decided to write a biography of Lukacs, not because I believe I am more qualified than anyone else to write it – far from it – but simply because someone must do it. The available resources for this task are vast. Surprisingly so. And they are a treasure. This is true of the Lukacs papers at Notre Dame University, the Russell Kirk papers at the Kirk Center in Mecosta, Michigan, the online George Kennan papers at Princeton, and the supremely important Dwight Macdonald papers available through Yale University. This summer, I hope to be able to see the large correspondence with Owen Barfield at Oxford University. Except for Kirk, all these friends were cited in *Historical Consciousness*. Lukacs relied on these few close friends to sustain him in darkness and doubt, to sharpen his thoughts, and to refine his words. (In 2009, he would add Wendell Berry as a cherished confidant.) This was his audience even if he found no other. He wrote for them and wanted their approval. So interminable and exhausting had the project become, that Lukacs confessed to Macdonald in 1958, “I really should not have started it.”

That admission of fatigue came three years at least into a titanic struggle that would not end until *Historical Consciousness* was finished in 1967. When he began the first draft in the summer of 1955, Lukacs was 31 years old, a teacher at Chestnut Hill College and at neighboring La Salle, recently married to his first wife, Helen, a father the following year, and an emerging writer of some distinction and critical success. He had been in the United States nine years. His first book, *The Great Powers and Eastern Europe*, a massive tome of nearly 900 pages, had been published in 1953 to critical success. By 1955, Lukacs had also established himself as a regular essayist on Eastern Europe, Communism, containment, the Soviet Union, and the durability of fascism after the Second World War. He wrote distinguished essays for the liberal Catholic magazine *Commonweal* that brought him favorable attention from Dwight Macdonald, to whom he soon wrote and began a stormy but enduring friendship. Macdonald was a fine writer, editor, and a liberal literary critic, well-connected to the New York publishing world, a former Marxist, Trotskyist, and New Dealer who went on to be a controversial figure in the Vietnam War protests

and civil rights activism of the 1960s and 70s. This was an unlikely friendship, to say the least, but Lukacs respected him as a master of English prose, an honest critic, an unclassifiable intellect like himself, and, in the subtitle of an excellent biography of him, “*A Rebel in Defense of Tradition.*” That phrase describes Lukacs just as well. Their correspondence reveals more about the genesis of *Historical Consciousness* than any other source, though the correspondence with Kennan and Kirk is rich and important and rounds out the story.

In April 1956, Lukacs sent Macdonald “a very rough first draft” he had completed in only nine months. This rapid pace was not unusual for Lukacs, though the impending years of almost obsessive revision were. His typewriter had hardly stopped clacking or the cigar smoke cleared from his study before he plunged into revisions, contemplating an entirely different structure. He labored on through 1957 and 1958 and was still hard at work in 1959. He continued to read widely, as the chapters and notes of the final book make abundantly clear. He never stopped thinking and maturing. For example, he read Heisenberg’s Gifford Lectures as soon as they were published as *Physics and Philosophy* in 1958. (Their correspondence survives.) He also kept writing other books in which he embodied his historical philosophy. This is true of *A History of the Cold War* and *The Decline and Rise of Europe*, whether in the structure of both books or in the more theoretical concluding parts of each. In these ways, he kept his mind engaged with the problems of historical thinking. By early 1961 he was on his fourth draft. And he didn’t stop there. When he returned from Europe in the summer of 1962, where he had met Heisenberg in Munich in June, he agonized over the book, grappled with a New York editor’s criticisms, and decided once more to rewrite the whole manuscript, this time emphasizing the autobiography of his ideas, or what he preferred to call “auto-history.”

What becomes clear in his correspondence is that *Historical Consciousness* is John Lukacs’s intellectual autobiography – at least up to 1967 and then elaborated in a new edition in 1985 and, of course, in two “auto-histories,” *Confessions of an Original Sinner* and *Last Rites*. At least one of the reviewers recognized it as such. Bernard Norling, professor of history at the University of Notre Dame, proclaimed it to be “an extraordinary book.” “*It is primarily about history,*” he continued, “*though it contains considerable material on philosophy, religion, sociology, psychology, semantics, biology, and genetics. It is, in places, close to an intellectual biography as well.*”

More significant than this astute observation, Lukacs himself called it his autobiography in an exchange of letters in the autumn of 1963 with, once again, Dwight Macdonald. One pair of letters, from October and November, shows just how autobiographical he conceived this book to be. He wrote Macdonald saying he was deeply depressed, worse than ever before. He struggled now as he had before with a sense of intellectual isolation, a recurring fear that his book would not find a publisher, and if it did that reviewers would not know what to do with a book and with a historian who could not be categorized, and that there was no audience for the book given the sorry state of academia and the reading level of the general public. We heard Kennan raise similar concerns. How would publishers and the public react? These questions haunted him. The book, he explained to Macdonald, “*proposes a radical revision of all of our thinking, and the emerging superiority of historical over scientific thinking in all spheres of life, including that of science.*”

*It is, in one word, one of the first books that is not merely anti-scientific but post-scientific.*” Philosophers of history such as Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee, he continued, had “*tried to WIDEN the scope of historical knowledge, covering everything, whereas I’m trying to DEEPEN it; they dealt with the knowledgeability of all history, whereas I deal with the historicity of knowledge.*”

But then he moved to the main reason he had written and to what I wish to highlight this morning, namely, “*that my book is affected by the very same problem it tries to discuss: that I grew during its writing, and that this philosophical book, like every book to some extent, is also autobiographical. And I have come to the conclusion that I might as well admit it. By this I mean that I am rewriting it in a v[ery] radical fashion, and I am thinking of beginning every chapter ... with an autobiographical subchapter, describing how I reached some of the conclusions that I’m going to explain and illustrate in the following pages of that chapter.*” Yes, “*the book is a philosophical book,*” he conceded; “*but I am beginning to think that philosophical books belong to the 19<sup>th</sup> century; that great Thesis-Books are things of the past.*” Today, the contemporary reader “*has become intensely and subconsciously sensitive to the plausibility of the personal account, and it is in the nature of things that such as personal account must describe rather than define. It must describe how the writer became first aware of the inadequacy of this or that accepted idea, how and why this or that experience set him thinking anew, raising new questions in his mind. [...] I am almost reaching the conclusion that from now on every so-called Non-Fiction piece of writing ought to begin with a frank avowal of why the author is proposing his thesis (and, of course, the development of this ‘why’ is auto-historical, the story of a growing interest or of a growing concern) – while, on the other hand, the only remaining field where an author can remain ‘objective’ (a bad and already superseded word) is that of ‘Fiction’, where he can practice a certain kind of near-absolute detachment when he deals with figures of his own imagination.*”

Some two weeks later, Macdonald endorsed the auto-historical approach but warned Lukacs how difficult it would be to realize his vision. “[O]f course you should include your own personal development in the book,” he wrote. “*Even the scientists in this century have come to see that the observer affects the thing observed [...] and so with your position you should put yourself into the picture.*” Macdonald offered a few possible strategies, recommending that he “*work the biographical genesis of the ideas into the actual exposition of them; this would be best, but,*” he warned, it “*w[oul]d, involve total rewriting and I imagine you have gone far beyond considering that with any pleasure, and [...] would take a great deal of literary tact and skill to keep the thread clear and the intellectual plot moving briskly along (in fact, it w[oul]d probably be, technically, impossible so let’s forget it).*”

Whether at the time Lukacs followed his own plan or took Macdonald’s advice, I do not know. So far, I have not found any surviving drafts. In the final version, Lukacs placed most of the auto-history in a brief postscript explaining the genesis of his ideas. Looking back on the book in 1994 for Russell Kirk’s republication of it, he called it a “*summing up [of] the history of the composition of the book itself, in accord with my belief – and, perhaps, with a main argument of the book – that the history of everything amounts to the thing itself.*” What is clear from Lukacs’s correspondence is that we can know much more than this brief “summing up.” By undertaking such a task – a difficult task – we will better understand the thing itself, “the thing itself” in this case being the historical consciousness of John Lukacs – a detailed intellectual biography. My expectation is that we will be able to read not only *Historical Consciousness* but his books and essays as well with

fresh eyes and deeper understanding. *Historical Consciousness* must find the audience he always hoped for but feared would never read it. I know from my experience with my own students that this hope is realistic, and the results will be profound. Lukacs expected nothing less than that historical thinking would lead to a new humanism with man once again at the center of the universe in a post-materialist, post-scientific, post-Cartesian world. That breakthrough would come. This was his cautious optimism.

*Delivered at the Otto von Habsburg Foundation’s conference  
“John Lukacs 100” to mark the centenary of the birth of John Lukacs  
(Ludovika University of Public Service, Budapest, 31 January 2024)*





## JOHN LUKACS – HISTORIAN OR WRITER?



The question in the title is easy to answer but still worth pondering. Naturally, John Lukacs was both a historian and a writer, i.e., a penman – if not even a novelist or fiction writer. He often referred to this, for example, in the foreword of his book *Destinations Past. Traveling Through History with John Lukacs*: “I overheard what another historian said when someone inquired about me, during a coffee break at a

symposium, after I had given a perhaps breezy, though not insubstantial, paper. He did not see that I was, accidentally, standing behind them. He said: »He is a historian; but he is really a writer.« (...) He should not have said »really«. He should have said »also«.” A lovely snippet from Lukacs, who was always a delightfully witty anecdotist. But may I add: in friendly conversations, John, who was otherwise an enviably cheerful man, grateful to God for his fate, his success as a writer, the beautiful and clever women with whom he had experienced so much pleasure, often remarked with a hint of – or perhaps more accurately, a heavy hint of – bitterness that historians did not accept him entirely because he was a writer, whereas he never became a “real” writer because he could not make up stories.

The purpose of this essay is twofold: on the one hand, I want to convey how excellent a writer John Lukacs was, and on the other hand, I want to explain why, in spite of this, he has not gained widespread recognition. In other words, why he has not been – and is not – read by many more people. Why did he not become a superstar? Because John Lukacs could have been, at least for us Hungarians (if not for the rest of the world; in the same way that Krúdy, whom Lukacs admired so much, is not appreciated outside of our country), a revered historian for his literary style, as Huizinga is for the Dutch – another author who had a profound influence on him. At any rate, we Hungarians could include him among the most significant writers who switched languages, like Joseph Conrad

or Vladimir Nabokov. In my opinion, John Lukacs is far from being considered as such. Besides, the world may value him more highly than we do – but that would be a whole other topic, so I shall not dwell on it.

I have a third aim as well: to evoke the figure of John Lukacs, with personal stories related to the subject in one way or another – sometimes only remotely – together with certain instances of our friendship, not solely because the centenary of his birth inevitably prompts (or encourages) such evocations, but also because he often spoke about things that – due to his inherent modesty – did not make it into his books, but might be interesting in the context of illuminating the theme.

The first examples are taken from the volume, which in Lukacs’ oeuvre – at least as it is known – is closest to fiction, or even to novels, in the strict sense, from *A Thread of Years*. Paradoxically, this is the very book in which he most frequently declares himself not to be a novelist but a historian (elsewhere, he says to his alter ego: “*But you are not a poet.*”). He even provides a succinct explanation of his reasons for not “writing a novel” – while the reader might conceivably, in a loose postmodernist sense, perceive this book of fictionalised sketches as a proper novel – because “*a story has to have shape, but life often doesn’t have a shape or even a theme. But history does.*”

To give you some examples. In the sketch story for the year 1902, Lukacs describes a typical mansion in southern New Jersey inhabited by American Quakers. Then, in the essayistic and conversational part of the chapter, he explains why this house is important to him; however, we are presently interested not in this but in the word magic: how Lukacs used the word “white” eleven times in one page to conjure up the building and its residents. This bald use of word recurrence requires a brave writer: a writer who senses that something might be a stylistic error in small scale, an offensive repetition of words, but can turn a text into poetry when taken to such extremes. Yet this word magic is not the only notable element, but equally so is the attention to fine details: something that is of little (or mostly no) relevance in a historical work, but without which it is impossible to write a good novel. “*The thin china cups and the white, blue-rimmed plates piled up in great ordered arrays, resting on the chalk-white wooden shelves of the cupboards and behind the white-framed glass doors of the kitchen cabinets.*”

My next one is an excellent example of this (attention to fine detail), and even more. A good novel has colours, flavours, odours, noises and sounds. How vivid, for example, is this sentence in the 1903 sketch: “*The Underground has a recognizable smell, coal smoke and dusty plush, with a faint whiff of sultana cake.*” A multitude of excerpts from *A Thread of Years* offer a fine illustration of this; let us quote, almost at random, another from the passage of 1946: “*Below the darkening emerald of a lawn, the last orange streaks of the sun are retreating from the burnished surface of a large pond, its smoothness disturbed only by the slow, silent wake of two beautiful and malevolent swans.*” This, for example, could be considered a clichéd narrative if it were not for the swan’s adjective “malevolent”; Lukacs, as a writer, feels that it is essential; otherwise, the description would be corny or even stinky Biedermeier. Indeed, we need this cruder effect: the hissing, nasty swan! And he was very adept at literary effects.

Then, we have another basic skill without which no good novel can be written: characterisation. I could cite countless examples of this from the book, but here is how Lukacs portrays someone in

the 1952 sketch: “A terrible snob, the kind who knows how to treat people whom he thinks are important and does not know how to treat people whom he thinks are not important, by which I mean that he snubs or ignores them, which is a shortcoming not only of manners but also of judgment — the occupational handicap of snobs, since sometimes the unimportant turn out to be not so unimportant after all.”

The last part of the above quote leads us to the aphoristic quality – or “aphoricism” – of Lukacs’ penmanship. It is not crucial for a good – or excellent – author, as we do not necessarily expect the writer to captivate us with witty – and wise – lines in an Oscar Wildean manner, but just like it was a hallmark of Oscar Wilde’s style (and of course many others), it was also one of Lukacs’. Several other elements distinguish his tone (and I shall come back to this later), but this is perhaps the most striking, and let me add, as possibly the only criticism in this essay, that he fell so in love with some of his aphorisms (well, let us put it this way, he deemed them so vital) that he repeated them endlessly throughout his oeuvre. Admittedly, it happened more towards the latter part of his career, and I think we should approach the works of an older, great writer with different expectations, more forgivingly than an author in their prime. The Európa Publishing House has released a volume entitled “*A boldogság: feladat*” (Happiness: a Task), compiled and edited by András Barkóczy, Lukacs’ Hungarian translator and dear friend. This collection brings together the aphorisms and aphoristic excerpts from his works, where each adage is often embedded in a longer train of thought, and can only be understood in conjunction with that.

Reflecting on Lukacs’ aphorisms would fill a whole essay, which, of course, could be said of many other matters, but I mention this because, during the years of our friendship, I often wanted to argue with him on a number of expressive points (although I felt prevented from doing so by something, perhaps a sense of respect for authority; which I now regret a bit), and because I know that he himself would have wanted to be argued with. Or, to be more precise, he would have liked to have been acknowledged, for example, for his ideas on historical philosophy, namely, to have been at least written about: preferably appreciatively, but at least in a debating manner. Or better still, he would have liked to have been more welcomed by the historiographers’ guild: if they would not have made him feel that his work had relatively less material based on new archival research, less exploration of new ‘facts’, but instead more recognition of his strengths: his literary skills and his ideas on the philosophy of history. But I shall come back to that later; for now, I would rather quote a thought from *Happiness: a Task* that again exemplifies Lukacs’ literary sensibility. “*In lovemaking, as with wine, the aftertaste is very important. Like an expensive wine, a beautiful woman can have a neutral (negative?) faint or even bad aftertaste.*” (By the way, he wrote this in Hungarian, and it can be found in the book *Fél évszázad magyar írásai* (Hungarian Writings of Half a Century).) In lieu of further quotations, let me note that John Lukacs, both as a man and as a historian, was by the interplay between genders, the psychology of love and the mystery (and practice) of lovemaking, and he wrote wonderfully on this subject, albeit with a conservative modesty. And it probably goes without saying that this – to use Lukacs’ endearing phrase, this element of “the clandestine alchemy of the human heart” – is, once again, critical to being a good writer.

My next example comes from his best-known book, *The Duel*, which recounts the struggle between Hitler and Churchill from 10 May to 31 July 1940 – from the day Churchill became Prime Minister of Britain, and Hitler began his blitzkrieg, and, in less than six weeks, had annexed practically all

of continental Europe. I could give you many passages that testify to Lukacs’ impressive talent for characterisation – in this case, of course, the personalities and psychology of Churchill and Hitler. However, since I have already mentioned this topic, though I certainly have not exhausted it, I will focus instead on another of his writing skills that has consistently captivated me through this volume – and has remained exemplary for me ever since when I read, usually a little discontentedly, historical fiction (although Lukacs’ work is not a novel) –: his sense of rhythm, the ability to shift between the various frames and angles. The book is almost entirely an illustration of this, but allow me to highlight two pages from the beginning. The one describing the events of 10 May, the day Churchill became Prime Minister. He opens with a close-up: we see Churchill in silk pyjamas in the morning and Hitler while he enters his barracks in plain clothes. The camera then pans to the telephone ringing on the bedside table in Churchill’s apartment: the Germans have invaded the Netherlands. We move into Churchill’s mind as he tries to make sense of the news. In contrast, next comes an extra wide shot: London, the largest city in the world at the time, followed by a description of the German and British people. This cuts to a long shot and then a full shot: we see the houses of London, the red buses, and smell the charcoal and plush scent of the Underground... Lastly, we return to a close-up: once again, we cut back and forth between Churchill and Hitler as they go about their daily business.

