HUNGARIANS AND ROMANIANS IN HABSBURG AND VATICAN DIPLOMACY: THE CREATION OF THE DIOCESE OF HAJDÚDOROG IN 1912

BY

JAMES NIessen*

The creation of the Hungarian Greek Catholic (Uniate) diocese of Hajdúdorog in 1912 from parishes in several dioceses of predominantly Ruthenian (Rusyn or Ukrainian) and Romanian population at the request of the Hungarian government was a political and ecclesiastical cause célèbre on the eve of World War I that had negative consequences in secular and religious terms. Both the government and the Holy See had laudable religious motives in view: to foster the Church's pastoral activity by overcoming the lack of sympathy between an increasing number of Hungarian-speaking believers and a church structure based upon an alien ethnic group. The government also had an overtly political goal, viz., to strengthen the loyal Hungarian element vis-à-vis the national minorities. The achievement of this goal incurred the cost of further worsening Hungarians' relations with the Ruthenians and especially with the Romanians. To the degree that both minorities were alienated by this event, the implications for the Romanians were greater, because their representatives were far better organized and critics of Romania's alliance with the Austro-Hungarian monarchy were growing stronger. Tensions between Hungarians and Romanians sharing the same faith increased, and many Romanian Catholics as well as Orthodox claimed that their people had been betrayed or abused by the Holy See. Why statesmen so misjudged the situation will be the subject of this article.

*Dr. Niessen is a librarian at the University of Texas at Austin. A fellowship from the Europa Institute, Budapest, and a travel grant from IREX contributed to the completion of this study. The first draft was presented to the Historical Institute of the Hungarian Academy in November, 1991, and the second to the seventy-second annual meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association in Chicago a month later. The thoughtful comments on these and subsequent drafts by Zoltán Szász, Peter Haslinger, John Lukács, and Gábor Vermes are gratefully acknowledged. The interpretations, of course, are those of the author.
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Various studies have dealt with the prehistory of the bishopric. In Hungarian writings, the focus is on the long-term movement among the Hungarians for the creation of the diocese, while Romanian and Ukrainian accounts presume the Hungarian government's purpose was to Magyarize the Romanian and Ruthenian Greek Catholics, and they emphasize the popular nature of resistance to the creation of the bishopric. Our study will examine the motives of several crucial decisionmakers, whose actions undermined their other goals: Hungarian Prime Minister Count Károly Khuen-Héderváry, who was engaged in an attempt to reconcile the Romanian minority; Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal, who was acutely conscious of tensions in the Balkans and anxious to keep Romania in the alliance; and Pope Pius X, whose traditionalist piety stood in marked contrast to the nationalist controversy that accompanied the creation of the bishopric.

As in other regions of Eastern Europe, in Hungary during the nineteenth century churches played an important role in the political activity of ethnic minorities. This was particularly true in eastern Hungary, where the clergy long formed the core of the Romanian national movement, and Romanian education was almost exclusively in the hands of the churches. The liturgical language in the Greek Catholic dioceses of this region was either Romanian or Church Slavonic. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, individual Greek Catholics expressed the desire for their liturgy to be celebrated in Hungarian. The first Hungarian translations of the Byzantine-rite liturgy date from 1793–1795; in subsequent decades individual chants and prayers began to be sung in Hungarian. In 1868, a public meeting in Hajdúdorog demanded the approval of a liturgy in Hungarian. As this demand became more intense after 1880, the decennial Hungarian census asked respondents to identify their "mother tongue," and it listed church membership according to this criterion. According to these data, the number and percentage of Greek Catholics claiming Hungarian as their mother tongue more than doubled in thirty years, reaching 304,318, or 15.2% of all members of the church in Hungary, in 1910. Romanian as well as Hungarian historians accept these figures as reliable.

Proponents of the Hungarian liturgy drew attention to the Hungarians' mounting numbers and the spiritual benefits of worship in their own language. Typical of the statistical argument was the recommendation of the Minister of Religion and Public Education, Count Gyula Wlassics, to the Hungarian Prime, Cardinal Kolos Vaszary, in 1896. Pointing out the 1890 census figure, he added:

I cannot help but regard with enthusiasm the petition of 150 thousand Hungarians, who are requesting the protection of their national character.

The Calvinist Prime Minister, Dezső Bánffy, wrote on the margin of his copy: "Very right, and nicely put!" When the government took up the matter of the diocese in 1910, it pointed to the increase in the number of Hungarian Greek Catholics by 1900, according to that year's census, to 239,355. It is difficult to determine whether an increase in Hungarian Greek Catholics sparked the government's growing interest in the campaign for the new diocese, or whether the government's interest produced the statistics for this increase. The 1910 census data


Concerning the nineteenth century, see Keith Hitchins, Orthodoxy and Nationality. Andreiu Săguna and the Rumanians of Transylvania, 1846–1873 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1977).
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The creation of the new diocese was the culmination of a movement of several decades that established, at the end of the nineteenth century, the National Committee of Catholic Hungarians of the Greek Rite. More than four hundred delegates presented their case to Pope Leo XIII in Rome in 1900, and a few years later more than eleven thousand members enrolled in the National Association of Hungarian Greek Catholics. Both organizations' leader was Jenő Szabó, a prominent official of the state railways and a member of the parliament's Upper House. As we will see, Szabó and two of his close associates played key roles in the government's proposal for the bishopric. That most of the prospective parishes were Hungarian-speaking was in fact hardly contested in 1910, and the bulk of them would remain within Hungary after its borders contracted in 1918.  

