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BACK IN THE DAY



*This feature extracts articles from *The Independent Scholar*, which became *The Independent Scholar Quarterly (TISQ)*; these publications preceded the current peer-reviewed journal *The Independent Scholar (TIS)* which first appeared in 2015. Papers that appeared in TISQ did not undergo the same peer review process as those critical papers appearing in the main body of TIS; there is nevertheless much of value to be gleaned from the earlier work in TISQ.*

For this volume I have selected Katalin Kadar Lynn's "Strange Partnership: Lord Rothermere, Stephanie Von Hohenlohe and the Hungarian Revisionist Movement".

SHELBY SHAPIRO

General Editor



STRANGE PARTNERSHIP: LORD ROTHERMERE, STEPHANIE VON HOHENLOHE AND THE HUNGARIAN REVISIONIST MOVEMENT

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STRANGE PARTNERSHIP

The interwar period between the first and second World War found Hungary a nation with few friends in Europe and the west and a nation deeply troubled by the decidedly punitive nature of the peace accord it signed at the end of World War I, the Treaty of Trianon. Hungarians at home and abroad, regardless of social rank and education, were universal in their condemnation of the provisions of the treaty, thus revision of the treaty became a focal point, a centerpiece of public desire, although the official policy of the Hungarian government did not publicly support revision as part of its public program. Nevertheless, it was the underlying theme around which Hungarian public policy was shaped.

A glimmer of hope appeared for the Hungarians, when the British press baron, Lord Rothermere, (Harold Sidney Harmsworth, First Viscount Rothermere) took up the cause of Hungarian revision as a result of his interest in the consequences of the Paris peace treaties. Lord Rothermere concluded that the Hungarians had been dealt with unfairly and began a campaign to champion the Hungarian cause with an editorial in his London newspaper *The Daily Mail* on 21 June 1927 entitled "Hungary's Place in the Sun."

Seemingly abandoned by the west and hemmed in by the antagonistic Successor States of the Little Entente [1], it seemed as if Hungary had finally found a champion of the revisionist cause and the movement spread like wildfire. The Hungarians "unofficially" sent Tibor Eckhardt as their emissary to meet with Lord Rothermere in Paris and the result was the founding of the Hungarian Revisionist League on 27 July 1927, with Ferenc Herczegh, the popular novelist of the era as its president and Tibor Eckhardt as executive vice president. [2] As a result of his outspoken support for revision of the Treaty of Trianon, Lord Rothermere became the toast of Hungary.

Eckhardt and the Hungarian leadership chose to view Lord Rothermere's involvement with the movement for revision in a positive light, although there was much speculation about the origins of the Englishman's interest in the Hungarian cause. His interest has at times been ascribed to his desire to right an enormous wrong, his own ambition, or the influence of his lover and accomplice, Princess Stephanie von Hohenlohe. Archival material, including Rothermere's own correspondence, confirms the fact that it was the princess who planted the seed for Rothermere's support of Hungary during first their personal and then their business relationship.

But Stephanie von Hohenlohe was much more than simply a messenger for Rothermere. Stephanie von Hohenlohe could arguably be said to be one of the most powerful women in Europe during the inter-war period. She developed a network of contacts that was unparalleled among persons outside of professional political figures or professional diplomats. She was able to use her not inconsiderable charm and connections to regularly meet with Prime Ministers, with Kings, with heads of state. There is no other interwar figure who could claim to have met with Lord Halifax, with



Hitler on a regular and personal basis, with Benito Mussolini, with the Prime Minister of Hungary (who solicited her advice) and Regent Miklos Horthy of Hungary who used her on one occasion to translate a letter into English for him. She had access to men of power and decision makers like no one else during that era. She was an influential and powerful woman. And while it might be easy to call her a spy or a inter-war Mata Hari, the fact remains that is too simplistic an explanation to describe her, as we would be hard pressed to name one other intelligence agent in recent history who had her access and contacts with the most powerful men of her day. Stephanie von Hohenlohe may not have been the most honorable of women, but she was certainly a woman of influence who has been sorely underestimated by her biographers and professional historians.