It is an element of a writer’s craft that can undoubtedly be taught (and I suppose it is), and yet, few historical novelists do it well: they mostly lack the proper extreme long and long shots that help the reader navigate. One probable reason for this is that authors do not want to state the obvious, thus expecting the reader to have a basic knowledge of the period they are evoking. I can even understand this to a certain extent because while it is possible to learn to alternate between different frame sizes, the way Lukacs manages to be truly exciting even in the wide shots is not: by adding something new, either in linguistic or factual terms, to the exposition of facts that are in principle common knowledge.

A final example: an open letter by John Lukacs to Viktor Orbán was published, first in the 25 January 2014 issue of *Népszabadság* and later, in the *Hungarian Writings of Half a Century*, in which he warned the Prime Minister – particularly in connection with the Paks investment project – against forging closer relations with Russia, because “*the Hungarian spirit and character cannot be Eastern*”. “*We respect our neighbours in Great Russia, but we ought not to conform to them nor should we slink towards them, because that could be a permanent burden in the long term, to the detriment of Hungarians.*” I will refrain from discussing the political content of this letter for the moment (I will do so a little later), but for the record, firstly, I will add that the Premier replied to him, and – in his somewhat condescending style (not addressing the question of why this “slinking” was happening) – reassured him that Hungary and its government had clearly chosen the West: “*we are already living in the future you are still worried about over there.*” I should note briefly that it now seems that Lukacs’ concern was not unfounded... Anyway, I do not intend to politicise this lecture; I am rather admiring the precise and yet tasteful wording: “slinking towards them.” An example – another almost random one – of how much Lukacs loved to fiddle with the Hungarian language. What he wrote in 1981 about Imre Kovács, the National Peasant Party politician who emigrated in 1947 and died in 1980, was also perfectly true of him: “*he preserved the flavour and vigour of his Hungarian language.*” (It was a pleasure to talk to him over wine – he always called it *kvaterkázni*, which means chatting



and drinking in convivial company – and to admire either the way he could lecture on almost anything, or the way he would tell stories about Hungary in the 1930s using the Hungarian language of the period, or the empathy with which he would question somebody – like me, for example, – who was, at that time, suffering from heartache.)

We can sense the strength of his use of Hungarian language and style not only from the sporadic, relatively few pieces he wrote in Hungarian but also from the translations of his works. I have stated that at least we Hungarians could count him among the greatest language-changing writers, however, I should also add that, although it is remarkable how Lukacs mastered the English language and was able to use it with as much vocabulary and nuance as Nabokov – with a little exaggeration – I still think that the Hungarian translations are superior to the original texts. And this is as much his merit as that of the translators – the brilliant Rudolf Komáromy and András Barkóczy (or indeed mine, because I translated several of his books towards the end of his career). John edited and stylised each translation with meticulous care. He made subtle adjustments that gave a slightly old-fashioned, bourgeois, Lukacsian flavour to the tone, which, I repeat, is more pronounced in Hungarian translations than in his English texts. It is a language that even the best translators cannot speak today, purely because the natural use of language has changed since the 1930s, when Lukacs, as an ambitious young man, absorbed every nuance of his mother tongue. He loved to play around with translations: he eradicated the superfluous articles (and the translator or editor was shocked to see how many unnecessary articles we use in our “natural” contemporary Hungarian), and he tweaked the word order and sentence structure (similar shock!). Moreover, he passionately sought the most precise words and expressions, which occasionally led to some amusement. I wish I had taken notes at the time because I can not give you any examples, but he had some quite bizarre word constructions (which, of course, did not make it into the final versions): he felt that the agglutinating Hungarian language could do many wonders that English is incapable of, and he was probably right, but not always. Nevertheless, he could have been a great language innovator if history and his destiny had happened to bring him back to Hungary, and he would have considered one of his tasks to support the changing (greying? dwindling?) Hungarian language.

The letter to the Prime Minister leads to this article’s second (and third) purpose: to explain Lukacs’s relative obscurity and evoke him as a man by recalling our friendship.

It was a year or two before this open letter, that he was excitedly preparing to meet Viktor Orbán during one of his visits to Budapest. He was formulating what he wanted to say to him. Most of all, that “we are all Hungarians”. Which is to say, how good it would be for the country, for the nation, if the Prime Minister – and his policies – were to represent the principle that everyone, whether liberal, socialist or any other political conviction, is equally part of the nation. We also know from his writings how concerned he was in the latter part of his career about the dangers of populist politics, and he expressed his apprehensions about it on a number of occasions. “*A populist will always remain suspicious of someone who does not seem to belong to his tribe.*” – he wrote, for instance, in his book, *The End of the Twentieth Century: And the End of the Modern Age*. Such tribal thinking was infinitely far from his views, while he was always proud of his Hungarian identity and patriotism. Then, the day after his meeting, at dinner, I asked him, “*Did you tell Orbán what you wanted?*” He seemed sad; even a teardrop appeared in his eyes, and he simply said: “*No, it didn’t turn out that way. I couldn’t tell him anything*”.

So that is the story, and I would not add anything to it (since he later did not want to talk about this meeting); I would rather move on to the question of why John Lukacs is not as well-known and respected as I – and I dare say many others – think he deserves to be.

Since I am not a historian and have never studied in depth the reception of John Lukacs, abroad or in Hungary, I cannot say how much he is objectively recognised in professional circles compared to other significant historians, so what follows is just a cautious suggestion or two. As a former publisher and translator of Lukacs, I certainly know that none of his books except *Budapest 1900* has sold a substantial number of copies (and *Budapest 1900* was not a huge blockbuster either).

This perhaps – might! – be partially due to the fact that Lukacs is difficult to classify in two ways: politically and genre-wise. (Incidentally, if he had been met with enormous success, I could explain it in the same way: neither genre nor political affiliation narrows his readership.) At any rate, Lukacs is too much of a writer to be a historian, too much of a historian to be a writer, and too much of a liberal to be a conservative, but too much of a conservative to be a liberal. For me, of course, these are positive things, but I think his lack of political classification, particularly, may have hindered his success. “*The writer is under constant pressure to commit, to pledge allegiance to one side or the other*”, said András Cserna-Szabó in a recent interview. Well, John Lukacs did not choose, and thus, he did not gain much visibility in a Hungarian cultural milieu where both camps mostly rewarded only their own loyalists. Again, this is just a cautious assumption...

However, I know for a fact that Lukacs has returned to the subject in conversations with friends: that his success has been limited because he has not been well received by the historians’ guild – on the one hand, they have practically overlooked his theory of historical philosophy (which had especially pained him), and on the other, out of some professional narrow-mindedness, they only valued new research on factual material. This became almost a complex – and it was no doubt part of the reason why he wanted to prove himself when he wrote his book on Stalin and Hitler (at the age of eighty-two): I assisted him in organising a trip to Moscow, I acted as his translator, I arranged his meeting with historian Alexander Yakovlev... And I helped him up, terrified, when he fell in a restaurant while staring at the hot Central Asian waitress... In addition, I spent long hours every day at the hotel translating a collection of Russian diplomatic documents from 1941 for him. He would quote it in a few places, but the only actual result of the hard – and dull – work instead of a siesta after lunch was only a long footnote (about what is almost irrelevant).

By the way, John was not impressed by Moscow, which he visited for the first time: he was not taken by its wealth and found it gaudy, architecturally “a mixture of Las Vegas and Stalinist neo-Baroque”; at the time, I was sorry about that. I admired Moscow a little enviously, but he did not; I had illusions (that Russia, with its wealth and youthful vigour, had finally stepped into Western civilisation), but he did not: he knew, he felt, that Russia was going to be an enemy of the West again.

And this is perhaps another valuable skill for a writer: not only the almost mystical ability to immerse oneself in the historical past but also to have a vision of time: past, present, and future.

Delivered at the “John Lukacs 100” conference  
to mark the centenary of the birth of John Lukacs  
(Ludovika University of Public Service, Budapest, 31 January 2024)

# HUNGARIAN EU PRESIDENCY WITH A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND



Archabbot of Pannonhalma,  
Minister Navracsics,  
Ambassador Pröhle,  
Dear guests and friends  
of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation,  
and indeed friends of  
Otto von Habsburg himself,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a true pleasure to  
be back at Pannonhalma. It is my second  
visit. My first visit was  
on 11 November last  
year when the Abbey  
celebrated its tradi-

tional Saint Martin's Feast. Having been born myself in the City of Aalst in Belgium, which has Saint Martin as its patron saint, and having been educated, like my father and grandfather and my brothers, at the city's Saint Martin's College, I seem to have a personal connection – through Saint Martin – with this magnificent and inspiring place. Through my school years, I was imbued with the values taught to us by Saint Martin's life. I am humbled to be able to address you today so near the place of Saint Martin's birth.

I am even more honoured to be here today as the monastic community of Pannonhalma is celebrating the eight-hundredth anniversary of the reconstruction and consecration of the Pannonhalma basilica and to pay tribute in this modest way to the commemoration of this extraordinary path of eight centuries.

All the more, therefore, would I like to extend my thanks for the warm welcome today and for inviting me as a speaker at this conference. I am not a historian, nor have I been connected to Otto von Habsburg, not even distantly, but as a Belgian, I am a European with strong convictions about how the lessons of our common history have taught us that our common values must be protected, strengthened and advanced for the common good, and to prepare our future and that of our children. The best way to do that is to defend our European Union and to defend its values

that are now enshrined in the Treaty, namely the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. It was the values that, I believe, Otto von Habsburg stood for during his long and active life and that provided the moral foundation for his pan-European vision and his vision for peace AND freedom in Europe.

His early years included a stay in Belgium as a student at the Catholic University of Leuven, where he obtained a doctorate in political science in 1935, and in Steenokkerzeel, where he lived with his mother and siblings at Castle Ham, from 1929 until 1940 when the family fled two days before the castle was bombed by the invading Nazi army. Of course, Otto von Habsburg's active life in European politics would bring him back to Belgium many times later on. We can assume that his education and formative years in Belgium have contributed to the indelible mark that he left on the European construction, or rather its "rediscovery" and reunification.

My capacity here as Ambassador of His Majesty the King of the Belgians adds another dimension to my presence at Pannonhalma. As was beautifully explained by Dr Gergely Fejérdy, Princess Stéphanie of Belgium, who found her last resting place under the basilica, represents par excellence the close connections between our countries, Belgium and Hungary, and the fact that Otto von Habsburg's heart urn was buried next to her, symbolises even more the deep historic and perhaps emotional connection between our countries.

## I. Belgian-Hungarian Relations Throughout History

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Unlike Dr Fejérdy, you may not all be experts of Belgian-Hungarian relations, but I assume that most of you know that these relations are close and friendly, and that they are built on a long history of rich encounters and exchanges, on mutual respect and friendship.

We do not know exactly when the first encounters between Hungarians and Belgians took place, but they may not have been the happiest. There are historical accounts of Magyar raids on monasteries in southern Belgium, in the county of Hainaut and the duchy Brabant, in the year 956. But let me reassure you, not all encounters were that bloody. For more than one thousand years now, our relations have been very peaceful, a long period coinciding with the life-span of this Abbey.

For a long period, our countries were both ruled by the Habsburg family, which stimulated commerce, scientific and cultural exchanges. A prominent figure was Mary of Hungary in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. She was a Brussels-born Habsburg princess, sister of Emperor Charles V. At the age of 17, she moved to Buda and married the King of Hungary and Bohemia, Louis II, and hence became queen of Hungary, but her husband died in the battle of Mohács in 1526. It is an interesting fact that Queen Mary appealed to her connections with the Southern Netherlands and got Flemish and Walloon soldiers to defend Buda against the Ottomans during the siege of Buda. In 1530, she was called back to become the regent of the Habsburg Netherlands, at the request of her brother,



Emperor Charles. But even after her return to Belgium, Queen Mary remained an active promoter of the two land's relations, fostering many cultural exchanges, the arts and music. There is abundant proof of that in the libraries of the Hungarian and Belgian aristocracy at the time, and who knows, in the library of this Abbey, too.

Later on, the links between our countries were not less abundant. Those of you who know Brussels will know that there is still a bridge in the capital called Buda, commemorating the city's liberation from the Ottomans in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. During and after the 1848 revolution, Belgium, independent since 1830, welcomed many Hungarian freedom fighters who were exiled. Kossuth Lajos's mother is buried in Brussels at the cemetery of Etterbeek. The famous freedom fighter and writer Miklós Jósika fled to Brussels in 1850 and lived there for 15 years. After the revolution, during the dual monarchy that brought substantial growth to Hungary, commercial and cultural relations intensified considerably. Brussels and Budapest are both capitals of art nouveau, a European style par excellence. Belgian capital investments were instrumental for the development of the Hungarian railways and mining sector.

After the First World War, Belgium provided relief to Hungarian children and employed 6,000 Hungarian miners. Even during the Second World War, Hungary and Belgium were never directly confronted. Hungary even sent humanitarian aid to Belgium. After the war, Belgium again welcomed Hungarian children and refugees. The same happened again after the 1956 revolution, when Belgium welcomed over 6,000 Hungarian immigrants. One of them was Alexandre Lamfalussy, a student who completed his studies in Belgium, also at the Catholic University of Leuven, where he co-founded the Collegium Hungaricum, a student home that still provides accommodation to Hungarian students in Leuven until this day. Lamfalussy obtained Belgian citizenship, and later became the founding father of the Euro as the first president of the European Monetary Institute. This year, the Euro is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and is one of the great successes of European integration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you can see, the links between Brussels or, Belgium and Hungary outdate the EU for centuries. I guess that the point I am really keen to make is that Brussels is not only the "source of all evil". It is also the Belgian capital and a city that is intricately linked to Hungarian history and that has always welcomed Hungarians.

Today, Belgium and Hungary are close partners in the European Union and allies in NATO. We benefit from the security, stability and prosperity that the EU and NATO have provided to our citizens and companies over the last decades. Our bilateral trade amounted to 7 billion euros in 2023, and Belgium is the 14<sup>th</sup> investor in Hungary, employing more than 9,000 Hungarians. This is only possible thanks to the EU's single market, another great achievement of European integration that has brought so many advantages to both our countries since Hungary joined the EU 20 years ago. Belgium and Hungary are both open economies, dependent on trade and investment, and characterised by a closely knit fabric of SMEs and family businesses. We have all to gain from working together. We are keen to cherish our close relationship and to make it future-proof.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, Belgium and Hungary have an extraordinary opportunity to take up once more a leading role in Europe by exercising the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. This very day, the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, marks an extraordinary moment. It is the last day of the Belgian Presidency, and tomorrow, in Brussels, the Presidency will be handed over from my Prime Minister to the Prime Minister of Hungary. To be able to mark this day at Pannonhalma is a great joy and auspicious occasion.

Let me take this opportunity to give you a brief and certainly incomplete overview of the most important achievements of the Belgian presidency that is now drawing to a close.

## II. The most Important Achievements of the Belgian Presidency

During the last six months, important legislative and political results were achieved in order to protect EU citizens, strengthen Europe's competitiveness, and make the EU future-proof. In all modesty, we think it is fair to conclude that Belgium successfully accomplished its presidency's triple objective to drive forward an ambitious legislative agenda, to effectively respond to ongoing challenges and crises facing the EU, and to prepare the debate on Europe's future.

First, driving forward the legislative work.

One of the Presidency's main achievements is that it has closed 74 agreements and found 57 Council-level negotiating mandates. We are proud of this because it demonstrates the Belgian 'culture of compromise'. Indeed, chairing the Council means that you have to find consensus between the 27 Member States and with the European institutions to broker agreements, so that the legislative work can move forward and that decisions are taken.

I will not list all these legislative achievements individually; the list is available online, but let me summarise the legislative work by saying that substantial progress was achieved in all six priority areas:

- 1) Defending the rule of law, democracy and unity
- 2) Strengthening the EU's competitiveness
- 3) Pursuing a green and just transition
- 4) Reinforcing our social and health agenda
- 5) Protecting people and borders
- 6) Promoting a global Europe

The second objective was responding to crises.

The Belgian Presidency reaffirmed its unwavering support to Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression through:

- Agreements on the Ukraine Facility of 50 billion euros from the EU budget, the Ukraine Assistance Fund of 5 billion euros via the European Peace Facility, the extension of autonomous trade measures on Ukrainian exports, and the transfer of contributions on profits made from immobilised Russian assets to support Ukraine;

- We also achieved the imposition of the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> sanctions package against Russia;
- The facilitation of progress on Ukraine’s accession process, with the opening of accession negotiations.