In addition to ethnographic factors and the movement for a Hungarian liturgy or diocese, however, one must also consider the role of the Hungarian government. Hungarians, more or less equally divided into Catholics and Protestants, constituted a bare majority of the country's population. While firmly in control of the political system, the Hungarian elite of landlords and officials jealously guarded its authority against perceived threats to the nation. Prominent among these was the alleged anomaly of minority churches and schools as a "state within a state" (as Count István Tisza would assert in 1913). The Hungarian electoral law guaranteed that Hungarians' parliamentary representation was far greater than their percentage of the population. Parliamentary opposition manifested itself chiefly in the form of the demand for an even more robust protection of Hungarian interests.  

Hungarian politics entered a new era in the spring of 1910 with the electoral victory of Count Tisza's Labor Party. Returning to prominence after five years of retirement on his estate in eastern Hungary, the forceful former Prime Minister was content to allow party colleagues to take the formal reins of power until the eve of World War I. His distinctive views on the nationality problem would rapidly make their mark, however. While steadfastly refusing to countenance any threat to Hungarian hegemony or an expansion of the electorate, Tisza saw the negotiation of a modus vivendi with moderate leaders of the Romanian minority as in the long-term interest of his nation. In 1910, this view coincided with concerns in Vienna and Berlin that Hungary's minority policy not alienate Romania from the alliance with the Central Powers. Between 1910 and 1914, Khuen-Héderváry and Tisza sought a rapprochement with the Romanian minority. Whether or not the two sides' goals were compatible, however, pressures from constituents limited their options. Skeptical about the chances for success, the Transylvanian Romanian politician Alexandru Vaida-Voevod warned the Habsburg Crown Prince Archduke Franz Ferdinand in October, 1910, that "after rejection of the peace talks the intensification of persecution of the Romanians may be expected."  

The first breakdown of Khuen-Héderváry's negotiations in 1910 came in the same weeks as the completion of the new government's initial proposal for the creation of the bishopric, in June, 1910. Its author was Gyula Csíky, a section Chief in the Prime Minister's office and member of the board of a private railway headed by Jenő Szabó. Csíky used historical and statistical data for the parishes that were provided by Emíl Melles, a Greek Catholic priest serving in Budapest, and the Hungarian Statistical Office. The memorandum asserted that a quarter-million Hungarians lived under "an alien organization and rite," subject to Ruthenization and Romanianization that only the
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creation of the new bishopric would avert, bringing them “the respite for which they had unrelentingly fought for nearly a half-century.”

Csiky’s memorandum bore the intellectual footprint of the government’s not-so-gray eminence. Count Tisza was a stubborn and iron-willed Calvinist, a landowner who was keenly aware of the clergy’s influence on the rural population in questions of culture, ethnicity, and politics. During two electoral speeches in March, 1910, he pointed out the enormous authority enjoyed by the Romanian clergy among their people, and urged them to use it constructively to “support us in the solution of the momentous question of somehow bringing to an end the intolerable situation of the country’s Hungarian-speaking Greek Catholic and Greek Oriental population.” In a speech given two years earlier, he had asserted that the “Catholics are needed in order to form a united front with the Protestants against the common dangers of atheism, materialism, and social democracy.” He considered these ideological tendencies to be not only dangerous in themselves, but also too indulgent toward Hungary’s ethnic adversaries.

The movement of Greek Catholics in northeastern Hungary after the turn of the century to convert to Orthodoxy exemplified for many Hungarians such a revolutionary danger. The poverty of this region’s peasantry and their fervent religiosity provided fertile ground for “schismatic” agitation by returners from kindred communities in the United States, Serbian priests from southern Hungary, and agents of the Russian Empire. The total number of converts reached 1500 by 1913, most of them Ruthenians but including at least one Romanian village. Authorities organized several trials of the converts starting in 1904, the largest of them in 1913–14. The reports of the Greek Catholic clergy encouraged this sort of reaction. The Bishop of Mukachevo (Hungarian: Munkács), Iului Firtas (Gyula Firczák), asserted to the Prime Minister in June, 1910, that “the whole thing is less a doctrinal than a political movement,” and one of his priests wrote at the beginning of February, 1911, that “Panslavic agitators are active among the crowds at the pilgrimages.” A report by one Hungarian official placed less emphasis on outside influences. He cited instead the people’s poverty and their poor relationship with the clergy, which for its part ought to recognize that “only the spread of the Hungarian liturgy and Magyarization, by raising the Ruthenians’ spiritual and material level, will ensure peaceful development.”

The specter of Panslavic agitation originating in Russia provided an ostensible basis for the Hungarian-Romanian negotiations. No less significant was the internal weakness of the Romanian National Party after its electoral losses in 1910 and an open revolt by its radical wing. Tisza and Khuen-Héderváry leaped at the opportunity to engage the Romanian moderates, who responded with a list of preconditions for their agreement in September, 1910. Roughly half its twenty-two points related in some way to church affairs, demanding respect for autonomous rights but also an increase in state subsidies. They made no reference, however, to the question of the Hungarian Greek Catholics. The status of the Romanian National Party, rather than religious questions, proved the principal obstacle to agreement.