Having met Viscount Rothermere on the French Riviera in early 1927, the princess made her first trip to Hungary on behalf of Rothermere in April 1927. For the first five years of their association, she was not publicly financially compensated by Rothermere, although she became his emissary not just to the Hungarians, but also to Adolf Hitler and various key German powerbrokers. Beginning in 1932, she entered Rothermere's employ as his paid agent at a rather generous level of compensation of five thousand pound sterling per year. This arrangement lasted from 1932 to late 1938, when the princess and Rothermere had a spectacular falling out as the result of a lawsuit she filed against him for breach of contract. [3] The resulting scandal was covered extensively by the papers of the day, and the princess, herself clever at using the press, played the media interest to the hilt. Unfortunately, the publicity backfired on her as more and more personal information about her double-dealing activities came to light, including her close relationship with Hitler. It was said she was an agent for Rothermere, the Hungarian government and the German government at the same time – a triple agent – a spy. This paper will attempt to shed light on Stephanie von Hohenlohe, to trace through archival material her relationship with Rothermere, her decades long connection to Hungary and her influence on the politicians of her day. It will also attempt to show the extent of her influence regarding the cause of revision of the Treaty of Trianon over a period of more than ten years.

There are many scholars who have written about Stephanie von Hohenlohe and her role in the interwar Hungarian Revisionist Movement. Some mention her but are not willing to reveal her name, some have gotten the facts distorted, some have made her out to be an interwar Mata Hari. Who was this woman who, though a commoner, entered into a morganatic marriage with a prince of royal blood, met and mingled with the high society of her day, was an agent for a British press baron, and perhaps a double or triple agent as well.

In scholarly circles the one of the well-regarded histories on the Revisionist Movement was written by András Bán. [4] Several biographies of the princess, including a book written by her son Prince Franz Hohenlohe in 1976, appeared over a period of two decades after her death in 1972.[5] Many were riddled with errors and sensationalist exaggerations.[6] Early scholars who dealt with her history did not have access to the personal papers that her son deposited in the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University first in 1977 and then the balance in 1993, consequently many questions that were posed could not be answered definitively until her personal material became available. Some of the questions in regard to her background and activities can now be answered, but many remain unanswered to this day.

Characteristically for Stephanie, she played fast and loose with facts and altered them to suit herself and the image she wished to portray. From the point of view of scholars of twentieth century Hungarian history, the princess' role in the Hungarian Revisionist movement is of the greatest importance although from the vantage point of her entire career, that may or may not have been her most important contribution. It is worth looking beyond her activities related to Hungary to judge for ourselves.

WHO WAS PRINCESS STEPHANIE VON HOHENLOHE?

Stephanie Maria Veronika Juliana Richter was born in Vienna on 16 September 1896, in the golden twilight of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the second daughter of Dr. Johannes Sebastian (Hans) Richter and Ludmilla Kuranda. Her father, a Roman Catholic, came from a decidedly common background, his wife, Stephanie's mother, Ludmilla descended from the Kuranda family of Prague which was Jewish. Although the birth father of Stephanie was not Dr. Richter, but Max Weiner a Jewish moneylender with whom Stephanie's mother had an affair while Dr. Richter was imprisoned for embezzlement for seven months.[7] Originally Dr. Richter studied for the priesthood, after leaving the seminary, Dr. Richter took a law degree and practiced law in Vienna. His grandson Franz Hohenlohe says that his clients



were "...solid, middle-class people of good stock". [8]

