

Diplomatic Relations Between Portugal and Hungary (1935–1943)

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The history of Portugal is a slightly neglected field of national history. However, the analyses of the Portugal-Hungarian diplomatic relations (1935–1944) throw light on several questions, which are problematical for the Hungarian historiography up to the present day.

The lecture is based on Hungarian documents of Foreign Office found in the Magyar Országos Levéltár (Hungarian National Archive) on the one part and documents of the Lisbon Hungarian Royal Legation collected by György Bakach-Besseney on the other part. It can be seen from this that I have made my analyses from the Hungarian point of view because I have not carried out research into the documents of the Lisbon National Archives.

In my short essay, I am going to make typologies about the Portugal-Hungarian diplomatic relations in that time, and I draw attention to three problems: first of all, why were Portugal revalued from the second half of the 1930's, secondly, what kind of talks was between the Anglo-Saxon powers and Hungary in Lisbon beside Stockholm, Bern and Istanbul and thirdly, what was the relation of the Kállay-government towards to Washington and London through the Hungarian Legislature in Lisbon.

Thus, the Hungarian-Portugal diplomatic relations enframe the Hungarian-British and the Hungarian-American relations, too, in this period. Thereby, the history of connections is going to expand by the title.

The diplomatic relations between Hungary and Portugal became stronger in the second half of the 1920's, for which one of the reasons was that the foreign policy of Hungary expanded, and the Portuguese government led by Oliveira Salazar made a serious interest towards the Horthy régime.

The connection between the two countries first was taken up on economic level. The two countries made an arrangement with each other in 1929, which was the first contract, and it was about the first export-import agreement, which refers to the exchange of wine of Tokaj and Porto.¹ The prelude of this was in 1924 that the Portugal government pointed out that she wanted to make an economic contract with Hungary. The agreement of 1929 broadened further; the Ipari Árukiviteli és Behozatali Rt. (Industrial Export-Import Ltd.) exported a considerable amount of goods from Portugal, for example mucilage,

¹ Magyar Országos Levéltár (Hungarian National Archives: MOL) K70 336, bunch (cs.) without number (szn.) item (t.) 1929. 11. 14. document

turpentine, fish-oil and cod-liver-oil. At the same time these goods came to Hungary by Swiss and German traders with 30-40% value higher than they were bought. To eliminate this came into force the new barter agreement in 1942 December to the extent of 6 million dollars. Among the Hungarian exports the paraffin, vaseline, textiles, medicines and photographic papers represented the biggest volume.² The agreement was ratified in January 1943 by the government of Salazar and the Hungarian Executive Council.³ It can be seen that the economic relations between the two countries became much stronger at the end of the 1920's, which coincided with Salazar's rise to power in Portugal and a new political constellation was taking shape in Europe.

The main foreign political aim of the Hungarian policy was the French and British orientation until the middle of the 1920's. There were important changes in Europe from the beginning of the 1930's. Hitler came into power in Germany and she broke the barriers of the Versailles peace treaty, in this England did not support her but she had scruple over the German revision and she closed her eyes. At the same time, Germany followed its expansive foreign policy in the second half of 1930's. There were dangers ahead of the British Empire from different sides, in the Far East there was the Chinese-Japanese war, in the Middle East the Palestinian conflict. The British foreign policy was attentive to her interests and she followed her reconciliation policy in Europe and walked out from Middle-Eastern Europe. With this, she gave ground to the aggressive Germany, which took the advantage of this and annexed Austria and the Sudeten-land from Czechoslovakia. The German presence increased in Eastern Europe and Hungary found herself in the shadow of the extended German Reich. In the constellation of changed balance of power, the Hungarian foreign policy turned to Berlin with Rome, since she could hope for putting into effect her revision aims from these two powers. The British presence was still in Europe and they still had to count on it ; the leaders of the Hungarian diplomacy knew it well and watched the British government with great interest not only from London, but from England's oldest European ally, Portugal. Pál Hevesy, accredited chargé d'affaires in Lisbon thought this: *"No one can talk about independent foreign policy, because Portugal de facto the colony of England."*⁴ One month later he wrote this: *"The protecting arm of Portugal is England in the future too. Without putting too much emphasis on Portugal I dare point out that the aspect from political and League of Nation but especially from economical aspect this country can mean a definite value for Hungary, particularly if the good relations with her are kept."*⁵

For the Hungarian foreign policy Lisbon meant a political channel to England, from where the Hungarian diplomats were able to follow the events in London with attention.

It can be seen that during the second part of the 1930's Hungary and Portugal greatly draw closer to each other ; it is confirmed by several facts: in 1935 István Csáky II. class chargé d'affaires was replaced by Andor Wodianer I. class chargé d'affaires as a deputy. The Hungarian Royal Legation opened its doors under the direction of Andor Wodianer,

² MOL K70 336. cs. szn. t. 1942. 12. 30. doc.