Following the breakdown of negotiations, the anxiety over the Orthodox movement and the weakness of the National Party encouraged Khuen-Héderváry to move ahead with Csiky’s plan. The two issues were linked in the government’s thinking: it instructed Melles to com-

12The memorandum is marked “Pro domo!” and dated June 23, 1910, preserved in HNA, K26-1915-XXV–1942, under the number 1910/5565. An undated version of the memorandum, in the same dossier, has been partially published in G. Gábor Kemeny (ed.), Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdéshez Magyarországon 5 (Budapest, 1985), pp. 484–487.
13Győző Tiszai István képviselőbázi beszédei, 4 (Budapest, 1957), pp. 124, 155. The references are to speeches on March 13 and March 4, 1910, respectively.
16The three cited documents are from a large dossier on the movement assembled in the Prime Minister’s office in 1910: HNA, K26: 1910/XXV/1974. Reference is made to Firtas’s letter of June 15, one by Father Miklós Máté to Khuen-Héderváry from February 2, 1911, and a typewritten report by Orest Szabó from 1904. “A rühének közöti schismaticus mozgalomról” (“On the Schismatic Movement among the Ruthenians”), marked on its cover “remains here.” Szabó later published an interesting study on the Ruthenians, A magyar cosszok (ruthénnek) (Budapest, 1913). I found Firtas’s own diocesan archives also open to research in August, 1992: see the relevant correspondence in Beregovo (Hungarian: Beregzsáza), Ukraine: Transcarpathian Regional State Archives, F. 151.
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pose two petitions to the Holy See, one for a Hungarian bishopric in Hungary and another for Hungarian Greek Catholics in the United States that would weaken the influence in Hungary of pan-Slavic tendencies abroad. The government sent the two petitions through Count Bertalan Lippay, a Hungarian painter employed by the Holy See, rather than through the joint Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office. Lippay submitted the petitions, with cover letters from Khuen-Héderváry to the Pope, during audiences he was granted in April and June, 1911. The Pope sent his favorable response to the Hungarians via Lippay.²⁸

Khuen-Héderváry adopted this extraordinary procedure in order to circumvent opposition by the national minorities and their dynastic supporter, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The Hungarian offered Foreign Minister Aehrenthal the explanation that “in consideration of domestic and parliamentary conditions, a rapid and favorable resolution of this matter would be of the greatest importance,”²⁹ while he told the Apostolic Nuncio, Alessandro Bavona, that it was urgent he “be able to show a success to [i.e., for the purpose of breaking] the parliamentary obstruction.”³⁰ The achievement of this “national” desideratum would enable Khuen-Héderváry to weaken his opponents in parliament.

The Holy See and its nuncio as well as Aehrenthal objected to Khuen’s circumvention of normal diplomatic channels. Lippay relayed to Khuen the Pope’s message that the Holy Father was inclined to examine the petition for the new bishopric favorably, but that he insisted that further steps be taken only with the co-operation of the joint Foreign Ministry. Khuen went to Vienna at the beginning of July, 1911, and requested that Aehrenthal facilitate the rapid resolution of the issue.³¹ Aehrenthal complied, but Bavona protested when the Prime Minister persisted in addressing the nuncio directly. The Foreign Minister admonished Khuen to conduct his business with the Holy See henceforth through the Foreign Ministry. Aehrenthal advised his ministerial colleagues that he intended “to deal in all seriousness with Khuen’s attempts at circumvention in this and other matters.”³²

Why, despite his evident annoyance, did Aehrenthal support the Hungarian request after all? His acquiescence stands in marked contrast to the events of October and November, 1911, when Aehrenthal’s objections to the Chief of Staff’s interference in foreign policy prompted the dismissal of General Franz Conrad von Hötzendorff.³³ The principal explanation lies in the constitutional guarantees of Hungarian influence upon foreign policy. The Hungarian Compromise Law entitled the Hungarian Prime Minister to a hearing concerning the monarchy’s foreign affairs. Aehrenthal recognized this, being accustomed to inform both the Austrian and Hungarian Prime Ministers of such diplomatic correspondence as had a bearing on their internal affairs.³⁴ These considerations weigh more than the number of Hungarians (or citizens of Hungary) within the personnel of the Foreign Ministry and the diplomatic corps, which, despite steady increase after 1867, never reached one-third.³⁵ Yet in both Vienna and Rome, two of the leading Austro-Hungarian diplomats involved in the case were

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²⁹Khuen-Héderváry to Aehrenthal, July 4, 1911, in HHSA, loc. cit.

³⁰Internal note, August 30, 1911, loc. cit.

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19 Khuen-Héderváry to Aehrenthal, July 4, 1911, in HHSA, loc. cit.

20 Internal note, August 30, 1911, loc. cit.

21 Correspondence of Khuen-Héderváry and Aehrenthal, as well as internal notes for their staff, in HHSA, loc. cit., and HNA, K26: 1915–XXV–1042. Franz Joseph's written request for the new diocese to the Pope, referred to in the literature, came only in May, 1912.