The Belgian Presidency also worked to counteract further escalation of the conflict in the Middle East by finding common ground for (re)engagement with UNRWA, launching an EU military operation contributing to maritime security in the Red Sea, and adopting sanctions against members of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad as well as against violent Israeli settlers in the West Bank.

The Belgian Presidency responded to the conflict in Eastern DRC through work on sanctions against those supporting, fuelling, or profiting from the conflict.

The Belgian Presidency took action to protect Europe’s democratic processes against external threats by starting the work on the Defence of Democracy Package and activating the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) mechanism in view of the European elections.

The Belgian Presidency responded to European farmers’ distress and helped realise a more just transition in the agricultural sector by successfully working to revise and simplify the Common Agricultural Policy.

The third objective was to preparing Europe’s future.

The Belgian Presidency fuelled the discussions in preparation of the next EU Strategic Agenda that was adopted during the European Council in Brussels last Thursday. The Strategic Agenda is an important document that will lay the foundations for a thriving EU for the next five years, until 2029.

To help make the EU future-proof, the Belgian Presidency also prepared a Progress Report on the Future of Europe, which includes a Roadmap for future work on internal reforms. In this effort, it took into account the triple challenge of retaining and improving the EU’s internal functioning and capacity to act, while adapting to a new geopolitical reality, and preparing for enlargement. Broad agreement emerged that reforms should focus on values, policies, budget, and governance.

As part of these reflections and to boost the Union’s competitiveness, secure its economic resilience and achieve the full potential of the Single Market, the Presidency also presented a Stocktaking Note on Competitiveness. This report outlines the progress made in all competitiveness-related policy fields by the Belgian Presidency, and previewed further work needed to bolster European competitiveness in the future, with a focus on the Single Market and the Union’s governance and finances.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the start of the Presidency, our commitment was to deliver and honour the reputation of the famous Belgian compromise. It is safe to say that we have kept our promise in terms of brokering

agreements. We kept our promise of “protecting, strengthening and preparing” the EU with an eye to the immediate present, as well as the long-term future.

Belgium has been working to ensure a smooth transition to the Hungarian Presidency, which will take over on 1 July.

### III. Handing over to Hungary

To conclude, a few words on our expectations regarding the Hungarian Presidency, from a Belgian perspective. First of all, the Hungarian diplomats and officials are very well prepared and very competent, and we expect them to run a very smooth and well-organised presidency. The timeframe will be special. The European Parliament and European Commission will be in a transition phase, so the Council will ensure the continuity, and that will be the responsibility of the Hungarian Presidency.

In terms of legislative work, we expect the Hungarian Presidency to take forward the work on the competitiveness agenda, which includes turning the Green Deal into a comparative advantage. The ingredients are on the table; now we have to start cooking. Secondly, building a solid European Defence Union will be a central topic. The Hungarian Presidency will be in the driving seat to advance the Commission’s proposal on a defence industry strategy and programme. Thirdly, the migration and asylum pact needs implementing measures. Fourthly, the support for Ukraine in all its dimensions will need follow-up and continuous attention from the Council. Fifthly, the enlargement negotiations with the aspiring countries need to be carried on effectively with scrupulous attention to the respect of the criteria in order to safeguard the credibility of the enlargement agenda. Lastly, the EU’s internal reform process will need to become more concrete and put on the rails.

For all this, Hungary will be able to count on Belgium’s support, in line with our long-standing relations, in a spirit of sincere cooperation in order to protect the legacy of the founding fathers of the EU, namely to protect the citizens of the EU, to strengthen our economies in a sustainable way, and to prepare our future which much remain true to our values, which are the values that motivated Otto von Habsburg’s work, and which were undoubtedly also the values that Saint Martin could have supported.

Let me reiterate my profound gratitude to the community of Pannonhalma for welcoming me today, and to the Otto von Habsburg Foundation, to which I extend my warm congratulations on its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary, for organising this wonderful gathering.

*Köszönöm szépen.* (Thank you very much.)

*Delivered at the commemorative conference  
“Under the Aegis of the Patron Saint of Europe –  
reflections on the Upcoming Hungarian Presidency”  
(Pannonhalma Benedictine Archabbey, Pannonhalma, 30 June 2024).*



## OTTO VON HABSBURG, THE EUROPEAN POLITICIAN



The history of Europe is unthinkable without mentioning the Habsburgs. This family gave rise to German, Spanish, Hungarian and Bohemian Kings, Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire and Austria-Hungary. Many traits of the great ancestors could be recognised in Otto von Habsburg: the devotion of Emperor Charles V towards God; the persevering diligence and sense of duty of Emperor Franz Joseph; the

fatherly and humble love for the peoples and ethnic groups of Europe that was the hallmark of his father, Emperor and King Charles, beatified in 2004. God bestowed upon him another parallel: he, like his forebear, Emperor Frederick III, defeated his enemies by outliving them.

Even as a child, little Archduke Otto was called a 'roly-poly toy'. He may have had an innate talent for overcoming setbacks, for continuing to work with tenacious determination, unwavering in his pursuit of recognised ideals without regard for himself, nevertheless these traits were also honed by the many vicissitudes and adventures of his life. Adolf Hitler, Edvard Beneš, Erich Honecker, and Slobodan Milošević all loathed this Habsburg. Persecuted and vilified by both the red and the brown ideologues, a common thread marked Otto von Habsburg's life: while he received neither an empire nor a crown, nor sovereignty or throne from his father, he did, however, inherit the awareness of bearing a responsibility that could not be delegated.

Born to be a just emperor and king of many nations, in time, he became a selfless defender of human rights, an incorruptible advocate of oppressed peoples, and a champion of a Europe united in freedom and peace.

The Austrian Jewish William S. Schlammm, a convinced communist in his youth and later a prominent conservative writer and journalist, wrote him an open letter in 1977 on the occasion of Otto von Habsburg's 65<sup>th</sup> birthday:

*"When we were both children, history and fate destined you to be my Emperor... In my long and eventful life, during decades of contact with the so-called celebrities of our time, I have never met a statesman, a politician or a thinker with the humanity, the sense of duty, the staunch faith that you have... If you had become what you were destined to be, the West would have had its most significant Emperor since Charlemagne. But since the West was thrown out of balance in 1918, Europe today finds in you the only civil statesman it can trust."*

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When Archduchess Zita gave birth to her firstborn in Reichenau, Lower Austria, on 20 November 1912, Europe was at the end of a long period of peace. The multinational and multilingual Habsburg Monarchy, with its 52 million inhabitants, seemed unshakable. However, the diverse empire in the heart of Europe, held together by the dutiful patriarch Franz Joseph, fell victim to the religion of the age, nationalism. The bullets fired by Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 took more than just the life of the Crown Prince. The Habsburg Empire staggered into the First World War with a mortal wound.

Archduke Otto was almost four years old when Franz Joseph died, and his father succeeded as Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary. He was six when his family was expropriated and driven out of the country. He was yet to turn ten when his father passed away in exile on the Atlantic island of Madeira after two failed restoration attempts in Hungary. Empress Zita had limited influence and resources, but she brought up Otto and his seven siblings with unstinting discipline and a sense of responsibility towards the people of the Danube basin. Otto was a diligent student, not only of languages, history, geography and literature but also of imperial obligations rather than privileges.

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A European by birth, he soon became a European by experience: from Madeira, he went to Madrid and later to the Basque Country, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Paris. While he was still working on his doctorate at the Catholic University of Leuven, he became a player on the political stage – which he never left thereafter. Otto von Habsburg was in Berlin when the Nazis rose to power. Hitler tried to meet the young Habsburg twice to rope him into his cause, which Otto immediately recognised. As he later remarked, this was probably the only interesting conversation he had ever refused. Having read Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, he had no illusions: he was determined to prevent Austria's annexation by the Third Reich at all costs.

Indeed, after the Anschluss in 1938, Hitler had the foremost Austrian monarchists imprisoned, Archduke Franz Ferdinand's sons, Max and Ernst von Hohenberg, were deported to the Dachau concentration camp, and Otto von Habsburg had a warrant issued for his arrest 'for the crime of high treason'. The Gestapo attempted to kidnap him from France. Adolf Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess, ordered Otto's death.

Although his own life was in danger, the young head of the House of Habsburg helped thousands of emigrants, mostly Jews from Central Europe, to escape to Spain, Portugal or South America by securing visas for them in France. When he, too, was forced to flee Europe, he carried the fight against the Nazis to Washington.

It is historically indisputable that Otto von Habsburg's efforts helped persuade US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to support re-establishing Austria as an independent state, preventing it from disappearing behind the Iron Curtain. The Republic did not thank him for it: after returning to Tyrol in 1945, he was forced to leave the country again at the demand of the Soviet occupiers and their pawn, Karl Renner. But Otto von Habsburg, a European by birth and experience, had matured into a European by conviction in the American exile. His objective was no longer to uphold the crowns of his ancestors but to liberate Europe from communism and unify the continent in peace and freedom. As a stateless statesman, the spoken and written word was his only weapon for decades. Evidently, it was a sharp one, as the sheer number and ferocity of his opponents illustrate.

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In 1978, he, a descendant of numerous German Kings and Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, took on German nationality to become a candidate for the first directly elected European Parliament. Having fallen victim to world politics in his youth, he plunged into parliamentary work at the age of 66 after a career as a lecturer, columnist and non-fiction writer. In Strasbourg and Brussels, he was a Member of the European Parliament for Bavaria but also the first representative of Austria, Hungary, Croatia, and all the other nations whose participation in the European unification project was blocked by the iron fist of communism.

Although statesmen such as Charles de Gaulle, Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, Henry Kissinger and Franz Josef Strauss had sought his counsel in the past, it was only a matter of time till he became an authority in the European Parliament, transcending the boundaries of nations and factions. For two decades, he acted as an advocate for the peoples suffering under the communist yoke, a champion of Christian Europe, but also as a representative of thousands of so-called small concerns of citizens. Even his ideological opponents were impressed by his zeal and wide-ranging expertise.

As he grew older, the breadth of his recognition expanded: in the 1970s, he was reviled as a 'cold warrior,' but his vision gradually began to be fulfilled from 1989 onwards. The 20<sup>th</sup> century's prisons of nations – the Soviet Union with its Eastern Bloc and Yugoslavia – broke apart, just as the Habsburg had hoped and predicted. With the great enlargement of the European Union to the East, the 'illusion' for which Otto von Habsburg had long been ridiculed began to materialise. *"I always aim beyond the range of my gun,"* he used to say. That is why he never looked backwards or conformed but faced forward with courage and determination.

He did not seek to cling to the shattered and broken forms of the old empire; instead, he wished to salvage the most valuable and noble aspects and incorporate them into a contemporary form. The Holy Roman Empire and later Austria-Hungary were supranational, diverse, tolerant, and yet orderly communities. Otto von Habsburg wanted the European Union to be supranational,

diverse, tolerant, and orderly. *"Europe must grow like a tree, and cannot be constructed like a skyscraper"*, he often repeated.

For him, a united Europe was not a new invention or construct but a rediscovery: a polyglot and world traveller whose family was related to almost all the European nations, understood from the history he had learned, lived and endured that the poison of nationalism had destroyed the empire of his forefathers and the entire continent. Otto von Habsburg saw the European Union as a legal and protective space, as a shelter for the unhindered development of peoples and ethnic groups, and as a power to bring peace. Otto von Habsburg wanted to convince his admirers and followers of this vision – which is by no means congruent with the ideas of today's EU dignitaries.

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But what is the lasting, timeless legacy of Otto von Habsburg? It is probably his understanding of responsibility that shaped all his political activity.

Otto von Habsburg died as he lived: in the certainty that before God, it is not titles and honours that count, but only faith and good deeds. He was never motivated by personal interest, honour, fame, power, or career. Neither slander nor calumny nor being twice thrown out of his own country, not even the discriminatory 'Habsburg laws' could deter him from devoting his utmost efforts to those for whom God and history had placed responsibility on him.

He claimed no personal credit for anything he had achieved or brought about, whether he had a secret or an evident hand in it. Otto von Habsburg had that inner independence, that equanimity of spirit in the face of success and failure, which is the fruit of true humility. He was convinced that all things come from God's grace: One should fulfil one's duty as long, and as well as possible without worrying about success or failure because God grants success in every case. Like this Habsburg, those who attribute all achievements to divine grace and not to themselves remain humble even when they are famous and revered, successful and respected. Nor can they ever become dictators because they know that any form of politics is merely a service and that only God is absolute. They stand against any form of totalitarianism because only God can fulfil the totum, the totality of human hopes and desires.

Not all, but his most illustrious ancestors were mindful of this as rulers. They understood their reign as serving the will of God, as the pursuit of a duty greater than themselves. This is the truer, more profound meaning of the much-quoted – and much-misunderstood – "divine right of royalty", which, in the best case, is a prerogative of humility and responsibility.

Otto von Habsburg's statement about Charles de Gaulle: *"a man of the day before yesterday and the day after tomorrow"* also holds true for him. And beyond: an emperor without a crown, a statesman without a state, a great visionary with a distinguished past. The responsibility that Otto von Habsburg shouldered with fervour throughout his life was deeply rooted in history – and bore rich fruit in his work.

*Delivered at the commemorative conference  
"Under the Aegis of the Patron Saint of Europe –  
reflections on the Upcoming Hungarian Presidency"  
(Pannonhalma Benedictine Archabbey, Pannonhalma, 30 June 2024).*



# THE CONTINUITY OF HISTORY

Greeting János Martonyi



*“There would soon be celebrations for the four hundredth anniversary of the battle of Mohács. It must seem funny, perhaps, this celebration of a defeat; still, the victors, the great Ottoman Empire, couldn’t very well celebrate, since they’d long ceased to exist. The Tartars had also disappeared from the face of the earth, without leaving a trace, as had the tough Habsburg Empire, practically before our very eyes. So we took to celebrating by our-*

*selves our great lost battles, which we’d managed to survive. Perhaps we’d also got used to finding defeat more exciting, made of sterner stuff, and more important than victory – at any rate, more genuinely belonging to us.”<sup>1</sup>*

I have quoted from the book of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian writer who was born in 1912, in the penultimate year of the Belle Époque, and died in 1990, a year after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. A Hungarian destiny in the midst of momentous European dates. The author’s name is Géza Ottlik – and if I were to explain to foreigners his major work, entitled *School at the Frontier*, I would say it is like blending Robert Musil’s novel, *The Confusions of Young Törless*, with Flaubert’s *Sentimental Education*.

It is a *bildungsroman* and a narrative of a national culture shaped by defeat. The Battle of Mohács, referred in the above quote, represents a calamitous moment for the Hungarians: the defeat of the medieval great power of Hungary in 1526 by the vast and expanding Ottoman Empire and the loss of independence for the subsequent 400 years. While every Hungarian is familiar with this date, less well-known is the fact that Sultan Suleiman’s ally was the greatest French Renaiss-

sance monarch, King Francis I. In addition to Mohács, Hungarians have another geographical expression for a national catastrophe: Trianon. Trianon was the name of the 1920 Peace Treaty of Versailles, which ended the “Great War” and recognised Hungary as a sovereign state again. But at what cost? As a result of the Treaty, Hungary lost 2/3 of its territory and 1/3 of its Hungarian ethnic population. Thus, Trianon is not a celebration of independence for Hungarians but remains a source of trauma and neurosis to this day.

A Hungarian *Sonderweg*? A Hungarian paradox? If we look at the birth year and date of the guest of honour, one can see that the spring of 1944 marks another low point in our national history. Disaster after disaster. The German occupation – the loss of independence, the scandal of the Shoah, during which half a million Hungarian citizens were exterminated by the Nazis in Auschwitz and other concentration camps in cooperation with the Hungarian authorities. Then, at the turn of 1944–1945, the siege of Budapest – the largest and bloodiest offensive on urban terrain during the Second World War after Stalingrad! – caused devastation, ruins and then the deprivation of independence, a brutal assimilation into a totalitarian empire, as an only nominally autonomous colony of the communist Soviet Union. The revolution of 1956 was a shining star in the Hungarian sky, yet the Russian boots that trodden it down proved that the chance of survival in Hungarian society outside of emigration until 1989 lay in returning to the hiding streams of the great traditions of national culture.

The latter was the path of the great statesman of the regime change, József Antall, and it was also the path of his colleague, János Martonyi. However, let us not forget that edification always brings hope and represents intellectual and political readiness, and it is what enabled the rebirth of civil society after 1990, not only in Hungary but throughout Central Europe beyond the Iron Curtain.

The yearning and promise of a bourgeois society in Hungary, as in the rest of Central Europe, meant a return to Europe. The tragedy of Central Europe lay in – as Milan Kundera put it in his famous essay – when Central Europe was torn away from its roots; and secondly, and it is no less thought-provoking, when Western Europe forgot to some extent about itself, its vocation, and European unity. It is rarely mentioned, but the revolution in Central Europe, the Springtime of the Nations in 1989, initially frightened the political elites of Western Europe, including such historic figures as Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand. Nonetheless, the return has been achieved, and it is now, thank God, history, albeit the continuity of this recent history is fragile, in the words of the French philosopher Simone Weil, “rooted in time”, as is everything in this ephemeral world.