Her son tells us that one of his mother's early mentors was Princess Fanny Metternich, a descendent of Prince Metternich, Austria's great diplomat and politician, and one of her father's most distinguished clients. Princess Metternich took Stephanie under her wing when she was fourteen and as a result of her patronage Stephanie was able to move in the highest levels of society, to which her family, in the strict social structure that was maintained in Vienna, would never have had access. Stephanie was not a good student, in fact, she loathed formal schooling, but she was clever, pretty, loved fashion and became good rider with an ability to ride, jump and hunt as a result of the Princess' tutelage and thus was able to hunt with Vienna's most exclusive set. She was recognized early on as having a "vivacity and originality" that set her apart. [9]

Stephanie, daughter of a lawyer, with not even a "von" in her name thus was able to move in the world of Viennese aristocracy. Her second patron was a Polish aristocrat, Count Josef Gizicki. A known womanizer and something of a rake, he had married into the distinguished Patterson family that owned the Chicago Tribune and was a part of the set in which Stephanie now moved. He took her under his tutelage and became the first of her many male patrons.

During Stephanie's teens, her father became increasingly religious and as his health began to fail he withdrew from his family into a religious order, the Brothers of Charity as a lay brother and died there just before the outbreak of WWI. The family was left in disastrous financial condition, only to be rescued by one of Ludmilla's brothers who had emigrated to South Africa and made his fortune. There are two distinct versions of the story of how Stephanie Richter of Vienna became a princess. The first is the official version of Stephanie and her son and admiring biographer, Franz. He tells us that once the Richters family's financial affairs were in order again, Stephanie began to travel, sometimes with her maternal aunt Clotilde, sometimes with her older sister Milla, six years older and appropriate as a chaperone and it was after these travels that upon returning to Vienna at age 17, she met Prince Nicolas Hohenlohe Waldenburg Schillingfürst. [10] Part of the huge clan of Hohenlohe, who had been princes of Germany for over a thousand years, Nicolas was attracted to Stephanie, but Stephanie was not attracted to him. By chance, she soon met his younger brother, Prince Franz Friedrich Hohenlohe, who became enamored of her and asked for her hand. The young Prince was a working diplomat and would have to ask for permission of the Court to marry as well as the consent of his family and of course, as a Catholic, post banns and wait the required amount of time to marry. The Richter's, particularly Stephanie's mother were all for the marriage and realized that Stephanie's position in Viennese society was tenuous and approval would not necessarily be forthcoming for a girl of Stephanie's background and reputation, for she already had a reputation. It was decided that Stephanie and Franz would avoid the delay and possibility of being refused permission and thus they were married at Westminster Cathedral in London on 12 May 1914. [11] Her son, Franz was born on 5 December 1914.

The second version of how Stephanie Richter became a princess is a more accurate but less charming story. In Martha Schad's biography of Stephanie which differs on many of the biographic details as claimed in her personal papers and her son's biography. Schad states that Stephanie became pregnant by the husband of Emperor Franz Josef's daughter Archduchess Marie Valerie, the Archduke Franz Salvator of Tuscany. To avoid scandal a suitable husband had to be found for Stephanie and Franz Hohenlohe was pressed into service by Emperor Franz Josef and the Court to marry her. Stephanie not only maintained her relationship with Archduke Franz Salvator throughout his life, but her son Franz was christened with the names of Franz and both her natural father Max and her adopted father Hans, as Prince Franz Josef Rudolf Hans Weriand Max Stefan Anton Von Hohellohe-Waldenburg-Schillingsfürst. [12]

Upon her return to Vienna, her morganatic marriage, not recognized by the court did not suit Stephanie's ambition and she freely used the title of Princess without the right to do so. She moved in society where women such as she were still supported by their beaux and made her way through society using Franz's name and with the patronage of many other patrons. Divorced in 1920 from Franz, who had immediately after their marriage in 1914 left for his military posting, she made the rounds of the social capitals of the world, moving with the seasons to the watering holes of the rich and powerful. She said of this period, "I could never deny it; I enjoyed the 20's enormously. I was free to go where I liked and play when I pleased. I was pleased to play most of the time." [13] Clearly Stephanie was enjoying her role "entertain (sic) the tired diplomats and ministers in whose overburdened laps these responsibilities lay. They always liked to chat with a woman after a hard day of treaty signing. So I did just that, and had a fine time doing it." [14]