³ MOL K69 726. cs. szn. t. 1943. 01. 27. doc.

⁴ MOL K63 225. cs. 26. t. 36. l. (1930. annual summing report 1931. 06. 28.)

⁵ MOL K63 225. cs. 26. t. 42. l. (1931. 07. 29.)

Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, in 1939, who fulfilled this post until 19 March 1944. At the same time, the Portugal legation was transferred to Budapest from Vienna, with the diplomatic order, in 1939 ; it was led by Sampaio Carrido, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. At the time of Anschluss, Germany annexed Austria, and this, of course, had an influence, but it is fact that the Portugal legation was placed to Budapest and reflects the approach of the Portugal government towards Hungary. *What is the reason for this?* Salazar probably looked on with great sympathy to the Horthy regime, which was certainly similar to his regime. The mutual sympathy was made stronger by Miklós Horthy, when he sent the Hungarian Great Cross of Merit to Salazar.⁶ At the beginning of the 1930's Gyula Gömbös made an attempt to establish the one-man dictatorship in Hungary. He sent the summary of his political programme – National Working Plan – to Salazar (which was translated to Portuguese by Pál Teleki, and some of its points kindled his interest.⁷ These probably influenced the decision of Salazar to move the diplomatic legation to Budapest. According to the documents of the Hungarian legislature of Lisbon, the tasks of the Hungarian diplomats were not only to watch the domestic and foreign policy of Portugal, but to analyse and send the coming information from London to Budapest.

The diplomatic importance of Lisbon grew further by 1940–41, insomuch as Portugal took a stand on neutrality. A new legation was opened in Lisbon in January 1941, and higher ranked ambassadors replaced the forgoing ones ; Switzerland, Finland and Sweden appointed their ambassadors also.⁸ The leaders of the Hungarian diplomacy also raised the number of the Lisboan mission. The change of the memorials between Pál Teleki and Oliviera Salazar was at this time also – 4 March 1941. Teleki, in his letter, outlined the overwhelming dominance of Germany and he invoked Salazar's aid to make approaches to the British government. Salazar made a promise to take on this mediation between Great-Britain and Hungary, and he expressed his opinion about concerning the three possible ways of ending the war. The first variation is that England will win ; the second variation is that England will sign peace with Germany, which means Stalin's victory and according to the third possible variation Germany will win the war, which means that the hegemony of Hitler's "New Europe" and the hegemony of Germany-Italy will be realized.⁹

It can be said that the importance of the European diplomacy of Portugal had grown on account of the neutrality of Portugal, which was sensed by the Hungarian foreign policy and it took the necessary steps. But the position of Portugal during the Second World War should not be overestimated, it is merely that the invisible frontline ran along Lisbon, where diplomats and secret agents were the soldiers. On the other hand, it meant the possible channel for exchanging the views between the Hungarian foreign policy and the powers of the Anglo-Saxons.

⁶ MOL K63 225. cs. 26. t. 128. 1. (1934. 10. 18.)

⁷ MOL K63 225. cs. 26. t. 115. 1. (1933. 06. 07.)

⁸ MOL K63 225. cs. 26. t. szn. (1941. 01. 10.)

⁹ MOL K63 226. cs. 26. t. szn. (1941. 03. 04.)

There were significant changes in the military position at the end of 1943 and at the beginning of 1943. The German army suffered a defeat in Russia, the Hungarian second army lied in its ruins, the Anglo-Saxons successfully set their foot on the shores of North-Africa (Operation Torch) ; all these events forced the Kállay-government that Hungary must revalue its relation with Germany and must take into account the possible defeat of Germany, too. The representative of the accredited Polish government to Lisbon, colonel Kowalewsky, had already drew Wodianer's attention, in July 1942 (!), that "*it would be practical for someone to be in Lisbon on part of the Hungarians, with whom preliminary talks could be started.*"¹⁰ In favour of this the Hungarian government took the necessary steps. Miklós Kállay sent Tibor Eckhardt, representative of Small Holder's Party, to the United States to take steps in establishing an emigrant government, and to form a connection with Washington. In a parallel direction with this the exploratory talks started towards the Anglo-Saxon powers. The Hungarian efforts found preferential welcome from the British side. Kowalewsky indicated, who also gave warning to Wodianer in December 1942, that there was a great interest towards Hungary in the circles of the Anglo-Saxons.¹¹