It is not my place to praise the foreign policy achievements of János Martonyi, and there is no time or space to give even a cursory analysis of the voluminous contents of the book in front of us. But this work vividly reveals that Martonyi’s diplomatic endeavours – which we might call the art of the impossible – were driven by a profound and much-reflected intellectual fervour, not merely by the exigencies so often invoked. *Continuity of History* reads the title, and the essays in this volume make it seem almost evident that out of the inherent chaos of history emerges the story of a community of values that we must recreate and reshape anew so that we may remain

<sup>1</sup> Ottlik, Géza: *School at the frontier*. Translated by Kathleen Szasz. New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966, pp. 366–367.



worthy of its ideals. The centuries-old past and the European character of Hungarian constitutionalism; 1848, the European context of the Spring of Nations; the blissful bond of the nation and freedom; the universal lesson of 1956; the still relevant political legacy of József Antall all remind us of what the great French conservative and liberal statesman Alexis de Tocqueville prophesied on his American journey: democracy is a providential fact in history. I would remind you that Tocqueville was minister of Foreign Affairs in the hopeful spring of 1848.

However, democracy, like all things in the land of mortals, is a double-edged sword: democracy can be the home of freedom or the prisoner of the tyranny of the majority. Tocqueville claimed to be an aristocrat at heart and a democrat in spirit. Tocqueville had read the reflections of József Eötvös, the great Hungarian politician and thinker, on the prevailing ideals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the dramatic dilemmas of liberty and equality. A hundred years later, it was the example of József Eötvös that led József Antall to dedicate his life to rebuilding freedom and democracy, and it was he who picked János Martonyi, the guest of honour of this day, as an important colleague, to whom Hungary’s Euro-Atlantic integration has been attributed to through many significant and painstaking achievements. From Tocqueville to Eötvös to Antall and Martonyi. With all the sorrowful events in our Hungarian and European history, what more comforting continuity is needed?

Thank you for your kind attention! Best wishes to the guest of honour *ad multos annos*!

*Delivered at the event honouring János Martonyi  
“Respect for the Law Above All Else”  
(Ludovika University of Public Service, Budapest, 5 April 2024)*



ALAIN LAMASSOURE

## HOMAGE TO JÁNOS MARTONYI

Mr. Ambassador,

Each of your invitations is an honour. I also consider it a gesture of personal friendship. For this, I am doubly grateful.

Additionally, this evening offers me the all-too-rare pleasure of paying tribute to the oeuvre of a great Hungarian and a great European in the twilight years of his career.

Under the unusual title, *La Continuité de l'Histoire*, János Martonyi has compiled a collection of texts, lectures, and speeches that distinguished his long diplomatic work. The title is unusual because the chapters have been arranged discontinuously, ignoring both the texts’ chronology and the themes’ homogeneity. However, this editing makes the book all the more livelier while symbolising and illustrating the unity and richness of János Martonyi’s thoughts and actions in the best possible way. The continuity of a personal tale, which is, at the same time, our own: Ours, that belongs to those of us involved in public affairs – we Europeans, particularly Hungarians and French. I am deeply touched that the Otto von Habsburg Foundation has undertaken to publish these texts in the language of Molière.

This book is not a memoir. It reveals what lies between the lines of memoirs and, paradoxically, what the memoirist dares not leave to posterity if they are overly modest or too reticent. So, thank you, dear János, for showing us the other side of the mirror of a life such as yours.

As a man of culture and action, never separating one from the other, János Martonyi is a paragon of “*l’honnête homme*”, an honest man in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century sense. He described himself as “a value-driven realist”. Someone who, by looking further back in time, seeks understanding with the aim of being useful and effective in this century of ours, which we are responsible for. Too many historical accounts are accusatory or apologetic. For Martonyi, it is about raising awareness as well as explaining and inspiring action while bearing in mind the accounts of others. His thought is imbued





with the best of Christian Universalism, the reasoning of the Enlightenment and the revolution of European peace, the peace we forged together after the two most appalling wars in the history of humankind. Leaving aside the Habsburg family, János Martonyi is the most Francophone of Hungarian diplomats and the most Hungarian of European activists.

So, what can we learn from János Martonyi over these pages?

**1.** – Hungary is a nation with a unique yet exemplary destiny. Pascale Andreani will talk about what she discovered “from within”, living in Budapest and learning Hungarian. We know all about Hungary’s great tragedies: the events of Mohács in 1848 and Trianon in November 1956. What belongs to you alone is the Holy Crown of St. Stephen, the immortal symbol of Hungarian sovereignty, whose history is a summary of Hungary’s extraordinary trials and tribulations, forever surmounted. The Golden Bull of 1222, mere years after the Magna Carta of England, is a proclamation of liberty, the like of which is unknown in our long history of French Monarchy. This “historical constitution” is a rather surprising concept from our perspective, which the Hungarian Constitutional Court still refers to today, and which combines the English customary law tradition with the practice of written constitutions. It ensures the protection of collective rights of freedom. In his book, János Martonyi explains that the same word refers to both individual and collective liberties in Hungarian. He adds that his entire life has been driven by the desire to see national minorities recognised in national decision-making processes and the Hungarian insights included in European decision-making processes – especially in 2011, during the memorable Hungarian EU Presidency.

János Martonyi’s vision is anything but nationalistic. He claims that, under the Habsburgs, Hungarians were accustomed to living in a multinational environment where foreign relations were conducted outside Budapest. Comparing his country with others – with a humble modesty that I would describe as particularly courageous – Martonyi concludes: “*We are neither better nor less culpable than other nations. We are exactly like them.*”

As one of the pioneers and theoreticians of the Visegrad Group, he makes the sensible point that there is no divide between Western and Central Europe, only historical differences.

**2.** – Let us now turn to history. Otto von Habsburg taught us that peace between nations begins with reconciling their collective memories. That is why we created the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe. We must avoid a twofold malediction. As Paul Valéry put it: “*History is the most dangerous product evolved from the chemistry of the intellect.*” And secondly, as George Orwell said in his world-famous novel: “*Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.*” The cursed state of affairs that once again engulfed the eastern part of the continent two years ago.

János Martonyi remarked on Hungary’s foreign policy from 1896 to 1919: “*History is a series of coincidences. It is not a sealed system.*” He expressly referred to Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle. The great teleologies – religious or pagan, Christian or communist – have all fallen flat: there was

no Parousia in the year 1000, nor proletarian dictatorship in 2000. Indeed, the past could have been different, even if God himself could not reverse the course of history. However, there is no point in dreaming of what would have happened if the Hungarians had tried negotiating with the Sublime Porte like the Romanians. Neither about the outcome had Charles I (IV) been able to sign a different peace treaty in 1917. Nevertheless, the principle of chance grants us the power to shape the present and the future.

Thus, one hundred years after Trianon, János Martonyi sees the tragedy transformed into a ‘miracle’: Hungarians are independent and united, even beyond their borders. “*Following a hundred years of solitude* [perhaps a nod to Gabriel García Márquez?], *it is time to understand and accept others; their language, culture, ideas, and aspirations, which sometimes differ from our own.*”

**3.** – This brings us to the debate on identity. Once again, Martonyi urges us not to remain prisoners of history or ignore it. A group identity cannot be exclusive. He reminds us that Otto von Habsburg was both Hungarian and European. István Bibó suggested that the country of which the prestigious Maria Theresa of Austria was Archduchess did not exist. She was the ‘monarch’ of Hungary, and her husband, a French prince promoted to Grand Duke of Tuscany, became Emperor simply because he was the husband of the woman everyone called Empress. The only British Conservative MP ever elected as President of the European Parliament declared in his inaugural speech: “*I was born an Englishman, but I shall die a European.*” In the wake of Brexit, the twelve-star flag adorned his grave. János Martonyi recalls the ordeal of Imre Nagy, who was torn between his Hungarian patriotism and communist beliefs.

The author also cites the example of Hungary to show that a nation is not necessarily confined to a territory. And he rightly argues that we cannot create a European identity without drawing on national identities first. To quote Robert Schuman: “*Europe is a continent of civilisation.*” Hence, the symbolism of the three hills: the Acropolis, Golgotha and the Capitoline (which explains the choice of the image on the book’s cover). However, the most widespread icon on the continent is the cross...

\*

In these first days of its six-month term, I wish the Hungarian Presidency success. The European and international contexts impose a historic responsibility. A duty to strengthen the Union, not simply to live better but to act together in the face of challenges, dangers, and threats of all kinds – while shouldering tremendous opportunities of this unprecedented century.

May the political testament of János Martonyi be the breviary of this responsibility!

*Delivered at the event honouring János Martonyi, entitled “Useful Guidelines for the EU Presidency” (Hungarian Embassy in France, Paris, 11 July 2024).*

## CHURCHILL AND CENTRAL EUROPE



A talk with the title “Churchill in the Political Thinking of Central Europe,” – exploring what the people living between the Baltic and the Adriatic and between the Germans and the Russians knew and thought about him, would require research lasting for years and the knowledge of at least half a dozen languages. What I can attempt here is the very opposite: what that great statesman knew and thought about the history, politics, and problems of those peoples.

From 1938 on, but certainly from May 1940, when Churchill took over from Chamberlain as prime minister, he became a household name throughout Europe, including the eastern half of the continent. His conduct in the Second World War influenced the lives of hundreds of millions, and his defiance inspired tens of millions. His own country and Western Europe owed very much to him in the victory over Nazism and Fascism, but for the Central Europeans, the question is: could he have saved them from Stalin’s totalitarian system? It was said about Poland, jokingly, that to impose communism on it was as difficult as to put a saddle on a cow. It was not much less difficult to impose that on the Hungarians, as the results of the elections held in November 1945 proved. And the spontaneous uprising and fight for freedom carved that in stone. In trying to answer that question, we must first ask: did Churchill care about the fate of Central Europe, too? Today, at least in Hungary, it is suggested that, together with U.S. President Roosevelt, he cynically abandoned Central Europe, leaving it to the tender mercy of the Soviet dictator. I would challenge that view, which stems from a lack of historical understanding. It was also the result of ignorance of a different kind that in June 2020, the bust of Churchill in Budapest City Park was vandalised by the (probably non-Hungarian) followers of the “Topple the Racist” campaign of the

Black Lives Matter movement, which itself promotes a deeply divisive and prejudiced agenda. In my opinion, Churchill deserves the gratitude and homage of the whole world, and that of the Central Europeans, too. Hungarians have their own reasons for that, as John Lukacs convincingly argued.<sup>2</sup>

Now, I would like to support that with more facts and arguments. All over the world, the younger generations know little about Sir Winston Churchill. For them, the Second World War is distant and, in their mind, does not much differ from the First or the Napoleonic Wars. Very recently, a podcaster who goes by the name Darryl Cooper asserted that Churchill was the “chief villain of the Second World War.” Tucker Carlson, the gullible interviewer of Russian President Putin, called Cooper “the best and most honest popular historian in the United States.” Myself, having studied and taught 20<sup>th</sup>-century history, cannot disagree more. The provocative and left-leaning British historian A. J. P. Taylor wrote in the *Oxford History of England* that Churchill was “the saviour” of Britain. Cooper argues that Churchill, by fending off a peace party who, in June 1940, were ready to make peace with Nazi Germany on Hitler’s conditions (see John Lukacs’ masterful account, *Five Days in London*), caused the growth of the conflict into a world war, with all its suffering. True, with his defiance, Churchill prevented Hitler from ruling over the whole continent, in league with Stalin, God knows for how many years! *National Review* executive editor Mark Antonio Wright gave Cooper a strong rebuke in the 5 September issue of his paper: Churchill “saved the Western world from darkness and tyranny.”

After 1945, most people in Central Europe concurred with that assessment. Even in Germany’s allies, especially in “the unwilling satellite” Hungary, during the war, the better educated and sober citizens hoped for the victory of the Allies, the official enemy, and had a high opinion of Churchill, without whom Hitler might have prevailed in the war of his making. After 1945, he was seen as the hope and the instrument for ending communism in Central Europe. I remember how happy my father was learning about the return of Churchill as prime minister in 1951.

The great British statesman was not ignorant of Central Europe, and specifically Hungary. As a young man, he took a liking to the freedom-loving nation of Kossuth, like many of his contemporaries. He must have been influenced by his fellow student and friend at the Harrow School, Leo Amery, who was Secretary of State for the Colonies in the 1920s and Secretary of State for India and Burma in Churchill’s wartime Cabinet. Amery’s mother was a Hungarian who grew up in Constantinople among the Hungarian exiles of 1849, and married an officer of the Indian Forestry Commission. Her son spoke many languages, including Hungarian, as well as Bulgarian, Turkish, and Serbian. Perhaps I am not going very far, thinking that Churchill’s interest in the Balkans, “the soft underbelly of Europe”, leading to the landing at Gallipoli in 1915, and advocating a campaign in German-occupied Yugoslavia in the early 1940s, had something to do with his life-long friend.

A most patriotic Briton, First Lord of the Admiralty during the Great War, Churchill took part in the war efforts energetically, was part of the victory, but was not happy with one of the results, the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The empire of the Habsburgs had been a friend and ally of England, an essential element in the balance of power. In his monumental history of

<sup>2</sup> Lukacs, John: „Churchill és Magyarország” [Churchill and Hungary], in John Lukacs, *Magyar íráások* [Essays on Hungary] Budapest, Európa Kiadó, 2007, pp. 29–36.



The Second World War, his judgment was well-founded: “*There is not one of the peoples or provinces that constituted the Empire of the Habsburgs to whom gaining their independence has not brought the tortures which ancient poets and theologians had reserved for the damned.*”<sup>3</sup>

Busy as he was in the 1920s as a member first of Liberal, then Conservative governments, occasionally he expressed a view on the problem spots in Europe that resulted from the peace treaties. Apart from Lord Rothermere’s campaign “Justice for Hungary”, many MPs spoke out on the need to reconsider the borders of what was often called Rump Hungary. My friend and colleague, Ágnes Beretzky, in her recent book, *Four Britons and Nationalism*, recalls that on 23 November 1932, Churchill received loud cheers in the House of Commons when saying that questions like the Danzig corridor and Transylvania should be reopened “*in cold blood and in a calm atmosphere, and while the victor nations still had ample superiority.*” Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald agreed with that. Soon, the idea appeared in the so-called Four Power Pact, proposed by Italy.<sup>4</sup>

With Hitler’s coming to power in Germany and the efforts, mainly in Britain, to appease and pacify him, Churchill, now a backbencher in the Conservative Party, became a vociferous critic of that policy. The first object of Nazi Germany was to break up Czechoslovakia, and to bring the whole of Central Europe under its influence. On 5 October 1938, Churchill addressed the House of Commons and denounced the Munich Agreement. In what is known as the “Disaster of the First Magnitude” speech, Churchill described the Agreement as “a total and unmitigated defeat.” He said that it gave Hitler everything he wanted with the “sacrifice [of] Czechoslovakia.” In his speech, Churchill predicted that it would draw Britain into war within a few years. Although he did not then use the words often attributed to him: “*England has been offered a choice between war and shame. She has chosen shame, and will get war,*” but he wrote essentially the same in a private letter: “*We seem to be very near the bleak choice between War and Shame. My feeling is that we shall choose Shame, and then have War thrown in a little later on even more adverse terms than at present.*”<sup>5</sup> Churchill was fully aware of the complexity of ethnic conditions in Central Europe, including the many unhappy national minorities there, and was in favour of improving their situation – but not through the intrigues of Germany. In that famous long speech, he expressed his deep sympathy with Czechoslovakia. “*What is the remaining position of Czechoslovakia? Not only are they politically mutilated, but, economically and financially, they are in complete confusion. Their banking, their railway arrangements, are severed and broken, their industries are curtailed, and the movement of their population is most cruel. The Sudeten miners, who are all Czechs and whose families have lived in that area for centuries, must now flee into an area where there are hardly any mines left for them to work. It is a tragedy which has occurred. There must always be the most profound regret and a sense of vexation in British hearts at the treatment and the misfortune which have overcome the Czechoslovakian Republic.*” Churchill understood far better than most of his contemporaries that the mutilation of Czechoslovakia was just the beginning. “*It must now be accepted that all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe will make the best terms they can with the triumphant Nazi power. The system of alliances in Central Europe upon which France has relied for her safety has been swept away, and I can see no means by which it can be reconstituted. The road down the Danube Valley to the Black Sea, the road which leads as far as Turkey, has been opened.*”<sup>6</sup>

While always sympathetic to Poland (which was so evident during the approaching world war), he criticised in his speech “*the harsh measures being pursued against Czechoslovakia in relation to Teschen.*” Churchill saw that many people in Central Europe were turning to Germany out of fear for their immediate future. But he reminded the House that “*there was always an enormous popular movement in Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia which looked to the Western democracies and loathed the idea of having this arbitrary rule of the totalitarian system thrust upon them, and hoped that a stand would be made.*”<sup>7</sup>

