

Herbert Pell Papers
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Trip to Hungary

All during the short time I was in Hungary the German pressure became stronger and stronger. ~~Although~~ There is naturally very little anti Semitism in Hungary, the Jews were well treated and given equal opportunities. ^W German pressure during the summer forced on the Hungarian Government a course of outrageous persecution with which the majority of the Hungarians had very little sympathy.

Up to comparatively recently Hungary was almost entirely an agrarian country. There were a few very large land-holders and a great number of smaller ones, roughly corresponding to the squirarchy of England. The great nobles were almost all catholics, and the smaller land-holders probably something more than two-thirds catholic and one-third protestant, but all Christian. The poorer Christian people were almost all agricultural laborers. The Jews were practically all engaged in commerce and later in professional work. The old upper class, like the same class in England until comparatively recently, monopolized the places under the government. As the importance of business increased the importance of the Jews became greater, but except from being excluded from occupations monopolized by the aristocracy from which the lower class Christians were also excluded, they were not badly treated, and, even more than in England, they frequently married into the nobility. I don't think that I have ever in my life been in a society where there were so many people well received in what would correspond to the four-hundred, who were of partially Jewish ancestry. I remember conspicuously the case of Baron Ullmann, a Jew with a Christian wife, at whose house I have met representatives of most of the great Hungarian families.

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As it was impossible for me to leave Hungary and, as I had explained to the German authorities, she was in no condition to travel alone, Baron Jeszenszky very kindly offered to go to Basel awaiting her there and accompanying her to Budapest. It would have been impossible for him to have crossed into Switzerland at Basel because if he had he would have been obliged to wait several weeks for a new German visa. As it was, the visa he got allowed him to go into Germany up to the Swiss frontier and immediately return to Hungary.

Naturally we were both extremely grateful to him for undertaking this difficult trip for us. I shall always think of him with great gratitude. I never was so happy as I was when I saw her getting out of the train accompanied by Baron Jeszenszky and taking care of her fat old dog Belinda.

When my wife arrived the scar on her lip was not yet healed and for a time she did not feel like going out, although the friends that I had made were all prepared to welcome her and had filled the apartment at the Ritz Hotel with flowers to make her arrival pleasant.

By the time I arrived in Budapest most of the Americans had already left. Practically the only ones who remained were the employees of the American oil companies who were in charge of Hungarian refineries.

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There were, of course, the usual group of naturalized Americans, who had returned to their native country. In time of trouble these people always crowd around the Legation, the existence of which they forget completely when things are going well. The ones that we knew best, of the American colony, were Mr. and Mrs. Victor Barry, and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Lienau. Messrs Barry and Lineau were attractive and intelligent men. Barry ^{who} was the highest in place always knew exactly what was going on and kept his feet on the ground. Mrs. Barry, ^a graduate of Vassar, was ^a well informed, intelligent and charming woman. The Lienau's were somewhat younger. He was a thoughtful and sensible young man who obviously had done a good deal of thinking in his life. Mrs. Lienau is a delight. She is very pretty and very blonde and gives that extraordinary affect of cleanness which you sometimes find in extremely blonde and soignée women. We saw a great deal of them and always with pleasure. Towards the end of July they all left Budapest, the Lineaus accompanied by an elderly and decrepit dog. As it had proved impossible to get transit visas from Germany they could not go by way of Portugal. Their trip must have been pretty awful. Two days in a dirty train to Sofia by way of Bucharest, from where apparently they had to take an even worse train to the Turkish frontier where the railroad service

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stopped. From the frontier to Constantinople, with a bag apiece, they were piled high^{ly}, pig^{gedly} in an old and decrepit motor and driven by fatalistic fanatics over roads worse than the bed of a stream for about ten hours. From there made the best of their way to Egypt, taking such land accommodations as presented themselves or whatever vessels were sailing in their direction. Eventually they achieved the Indian Ocean, where they were picked up by the first available tanker going to New York. I told them that the only possible way to make such a trip is to resign yourself in the very beginning, get dirty all together and stay so. I do not know whether or not they took my advice, but it was good all the same.

For a short time I went out by myself to various dinners, including one at the Russian Legation, where, to the delight of all the Hungarians, caviar was served in quantities which would have been ostentat^{ly} lavish had it been mashed potatoes. Most of the guests tucked it away like orphans in a candy shop and seemed very much surprised that I did not take advantage of the opportunity. Fortunately for my purse I do not like the stuff.

Early in June I went down to stop with Count and Countess Tomas Esterhazy at their country place at Devegser. It was a very nice house,