As it is known, the peace-feelers of the Kállay-government towards the Anglo-Saxons during 1943 took place in Lisbon, besides Stockholm, Istanbul and Bern. The Hungarian-British negotiations in Stockholm and Istanbul were processed by Gyula Juhász, who took the documents of the Foreign Office as a basis.¹² While István G. Vass outlined the negotiations with the American representatives in Bern.¹³ The Hungarian-British connections were taking place in Lisbon and we can only reconstruct this, and we have only had few information about the Hungarian-American connection, because the compromising document were destroyed after March 1944, so were the documents of the armistice negotiations respecting Lisbon. After György Bakach-Besseney collected some parts of the bequest of Wodianer, which was brought back to Hungary not long ago, further researches can be carried out.¹⁴

In the focus of the English foreign policy for the planes of Middle-Eastern Europe there was a conception to create a confederation, which could have several imaginable alternative forms: a Polish, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Croatian confederation or a Danube confederation. The British government counted on this plan as a real possibility until the end of 1943. At the same time they also had to consider their anti-German allies' demands, which were reconciled on talks. The leaders of the American diplomacy rather

¹⁰ MOL K63 116. cs 26/1. t. 174. 1. (1941. 07. 10.)

¹¹ MOL P2066 19. doboz (d.) 23. 1.

¹² JUHÁSZ Gyula, *Magyar-brit titkos tárgyalások 1943-ban* (Hungarian-British secret negotiations), Bp., 1978.

¹³ G; VASS István, "Negotiations of György Bakach-Besseney with the delegates of the United States of America in Bern, between 28 August 1943 and 19 March 1944. Further documents of the peace-feelers of Kállay government" Bp., 1994, In : *Levéltári Közlemények* LXV. évf. 1-2. sz. (Különlenyomat).

¹⁴ The György Bakach-Besseney 's son donated the documents to the Hungarian National Archives (MOL) in 1994, which is under the number of P2066 there.

judged the policy of Hungary for the quicker victory than the sphere of influence, while in the British policy the latter was to the fore. But they agreed on – in the beginning of 1943 in Casablanca – in that they only accept the unconditional surrender of their enemies. On the contrary, the Kállay-government tied its political conditions to sign the armistice, such as to keep the reoccupied territories, and to save their existing political system and power.

The events accelerated by September 1943, because Italy – Germany's main European ally – signed the truce agreement in September with the Allies. These made the British government to take immediate steps towards Hungary, as they thought that the Italian example would make the Hungarian leaders to take determined steps too.

Mr. Gladhill, a member of the British embassy in Lisbon, sent an 8-point-demand to Wodianer in 18 September 1943, and by that 1., the British embassy is ready to receive a three-member delegate for the negotiations of the unconditioned surrender, 2., the leader must have a rank as a general, 3., they want complete secrecy, 4., the negotiation can be held in Ankara or other neutral European country, 5., the agreement is to be published when the British government finds it advisable, 6., until the actual armistice is not signed sabotage actions must be carried out, 8., if they are in treaty with someone else this message is objectless. Wodianer added that "*Gladhill said that the 8th point is only valid for 48 hours*" and continued "the only reason I answered this ordinary arrogant and annoying British message was that, it came from a leading embassy of a Great power and because it contains positive suggestions, too, comparing with other, friendly, but less concrete suggestions."¹⁵

Wodianer wrote this on 1st October 1943: "*Any other hither or farther connections of us want to make negotiations with us. They also suggest that before we start the talks, we must not do anything, by which we would be compromised with the Germans. All of our connections agree in that the negotiations can be proceeded on the military level at the moment, and not on the political level, like the questions of the borders.*"¹⁶

György Ránki wrote in his book, 19 March 1944, that Wodianer said to Cambell, British ambassador in Lisbon, that generally the proposal can be accepted, but expressed his vindications about the formula of the unconditional surrender.¹⁷ We did not find any notes concerning this. With the date of 10 October, Wodianer was informed from Budapest that the traitor in Istanbul, Dezső Újváry, speaks in the name of the Hungarian government and he has the authority to negotiate.¹⁸ In his report of 27 December, which was given by the British, Wodianer writes the following: "*the political negotiations and the oral statements only have values until the military actions start [...] the military and other leaders must sign the surrender agreement, which includes the conditions of publication.*"¹⁹ By all this, I suppose, that our knowledge of 1943's armistice negotiations have to be supplemented by the new accessible documents.

¹⁵ P2066 19. d. 56. 1.

¹⁶ P2066 19. d. 45. 1.

¹⁷ RÁNKI György, *March 19, 1944 (German occupation of Hungary)*, Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Bp., 1968., p. 7-29

¹⁸ P2066 19. d. 67. 1.

¹⁹ P2066 19. d. 89. 1.