Although Hungary was omitted from that list of countries, Churchill was not against revising what he considered the unfair borders of the country. In July 1939, he received Tibor Eckhardt, the leader of the Hungarian opposition Smallholders’ Party and the diplomat Pál Auer. During the conversation, which lasted about an hour, he said. “*Please note that if this time, too, you stand firm for your independence, if you resist German pressure and, in the event of war, if you, together with Poland and the small nations neighbouring you, endeavour to prevent the Germans from inundating Central and Eastern Europe, Hungary’s revisionist demands will be amply satisfied. If it comes to that, remind me of this statement of mine. But if Hungary were again to fight on the side of the Germans, do not be surprised if the worst awaits you.*”<sup>8</sup>

Soon, in May 1940, Churchill took over the government. Britain still fought a life-and-death war, and Hungary was still non-belligerent; its prime minister, Count Teleki, was trying to keep Hungary out of the new world war. At the same time, as a Transylvanian-born who lost his homeland, Teleki worked to regain it. In June 1940, the Soviet Union forced Romania to cede its Bessarabia province (today’s Republic of Moldova), so Hungary felt the time came to press for its claims. The result was the so-called Second Vienna Award of 30 August, when, through arbitration by Germany and Italy, the northern part of Transylvania was transferred back to Hungary. That could be justified on ethnic grounds, since the Hungarians had a slight majority there over the Romanians. But the circumstances, that it was practically a diktat of the Axis Powers, was politically and morally at least questionable. Even under great stress, threatened by a German invasion, the British prime minister took the trouble to express his view. Speaking in the House of Commons on 5 October, he said: “*Personally I have always thought that the southern part of the Dobruja ought to be restored to Bulgaria, and I have never been happy about the way Hungary was treated after the last war. We have not at any time adopted since this war broke out, the line that nothing could be changed in the territorial structure of various countries. On the other hand, we do not propose to recognise any territorial changes which take place during the war, unless they take place with the free consent and goodwill of the parties concerned.*”<sup>9</sup>

Prime Minister Teleki, who could be called an Anglophile, was pondering to set up a Hungarian government-in-exile, in case the sovereignty of Hungary was violated by Germany. When Hitler decided to destroy Yugoslavia, and as a bribe, offered Hungary the return of what is today called Vojvodina, if it participated in the aggression, Teleki chose not to join the attack. Instead, he took his own life. Churchill, too, was shaken, but it is just a legend that he promised to keep an empty chair at the future peace conference for Teleki. What he did think appears in his history of the

3 Churchill, Winston: *The Second World War 1. The Gathering Storm*. London, Cassel 1964, p. 14.

4 Beretzky, Ágnes: *Four Britons and Nationalism*. Reno NV, Helena History Press 2024, p. 118.

5 Churchill to Lord Moyne, 11 September, 1938.

6 <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1930-1938-the-wilderness/the-munich-agreement/>

7 Ibid.

8 Both Eckhardt and Auer quoted Churchill’s words, with only small, stylistic differences. D. Bán, András: *Illúziók és csalódások. Nagy-Britannia és Magyarország, 1938–1941* [Illusions and Disappointments. Great Britain and Hungary, 1938–1941.] Budapest, Osiris, 1998, p. 77.

9 Hansard, H. of C., vol. 365 col. 40, quoted by C. A. Macartney, *October Fifteenth: a History of Modern Hungary, 1929–1945*. Edinburgh, University Press, 1956–1957, vol. I., p. 426.

Second World War. “*The choice for Hungary was either a vain resistance to the passage of German troops or ranging herself openly against the Allies and betraying Yugoslavia. [...] [Teleki’s] suicide was a sacrifice to absolve himself and his people from guilt in the German attack upon Yugoslavia. It clears his name before history. It could not stop the march of the German armies nor the consequences.*”<sup>10</sup> At least Teleki’s act saved Hungary from an immediate British declaration of war.

Churchill’s grandson, Winston S. Churchill, was justified in saying that “*My grandfather was a great admirer of the Polish nation and a staunch defender of their national sovereignty.*” In the wake of the German attack on Poland, Britain and France declared war on Germany. In a BBC broadcast on 1 October 1939, Churchill spoke with his usual eloquence: “*Poland has been again overrun by two of the great powers which held her in bondage for 150 years, but were unable to quench the spirit of the Polish nation. The heroic defence of Warsaw shows that the soul of Poland is indestructible, and that she will rise again like a rock, which may for a spell be submerged by a tidal wave, but which remains a rock.*”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Poland was crushed by the overwhelming force of Germany, joined by the Soviet Union, but did not give up. Polish soldiers, and especially pilots, fought alongside the British forces all through the war, and a Polish government-in-exile was set up in London. The Polish contribution to the war effort and eventual victory was very significant.

Churchill was an opponent of Bolshevism right from its beginnings, and voiced the notion of “strangling the infant in its cradle” several times over the years. In 1920, he stated: “*The policy I will always advocate is the overthrow and destruction of that criminal regime.*” Much later, at the beginning of the Cold War, he said in the House of Commons on 26 January 1949: “*I think the day will come when it will be recognised without doubt, not only on one side of the House, but throughout the civilised world, that the strangling of Bolshevism at its birth would have been an untold blessing to the human race.*”<sup>12</sup> But, having fought Nazi Germany alone over a year, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, Churchill, without hesitation, accepted Stalin as an ally against Nazism. His famous words, “*If Hitler invaded Hell I would make at least a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons*”<sup>13</sup> were fully justified. It was Realpolitik and sensible policy. Britain could only take on one evil empire at a time.

Romania immediately joined Germany in the attack, Finland and Hungary a few days later. Stalin demanded that Britain declare war on them, and also on Slovakia, a country not recognised by His Majesty’s Government. Churchill, in a telegram to Stalin on 4 November 1941, pointed out that “*those countries are full of our friends; they have been overpowered by Hitler and used as a cat’s-paw, but if fortune turns against that ruffian they might easily come back to our side.*”<sup>14</sup> No avail, Stalin was adamant, so on 6 December Britain declared war on Germany’s satellites.

Poland’s post-war frontiers and political future were a heavy burden on British-Soviet relations, since the Soviets insisted on keeping the border they had agreed upon with Hitler in 1939. The British government, and personally the Prime Minister, found themselves in a most frustrating

position. With all their sympathies for Poland and gratitude for its heroic contribution to the war effort, they could not afford a serious conflict with their Soviet ally for the sake of Poland. Not even when the Soviet murder of tens of thousands of Polish officers in Soviet captivity at Katyn and other POW camps was revealed in April 1943. “*Whatever we do we cannot bring them back,*” was Churchill’s answer to the Poles in London. That sounds cynical, but that was the case. Even more dramatic and tragic was the fate of the uprising of Warsaw by the underground Polish Army in August 1944. As it should never be forgotten, Stalin refused to help it; on the contrary, passively watched the German SS deal with the Polish resistance, so as to make it easier to turn post-war Poland into a Soviet satellite. Churchill was alive to the agonies of the situation and did his best to impress them upon Roosevelt. Since Stalin did not even allow Allied transport aircraft, after dropping supplies to the embattled Poles to land and refuel in Soviet-liberated territory just 100 kilometres to the East, Churchill was outraged. The “naval person” (as he called himself in his correspondence with Roosevelt) proposed to the President that Great Britain and the United States threaten jointly to suspend convoys to Murmansk and Archangel, delivering aircraft, tanks and war material to the Soviets, until Stalin agreed to allow the planes to land and refuel. However, Roosevelt replied to the Prime Minister on 26 August: “*I do not consider it advantageous to the long-range general war prospect for me to join you.*” We know from the records of the conferences at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam that Churchill did his utmost to help Poland to be an independent country, if unavoidable, even by giving up its eastern half to Russia, to be compensated in the West by German territories, but lack of support from the American president made his efforts futile.

For the future of Central Europe, the two Western Great Powers sought long-term reconciliation and prepared for fair borders. Their wartime plans are now available for study.<sup>15</sup> Prime Minister Churchill’s idea was to establish federations to remedy the mistakes of the post-First World War settlement. A northern one (Polish-Czechoslovak) and a Balkan one, as well as a “*Danube federation centred on Vienna, which would fill to some extent the gap left by the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.*”<sup>16</sup> The plans were far-sighted, but Stalin rejected both confederations and border changes (in favour of the Hungarians) in the strongest terms. In the interests of victory, Churchill had to swallow his intentions to create a better Central Europe.

There is a commonly held notion that the West ceded Central Europe, both victors like Poland and losers like Hungary, to the Soviet Union. First at the 1943 Tehran Tripartite Conference, and then at Yalta and Potsdam in 1945. It should, however, be pointed out that the western Great Powers did not give up Central Europe either deliberately, or voluntarily and easily. Their behaviour was dictated mainly by the military situation. By the autumn of 1944, the Soviet Red Army had stood (idly) before Warsaw, already occupied Romania and Bulgaria, as well as large parts of Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Milovan Đilas, a Yugoslav communist partisan, famously recorded

<sup>15</sup> Kovrig, Bennett: Peacemaking after World War II: The End of the Myth of National Self-determination. In: Borsody, Stephen (ed.): *The Hungarians: A Divided Nation*. New Haven, Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1988, pp. 69–88; Romsics, Ignác (ed.): *Wartime American Plans for a New Hungary*. Boulder, Colo., Atlantic Research and Publications, 1992; Bán, D. András: *Pax Britannica. Brit külügyi iratok a második világháború utáni Kelet-Közép-Európáról*. [Pax Britannica. British Documents on Post-Second-World-War East-Central Europe.] Budapest, Osiris Kiadó, 1996; Beretzky, Ágnes: *Four Britons and Nationalism. Henry Wockham Steed, Robert William Seton-Watson, Arnold Toynbee and Carille Aylmer Macartney in/on East-Central Europe and Beyond (1903–1978)*. Reno, NV, Helena History Press, 2024, pp. 200–227. On the reactions of the British government to Hungary’s attempts to leave the war: Juhász, Gyula: “The Hungarian Peace-Feelers and the Allies in 1943. *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 1980, vol. 26, No. 3/4, pp. 345–377.

<sup>16</sup> Bán, D. András: *Pax Britannica. Brit külügyi iratok a második világháború utáni Kelet-Közép-Európáról*. [Pax Britannica. British Documents on Post-Second-World-War East-Central Europe.] Budapest, Osiris, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Churchill, Winston: *The Grand Alliance*. London, 1950, p. 168. I used a later edition: Churchill, Winston: *The Second World War 5. The Commonwealth Alone*. London, Cassel, 1964, p. 148.

<sup>11</sup> Churchill’s grandson, in his essay “1939–1945: Poland’s Contribution to Victory in the Second World War”. <https://winstonchurchill.org/publications/finest-hour/finest-hour-145/1939-1945-polands-contribution-to-victory-in-the-second-world-war/>.

<sup>12</sup> <https://winstonchurchill.hillisdale.edu/bolshevism/>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://winstonchurchill.hillisdale.edu/alliance-stalin/>.

<sup>14</sup> Churchill, *op.cit.* 6. *War Comes to America*. London, Cassel, 1964, p. 135.



Stalin’s assertion during their wartime conversation in 1943: “*This war is not as in the past: whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise.*”<sup>17</sup> At the Tehran Conference (28 November to 1 December 1943), President Roosevelt’s decision, based purely on military calculations, meant that Churchill’s plan for an Anglo-American invasion of the Balkans (probably through the Ljubljana gap) was finally taken off the agenda. With that decision, the fate of Central Europe was decided.

Seeing the success of the Red Army in the Eastern Front, and in the hope of limiting Soviet influence, on 10 October 1944, Churchill made a controversial “percentage agreement” with Stalin. In an informal discussion preceding the official negotiations, the British prime minister proposed an understanding on the delimitation of British and Soviet interests in the countries allied to Germany. In Hungary, Churchill proposed 50–50 per cent, but the next day, at the negotiations-proper between Molotov and Eden, the proportion was changed to 80 per cent Soviet influence. At the same time, in Bulgaria, Soviet influence would be 80, and in Romania 90 per cent, while in Greece, only 10 per cent. In Yugoslavia, the percentage would be 50–50. Decades later, the then wartime head of the British Foreign Office’s Central European Department, Frank Roberts, rightly told a Hungarian weekly that,

*“It is generally accepted [...] the simplistic view that in Moscow Churchill ‘sold’, or in other words ‘betrayed’ Eastern Europe to the Russians. [...] In reality, however, this was not the case. [...] Churchill’s aim was not to hand over peoples to Stalin, but to save what could still be saved! It was not our country, Stalin had everything in his hands, his troops had already occupied or were about to occupy these countries.”*<sup>18</sup>

It is even more generally held that Roosevelt and Churchill agreed at Yalta to the permanent absorption of the eastern half of Europe by the Soviet Union. In Stalin’s eyes, a sphere of interest meant total domination. He declared that he would not care what was going to happen in Western Europe – and, in exchange, the U.S. and Britain should not interfere with what went on in Eastern Europe. Stalin’s policy violated the Yalta Declaration, which he never meant to honour. But in February 1945, it was too late to reverse old illusions and mistakes and to change the situation in East Central Europe, already occupied by the Red Army.

In the Polish political vocabulary, the name of Yalta became a symbol of treason and betrayal, and the Yalta conference is considered to be a close copy of the Munich conference. The picture is not very different in Romania and Hungary. For Czechoslovakia, it is different, or it was different in 1946, as at the elections held on 26 May 1946, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia emerged as the largest party, winning 114 of the 300 seats with 38 per cent of the vote. Voter turnout was 94 per cent.

Now, a word on Transylvania. In line with his earlier opinion, Churchill regarded the creation of an independent Transylvanian state as the optimal solution, with the alternative of border revision in favour of Hungary along the western border and the granting of autonomy to Szeklerland

within Romania.<sup>19</sup> When Hungary in 1941 declined the Soviet offer to support it on the border of Transylvania, and, instead, joined in Hitler’s war, the Soviets decided to support Romania, especially since they were determined to keep that country in the Soviet orbit. When Romania changed sides on August 23, and its army continued the war on the side of the Red Army, it was only natural that the Armistice Agreement with Romania (September 12 1944) would include the following provision in Article 19: “*The Allied Governments regard the decision of the Vienna award regarding Transylvania as null and void and are agreed that Transylvania should be returned to Romania*” It was on Churchill’s intervention the last sentence was changed to “*Transylvania (or the greater part thereof) should be returned to Romania, subject to confirmation at the peace settlement...*”<sup>20</sup> Sadly, due to Stalin’s personal insistence, the peace treaty signed in 1947 re-established the 1920 Trianon border between Romania and Hungary. By then Churchill was already out of government.

The Western democracies could have prevented the actual division of Europe only by military force, which, in the mood of 1945, still influenced by the role the Soviet Union played in the defeat of Nazism, was psychologically impossible and militarily unfeasible, unless having recourse to nuclear weapons. After Hiroshima, they were unwilling to do so. Thus, instead of a lasting peace, the Cold War started between the democratic world and the Soviet bloc.

Churchill did not give up Central Europe, even after he warned in his famous speech at Fulton, Missouri, on 5 March 1946, that an Iron Curtain was descending upon Europe. In his other famous speech held at the University of Zurich on 19 September 1946, he advocated a “Unites States of Europe”, which Central Europe, too, could join.<sup>21</sup> This far-sighted notion could be realised only after his death and after the fall of the Communist dominoes of Europe. Central Europeans should never forget Churchill’s warm sympathies for them.

*Delivered at the conference “Polyhistorians in World Politics – Winston Churchill 150”  
(Ludovika University of Public Service, Budapest, 22 November 2024)*

<sup>17</sup> Džilas, Milovan: *Conversations with Stalin*. New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962.

<sup>18</sup> *Heti Világgazdaság*, May 6, 1995. p. 42.

<sup>19</sup> Cornelius, Deborah: *Hungary in World War II: Caught in the Cauldron*. New York, Fordham University Press, 2011, pp. 240–241.

<sup>20</sup> “The Armistice Agreement with Rumania; September 12, 1944.” <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/rumania.asp>

<sup>21</sup> Barta, Róbert: “Churchill’s Ideas on United Europe After World War II,” *Történeti Tanulmányok XXII, Acta Universitatis Debreceniensis Series Historica LXV*. 2014, pp. 282–299.

## CHURCHILL AND CHARLES DE GAULLE



We should certainly begin with Churchill's Francophilia; he knew the history of France as well as any Frenchman, and probably better than most. Apart from his great ancestor Marlborough, his heroes were Joan of Arc, Napoleon and Clemenceau – which was rather unusual for an Englishman. Besides, up until 1940, he considered the French army as the finest in Europe. Granted, the wish was father to the

thought, since a strong French army was the best guarantee for the defence of the British Isles.

In June 1940, he was proved wrong, and Churchill hated to be proved wrong. This was when he met General de Gaulle, who was then the French Secretary of State for war. At the Franco-British conference in Tours on June 13, Churchill had been most disappointed by the defeatism of the French leaders, Reynaud, Weygand, Pétain, and most of the others. Casting about for an energetic personality, he set his sights on de Gaulle. This is what he later wrote: *"I saw Gen De Gaulle standing stolid and expressionless at the doorway. Greeting him, I said in a low tone, in French: »L'Homme du Destin.«"* Did de Gaulle hear these prophetic words? The General later answered: *"No, I didn't"*, but he added: *"You know, Churchill is a romantic type."* After all, Churchill spoke in a low tone of voice, and the distance between the Prime Minister's mouth and the General's ear was not inconsiderable; but being "a romantic type", Churchill may have had, then and there, the intuition that he had before him the model of the historic figure who remains unrattled when others panic – the very picture of the hero of his youth.

