

***"I think absolutely highly of Gyula Andrassy because of his character..."***

### **Years of exile 1849-1857**

The exile of Gyula Andrassy only started at the end of November 1849. Until then he had been working successfully in the position to which he was nominated by Lajos Kossuth, the Governor-President of the independent Hungarian State, which was still fighting its war of defence. As Ambassador to Constantinople, among his first tasks was to persuade Turkey to intervene militarily against the Russian troops operating against Hungary on Turkish territories (the Romanian principalities). However his efforts were unsuccessful as the Sublime Porte was entirely aware of its military weakness. Actually, he had a chance to make real efforts of diplomacy only following defeat: as a result of his intervention the émigrés, led by Lajos Kossuth had not been extradited to Austria, and the conditions of internment in Asia Minor had been quite improved. Andrassy's Turkish friends, however, had warned him, in confidence, that at the demand of the Austrian Ambassador baron Barthélemy de Stürmer, he might be part of the group that was to be transferred to Kutahya - so nobody was surprised when at the end of November 1849 he left the Bosphorus region and sailed to Western Europe.

Though he visited London several times, Andrassy established his home in Paris, where he, the nobleman used to a life of luxury, had to live on what remained of his Ambassador's salary. His financial situation soon improved, though, given that his widowed mother Andrassy Károlyné born Countess Etelka Szapary provided a generous allowance for her son from the income she received from her estates. During the inquiry set up against him, Andrassy's own assets had been sequestered, and after his death sentence was pronounced, they had been confiscated. His friend, Count Arthur Seher-Thoss gave the news cheerfully: „One day [...] Andrassy visited me laughing, with a Viennese newspaper in his hands. I asked him repeatedly what was so funny in the official Wiener Zeitung? He handed over the newspaper to me with the following words: »Read, here is my death sentence, it is so well formulated, I could not wish a better wording for my gravestone.«"

The biographers of the later prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of the Austro-Hungarian dualist government had stressed with fondness that, although Andrassy had never denied his exile, as to his views, from the very beginning he opposed Lajos Kossuth and held: one should not speculate on the collapse of

Austria, instead one should conciliate, so that Vienna should respect Hungary's autonomy. Sources, however, confirm the opposite, namely that in the early 50's the young émigré - together with his companions in exile – had not only held with the Declaration of Independence, but for a while he even followed his friend László Teleki's views on national policy, that had been considered the most radical in those times. The earlier representative of the Hungarian government in Paris, as it is well known, had been consulting the leaders of the Central European revolutionary movements living in the French capital, about how the new power structure emerging after the collapse of the Habsburg state should look, which would undertake the role of its predecessor in the European power structure. Teleki shared the opinion of his Romanian, Serb, Czech and Polish colleagues, that not only the nations and states should unify in a democratic federation of states, but Hungary itself should be transformed into a federation on a territorial-national basis. On January 10, 1850, the members of the Hungarian Refugee Committee in London held a meeting, Gyula Tanárky, the impartial and most reliable chronicler relating the following about the most interesting topic of the meeting: "Finally, the most interesting were the views of Teleky and Gy. Andrassy as to, if we were to return to Hungary why it is necessary to give up our Hungarian national(istic) supremacy. We should respect the demands of nationalities that have reached maturity like Serbs, Croats, Vlachs (but not the Slovaks, since they are not yet mature) and create a federal status for these, in which the leadership and government would be Hungarian – which is politically, in number and character, the most developed constituent – in a natural way and not forced upon them."

Undoubtedly, these views meant a definite break with the traditional views of aristocratic Hungarian nationalists, in this respect showing an open mindedness Gyula Andrassy never again reached in later years. All the evidence showed, however, that he followed László Teleki only until he became acquainted with the position of Lajos Kossuth from Kutahya on this matter. After his arrival to Paris, Andrassy kept up correspondance with the earlier governor, accepting him as the political leader of the Hungarians in exile, and when a few months later, in June 1851 Kossuth took a definite position against the concept of federalism inside the state, he accepted Kossuth's position – and keeping their personal good friendship – he turned against Teleki. Thus, the leaders of the émigrés in Paris split: general György Klapka and former minister Bertalan Szemere favoured Teleki's ideas, while Andrassy and the former minister of justice, Sebő Vukovics – in line with the program Kossuth had drafted in the so called Constitution of Kutahya – held on to the principal of territorial integrity, and considered guaranteeing collective political rights to nationalities (local government based on representation, where in the majority, and political

representation at national level, granted on other than on territorial basis) within the limits of the Szeged Nationality Resolution adopted by the National Assembly in July 1849. This was, of course, not a major step, indicating a strong break with Hungarian efforts at hegemony – but without doubt was less than Teleki's program, who had sensed, that slowly his opinions would leave him isolated, so Teleki slowly started to withdraw from further engagement in active politics while in exile.

