

NEW INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

—Foreword—

Lajos Arday *

It is widely accepted within academic communities – however also a less known fact – that there had not been sovereign Hungarian foreign policy between 1526 and 1918. Within Austrian Empire the Kingdom of Hungary or at least dominant parts of it were successfully preserving some sort of municipal or provincial autonomies, although foreign affairs were administered in Vienna. For Széchenyi (and other coeval politicians from Italy to Sweden) England was the model country in the era of national renaissance and reforms, nevertheless national independence and the situation of non-Hungarians were unsolved issues and did not have any effect outside the Empire. Looking back amidst terrible destruction and miseries of the 20th century, the half-century between 1867 and 1914 could seem as a Golden Age, however in many aspects phenomena which has lead to tragic end were visible at that time. The Empire with its 52 million inhabitants was a European great power and its positions with German and Italian alliances seemed strong. At that time main political issues were the relations with Austria, forming of the independent Hungarian Army, debate on sovereignty and nationalist ‘agitations’ besides local politics. Both of the diplomatic senses of the political elite and the masses were declining. Blurred by the fiction of 30 million Hungarians they did not noticed that new enormous powers were emerged in the world: Serbian intentions targeting the break-up of the Monarchy and Romanian aspirations to annexe Transylvania were supported by Russia and France, the leaders of millions of Czech, Slovakian and Rusyn workers in the United States were lobbying at the US decision-makers for an envisioned Czechoslovakian state, – indeed Masaryk ‘had found’ the state in Pittsburg and Philadelphia instead of Prague in 1918. When prime minister Kálmán Széll was warned to a possible confrontation with Great Britain he (in accordance with the *Zeitgeist*) presumably said: ‘English navy fleet does not have wheels to get nearer’.

Horthy, Bethlen and Teleki – as members of the moderate elite of the truncated and plundered but independent country – saw England as the main supporter of the economic and political stability and peaceful border revision as well. However those who were interested in foreign affairs were blinded by truly impressive economic and military successes of the Nazi Germany and they didn’t see further than Berlin. After the recurring national tragedy, Hungary – besides the whole East Central European region betrayed by the West – became a satellite state of the Soviet Empire and there was no independent foreign policy representing national interests neither in 1948-49 nor after 1956. This was the period of ‘close conciliation’ diplomacy. Starting from the mid-1960s there are slightly independent Hungarian foreign policy initiatives in connection with the Non-Aligned Movement (Austria, Finland and Yugoslavia) and towards Hungarian minorities. Truly independent foreign policy authority and thinking could not be developed in the state of ‘goulash/fridge communism’ or in the ‘happiest barrack’ specified by individual solutions and tightly closed domestic frameworks.

* Author: Lajos Arday Dsc Historian. His main areas of research are Great Britain, Easter Europe and the post Yugoslav states.

Recovered independency enabled free foreign policy orientation from 1989-91. There was a national accord on triple aims: Euro-Atlantic integration, neighbour relationship and backing regions with Hungarian majority outside Hungary. In the same time public awareness became more domestic due to the failure of excessive expectations and promises. Today focus of the foreign policy targets neighbour countries providing a good initiative concerning the future of Hungarian minorities outside Hungary. Recently there have been two main and popular topics regarding foreign affairs: Yugoslav wars which had affected Hungarian minority people as well and Meciar's, Fico's and Slota's anti-Hungarian politics in Slovakia.

There is an urgent need for such a modern online public foreign affairs review which addresses not only academic community but young people as well. What is most important, it shall be edited not only in Hungarian or world languages but in the languages of the neighbour states. According to a mainly American notion, Poland shall be a model state for its Eastern neighbours, Ukraine and Belarus and the same time Hungary shall fulfil that leadership towards EU aspirant Southern countries in the Balkans.

This notion is the base of our periodical's objectives with its title referring to that as well. We facilitate the recognition of the interdependence in a fated region from Poland to Bulgaria and Albania. We can earn more beneficial positions within an integrating Europe if we act as a unit to stand for our regional interests following Scandinavian model.

Whether we contribute to the recognition of this initiative, our effort is not ineffective and would be valuable in the unforeseeable future.

Budapest, 2010

© DKE 2010

<http://www.southeast-europe.org>
Contact: [dke\[at\]southeast-europe.org](mailto:dke[at]southeast-europe.org)

Note: *Respected Researchers*, if you make a reference to this article or quote part of it, please send us an email at dke@southeast-europe.org to let us know that. *Please cite the article as follows:*

Lajos Arday: New International Relations. Foreword. *International Relations Quarterly*, Vol. 1. No.1 (2010) 2 p
Thank you for your kind collaboration. *Editor-in-Chief*