But there was more to it than that: Churchill needed someone who could persuade the French government to keep on fighting, and de Gaulle, who had not spoken once of giving up the fight, seemed to be just that man. Indeed, he was, but Churchill had overestimated the power of an

undersecretary of state within the French government. By June 16, the defeatists in the cabinet had gained the upper hand, and Marshall Pétain edged toward capitulation. For de Gaulle, this was unacceptable, and he left for England the very next day.

Once in London, Churchill gave De Gaulle a strong and willing hand, and that had little to do with romanticism. What he feared most at this juncture was the reaction of public opinion in his country. After all, at the time of greatest peril, the British people were to be told that France, the ally that had resisted so steadfastly during the last war, had crumbled after only five weeks of hostilities – and as a result, the British Isles were now under imminent threat of invasion. There could be no greater blow to morale, and there was a very real risk that the British people would follow those defeatists like Halifax, Butler, Hoare and old Lloyd George, who wanted to negotiate with Hitler before it was too late. Therefore, Churchill, as a master propagandist, conceived something of a fiction by announcing officially that, in fact, France had not disappeared from the alliance, since she was continuing the struggle alongside Britain through this general who had a stature, a reputation, an ideal, a determination, a program, a voice, and even a name, De Gaulle, that was a program in itself. In Churchill's words: *"General de Gaulle, a fine fighting soldier with a good reputation and strong personality."*

Now, as for the strong personality, Churchill was later to have some cause to deplore it, but for the time being, he certainly didn't do things by halves: he gave De Gaulle access to the BBC, he recognised him as leader of all Free Frenchmen, he had him filmed together with the king and queen consort, and he even hired an advertising consultant to make his name known throughout the world. If De Gaulle was able to build up his movement, it was almost entirely due to the British Prime Minister's ceaseless prodding of his highly reluctant officials, generals and admirals. After all, the General was a friend of the Prime Minister's; nay, he was a friend of England, and one could never do too much for him.

During the summer of 1940, Churchill regularly invited De Gaulle to Chequers, and both men realised that they had a lot in common: a tremendous culture, a broad vision of history, both past and future, an exceptional mastery of their respective languages, an outright rejection of both Nazism and communism, an almost limitless confidence in their ability to get things moving, and an exceptional degree of idealism and patriotism, backed by an uncommon moral and physical bravery. Even some tragic events, like the bombardment of Mers el Kebir in July and the failure of the Dakar expedition in September, could not affect their partnership. And after De Gaulle's speech in Brazzaville on October 27, Churchill admitted that De Gaulle was, quote, "very different from an ordinary military man" – which was quite a compliment coming from a Prime Minister who used to say "military intelligence is a contradiction in terms". Of course, as usual with Churchill, admiration and sentimentalism blended with expediency: he recognised that Europe could only be reconquered from Africa, and he counted on De Gaulle to give him the keys to French Equatorial Africa, Western Africa and North Africa.

Now, given this community of interest and this exemplary partnership, how can one account for the frightful storms that were to break over their relations as soon as 1941? Well, the peculiar temperament of the two men may offer the first explanation. Churchill, with his famously



authoritarian character, naturally expected De Gaulle to bow before his political and strategic decisions, exactly like the nine other leaders of governments in exile who depended materially, militarily, politically and even personally on the Prime Minister's benevolence. Churchill had said it himself: *"All I ask for is compliance with my wishes, after reasonable discussion!"*. Only that... The problem was that De Gaulle simply could not bear submission, and complete dependence on the British ally tended to make him insufferable. Besides, having somewhat by accident become responsible for the interests of France, he fully expected to be treated like a statesman, and was often frustrated when this was not the case; last but not least, he often repeated, "we are too weak to make concessions" – something Churchill never quite understood.

But there was more to it than that: for one thing, Churchill insisted on maintaining secret and indirect contacts with Vichy France, and he could not help meddling in Free French internal affairs, which already made de Gaulle highly suspicious. But things got much worse when the Allies reconquered Syria and Lebanon in the summer of 1941. The Franco-British armistice that was signed at the end of that campaign was remarkably generous to the defeated Vichy troops, while largely ignoring the interests of the victorious Free French. This seemed to confirm the general's worst suspicions, and he retaliated with some vengeful speeches and interviews during the summer, including one in which he said: *"What, in effect, England is carrying on is a wartime deal with Hitler, in which Vichy serves as a go-between."* This, in turn, affected Churchill considerably and gave rise to some violent clashes between the two men, especially in September 1941 and 1942. In fact, it can be safely said that 90% of their quarrels until 1945 arose from serious or insignificant incidents in Syria and Lebanon.

All this might not have gone very far, but for America's entry into the war at the end of 1941. For at least five reasons, President Roosevelt happened to be afflicted with an acute and incurable case of Gaullophobia. Since he could not himself take responsibility for a direct break with De Gaulle – mainly for electoral reasons – his policy was henceforth to apply pressure on Churchill to take the initiative of breaking relations with the Free French leader – after which the US could follow suit. Now, for strategic, economic and sentimental reasons, Churchill was highly vulnerable to Roosevelt's pressure, which explains the fact that in 1942, De Gaulle was associated neither with the reconquest of Madagascar nor with that of French North Africa, and was also sidestepped in favour of both Darlan and Giraud. But for at least half a dozen reasons, breaking completely with De Gaulle was another matter altogether...

For one thing, Roosevelt and Churchill had sought to back no less than ten different personalities as replacements for De Gaulle, and all of them proved to be utter lightweights, who were simply not up to the job. Second, after the spring of 1943, the people sent to Algiers in order to support General Giraud against De Gaulle; first and foremost, Macmillan, Jean Monnet, and General Eisenhower all eventually ended up backing De Gaulle. Third, Churchill and De Gaulle were not operating in a void; they were assisted on both sides by some devoted people whom I might call shock absorbers. On the British side: Eden, Attlee, Bevin, Macmillan, Charles Peake, Duff Cooper and Alexander Cadogan; on the French side, Catroux, Pleven, Dejean, Vienot, Passy and Cassin. All these men were perhaps less forceful and pugnacious than their bosses, but being also more moderate and level-headed, they somehow managed to smooth the rough edges every time a

crisis broke out between Churchill and De Gaulle. Fourth, after the Darlan episode in late 1942, it became obvious that in Britain, public opinion, the press, Parliament, Churchill's ministers and all the exile governments backed de Gaulle – and so did the King, who wrote in his diary on February 9, 1943: *"I told Winston I could well understand De Gaulle's attitude and that of our own people here, who do not like the idea of making friends of those Frenchmen who have collaborated with the Germans."*

Fifth, in May 1943, the French resistance officially declared its support for De Gaulle, so that breaking with him would have been tantamount to breaking with France – a complete impossibility for an old Francophile like Churchill. Last but not least, whatever Churchill's grudges against De Gaulle, he couldn't help admiring the man and his solitary crusade. Witness Churchill's words to his doctor at Casablanca, as they watched De Gaulle stalking outside with his head in the air, after another frightful row: *"His country has given up fighting, he himself is a refugee, and if we turn him down, he's finished. Well, just look at him! He might be Stalin, with 200 divisions behind his words."* And after one of the Prime Minister's vengeful tirades against De Gaulle, Harold Nicholson had remarked: *"You may be right, Mr Prime Minister, but surely all that is irrelevant, since general De Gaulle is a great man!"* At this, Churchill exploded: *"A great man? Why, he's selfish, he's arrogant, he thinks he's the centre of the universe... He... You're right, he's a great man."*

How much did De Gaulle know of all this? Clearly, a lot, since he was heard to say just before returning triumphantly to France in the summer of 1944: *"Churchill considers me as a most cumbersome piece of furniture into which he bumps occasionally, but that is now part of the scenery and can no longer be displaced."*

Of course, that scenery was to change completely once the war was over. Both men having gone into retirement, voluntarily or otherwise, they corresponded occasionally, mainly to exchange information while writing their memoirs. They also found themselves in agreement on the necessity of a Franco-German reconciliation, and on the urgency of building some kind of Western alliance to counter the Soviet threat – although they disagreed on just about everything else. By the end of 1951, Churchill was back in power, and he remained in office until the spring of 1955. All the while, he kept a watchful eye on French affairs, and he was much preoccupied by the political turmoil caused in France by the war in Algeria. In fact, he came to consider that only De Gaulle could put things right.

His wife had bet £500 with a British general that De Gaulle would eventually return to power, and by May 1958, she was able to collect. One of De Gaulle's first initiatives as President of the Council was to invite Churchill to Paris and present him with the Cross of Liberation. In a short speech, he said: *"I want Sir Winston Churchill to know this: today's ceremony means that France remembers what she owes him."* Churchill thus realised that De Gaulle, though insufferable in adversity, could also be grateful and magnanimous in better times. And so it was that, after almost two decades, Churchill once again became England's foremost Gaullist – which he was to remain until his dying day!

*Delivered at the conference "Polyhistorians in World Politics – Winston Churchill 150"*  
(Ludovika University of Public Service, Budapest, 22 November 2024)

## WINSTON CHURCHILL'S RECEPTION AND INFLUENCE IN THE U.S.



We gather today to commemorate the life of one of the most remarkable political figures in modern times. Before his death in 1965 at the age of ninety, Winston Churchill had come to be acclaimed by many as the “Greatest Living Englishman” and the greatest man of the twentieth century. He was revered as the indomitable statesman and orator who, by his words and his courage, inspired his

nation to persevere in a battle for what he called Christian civilization and to emerge victorious in the most gigantic war the world has ever known.

Interest in Churchill has not abated since his death nearly sixty years ago. More than a thousand books have now been written about him. Nearly every facet of his life has been the subject of study.

Churchill himself, one might say, led by example. During his life, he published more than three dozen works of his own, some of them autobiographical, not counting a posthumously published, eight-volume compilation of his speeches between 1897 and 1963 that runs to 10,000 pages.

Nowhere (outside of Great Britain) have Churchill's words and deeds attracted more attention than in the country he came to call the “Great Republic”: the United States of America. This was not happenstance. His father was a British aristocrat, but his mother was an American, and from boyhood, Churchill was fascinated by the history of his mother's native land. His acute awareness that he was “half American by blood “ (as he put it) helps to explain both his lifelong curiosity about America and many Americans' curiosity about him.

In 1895, shortly before he turned 21, Churchill visited the United States – specifically, New York City – for the first time. He was on his way to Cuba, and he stayed only eight days, but it was long enough for him to sense the vitality of the awakening giant in the New World. America was “a very great country,” he told his brother. The young traveler's curiosity very quickly turned to love.

In 1900, Churchill returned to the United States for the second of ultimately sixteen visits during his lifetime. This time, he came for a lecture tour. Since his first visit, he had served in combat as a British soldier in India, Sudan, and South Africa; had written five books about his adventures; and had been elected to the British Parliament. During the Second Boer War in South Africa, he had even been captured by the Boers. His sensational and harrowing escape from their prison camp won international headlines. By the time he reached America in late 1900, he was probably the most famous young man in the world.

Churchill's lecture tour was a success. American audiences were charmed by his verve, wit, and oratorical ability. He widened his acquaintance with American elites, a process he developed assiduously in the years to come. And most significantly, he began to propound a theme that he reiterated for the rest of his life: the desirability of what he called “the fullest, closest, intimacy, accord and association” of Great Britain and the United States. “*I am proud that I am the product of an Anglo-American alliance,*” he declared humorously in 1900. But he was not really joking. The cultivation of what he eventually called a “special relationship” between the USA and the United Kingdom was at the heart of his geopolitical vision.

Churchill's second voyage to the United States inaugurated the first phase of the Churchill-America relationship. It was a phase that lasted all the way to the 1930s. During his successful lecture tours, he did not avoid mentioning current events and sometimes angered Americans who did not share his enthusiasm for the British empire. But fundamentally, before the Second World War, American perceptions of Churchill were derived not primarily from his fame as a British politician but from the endless cascade of scintillating books and essays that he produced and circulated in the United States. Before he died, his articles appeared in more than 40 American magazines.

This first phase – featuring Churchill as a celebrity and literary entertainer – yielded abruptly in 1940 to a new phase, during which, for most Americans, he became a hero. Defiant, courageous, and unyielding, he was easily the most eloquent of all the leaders of nations during the Second World War. In the later words of President John F. Kennedy, Churchill “mobilized the English language and sent it into battle.”

Churchill's effort was immensely aided by the growing availability of radio in the United States. During the war, countless Americans heard some of his greatest addresses by radio and were inspired. One such listener was a young soldier named Caspar Weinberger, who later became President Ronald Reagan's stalwart Secretary of Defense and a tireless champion of Churchill's legacy. Another was the future American President, Richard Nixon.

Churchill's reputation as the indispensable leader who saved his government and nation from total defeat in 1940 was reinforced by Churchill himself in his monumental, six-volume history titled *The Second World War*, published between 1948 and 1954. It contained two million words.



Widely excerpted in newspapers and magazines in the United States, the volumes were a sensational bestseller. A few years later, he completed a long dormant, four-volume *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, another tremendous bestseller in the United States.

In 1963, for the first time in American history, the United States Congress voted to make a citizen of another country – Churchill – an honorary citizen of the United States. It was a gesture that must have mightily pleased its recipient, the foremost advocate of the Anglo–American “special relationship.”

Less than two years later, Winston Churchill died. Of the tributes to him that poured in from every direction, one may be of special interest to this audience. It came from Russell Kirk, the distinguished American conservative scholar and friend of Otto von Habsburg and his family. Kirk extolled Churchill as an “aristocrat of genius” who for “sound sense as a statesman...had no equal in our time.” Few of Kirk’s fellow Americans would have disagreed.

Soon after the Second World War ended, American perceptions of Churchill entered a third phase. No longer perceived simply as a heroic wartime leader, he was increasingly perceived as a prophet and a sage. If Churchill’s magnificent “Finest hour” speech of June 18, 1940 was the single most consequential address of his career, arguably the second most consequential was his address in America on March 18, 1946, in which he solemnly told his audience, which included President Truman, that an “iron curtain” had “descended” across central Europe and that the Soviet Union our recent wartime ally – was behaving in a dangerously threatening manner. He implored the United States and United Kingdom to work in “fraternal association” and unite with other democracies in opposition to Soviet expansion.

Churchill’s dramatic appeal shocked and outraged many on the American Left, who accused him of poisoning relations with the Soviet Union and risking a new world war. But within a few weeks, thanks in considerable part to Churchill’s timely warning, American public opinion swung overwhelmingly in favor of an invigorated Anglo-American alliance in the face of the Soviet threat. Once again Churchill, with his gripping rhetoric, had helped to galvanize the West.

In the ensuing Cold War against the Communists, Churchill became for many Americans a symbol of farsighted resistance to tyranny. His scathing critique of British appeasement of Hitler at Munich evolved into a history lesson that a generation of American political leaders absorbed.

Some of them even tried to emulate Churchill. John F. Kennedy, who as a teenager voraciously read Churchill’s multivolume series *The World Crisis* and other books, was notable in this respect. In 1959 and 1960 Kennedy deliberately based his campaign for the presidency on Churchillian themes.

In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan, who liked to quote Churchill, formed a friendship with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, herself a devotee of Churchill. Their close political alliance seemed to epitomize the Anglo-American “special relationship” that Churchill had so persistently sought.

After the terrorist attack on the United States in 2001, invocations of Churchill multiplied in American politics. President George W. Bush, who declared himself a “great admirer” of Churchill, kept a bust of the great man on display in his office and publicly praised him for refusing to surrender or compromise during “an hour of peril.” Significantly, among the most ardent supporters of Bush’s foreign policy in the Middle East was a faction on the American Right known as neoconservatives, for many of whom Churchill was a political lodestar.

The continuing American esteem for Churchill has deeper roots than party politics, however. Since his death, there has arisen among the “English-speaking peoples” what has been called a “Churchill industry”, in which historians, filmmakers, and commentators visit and revisit every aspect of his long life. The *locus classicus* for Churchill scholarship is the eight-volume, so-called *Official Biography* begun by his son Randolph and completed by Martin Gilbert in 1986. Much reviewed and lauded in the United States, it is the longest biography ever written. The most devoted promoter of Churchill scholarship and commemoration is the International Churchill Society (as it is now called), founded in 1968. It has many American members. Its quarterly magazine, *Finest Hour*, and its much-visited website, along with the Churchill Project initiated by Hillsdale College in Michigan, attest to the esteem that Churchill’s legacy still commands among many Americans.

Here I call your attention to the noted political philosopher Leo Strauss, a refugee from Nazi Germany who became an eminent scholar in the United States. The day after Churchill died, Professor Strauss eulogized him in his classroom at the University of Chicago as a statesman of superlative excellence and “political greatness” whose life political scientists everywhere should meticulously study. Since then, some of Strauss’s students (and their students), all commonly called Straussians, have taken up this challenge and have become tenacious advocates for Churchill’s record and legacy. Notable among these was the late political scientist, Harry Jaffa. Today the influential *Claremont Review of Books*, founded by some of his students, is a citadel of scholarship and commentary sympathetic to Churchill.

