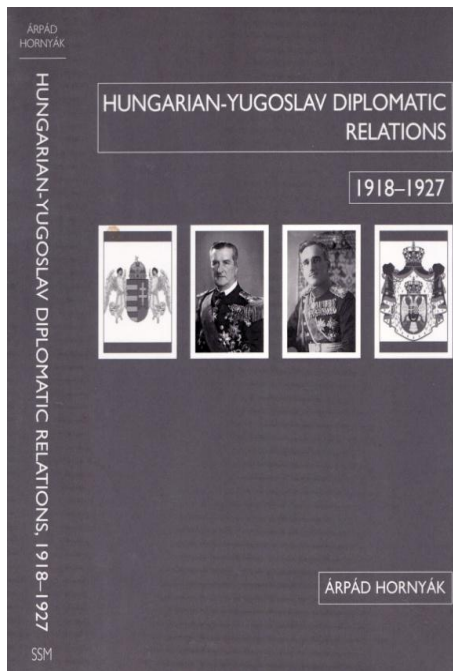


Árpád Hornyák, *Hungarian–Yugoslav Relations, 1918-1927*, Columbia University Press, New York 2013, 426 pp., ISBN: 978-088-0337-01-4, (bibliographic essay, bibliography and three maps).

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Árpád Hornyák is senior research fellow at the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Science and professor of history at University of Pécs. He teaches *Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Balkan History* and *Hungarian Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century*. His research focuses on the *Hungarian -Yugoslav Relations in the Twentieth Century*.

In his book Árpád Hornyák shows the evolution of the diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and Hungary from the

end of the World War I until April 5th, 1927.

1927 represents a concluding point of the Hungarian-Yugoslav diplomatic history. The author believes that by signing the Hungarian-Italian Friendship Pact, Hungary and Yugoslavia fell into two opposing camps, which put an end to the careful and hesitant steps over the previous year towards a tentative rapprochement.

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At the end of World War I, there have been important changes on the map of Europe, i.e. the German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman Empires have collapsed, and a mosaic of new states like Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland has been created, while others, such as Romania Kingdom and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, have integrated their territory.

The specific character of the Hungarian-Yugoslav diplomatic relations depended on the relations between Yugoslavia and Italy and every political step that Italy made significantly influenced every foreign policy action of Belgrad. Another factor mentioned by the author that influenced the Yugoslav-Hungarian relations was the role that Central Europe, including Hungary, played in Yugoslav's foreign policy. The author underlines that the importance of this area in Belgrad's eyes was minimal comparing to Yugoslavia's aspiration towards the Balkans.

This book is divided into three parts.

The first part entitled "From the Liberal Democratic Revolution to the Deposition of the House of Habsburg" shows the relations between Hungary and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes at the end of the Great War, the activity of Károlyi government, Italy and the relations between Hungary and the Soviet Republic, as well as the Hungarian-Romanian negotiations.

An important extent is attributed to the Peace Conference and the *de jure* establishing of the Hungarian-Yugoslav border, as well as to the restoration of the diplomatic relations between the two countries. Following the armistice concluded in Padua, according to the Belgrade Convention (November 13th, 1918) the southern border separating Hungary and the allies would run from the Mureş River in the east through the cities of Subotica, Baja and Pécs. On August 1st, 1919 the Supreme Council of the Paris Peace Conference made its

final decision regarding the border, internationally recognized by the Treaty of Trianon (1920).

Although the Yugoslav government kept suspicious of Hungary, especially after the Habsburgs's attempt of restauration, and accused the Hungarian government of the rearming tentative on numerous occasions, Hungary was not the same threat as Italy meant for Yugoslavia. Árpád Hornyák transposes the diplomatic relations between Hungary and Yugoslavia on the chessboard of the Great Powers with major interests in the Balkans.

In this respect and thanks to the study of the Yugoslav documents, the author reveals a uniquely valuable material to the readers, enriching his research with a deep analysis of the diplomatic documents unknown until recently, which sheds new light on the events that left marks on the efforts made by the Hungarian and Yugoslav diplomacies within the power games of the Great Powers in the Balkans.

Part two is headed "After the Royal Coups" and begins with the new Hungarian foreign policy carried out by Count István Bethlen as head of the government and Count Miklós Bánffy as head of the Hungarian diplomacy, after the second attempt of the Habsburgs to reassert themselves. The new administration determined its principles on the basis of which it wanted to lead Hungary out of its present isolation. Hungary was considered to have two foreign policy options: either to remain satisfied with the prevailing condition or to enter a path towards revision albeit the latter held relatively little promise. Count Bethlen proposed a combination of the two. He wanted to continue the policy of consensus but he was just waiting for an opportunity to turn revision into reality.

The first step was admission of Hungary to the League of Nations, which meant a political rehabilitation and the *de jure* recognition of the system. On the other hand, Hungary continued to neutralize the activity of the Little Entente and gradually started the

fight to improve the situation of the Hungarian minorities in the lost territories and to implement territorial revision.

Once the Little Entente established, the danger of the Habsburg restoration was obviated and Yugoslavia had sufficient grounds not to feel threatened, but the situation regarding Italy was much complex. The Yugoslav diplomats's suspicions were closely related to the relationships between Hungary and Italy. The Little Entente was primarily directed against Hungary, but there was no provision for joint resistance to potential German or Italian aggression. Thus the defensive regional alliances were largely directed against the states that were too small on their own to pose much of a threat, rather than against the major potential external threats to Balkan or East Central European security.

The author puts forward a balanced approach and sets out the views of the regional actors and the Great Powers in determining the dynamics of the Yugoslav-Hungarian diplomatic relations, given the research he has done in the diplomatic archives of Hungary, Serbia and England.

Another target of the Hungarian administration was to stabilize the country's economy and to apply for a loan from the League of Nations. Yugoslavia was against this action accusing Hungary of having the intention to arm itself, but it would obviously prefer a weaker neighbour to a strong one conspiring against it.

The third part, titled "The détente", expounds the attempts to normalize the Hungarian-Yugoslav relations and the beginning of the Hungarian-Yugoslav rapprochement.

In the last chapter, the author demonstrates that disbelief was the dominant feeling in the relations between the two countries. The weakness of France's diplomacy and its policy of appeasement pushed Yugoslavia to try to reach a compromise with Italy.

Yugoslavia started making conciliatory gestures towards Hungary due to several reasons, such as: its fear of being surrounded by Italy, its concern about the negotiations for an agreement between Romania and Italy (September 1926), Italian influence increasing in Albania, failure to normalize relations with Bulgaria or to succeed its demands in Greece.

On April 5, 1927, the Italian-Hungarian Treaty of Friendship, Conciliation and Arbitration was signed. This meant that the government in Budapest exited isolation and gained a friend among the Great Powers. Hungary's improving relations with Italy made Belgrad become anxious that the country would be encircled. Hungary hoped that Rome would take Hungary's cause and, as one of Great Powers that was discontent with the existing order, would be able to find support in the revision of the treaties.

Hornyák's book represents a valuable contribution to studying the history of the Balkans, providing a nearly complete picture of the diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and Hungary since the end of the World War I until 1927.

The book includes a comprehensive bibliography including books, newspapers and journals. Also, the rich endnote apparatus, maps and an index happily complete the book.