The talks with the British government in December 1943 faded. However, the United States of America was still interested in Hungary. But at the same time, the Kállay-government felt its position insecure and sent a huge amount of gold to Switzerland without the knowledge of the Prime Minister, Miklós Kállay, and there were three persons who disposed of this. This was the so called Kállay Disposal Fund, and the aim of this was to provide the financial basis of a possible emigrant government.²⁰ I have already mentioned that Tibor Ekhardt travelled to the United States of America on account of organising and establishing the Hungarian government, where he met Ottó Habsburg, too. Ekhardt and Ottó Habsburg tried to represent the Hungarian interests in the governmental circles, thus Ottó Habsburg made talks with Roosevelt in Quebec. Meanwhile, Ekhardt thought about himself as the man who represents the official American point of view, which was denied by the American official statements. Ottó Habsburg kept the connection with the Hungarian legitimists via Lisbon through the mediation of archduke Róbert. Ottó Habsburg made a speech in Toledo, Ohio in November 1943, where he sketched his cabinet-making plans in Hungary but these did not fit in the British and American foreign policies' plans.²¹ Therefore a special agent, Ferenc Deák, was sent to Lisbon from the State Department to make connections with the Hungarian government, who was an officer of the Intelligent Service also. Ferenc Deák arrived in Lisbon in January 1944 and gave the memorandum of the United States of America to Wodianer, by which the two countries were active belligerents. If Hungary wants to turn the sympathy of Washington to herself, then she has two choices: gives precious information, which fastens the fall of Germany or makes an immediate war against Germany. Deák phrases like this *"the American government wants to save Hungary from the Russian occupation and getting into the Russian's sphere of interest."*²² It is interesting, that via Deák the American State Department encouraged the Hungarian diplomacy in January 1944 to break off its relations with the British, because the Americans were more independent from the Russians than the British.²³

The Kállay-government passed information to Washington about the amount of German supplies, arms factories and airfields, which emerge from the documents.

The relation between the Dísz Square and the State Department through Lisbon lasted until 19 March 1944, when the German troops occupied Hungary and she lost her sovereignty. Andor Wodianer resigned from his post after the German occupation and left for Buenos Aires.

²⁰ P2066 28. d. 1-67. l.

²¹ MOL K63 227. cs. 26. t. 508-515. l. (1943. 11. 20.)

²² P2066 19. d. 91. l.

²³ P2066 19. d. 102. l.

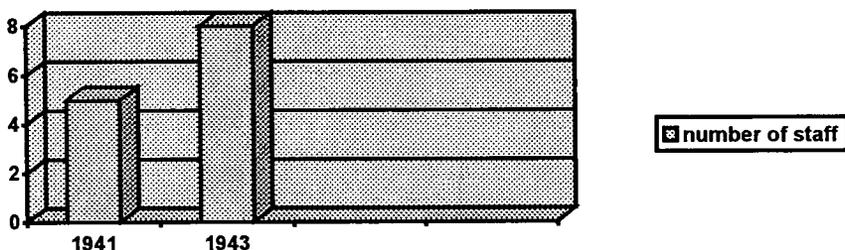
Annex

Diplomatic relations with Portugal: 9 February 1926.**Hungarian Royal Legation:** Madrid, San Sebastian, Lisbon

The leaders of the Hungarian Royal Legation: from Madrid: **Antal Magyary**, chargé d'affaires (1926. 02. 09. – 1928. 02. 07.) ; **Péter Matuska**, chargé d'affaires (1928. 02. 07. – 1929. 04. 02.), then ambassador (1929. 04. 02. – 1930. 10. 31.) ; **Pál Hevesy**, chargé d'affaires (1930. 10. 21. – 1931. 12. 10.) ; **Ferenc Marosy (Mengele)**, chargé d'affaires (1931. 12. 10. – 1933. 01. 01.) ; **István Csáky**, chargé d'affaires (1933. 02. 10. – 1935. 04. 09.) ; **Andor Wodianer**, chargé d'affaires (1935. 03. 30. – 1938. 02. 22.). From San Sebastian: **Andor Wodianer** (1938. 02. 22. – 1939. 05. 08.). In Lisbon: **Andor Wodianer** (1939. 05. 08. – 1944. 03. 19.).

Consulates: Lisbon, Porto

The leaders of the Consulates: Eduardo da Silva Braga, Guilherme da Cuncha Reis, Antal Husum Károly, László Belányi, Artúr Baján

Changing of the number of staff of the Hungarian Royal Legation (1941-1943)

Portuguese representatives accredited to Budapest: From Vienna: **Alberto da Veiga Simões** (1928. 06. 19. -). Between 1936 and 1937 the post of the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary was unfilled. In Budapest: **Carlos de Almeida Sampaio de Carrido** (1939. 11. 18. – 1944).

Trading records:

1., Trade agreement in Paris: 14 November 1929.

Released: 1930. XXXII. Act.