Not everyone, however, who studies Churchill walks away as an enthusiast. In recent decades, in the United States and Great Britain, his record has come under critical and at times ferocious attack from revisionist historians and their allies in the media. On the Left, he has been portrayed as a racist, reactionary egotist and imperialist whose judgment, in politics, was frequently and terribly flawed. Often these revisionists have denounced what they derisively call the “Churchill cult” – especially the hawkish, neoconservative Churchillians whom they hold partly responsible for President Bush’s unpopular war in Iraq.

On the American Right, revisionists like the libertarian scholar Ralph Raico and the paleoconservative writer Patrick Buchanan (among others) have disparaged Churchill’s record comprehensively – most notably his fateful decision in 1940 to fight on, against all odds, after the fall of France. What he should have done, the right-wing revisionists appear to believe, was to acknowledge Britain’s defeat and accept Hitler’s offers of a negotiated peace. Then, presumably, Hitler would have left Britain and its empire alone, turned east, and destroyed the Soviet Union. Instead, the right-wing revisionists charge, Churchill stubbornly continued a war he could never win alone at the ultimate cost, these revisionists allege, of “his country’s greatness.”

Time does not permit me to analyze the rebuttals that other Churchill scholars have given to these critiques. It is my impression that the Churchill revisionists (at least in America) are marginal in the history profession and that among Americans generally he remains an iconic figure.

And that is how he will likely remain for a long time to come. A few weeks from now, the American film distributor Netflix will release a massive, four-hour documentary film titled *Churchill at War*. It is one of many acts of remembrance at this time that will likely enhance his reputation for a new generation.

A famous historian once remarked that history is “an argument without end”. In the lengthening argument about Winston Churchill’s life and legacy, I suspect that, on the truly essential points, this “aristocrat of genius” will continue to emerge victorious.

*Delivered at the conference “Polyhistor in World Politics – Winston Churchill 150”  
(Ludovika University of Public Service, Budapest, 22 November 2024)*



LORD DAVID ALTON OF LIVERPOOL

## TWO LEADING FIGURES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

It’s a real privilege and awe-inspiring to be following in the footsteps of some remarkable speakers who have addressed preceding Gala dinners. And no small challenge to offer a few words about two of the most outstanding and significant human beings of the twentieth century: Winston Churchill, in this 150<sup>th</sup> year of his birth, and Otto von Habsburg, whom Martyn Rady has described as “*the best emperor the Habsburgs never had*”.



Some of you had the misfortune to hear me at the opening of your Conference, marking the birth of Winston Churchill some 150 years ago. Forgive me if I repeat any of my remarks – but if I do, bear in mind what once happened to Winston Churchill. In the halcyon days before word processors, iPads, tablets, and social media, you may recall that pieces of carbon paper were placed in the typewriter to make two copies of each page. However, on one notable occasion, his typist mistakenly stapled a page of the carbon-copied speech into the finished text, and he found himself saying the same words all over again. Hardly pausing for breath, he told his audience: “*You may wonder why I am repeating myself; it is because it is so important...*”

Happily, a team of typists preserved for us his remarkable speeches – everything from ‘*Blood, toil, tears and sweat*’ to ‘*We Shall Fight on the Beaches*’ and ‘*This was their Finest Hour*’.

He didn’t, however, have a very high opinion of some of the speeches given by his opponents. Evaluating a speech by a fellow Member of Parliament, Churchill once said: “*He spoke without a note and almost without a point.*” Another time, he wryly observed: “*Too often the strong, silent man is silent because he has nothing to say.*” In Parliament, he is famous for having used his gift with



words to eviscerate political opponents; once describing the Labour leader, Ramsey MacDonald, as the man with *“the gift of compressing the largest number of words into the smallest amount of thought.”* And his withering humour could be extended to his Conservative colleagues too. When asked what should be done if his *bête noire*, Stanley Baldwin, three-time Prime Minister, should die in office, Churchill quickly responded, *“Embalm, bury, and cremate. Take no chances!”*

Churchill’s directness had its consequences. In 1938 he was booed in the House of Commons: Following Nazi Germany’s annexation of portions of Czechoslovakia and the creation of Sudetenland, he said of Neville Chamberlain’s Munich Pact with Hitler: *“You were given the choice between war and dishonour; you chose dishonour and will have war.”* Circumstances ultimately provided Churchill with the opportunity to put his extraordinary gifts of leadership at the disposal of his country. He never doubted he had been made for greatness, and I am sure he recognised in Otto von Habsburg those same attributes.

In these dispiriting and troubled times, we need the inspiration and example of two men who knew that without security and stability there could be no economic prosperity or progress; Both men knew that politics and politicians had to speak to the anxieties of the times – not to do so would open the door to populism, autocrats, and extremism; Both gravitated to the politics of the centre; Both men had a vision of the dangers posed by dictatorship to the world’s democracies; Both identified the curse of Nazism; Both loathed antisemitism and spoke up for the persecuted Jews; Both saw in Stalin a continuation of the barbarism of Hitler; Both were passionate in their belief in democracy, the rule of law and the upholding of human rights and human dignity; Both were committed to a pan Europeanism – which meant the whole of Europe – represented by the empty chair for the missing States in the European Parliament and more recently poignantly left out for the now deceased Alexei Navalny – and, while Churchill coined the phrase *“the iron curtain”*, both men knew it wouldn’t last for ever.

Throughout Otto von Habsburg’s time in the European Parliament, he was an ardent opponent of the Communist Soviet Union and yearned for the fall of the Berlin Wall. But he prophetically saw the coming dangers too. In 2002, in a newspaper interview and in speeches in 2003 and 2005, he warned that Vladimir Putin was an “international threat”, that he was “cruel and oppressive”, and a “stone cold technocrat”. He warned Europe that *“a real international danger continues to exist.”* Right up until his death, he warned against revisionist “national Bolshevism”, the danger of new Russian “colonial wars in Europe” and he drew comparisons between Putin and Hitler. Despite claims to the contrary, history is never over, and the battle for freedom is perennial. As Ronald Reagan – born a year before Otto von Habsburg – famously observed that freedom is *“never more than one generation away from extinction.”* We must fight for it in every generation. Freedom comes with a high price tag: freedom is never free.

In confronting the deadly quartet – four apocalyptic dictators: Putin, Xi, Kim and Khomeini – and their many imitators – we have failed to understand what Otto von Habsburg saw so clearly. Recall his refusal to meet Hitler – and the price the Nazis put on his head. What would he or Churchill had to say about today’s kowtowing and grandstanding by new of Quislings and Pétains, allowing themselves to be flattered and used for propaganda purposes whilst re-enforcing the legitimacy of the dictators?

Churchill defined an appeaser as *“one who feeds a crocodile – hoping it will eat him last.”* To those making their accommodations and deals with dictators and autocrats, be clear that this war in Europe – with tens of thousands of re-enforcements from North Korea – the world’s most repressive regime – is not simply a threat to the sovereignty of the fledgling democracy of Ukraine but to all the free nations of Europe and all democratic nations. If Ukraine falls to a tyrannical regime, watch what happens to Taiwan, to the Republic of Korea, and to small independent nations who will be picked off, one after another. That’s why friends of Ukraine pay heed to their right to defend their lawful borders and stand with them as they do so.

Ronald Reagan knew the foolishness of failing to learn the lessons of two world wars which began in Europe: *“We’ve learned that isolationism never was and never will be an acceptable response to tyrannical governments with an expansionist intent.”* And he warned of *“rushing to respond only after freedom is lost.”*

Europe’s architecture for freedom, bequeathed by the blood of its allies and by the wisdom and deeds of Churchill, Habsburg, Adenauer, De Gaspari, Schuman and others, is such a precious legacy. But it is a legacy that has come at an enormous price. I repeat, freedom is never free. Do not forget your past, what has gone before.

After the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939, my father and his four brothers enlisted in the British Armed Forces. One lost his life. My father was at the Battle of Monte Casino and spoke about the extraordinary bravery of Polish soldiers. In the ‘60s, I read about the 1956 Hungarian uprising, the imprisonment of religious and political dissenters and, in 1968, as a schoolboy, organised a town protest following the crushing of Alexander Dubček’s Prague Spring by Soviet tanks. I once met Vaclav Havel, who said that under Communism, the truth had become the first casualty: *“The saving message is that the truth prevails for those who live in truth,”* adding that, in the formation of the next generation of leaders, this message *“might be inscribed on the Moses baskets of every nation’s babies.”* Do we?

How easily we forget.

In post-war Europe and in Post-Communism Europe, there was an instinctive embrace of the biblical injunction that *“the truth will set you free”*. This was accompanied by remarkable energy, altruism, and generosity in the strenuous efforts of leaders like Churchill and Habsburg. We see it in the Marshall Aid Programme, the rebuilding of cities, towns, and villages, in the rebuilding of economies, institutions, culture, and families.

We will need to see it again if we are to tackle the catastrophic displacement of over 120 million people worldwide; if we are to rebuild Ukraine; if we are to respond to the catastrophic situation in Sudan where an almost unreported war has left 12 million displaced people facing famine; if we are to respond to the dangers in the Middle East, or to the recurring military provocations and threats experienced by Taiwan and South Korea on a daily basis.

We seem very badly prepared to meet these threats. Recall that Churchill said that the very worst time to create a plan is when the plan is needed. But the threat is not from tyrants alone. There is an interior challenge too. We in the West have an intrinsic problem in the lack of resilience and

even belief in our civilisational values. We combine a self-hatred with amnesia, forgetting who we are and what made us who we are.

Winston Churchill uttered a warning which has a particular contemporary resonance: *“When one generation no longer esteems its own heritage and fails to pass the torch to its children, it is saying in essence that the very foundational principles and experiences that make the society what it is are no longer valid. What is required when this happens and the society has lost its way is for leaders to arise who have not forgotten the discarded legacy and who love it with all their hearts.”*

Otto von Habsburg saw that too. I recall with fondness that, as a young MP, I met him during a visit to the European Parliament. We discussed a wide range of issues, but several times in our conversation, he emphasised the importance of the renewal of faith in reanimating the “soullessness” of Europe and its political life.

Your government here in Hungary adopted a new constitution that recognised your nation’s submission to the Cross of Christ. Francis of Assisi was right: use words but only when you have run out of deeds. Nevertheless, words do matter. Giscard D’Estaing rejected the advice of six Catholic countries to recognise Christianity in its treaties and to rework the foundations accordingly – on rock or on sand.

In their different ways, both Habsburg, the true believer and Churchill, the self-defined buttress of the church, understood why such values give meaning to our identity and lives. Both knew of a Power greater than theirs. Otto said that you can’t have human rights without God – because He is the ultimate authority; the point of reference.

In these days of Putin’s horrific war, this era of continuous crisis, Europeans are once again faced with an intensifying storm, threatening the very foundations. If its institutions are to have a future, built on rock rather than sand, it needs a revaluation, a metanoia – a change of heart and a change of direction: institutional, yes, but personal too.

Otto told me that he mourned the decreasing belief in the sanctity of every human life – from the womb to the tomb. He told me that the family is the building block of society: that we must do more to empower families – including the radical and meritorious idea of giving every child a vote, to be used on their behalf by their parents until the child comes of age. That would certainly massively counter the anti-family and anti-child agenda so prevalent in so many countries today – and Otto would certainly not have been silent about some of the madness emerging from Brussels today or about the hedonism that has displaced faith, hope and charity.

Habsburg once remarked: *“Neither Communism in the East nor the consumer economy of the West is giving a valid answer to the final questions of mankind. If Communism was shattered because a godless system cannot survive, that is also true of the materialist format that certain market idolaters want to give to the European Community. Naturally we need a free and social economy, for that is the only kind that works and serves people. But a Europe without Christianity would have to collapse like a house of cards, because it would have no soul.”*

This *soulless* Europe is largely silent about the root causes of the 120 million people currently displaced worldwide – by war, conflict, or persecution: or about the 360 million Christians who last year experienced “high levels of persecution and discrimination” worldwide, many the victims of ideological Jihadism or Communist ideology. Hungary has understood such persecution while others have looked away and deeds have followed words.

It has helped to rebuild the post-genocide villages of Christians on the Nineveh Plain, and it has challenged political indifference to persecution. But it has failed to build a consensus around that question so close to Otto von Habsburg’s heart: how do you ensure that the Judaeo-Christian faith that was once central to European life can be presented in ways that unite rather than divide, and whose enduring relevance can appeal to Europe’s increasingly secular and sometimes hostile elites? How can we best counter that?

Politics must address the anxieties of the age and provide a compelling, hopeful narrative. When it fails to do that, it opens the door to populists, autocrats, and dictators. Otto von Habsburg was deeply concerned for the soul of Europe, and so should we be too. It’s not too late to bring alive the spiritual heart that is the lifeblood of liberty and human dignity.

I began with some anecdotes about Winston Churchill’s rapier-like retorts and humour. Let me end with some words of his too:

Bernard Shaw once sent him a note with an invitation to see Shaw’s opening night performance of *Saint Joan*. The playwright enclosed two tickets, *“One for yourself and one for a friend – if you have one.”* Expressing sorrow at being unable to attend, Churchill wrote back and asked for tickets for the play’s second night – *“if there is one.”*

In reiterating my thanks for the privilege of speaking at this Gala Dinner, I would like to end with Churchill’s insistence that *“Success is not final; failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts”* and I ask you to raise your glasses in a toast to the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Winston Churchill – friend and contemporary of Otto von Habsburg.

*Delivered at the Gala Dinner  
on the 112<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Otto von Habsburg  
(Pesti Vigadó, Budapest, 23 November 2024).*



## PRESENTING THE TRAVELLING ALTAR OF EMPEROR JOSEPH II



It was a cold and bright winter day on 14 January 1994, the first time I visited Pannonhalma. My travelling companion was Zoltán Balog, a Reformed pastor. We arrived there to plan a conference on “Church and Modern Society” in the context of the forthcoming parliamentary elections. We aimed to clarify the relationship between the state and religious communities, historical churches and po-

litical parties in a way that would allow for a genuine dialogue between the participants. Paul Zulehner, the renowned Catholic sociologist of religion, and Niklaus Peter, the Swiss Reformed theologian and curator of the legacy of Karl Barth, have already said yes; Otto Graf Lambsdorff, a legendary figure of the German liberals was the highest-ranking active political guest, also in his capacity as a member of the Synod of German Lutherans. We had come to Pannonhalma because we wanted to share our plans with Archabbot Asztrik and invite him personally to what we considered to be an important meeting.

The Archabbot welcomed us cordially, although he began, seemingly, with an apology: “Forgive me for only being able to offer you a seat among furniture less than two hundred years old, but as you may know, Joseph II took the older pieces.” We were aware that the emperor and king had removed the furnishings when he dissolved the monastic orders; however, no one in the reception room, no matter how fond of antique furniture they might be, could sense its absence. Nonetheless, it was clear from Archabbot Asztrik Várszegi’s remarks, especially in the light of the conference’s theme, that the Benedictine community was at least cautious in its relations with the state authorities.

Over the past eight hundred years, there must have been countless opportunities to draw from this experience. The traumas of the 20<sup>th</sup> century may be remembered well even by those who are present here, if not personally, then through the stories of their parents and grandparents. On this occasion, however, we are turning our gaze towards the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when, during the reign of Maria Theresa, the empire managed to stabilise the state organisation and avoid major losses, even if negotiations with the European monarchies posed many difficulties. The 1741 Diet of Pressburg (today Bratislava) holds a prominent place in our national historical consciousness, where the queen, dressed in mourning, with the barely six months old Joseph in her arms, asked the Hungarian estates for their backing, to which they responded with “*Vitam et sanguinem pro rege nostro!*” – “Our lives and blood for our King!” avowing their enthusiastic support.

Despite her aversion to the ideas of the emerging age of Enlightenment, the influence of the Catholic Church had already been curtailed by Maria Theresa in several areas where it was acting at the expense of the state. She was a profoundly religious, resolute, strong-minded Monarch, and heartily contemptuous of Protestantism, a conviction reinforced by her intense dislike of King Frederick II of Prussia.