22 Aehrenthal to Khuen-Héderváry, July 22, and internal Foreign Ministry instructions, in HHSA, loc. cit.


Hungarians: Lőrinc Szapáry headed the responsible section of the Foreign Ministry, while Count Móric Pálfy directed the Monarchy's embassy to the Holy See during the decisive months of negotiations after Ambassador Prince Johann Schönburg-Hartenstein left Rome for a vacation on July 9, 1911.²⁶

The monarchy's diplomats were well aware of the importance of relations with Romania and of its ties to Hungary's nationality problem. Heavy Central European investments, the German origins and loyalty of Romania's King Carol I, and the cultivation of the Romanian conservatives were their favored means of counteracting the well-known influence of Romanian irredentists in Bucharest opposed to all collaboration with Austria-Hungary.²⁷ Austro-Hungarian diplomats submitted detailed reports on the annual meetings of the irredentist Liga Culturala.²⁸ Aehrenthal himself had served as ambassador in Bucharest in the 1890's, and in 1910 he received a series of reports documenting popular anti-Catholicism there.²⁹ Two of the monarchy's observers on the spot, Szapáry and Schönburg, would soon move to Vienna and Rome where they contributed to the creation of the Hungarian bishopric despite their familiarity with the sentiment in Bucharest.

Although their assessment of Romanian public opinion was pessimistic, the monarchy's diplomats saw a "window of opportunity" in 1911. The Romanian elections of 1910, like those in Hungary, had been fought with exceptional brutality and also yielded a government of Realpolitiker. Petre Carp, the greatest friend of Austria-Hungary among Romania's politicians, became Prime Minister at the beginning of 1911. The Austro-Hungarian embassy reported in April and May that both the government and King welcomed Khuen-Héderváry's

²⁶Szapáry was the head of the Second Section in the Foreign Ministry, while Pálfy presented the embassy's case to the Holy See. See HHSA, loc. cit. A Hungarian priest in the embassy, Fr. Csiszár, was also active in this matter. In the judgment of Friedrich Engel-Jánosi, "Quantitativ und Qualitativ nahmen die Desiderata der ungarischen Reichsheil die erste Stelle unter den Angelegenheiten ein, die von der Monarchie an die Kurie gebracht wurden," Österreich und vor der Volkskunde, 1846-1918 (Graz, Vienna, and Cologne, 1960), p. 132.

²⁷An informative Marxist study of Romania's relations with the Central Powers in this period, giving heavy emphasis to its economic component, is Gheorghe Nicolae Cizan and Şerban Ridulescu-Zoner, Rumänien und der Dreibund 1878-1914 (Bucharest, 1983).

²⁸In 1912 the Hungarian Prime Minister's office assembled a dossier of the reports on Romanian irredentism, copies of which had been forwarded from Vienna annually: HNA, K26: 1912-XXV-36.

²⁹HHSA: PA XVIII: Box 42; Reports from 1910.

²⁶HHSA: PA XVIII, Box 43: Reports for 1911, and HNA, K26: 1912-XXV-36. Cited here is Secretary István Ugron's report to Aehrenthal of May 26, 1911.

²⁷Engel-Jánosi, op. cit., pp. 15–46. 54. The quotations are from pages 45 and 54.


Attempts at conciliation. While one could hardly speak of popular sympathy for Hungary, "a gratifying improvement in the Romanians' relations with Hungary may be observed ... an improvement in the popular psyche."³⁰ Carp's successor one year later, his foreign minister, Titu Maiorescu, was also a friend of the monarchy.

The Pope's preliminary agreement to the Hungarian request created a fait accompli for Emperor-King Franz Joseph and his Foreign Minister. This had considerable weight because of the perception of the common interests of the monarchy and the Holy See during the reign of Pius X (1903–1914). Their historically close ties had cooled during the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878–1903) due to the Pope’s relative liberalism and the occasional sympathy for the South Slavic peoples shown by his Secretary of State, Cardinal Mariano Rampolla. Seeking to avert a continuation of these policies, the Emperor had Cardinal Jan Kozierko-Puzyna, Archbishop of Cracow, submit his famous veto against Rampolla's candidacy in the conclave of 1903. In his stead, the choice fell upon Giuseppe Sarto, the Patriarch of Venice. At the first audience of the monarchy's ambassador with Pius X, the new pope expressed his interest in improved relations with Austria-Hungary. He pointed out that "for thirty-two years he had been a loyal Austrian subject." The Austro-Hungarian ambassador wrote in 1904: "Austria-Hungary can state today with satisfaction that it has completely recovered its deserved role in the policy of the church."³¹ The ultramontane and anti-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand—admittedly not a very objective observer—characterized the Pope's new Secretary of State, Rafael Merry del Val, as subservient to Aehrenthal and the governments of both Austria and Hungary.³²

It would be a mistake to exaggerate the significance of the Pope's political sympathy for the Monarchy, however. He was preoccupied throughout his pontificate with the goal of a conservative religious revival and was even ready to consider a breaking of relations with Austria-Hungary in 1905 in a dispute concerning a "modernist" theologian at the University of Innsbruck named Ludwig Wahrnund.³³
Hungarians: Lőrinc Szapáry headed the responsible section of the Foreign Ministry, while Count Móric Pálfy directed the Monarchy's embassy to the Holy See during the decisive months of negotiations after Ambassador Prince Johann Schönburg-Hartenstein left Rome for a vacation on July 9, 1911.30

The monarchy's diplomats were well aware of the importance of relations with Romania and of its ties to Hungary's nationality problem. Heavy Central European investments, the German origins and loyalty of Romania's King Carol I, and the cultivation of the Romanian conservatives were their favored means of countering the well-known influence of Romanian irredentists in Bucharest opposed to all collaboration with Austria-Hungary.31 Austro-Hungarian diplomats submitted detailed reports on the annual meetings of the irredentist Liga Culturala.32 Aehrenthal himself had served as ambassador in Bucharest in the 1890's, and in 1910 he received a series of reports documenting popular anti-Catholicism there.33 Two of the monarchy's observers on the spot, Szapáry and Schönburg, would soon move to Vienna and Rome where they contributed to the creation of the Hungarian bish- oproc despite their familiarity with the sentiment in Bucharest.