From this time, probably one of the most characteristic and most frequently quoted pieces of Andrásy Gyula folklore, claims that one of his fellow countryman once called Teleki a traitor, because he accepted the idea of deciding the status of Transylvania by referendum. The count, who was notoriously sensitive about his honour, could not bear the insult and asked Andrásy to be his second in the duel, but the latter after enquiring about the circumstances – as reported by the politician and scholar Ferenc Pulszky – “told him to find a French second, because under such circumstances no Hungarian would help him, as there was no one among them who would hand over Transylvania to the Romanians.”

History books regard in different ways the article written by Andrásy, published – with the contribution of Ferenc Pulszky – in the fall of 1850 in the famous political and social science periodical in London, the *Eclectic Review*, to what extent his approach and orientation diverged from the main political stream of émigrés. There was no sign, however, that Kossuth's or Teleki's confidence in their young friend had declined, because he held: it is the only way for Austria to counterbalance Russia in order to maintain the balance of power in Europe, it puts an end to its attempts to centralise the empire, restores Hungary's sovereignty and fulfils the demands of the nationalities. In October 1851 Andrásy met Kossuth in London, who returned from exile in Turkey, and who entrusted him to try to stop, together with Dániel Irányi, the offensive of French left wing newspapers aiming to enforce Hungary to give a positive answer to Romanian plans for a federal state. Andrásy clearly took Kossuth's side when the former minister of foreign affairs Kázmér Batthyány and former prime minister Bertalan Szemere openly criticised in the media Kossuth's demands as a leader, the legitimacy of using the title of Governor in exile, as well as, his alleged or real dictatorial ambitions. On the other hand Andrásy was not part of the secret revolutionary movement, that lasted until the unsuccessful uprising in Milan at the beginning of 1853, and in which primarily the ideology and methods of the leader of the Italian unification movement, Giuseppe Mazzini, had an impact on Hungarian plans and actions. Although his name occurred in

secret reports, this was first of all due to his love affairs rather than his political actions.

The absolute confidence of Kossuth in Andrassy was clear, when in October 1852 he was offered the opportunity to be the representative of the Hungarian cause in the United States of America. Andrassy declined the honorific offer in a long letter, and there is no reason for us to doubt that he indicated the most important reason, when he mentioned: "this would be a total split from my mother, and I am anyway rather tense because of my continuous refusal of her demands". Andrassy recommended László Teleki in his place, and added the following "I am sure, sooner or later, you will forgive me for refusing go to America ". Likewise a sign of their political agreement can be seen in the very thorough and detailed memorandum Kossuth sent in November 1853, scarcely two weeks after the break of the series of conflicts later called the Crimean War, in which he tried to prepare Andrassy how to persuade the Ambassador of the Sublime Porte to Paris, Veli Pasha: they should not believe what Austria says, its neutrality is only appearance and they should build their anti Russian policy of foreign affairs on the independent Hungary.

In the Crimean War, Vienna in the end remained neutral, so there was no chance for the Hungarian émigrés to obtain great power support to renew the fight against Austria. Though in 1854 Andrassy was invited into the close circle of Prince Jérôme Napoleon, the nephew of emperor Napoleon III., in which the Polish revolutionaries exercised significant influence, in this period politics fell into the background for a while in his life. Instead he lived a great social life, and without exaggeration, in the middle of the 1850s the Hungarian aristocratic émigré became one of the favourites of Paris salons. The Austrian knight Ludwig Przibram, considered the "know-it-all" of his times – whose memoirs recorded many interesting details especially of the life of Queen Elisabeth – writes that the ladies in Paris called Andrassy: "*Le beau pendu de 1848*" – "the handsome hanged Forty-Eighter" – which, though objectively wrong, illustrated very well the romantic aura which surrounded the Hungarian émigré. "Count Gyula Andrassy while in Paris had drawn 40-50.000 Francs from his mother – describes Bertalan Szemere with certain irony in January 1852 – amused himself now in London, now in Switzerland, as the dandy also likes to talk about the affairs of the country, given that for him politics is a sort of *serious* entertainment, but his activity is limited to this. What he still lacks so far is deep conviction and active patriotism. His thoughts revolve around his country, but he lives for his pleasures. But he is still a young man." According to a later Andrassy-anecdote, when the older count found this portrayal he "smilingly remarked: there might be some truth in it, but he should have added: »... but he