*“There was only one person who dared to raise his voice and was bold enough not to be silent about his opposing views: the son of Maria Theresa, the emperor, the future successor”, writes Elemér Mályusz in his immense monograph on the Edict of Tolerance, published in 1939, and goes on to explain: “Joseph loved his mother; not only with a filial affection but also with admiration that made the years of his youth, the tale of saving the Habsburg dynasty, a deeply engraved memory in his soul, which reflected the outstanding qualities of the queen at every turn. He too was imbued with an awareness of his responsibility and vocation to the imperial body, although he was convinced that his duties as monarch required a different approach to the administration of religious affairs from that of his mother. He outlined his views clearly to his mother as early as 1765, when he proclaimed that in matters of faith and morals, persecution or violence would not convert anyone because these require inner conviction [...]. What the twenty-five-year-old Joseph then expressed in such definite words remained his conviction to the end. He also believed in the rightness of his principles, and he did so with a perseverance no less than that of Maria Theresa. He was only willing to forsake them on one condition: if someone would prove him wrong in his position. Yet he did not impose his views on his mother, observing her religious policy for fifteen years, albeit with inner discontent but without aggressiveness. His almost childlike attachment to and respect for his mother’s principles and convictions restrained him from criticism. Maria Theresa had seen her son’s advance; but from his sarcastic remarks and demeanour, she would have preferred to conclude that his ideas and beliefs had been formulated only through reading and the influence of more liberal intellectual associations and that it was all a matter of deportment. She regarded Joseph’s behaviour as a flaunting of his distaste for old habits and the clergy, an expression of his frivolous moral views. This filled her with concern for the future but also with confidence that her son, if persuaded, would see the error of his ways and change.”*

In this particular document dating back to December 1765, only a few months after becoming his mother's co-regent, he outlined an argument that would remain largely the same two decades later when it came to the actual ban. He called for the public use of the monastic orders' property, the abolition of their autonomy, the ruthless enforcement of the principle of social utility.

"The impatient mind" is the title of the chapter on Emperor Joseph II of Emil Niederschauer's book, *A Habsburgok. Egy európai jelenség* [The Habsburgs. A European Phenomenon], co-authored with Imre Gonda. The impatience of the mind, paradoxically, for Hungarian Protestants – including my own church, the Lutherans – created the Edict of Tolerance, which is based on the same state-interested rationality that was already mentioned in connection with the ban on monastic orders. According to Joseph II, *"Diversity of religions is dangerous to the state only if it gives rise to fanaticism, inequality and partisanship, which can be avoided by treating all denominations on a completely equal footing"*. It was this conviction that guided him in the drafting of the Edict of Tolerance.

Elemér Mályusz summarises the difference between mother and son, Maria Theresa and Joseph II: *"The divide that separates him from Maria Theresa is not the opposition of the believer and the unbeliever. Joseph was far from the scepticism of the philosophers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was not piety that he lacked, but rather the blind zeal, for he had nothing to veil his eyes; therefore, he recognised the disadvantages of clerical interference in the management of the fate of the state."*

Maria Theresa was visibly occupied with her son's religiosity and relationship with God and the Church. One's faith, whether as an emperor or a person of any rank or title, is always a profound secret. The forms and gestures of faith may vary greatly, but one thing is certain: for a Christian, the fact of salvation, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the firm foundation of their faith. In the relationship between God and humankind, the Word made flesh, the infant of Bethlehem, assumes a central position.

But why are we talking about this?

The object next to me, a more than 200-year-old artefact consisting of three parts, is Joseph II's travelling altar. We have no definite records, but there is reason to believe he received it from his mother in his teens. The altar came to Hungary with the heritage of Otto von Habsburg. I am now presenting it to the monastic community on behalf of the family and the Otto von Habsburg Foundation, requesting it to be made available for viewing by anyone interested.

The silver relief of the central image portrays the Angelic Salutation, and the upper frieze is unfortunately missing. To the right and left of it are two small putto figures with lilies. The reliquary bears the inscription "S. Bonifatii M". As this is the central element, it presumably contains the relic of a significant saint, whom we have identified with the martyred bishop St Boniface. Boniface was born Winfrid around 672, in the Wessex province of Britain. He was ordained a priest at the age of thirty. In 718, he went to Rome, where he was welcomed by Pope Gregory II and sent on his way a year later – when he assumed the name Boniface. On 30 November 722, he was consecrated missionary bishop for Germania. The German dioceses he founded continue to function in a barely changed structure to this day. He is the apostle of Germania, the patron saint of Germany, who was murdered by the Frisians in the town of Dokkum on 5 June 754.

The left wing's depiction of the Nativity of Christ in the stable at Bethlehem is a replica, and there may have been a silver relief here once. The reliquary bears the inscription "Benigni M", which probably contains a relic associated with Saint Benignus of Dijon. Tradition considers the martyred bishop, who lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, to be the first Christian priest to serve in a city, Dijon. The other reliquary is engraved with the inscription "Marcelliani M", which is believed to hold a relic of Marcellianus, a martyr of the persecution of Christians under Diocletian. On the lower reliquary is the inscription "S. Austeri M", which may contain the relics of the Roman senator St. Asterius, martyred at Caesarea.

On the right wing is an image of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, which does not appear to be original either. On the left side, the reliquary is inscribed "Quirini M", presumably with the relics of St. Quirinius in it, who was martyred in Savaria, now Szombathely, where he was buried following his death, and his relics were taken to Rome. After the foundation of the Diocese of Szombathely in 1777, they were returned to the Bishop's Palace of Szombathely through the intercession of Maria Theresa. The right side of the reliquary bears the inscription "Alepani", which has yet to be deciphered.

Joseph II travelled extensively throughout his life, spending about a quarter of his reign journeying in a carriage, far from his home in Vienna, following the example of King Frederick II of Prussia and Tsar Peter I of Russia. In terms of distance covered, he could have circumnavigated the globe about one and a half times. In addition to his impatient mind, his restless heart and curiosity drove him to gain experience in disguise, presenting himself abroad as the Count of Falkenstein. He visited every corner of his empire, as well as France, Italy, Spain, and even Moscow and the Crimean Peninsula in Russia. He gathered information, mingled with the people, and then wrote official reports – and letters to his mother and Chancellor Kaunitz – about his impressions and encounters.

The altar that accompanied him on these journeys was a sacred instrument essential for the moments of quiet reflections that followed or preceded the hustle and bustle of the day. Not a backdrop, not some pious gesture, but a personal object in which maternal exhortations were as much a part as theological and historical messages. The praying person expresses gratitude and pleads. The particular blend of joy over good things and the fears and desires expressed in supplication is the distinctive character of every Christian person. This could not have been otherwise in the case of Joseph II.

The altarpieces are iconic moments from the Scriptures, decisive moments of the Incarnation. At the focal point of the central altar's depiction of the Angelic Salutation is the dove, which symbolises the Holy Spirit, whose gentleness and power is the great mystery that each person can experience and articulate in the face of their relationship with God. Beneath the silver relief is the relic of St. Boniface, who, although fallen victim to the enraged Frisian pagans, was a missionary and church organiser whose work has had a lasting impact on the spiritual landscape of Europe to this day. His determination and decisiveness are shown by the fact that he began his mission of conversion by felling the sacred oak tree of the Germanic peoples, hence the axe, a common attribute. As Boniface himself writes: *"Let us die for the holy laws of our fathers. Let us be neither dogs that do not bark nor silent onlookers nor paid servants who run away before the wolf."*



*Instead, let us be careful shepherds watching over Christ's flock. Let us preach the whole of God's plan to the powerful and to the humble, to rich and to poor, to men of every rank and age, as far as God gives us the strength, in season and out of season.*" However, in addition to his vigorous missionary and organisational activities, he was a devotee of the liberal arts and wrote a grammatical treatise and a treatise on verse. In Benedictine monasteries, he is often depicted as an abbot, a clear sign of his esteem. In the course of his retreats, Joseph was faced with all this – and we can be sure that the fact that the patron saint of Germania repeatedly appeared before him to serve as a measure of his faith and his often ruthless, 'axe-wielding' organisational determination played an important role in shaping his self-image – also as a benefactor, as his name, Boniface, indicates.

The nativity scene of the stable in Bethlehem is a well-known classic with a familiar message: the Saviour is embodied in a tiny baby, around whom shepherds and ordinary people gather, and then even the mighty of the world finally bow down to the ground. But how does a ruler of an empire think of the humility of the three kings? And how did the self-conscious and caring mother, Maria Theresa, regard the scene, seeing in her own son the tiny infant who, if not Saviour, was destined for great deeds, an emperor, the successor to her work? This is mere speculation, but looking at the right wing, it would be a challenge not to discover a parallel, however profane, between the infant Jesus in the Temple and Joseph as a babe-in-arms in the Hungarian Parliament. A mother's exhortation is, therefore, also an encouragement, as the Gospel of Luke says: *"As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"* (Luke 2:23); thus, whatever may happen to you, you can draw strength from your faith, family, and your mother's legacy.

The relic evoking Saint Benignus, the town priest of Dijon, perhaps suggests the importance of service in a civilising Europe, while the remains of St. Marcellianus and St. Asterius – the latter being a Roman senator – reveal the sacrifice of a politician unwavering in his faith. The invocation of St. Quirinius, martyred in Szombathely, on the altarpiece – discussed as a possible reference to the presentation to the Temple and the scene of the 1741 Diet – may suggest, in addition to the obligingness and generosity of the offer of *"Our lives and our blood"*, that in the land of Pannonia, my dear son, you can easily fall victim to the wrath of the people. And we have yet to mention the conditions in Hunnia, the eastern part of the Kingdom of Hungary.

For all its possible subtle allusions and historical connotations, Joseph II's travelling triptych conveys a clear, encouraging message: *"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."* (Isa 43:1).

We know that Joseph II, on his deathbed, revoked all his decrees except for the emancipation of the serfs and the religious toleration. In the final hours of struggle, reformist determination disappeared, and the stability of the empire and peace became more important.

Otto von Habsburg, whose heart urn rests just a few steps away, learned much about Hungarian history from his Benedictine teachers. Certainly, the turbulent years of the Order's history and the resolute reform plans of his distant relative were not hidden from him, nor were the circumstances of his death. Evaluating the successes or failures of politicians and rulers is a serious academic and historical task, but it also has a transcendent dimension.

Otto described the death of his father, the last Austrian Emperor and King of Hungary, in such terms: *"When faced with death, there is no self-deception. One remains alone, and earthly merits no longer matter. When one stands before their Creator, in front of Him, all that matters is the fulfilment of duties and goodwill. God does not ask people to bring Him victory reports. Success is granted by Him. He only expects us to give our utmost."*

*This lesson has remained with me, in accordance with my father's wishes, as the most valuable experience for the rest of my life. His demise showed me that as long as one's conscience is at peace, one cannot truly fail. And this, after all, is the only real secret to happiness – even here, on earth."*

Joseph II's travelling altar is now brought to Mount of St. Martin – at the conclusion of a great journey. Not as compensation for the old furniture taken away, but rather, to be kept in a place where it could help us to understand the relationship between the intentions of the individual and the broader community, including Catholics, Protestants, people of different political and ideological positions, values and interests, all within the context of God's presumed Will. Let the Benedictine community of Pannonhalma be our compass, our trusted guide on our earthly journey, especially when our impatient minds – like Joseph's in his day – makes us want to rush ahead...

*Delivered at the St. Martin's Day celebration  
(Pannonhalma Archabbey, 15 November 2024).*



# IN MEMORIAM

## In Remembrance of our Colleague, Dr. Zoltán Ólmosi (1953–2024)



We are grateful for the privilege of knowing him and working with him.

He was involved in the Foundation's mission from the very beginning. We felt and appreciated the security of his decades of professional experience in the archival field and his extensive network with the academic community. We are grateful that with our volume entitled *Otto von Habsburg and the State Power. Archival Sources Relating to the Last Heir to the Hungarian Throne*, we were able to make our mark in the world of archival scholarship within our very first year of operation – this would never have been possible without him. It was inspiring to witness how he enjoyed digging through old documents and was filled with joy and intellectual excitement as the contents of a letter were revealed, or another detail of a web of relationships unfolded. We are thankful to him for his part in forming an excellent team of colleagues in such a short space of time.

Zoltán Ólmosi graduated from the Eötvös Loránd University with a degree in German language and literature, history and political science. After completing his studies, he taught at the Kossuth Lajos High School in Pesterzsébet, and then, until 1995, he was a research fellow at the Institute of Political History. He defended his doctoral thesis in 1991 with a dissertation on the history of the Petőfi Circle. From 2003 until his retirement, he was archivist, senior archivist and chief adviser of the National Archives of Hungary.

He participated in the organisation of scientific conferences, round-table discussions and exhibitions. For the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Otto von Habsburg, Zoltán Ólmosi collected and presented the archival material held by the institution on the last heir to the Hungarian throne. He also gave lectures at professional events and was involved in realising public cultural programmes of the National Archives. All the while, he regularly produced articles, studies, source books, and youth history chronologies on his chosen topics in the field of post-1945 political and social history.

A range of publications represents his work as a reviewer, copy editor or editor-in-charge: in the historical journal *Múltunk* [Our Past] (1979–1995), the series “*Fehér foltok*” [White Spots] (1989–1991) of the daily newspaper *Magyar Nemzet* [Hungarian Nation], *Levéltári Közlemények* [Archival Bulletins] (2003–2005, 2009), and *Levéltári Szemle* [Journal of Archives] (2003–2005, 2011–2018). For a few years, he was editor-in-chief of the electronic resource journal *ArchívNet*, which dealt with 20<sup>th</sup>-century history (2010–2016).

Beyond the above-mentioned, he undertook training tasks as well: between 1983 and 1987, he taught 20<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian history at the Faculty of Humanities of Eötvös Loránd University, and from 2013 to 2014, he was a regular lecturer teaching public administration history at the vocational courses of the Hungarian National Archives for records management and assistant archivist.

After retirement, he continued to work as a Collection Fellow at the Otto von Habsburg Foundation, where he was responsible for organising records, preparing auxiliary documents and developing databases. Our book *Otto von Habsburg and the State Power*, edited together with Piroska Kocsis and released jointly with Corvina Publishing House and the Hungarian National Archives, received the first prize in the category of professional publications at the “Archival Publication of the Year 2020”.

For several decades, Dr. Zoltán Ólmosi's work as an archivist has been carried out with exemplary dedication and high quality. His personality – characterised as much by professional fastidiousness and curiosity as by a wry, often sarcastic sense of humour – will remain in our memories.

May God rest his soul!

## Farewell to Dr Pál Huszár

Pál Huszár, former legendary professor of the University of Pannonia in Veszprém and the Reformed Theological Academy of Pápa, a prominent member of the Hungarian Pan-European Union, passed away at the age of 83.



## The Otto von Habsburg Foundation bids farewell to its friend, Gusztáv Hittig

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of our friend and enthusiastic supporter, Gusztáv Hittig, who had been called back to God on 1 December 2024.





# Outlook

*Naptár* (calendar) and *napló* (diary): two words share the same root – “nap” (day) in Hungarian – yet diverge in form and meaning. In a calendar, we mark our programs, the tasks to be accomplished. A diary is a record of past events, memories, and achievements. When we write a report, a kind of diary or memoir, we also confront ourselves with whether and how the resolutions we have set down in the calendar have been fulfilled. Life often intervenes, and great expectations are dashed. The Habsburgs have had plenty of experience of how history and world politics can tear our daily lives apart, rewriting the plans of individuals and whole nations. At other times, changes lead in new directions, but then, through twists and turns, they just happen to return to the original course.

When we look back over the days of a year that have gone by, the calendar is no longer merely a structured record of dates and events. Instead, it forms an overall picture of the entire year. The year that now has a style painted in our memory with brushstrokes of detail but organised into a larger composition. Just like on the pages of *99 Years – 99 Photos. Photographs from the Life of Otto von Habsburg*, published in 2023, where the shades of old photos become the reflections of the light and shadows of a larger image, drawing the portrait of the book’s protagonist. Many stories behind a single face. Small details in the whole.

If I may make a personal confession, in my mind, 2024, for instance, has a slightly five-ring shape. Since I live in Paris, last year was, for me, above all, the year of the Olympics: the anticipation and excitement of the city, the many meetings, beach volleyball players on the Champ de Mars, cyclists on the city centre streets (including Hungarian competitors at a very prominent place!), fencers inside the elegant walls of the Grand Palais (Hungarians with even more glamorous achievements!). These are all colours of the fresco of 2024, enriching my memory of it.

The 2024 report of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation is a true diary, in which a remarkable collection of events, exchange of ideas, publications, and acquisitions, once again, presents a compelling overview of which we are rightfully proud. Beyond the work in the Collection, our Foundation fosters excellent relations, initiates meaningful discussions, and represents with great dedication its namesake’s commitment to European values and solutions based on mutual respect and dialogue.

2025 is currently still predominantly a blank sheet to fill. Although the calendar is undoubtedly getting busier, who could predict which will be the most memorable colours and lasting impressions of this year? I am confident that the centenary of the birth of my mother, Regina of Saxe-Meiningen, will be on the minds of my family, myself and the Otto von Habsburg Foundation.

Winston Churchill, who was often quoted last year on the occasion of his 150<sup>th</sup> birthday – which our Foundation respectfully celebrated – wrote the following about his passion, painting: *“Whatever the worries of the hour or the threats of the future, once the picture has begun to flow along, there is no room for them in the mental screen. They pass out into shadow and darkness. All one’s mental light, such as it is, becomes concentrated on the task.”* As the world changes, just like last year, we cannot avoid the worries of the hour in 2025 either, and I feel we will also have plenty to deal with the threats of the future as well. But I believe in what Churchill and Otto von Habsburg firmly held: that it is worth concentrating on our creative tasks in the midst of every adversity.

GEORG VON HABSBURG  
Hungarian Ambassador to France, Member of the Board



Otto von Habsburg and Regina in front of the Sacré Cœur Basilica in Paris, 1951.





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