Although their assessment of Romanian public opinion was pessi- mistic, the monarchy's diplomats saw a "window of opportunity" in 1911. The Romanian elections of 1910, like those in Hungary, had been fought with exceptional brutality and also yielded a government of Realpolitiker. Petre Carp, the greatest friend of Austria-Hungary among Romania's politicians, became Prime Minister at the beginning of 1911. The Austro-Hungarian embassy reported in April and May that both the government and King welcomed Khuen-Héderváry's attempts at conciliation. While one could hardly speak of popular sympathy for Hungary, "a gratifying improvement in the Romanians' relations with Hungary may be observed . . . an improvement in the popular psyche."34 Carp's successor one year later, his foreign minister, Titu Maiorescu, was also a friend of the monarchy.

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30Szapáry was the head of the Second Section in the Foreign Ministry, while Pálfy presented the embassy's case to the Holy See. See IHSA, loc. cit. A Hungarian priest in the embassy, Fr. Csissárk, was also active in this matter. In the judgment of Friedrich Engel-Jánosi, "Quantitativ und Qualitativ nahmen die Desiderata der ungarischen Reichshälfte die erste Stelle unter den Angelegenheiten ein, die von der Monarchie an die Kurie gebracht wurden," Österreich und der Vatikan, 1846–1918 (Graz, Vienna, and Cologne, 1960), p. 132.

31An informative Marxist study of Romania's relations with the Central Powers in this period, giving heavy emphasis to its economic component, is Gheorghe Nicolae Căzan and Şerban Rădulescu-Zoncour, Rumänien und der Dreibund 1878–1914 (Bucharest, 1983).

32In 1912 the Hungarian Prime Minister's office assembled a dossier of the reports on Romanian irredentism, copies of which had been forwarded from Vienna annually. HNA, K26: 1912–XXV–36.

33IHSA: PA XVIII: Box 42: Reports from 1910.
THE CREATION OF THE DIOCESE OF HAJDUDOROG IN 1912

The influence of intellectual currents upon Vatican diplomacy is further illustrated by the role in our story of two other professors from Innsbruck who enjoyed better connections in Rome than Wahrmund: the church historians Nikolaus Nilles, S.J., as an advocate of the Hungarian bishopric, and Ludwig von Pastor as its unsuccessful opponent.

Nilles, the editor of a classic two-volume collection of documents on the church unions in Hungary,34 provided a theological grounding for the Holy See's ambitious advocacy of church unions in the Russian Empire and the Balkans on the eve of World War I. The Holy See sought to secure the allegiance of the primarily Slavic peoples of this region by confirming the historical guarantees given to the eastern rite in the church unions and fostering the same religious renewal which the Western Church was experiencing. These goals coincided nicely with the political ones of Austria-Hungary, which saw Orthodox Serbia and Russia as the chief threats to its internal and external security, but their conversion to Catholicism as in the Monarchy's own interest.35 Nilles publicly supported not only the tendencies toward church union or conversion in these countries, but also the Hungarian Greek Catholic cause.36 As we will see shortly, Pastor played a brief diplomatic role in opposition to this cause.

The foregoing helps to explain the Holy See's responsiveness to a request coming from the Monarchy as a whole, but not to one from the Hungarian government as such. The government memorandum of 1910, and that submitted to the Holy See in 1911, differed from the earlier, unsuccessful proposals in one fundamental way: while both the earlier and later proposals made the case for separation of the Hungarians on pastoral grounds (facilitating diocesan administration and schools in Hungarian), the earlier request for the Hungarian liturgical language—explicitly forbidden by the Holy See in 1896—was now dropped.37 Instead, Ancient Greek was specified as the language of the Mass Canon, with—by analogy to the Roman Catholic Latin Mass—Hungarian as well as Ruthenian and Romanian permitted for congregational singing and readings. The Hungarian and Austrian presentations to the Holy See carefully emphasized this provision, and largely succeeded in putting the Vatican's misgivings to rest; as the ambassador reported, his argument "appeared to make a good impression."38

The Holy See's acquiescence must be attributed in part to an incomplete knowledge of conditions and in part to wishful thinking. Contemporary sources indicate that Hungarian was frequently used, not only for hymns and readings, but for all parts of the Mass except the priest's quiet prayers and the consecration, before 1912. It was unclear precisely what proportion of the liturgy must now be said in Ancient Greek, and how realistic the expectation was that all priests of the new diocese would learn this language, which was unknown to them. The Holy See returned repeatedly to this issue; in the words of Pálffy, this was "the Achilles' heel of the whole question."39 In March, 1912, the Holy See finally expressed its satisfaction with the wording of a solemn declaration by the Hungarian government that the Hungarian liturgy would remain prohibited.40 In fact, the Hungarian liturgical practice continued with little change after 1912, and it is difficult to envision what the Hungarian government could have done about it. After the energetic Romanian protests against the new "Magyarizing" diocese, the Pope reportedly claimed that the Hungarians "had tricked him." The Prefect of the Oriental Congregation would assert in 1943 that Vatican policymakers had circumvented proper channels, just as the Hungarian government had done. The Romanian dioceses had been directly subordinated to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide since 1855. Yet its prefect, Cardinal Antonio Gotti, was largely excluded from the crucial decisions.41