is thinking and hoping.«" Arthur Seher-Thoss, however praised Andrásy's seriousness: "Count Gyula Andrásy is much younger than Teleki, but more conscious than he, I could say more serious, more manly. He was a man of poise, never lost his temper; he learned very soon how to disarm his adversaries with wit [...] Andrásy was vain only with women, capturing easily their hearts with his black curls. He was the only one among the émigrés, who with an enthusiastic assiduity followed serious studies, especially in his favourite subject, the art of war. Once when I found him entirely taken up by his books, I predicted that he would become a minister and a general; since then he become both."

Miklós Jósika, the writer living in exile in Brussels, in June 1856 informed his good friend Miklós Fejérváry living in America in Davenport as follows: "Gyula Andrásy the richest *refugéente polytico* [political refugee], it seems – according to rumour – will marry Kata Kendeffy, Traun's daughter. If this is true, he will get a good and nice lady." The father of the young lady with the best possible reputation among Transylvanian aristocrats was count Ádám Kendeffy known also for his virtuosity in sports, and once sided with the great Miklós Wesselényi in the Transylvanian Diet, who also was a good friend and fellow of Jósika. Her mother, countess Borbála Bethlen (at that time already the wife of count Franz von Abensberg-Traun), arrived in Paris together with her husband and daughter at the beginning of 1856, where the Austrian Ambassador, baron Alexander von Hübner introduced the family to emperor Napoleon III. at a reception in January 27. Hübner obviously knew the count very well (calling him "Feri" Traun!), mentioning with appreciation in his diary – also with a delicate irony he refers to the family's opposition position – as "the pretty miss Kendeffy", is known "for her white shoulders and for her red political views "... According to family gossip, Manó Kónyi mentioned how prince Heinrich Reuss (the later German Ambassador to Vienna) was a devotee of the most beautiful shoulders he had ever seen in his life...

Andrásy was thirty years old at the time. Due to his social and financial position he enjoyed all pleasures and entertainments that those times offered to young men in his position. He was enchanted by the beauty of the seven years younger countess – however he might have sensed something more than pure attraction. He received news from home indicating that the worst years of absolutism were over, and even if only very slowly a kind of détente was felt. The perspectives of émigré politics were limited, the émigrés as a community practically broken up, and the main obstacle of honour for returning home – acknowledgment that if someone took part in the revolution it was a crime – was overruled: the caesarean decree of October 19, 1856 annulled the investigation

of deeds of those returning home under the clemency of the monarch. Love, marriage befitting his rank, desire to establish a family and his mothers' recurring demands, finally forced him to make a two fold decision: proposal to Katinka Kendeffy and the request for official clemency from the Austro-Hungarian emperor in order to return home to the territory of the empire.

The marriage took place on July 9, 1856: the civil wedding was held at the town hall (*Mairie*), the church wedding in the Maria Magdalena (*Madeleine*) Church – the humorous letter in which the future husband informs his witness Miklós Kiss Nemeskéri about where and when he requests his services as a friend, has been preserved up till today. "I will be glad to embrace you the last time as an unmarried, or as you would put it, as a rakehell (Lump) – Gyula Andrásy". "One has never seen a more beautiful and enchanting bride walking to the altar" – eye witness, Dániel Irányi, described the wedding ceremony. One year later Andrásy obtained permission to return home, under conditions that suited his sensitive sense of honour. Naturally, politically he had broken up with the émigrés – however the majority of his human relationships and friendships had been maintained. He waited until his first son, born on July 10 in 1857, was strong enough, and in the fall of the same year, together with his family he returned to Hungary.

When crossing the border of his home country, the count might have recalled the words of the farewell letter of his former friend in exile count Kálmán Schmiedegg, who had committed suicide a few years earlier: "Gyula, you have a calling for great things. I have only one request: be aware of the greatness of your calling and don't let your indolent character destroy your energies. Your life belongs to Hungary, through your deeds you are obliged both to your country and your name."<sup>1</sup>

László Csorba

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<sup>1</sup> MOL P 4 17. Schmiedegg Kálmán (Neuilly, 1853. november 22.) – Andrásy Gyulának és Aladárnak. – A Magyar Országos Levéltár vonatkozó iratanyagának használatához köszönöm Laczlavik György szíves segítségét.