If there was any "trickery" involved, it concerned the purpose and possible repercussions of including parishes from Romanian dioceses. A striking difference between Csiky's memorandum of 1910 and that

34Symbolae ad illustrandam historiam Ecclesiae Orientalis in terris Coronae St Stefani (2 vols.; Innsbruck, 1885).
35Eduard Winter, Russland und das Papsttum, Bd. 2: Von der Aufblühung bis zur grossen sozialistischen Oktoberrevolution (Berlin, 1961), pp. 529–567. Winter neglects the specifically religious component of the union strategy, but bases his thesis of the Holy See's "imperialism" in the region on extensive research in Moscow and Vienna.
36Pirigyi, op. cit., p. 103.
37The Holy See was unbending in its view that the use of the vernacular in the Romanian rite could not be seen as a precedent for a Hungarian rite, since the Romanian practice was canonized already at the time of the Romanian church union in 1700.
39Pálffy to Acrenthal, September 21, 1911, in HHSA: PA XI, loc. cit.
40Correspondence of Khuen-Héderváry, Minister of Religion and Public Education Zichy, and Foreign Minister Berchtold, February–April, 1912, in HNA, K26: 1913–XXV–1042, 1912/971, 1790, 2362.
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by Melles which was sent to Rome is that the former presents explicitly anti-Romanian and pro-Hungarian goals, including the assertion, bracketed by someone in the Prime Minister's office, that while the Holy See would never approve the Hungarian liturgy "expressis verbis," in a Hungarian diocese the liturgical language would "gradually become completely Hungarian." The argumentation in the memorandum received by the Holy See is far more religious and canonical in nature. The Holy See insisted that a special session of the Hungarian Bishops' Conference be held to secure the agreement of all affected bishops, including three Romanian ones; this took place in November, 1911. The Romanian bishops learned of the proposed separation of "Romanian" parishes for the first time; they agreed in principle, but insisted that the number of Romanian parishes to be separated be kept as small as possible. Three of the bishops wrote a letter to the nuncio expressing their anxiety the very next day, but for three months they refrained from communicating their concerns to Romanian lay politicians.42

In February, 1912, the government invited the Romanian bishops to a conference that would formally approve the new bishopric. Only then did the bishops alert Romanian laymen, who subsequently made a public protest. Moderates were content to assert that some of the ninety-eight parishes due to be separated from the Romanian dioceses were Romanian in nationality, and threatened by Magyarization; for the nationalist press and the popular assembly of 20,000 that met in Alba Iulia (Hungarian: Gyulafehérvár) in May, the separation of any parishes was viewed as an attack on the autonomy and freedom of the Romanian church, indeed as a threat to the entire nation.43 In response to press reports in the Romanian Kingdom, King Carol called in the ambassador of his Austro-Hungarian ally, Prince Johann zu Fürstenberg, in February. Given the mixture of religious and nationalist fanaticism which had been unleashed by reports of the Hungarian project, the king remarked, he feared that this project constituted "a serious danger for the present good relations with the neighboring country; . . . this affair would put a weapon in the hands of the opponents of his foreign policy." Reporting this audience to Khuen-Héderváry, the new Foreign Minister, Count Leopold von Berchtold, urged him to be as generous to the Romanians as possible.44

Meanwhile, another meeting of bishops had taken place in Budapest under the presidency of the nuncio, with one Romanian bishop, Dimitric Radu of Oradea (Hungarian: Nagyvárad), once again dissenting from the majority's approval of the government's proposal. Radu carried the Romanian bishops' renewed protest to Rome, where he met with a series of officials. While Radu's energetic pleading had some initial success in the Vatican, Austro-Hungarian diplomacy succeeded by mid-March, 1912, in overcoming his arguments. As the urging of Prince Schönburg and Count Berchtold, the Hungarian government agreed to concede the removal of fifteen parishes from the list of those to be ceded by the Romanian dioceses.45

Romanian politicians also sought to influence the Holy See through other channels. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod composed several major memoranda, at least one of which reached the Vatican through the assistance of the Romanian government. He also persuaded the Catholic archbishop of Bucharest, Raymund Netzhammer, to travel to Rome and intervene on the Romanians' behalf.46

The Romanian protesters' last resort was intervention by Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The Archduke's sympathy for the Romanians, his suspicion of most Hungarian politicians, and his fervent Catholicism

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42Primate Vaszary to Bavona, November 10, and the three Romanian bishops to Bavona, November 10, in Dumitriu-Snagov, op. cit., pp. 811–616. Archbishop Cernoch's report to Khuen-Héderváry on November 23 somewhat misleadingly asserted simply that support of the government proposal was unanimous: HNA, K26: 1915–XXV–1042, 1911/6856. Păcurariu is mistaken in his assertions: (1) that the Hungarians added territories from central Transylvania to the proposal only in the last years before 1912 (op. cit., p. 121)—these territories were already present in a petition to Leo XIII by the National Committee in 1900, published in Dumitriu-Snagov, op. cit., pp. 705–709, accompanied by a map of the proposed diocese—and (2) that the Romanian bishops were not informed at the November conference about the inclusion of parishes from their dioceses (pp. 109–110). Vaida-Voevod would later write that one bishop insisted that they had learned of the plan only in February, but Vaida did not believe him. See Liviu Maior, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod între Belvedere și Versailles (insemnari, memorii, scrisori) (Cluj-Napoca, 1993), pp. 210–211.


44Fürstenberg to Berchtold, February 26, 1912 (Strictly confidential), and Berchtold to Khuen-Héderváry, March 1 (Strictly confidential), in HNA, K26: 1915–XXV–1042, 1912/1408.


46Maior, op. cit., pp. 20–21; Dumitriu-Snagov, op. cit., pp. 845–847, 861–877. One of these memoranda may be the anonymous one in Italian, dated Budapest, February 8, 1912, found by Dumitriu-Snagov in the personal papers of Pius X, ibid., pp. 817–830. The author demonstrates a good knowledge of the Romanian and Hungarian press as well as the parishes in question.
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provided good reason to keep him unaware of the project. The politicians' success in this regard is all the more remarkable when one considers the considerable power and influence enjoyed by the heir apparent. Referring to Franz Joseph and his nephew, the Austrian politician Ernst von Koerber stated: "We not only have two parliaments, but two emperors." Count Aehrenthal was able to exclude the heir apparent's influence on the conduct of foreign policy, but he died of leukemia in early 1912. Franz Ferdinand probably learned of the new bishopric through Vaida-Voevod. For diplomatic reasons he was unable to travel to Rome personally, and so he wrote to Pastor, the director of the Austrian Historical Institute in Rome, professor and author of *The History of the Popes*. Sending him a lengthy memorandum against the diocese, he requested that he present it personally to the Pope. "This chauvinistic Hungarian bishopric" must be prevented, Franz Ferdinand wrote Pastor; "it would be harmful in both an ecclesiastical and a political sense"; the loyal Romanians would be "Magyarized ex officio by the Church" and turned, like the Hungarians, into "rebels." 

Pastor's mission proved fruitless, as the Holy See's decision had already been made. The bull establishing the new diocese, *Christifideles Graeci*, was published on June 8, 1912. It designated 163 parishes to be separated: one was the Hungarian parish of Emil Melles in Budapest, seventy-nine were from the two Ruthenian dioceses, and eighty-three from three Romanian dioceses. The bull cited the increase in the number of Hungarian Greek Catholics in justification, and the "doubtless effect" of the new diocese in causing the Christian religion to prosper, as well as "peace and unity among the faithful of the Greek rite speaking different languages." The use of Hungarian in the liturgy was expressly forbidden. According to the census of 1910, the faithful of the new diocese were 87% Hungarian, 10% Romanian, and 3% Slavic by mother tongue.

The practical organization of the diocese began in November, 1912. In several instances, Romanian villagers resisted with force the entry into their churches of the new episcopal vicar; several were injured when the police intervened, and others were indicted. Resistance was somewhat milder among the Ruthenians in the affected parishes; Magyarization had made greater inroads among them. But the establishment of the new diocese stimulated the Russophile "schismatic" movement. Here, too, the Hungarian prosecutor brought minority members to court in a well-publicized trial.

The first bishop of the new diocese was István Mildósy (1857–1937). A priest of the Diocese of Mukachevo, he had served at the diocesan seat for ten years, then in Hungarian-speaking parishes on the present territory of Hungary between 1894 and 1913. He had been decorated by both the monarch and the pope and was a member of the leadership of the National Committee of Greek Catholic Hungarians.

The chorus of Romanian, and to a lesser extent Russian, press protests against the new diocese was almost drowned out by the outbreak of the First Balkan War in October, 1912. The Balkan Wars further weakened the already shaky ties of Romania to the alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany. Increasing numbers of Transylvanian Romanians looked south of the Carpathians for leadership. The Romanian Kingdom's foreign policy gravitated toward Russia, and especially toward France, which both expressed displeasure about the Hungarian diocese. The French foreign office instructed its embassies in January, 1913, about "the great political importance" of the new diocese; the historian Nicolae Iorga in Bucharest published a pamphlet on the matter in various Western languages, hoping, of course, for the greatest possible impact. A reminder of the diocese's dramatic early history can be viewed in the Hungarian Greek Catholic church in Debrecen: a wall painting above the iconostasis depicts the explosion in February, 1914, in the

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5 The letter is quoted by Pastor in his memoirs, *Tagebüber, Briefe, Erinnerungen* (Heidelberg, 1950), p. 546. I would like to thank Max Hohenberg for granting permission to consult Pastor's correspondence in the Nachlass Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand, Box 18, in HHSA. It simply confirms the account of this episode presented by Pastor and by Engel-Janosi.

6 The bull was published in the Latin original and Romanian translation in *Cultura creștină*, 2,13 (September 10, 1912), pp. 390–404.

7 Pirigyi, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

8 Pâcurariu, *op. cit.*, pp. 116–120.


11 Iorga, *Le évêché de Hajdú-dorogh et les droits de l'Église roumaine unie de Hongrie. Nouveaux attentats du gouvernement hongrois contre la nationalité des Roumains* (Bucharest, 1913). The copy in the Széchenyi National Library, Budapest, was dedicated by the author to Professor Henrik Marczali of the University of Budapest. It was uncut until November 13, 1991.
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49Vasile Vesa, România şi Franța la începutul secolului al XX-lea 1900–1916. Pagini
de istorie diplomatică (Cluj-Napoca, 1975), pp. 27–74.
50Vesa, "Écout créarrii episcopiei de Hajdudorogh în unele cercuri politique și diplo-
51Iorga, Le évêché de Hajdudorogh et les droits de l'Église roumaine unie de Hongrie.
Nouveaux atténts du gouvernement hongrois contre la nationalité des Roumains
(Bucarest, 1913). The copy in the Széchenyi National Library, Budapest, was dedicated
by the author to Professor Henrik Marczali of the University of Budapest. It was uncut
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The Pope's Mass not only canonized the Hungarian liturgy, but celebrated for millions of television viewers and visitors the historical triumph of the diocese. It was one of the few Greek Catholic dioceses in the region, and the largest, to avoid suppression after 1945: its small size, the minuscule number of Hungarian Orthodox, and the identification with the ethnic majority rather than minority in the state had deprived it of political significance. The diocese attained its own seminary in 1950, administrative consolidation, and a less ambiguous status for its liturgy in these decades. Romanian, Ukrainian, Ruthenian, and Slovak Greek Catholics visiting Máriapócs, emerging from the catacombs into which Stalin had sent them, heard the Pope exhort them in each of these languages to practice their faith in solidarity with their Hungarian brethren. Concluding his sermon at this Marian shrine, he reminded Hungarian listeners of their dedication to Our Lady of the Hungarians, Magna Domina Hungarorum.86

Whatever the rationale for the attack, it is clear that for many the new bishopric symbolized a controversial religious and foreign policy. An unsteady Hungarian government exercised a disproportionate influence on Austro-Hungarian foreign policy, and the latter enjoyed disproportionate influence on the Holy See. As was characteristic of the era, the secretive actions of a handful of leaders circumvented normal channels to compound the impact of popular nationalism in an atmosphere of mounting international tension. In the short term, the increased ethnic tensions offset the pastoral benefit of an ethnically defined diocese.

The long-term significance of the diocese of Hajdudorog may well be its survival of Hungary's territorial division in 1918 and subsequent Communist persecution. On Sunday, August 18, 1991, an Eastern rite liturgy in Hungarian was celebrated by Pope John Paul II and Bishop Szilárd Keresztes at Máriapócs near Hajdudorog in the presence of over 100,000 Greek Catholic pilgrims from Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Ukraine as well as Hungary itself.

The demise of the old Hungary after World War I left seventy-nine of the parishes of the diocese of Hajdudorog outside the new frontiers. The Holy See eventually confirmed a drastic reduction in the size of the diocese, returning these parishes to the authority of Romanian or Ukrainian bishops. Eighty-two original parishes of the diocese remained on Hungarian territory, and twenty-three others of Romanian and Slavic dioceses from which they were now separated. As skeptics had warned, and Hungarian politicians had hoped, the stipulation in Christifideles laeti for the celebration of the liturgy in Greek was never fully applied. A Greek text was used for the portion of the canon from "Holy, Holy, Holy" to the beginning of the Our Father, but Hungarian for all the rest; the Holy See chose to tolerate this practice without lifting the prohibition of any celebration in Hungarian. The Oriental Congregation approved the Hungarian practice in 1960, but in 1965 the Bishop of Hajdudorog unilaterally (without explicit Vatican approval) extended the use of Hungarian to the entire liturgy. The Hungarian liturgy gained unambiguous sanction when the Pope himself chanted the consecration in Hungarian in 1991.

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8"Pirigy's account (op. cit., pp. 166–168) forthrightly recognizes the uncanonical status of the Hungarian practice. A curial document from 1924 demonstrates that Rome was fully aware of the situation; it is published in Dumitriu-Snagov, La Romania nella diplomazia vaticana 1939–1944 (Roma, 1987), pp. 25–28.


8For a contemporary speculation, see Lajos Lakos, Orosz, vagy román kéz? Tanulmány a debreceni pokolgép-mérnöktől (Nagyvárad, 1914). He blames the Russians.

86Diary entry of Raymund Netzhammer, published by Dumitriu-Snagov, op. cit., p. 939.
palace of the new bishop, of a bomb mailed by an opponent of the
new bishorpirc. The bomb killed three people, including the episcopal
vicar. The exhaustive police investigation revealed that the package
had been mailed by a professor of the Romanian Military Academy,
Ilie Cătărău, from the city of Chernivtsi (German: Czernowitz) in
Austrian Bukovina. The speculation on the meaning of the attack pro-
duced three alternate explanations: it was an act of patriotic protest
against the new diocese by Romanians or Ruthenians; it was a Russian
or Romanian provocation that sought to heighten Hungarian-Russian
tension at a time when Tisza's renewed peace talks with the Romanians
seemed still to have some chance of success; or it was a desperate
Russian attempt to distract public attention from the revelations about
Russian machinations that came out at the "schism trial" of Russophile
Ruthenians. King Carol of Romania, still hopeful for the preservation
of the Habsburg alliance, considered the second explanation most
convincing.

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58The diocesan catalogue of 1918 (see note 8) contains a depiction of Mary, Patrona
Regni Hungariae: determined in countenance, the national emblem at her knee, royal
crown and scepter in each hand. The Hungarian text of the Pope's remarks is available
in an edition published by the Hungarian Christian Democrats: II. János Pál pápa
nyelvű fordítása, 2nd ed. (Budapest, 1991), pp. 28-33, and in the Hungarian Catholic
weekly's account of the event: "A kereszténység országhatárok fölött áll," Uj ember