Anticipating further chaos in Central Europe, she chose to move to France in 1922, selling her home and all of its contents in Vienna for cash. She moved first to Nice, then Paris in 1925, with a villa in Biarritz. No mention is made by



her biographers, other than the fact that she was a shrewd manager of money, as to how she went from a virtually penniless commoner to a princess with a luxurious villa filled with precious contents in less than a decade. Nevertheless, Stephanie, always clever with money, was able to extract gifts and tribute from her admirers very successfully – enough for luxurious lifestyle funded by her patrons or perhaps the Court. As she personally recognized later, the connections that she made in those “hedonistic days” would later prove invaluable to her. “They provided me with a passport that could open any door, and later did.” [15]

ROTHERMERE AND “JUSTICE FOR HUNGARY”

Stephanie first met Lord Rothermere in Monte Carlo at his sporting club, well informed in advance of his power, wealth and influence. She had earlier made friends on the Riviera with James and Annabel Cruze a young English couple, Annabel having been a few years earlier the mistress of Harold Harmsworth (later Lord Rothermere) and having married, both she and her husband remained a part of Rothermere’s inner circle. In conversation with Stephanie, Rothermere bemoaned the fact that there was a dearth of news that would sell newspapers and Stephanie offered the opinion that indeed there was a theme that had not been exploited and which would have appeal and that was the cause of Hungary. The princess insisted that it would arouse public interest and was a viable cause. Rothermere was intrigued by the idea and asked Stephanie for further details. She explained the details of the Treaty of Trianon that Hungary had been forced to accept and the forced dismemberment of Hungary, but also the human interest aspects of what Trianon, with its arbitrary boundaries had done to the people, where county seats were separated from their countryside and where families found the outbuildings of their farms in a different country than their homes. “Rothermere, with a superb nose for newsworthiness, was instantly captivated by Steph’s disclosures. He had certainly never given any prolonged thought to the small distant Central European country. However he did see the possibilities of a crusade and wanted to know more”. [16] He and the princess met again the next day at his villa, La Dragonière in Cap Martin where Rothermere further explored the idea of justice for Hungary perusing maps and atlases to make certain he understand the issues involved. She then introduced him to Count Rubido Zichy, the Hungarian ambassador to Great Britain who filled him in more on the situation Hungary found itself in.

Why was Hungary a cause for Stephanie, who had no Hungarian blood? One of the mysteries that confounded researchers for many years was in regard to the Princess’ Hungarianness, many questioning how she was able to travel on a Hungarian passport and be regarded as Hungarian citizen, although she had never lived in Hungary and did not speak Hungarian. The answer lies in her marriage to Prince Franz Hohenlohe. As a consequence of the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Hohenlohes no longer had dual citizenship available to them and had to choose a nationality. The some eight hundred members of the Hohenlohe family chose to be Austrian, German, Czech, Polish or Hungarian depending on their estate holdings and where they lived. Stephanie’s husband, Franz Hohenlohe chose to be Hungarian. His mother Countess Eszterházy de Galanta was Hungarian and his father who had married a second Hungarian wife when Franz mother died, lived all of his married life Hungary. Stephanie, still married at the time of the breakup of the Dual Monarchy, also acquired a Hungarian passport and nationality that she was to retain all of her life.

This then was the basis of Stephanie’s official connection to Hungary and why she brought up the idea of justice for Hungary to Rothermere. But additionally it must be remembered she had spent a great deal of time in Hungary particularly on shooting trips and her former husband Franz lived in Hungary and was the head of Hungarian civil aviation. Rothermere seized the idea and ran with it, traveling to Hungary to investigate the injustice of Trianon in time to view a demonstration protesting Hungary’s dismemberment in Budapest. He returned convinced of the Hungarian’s cause and on 21 June 1927 published the article entitled Hungary’s Place in the Sun, which was to launch not only world wide publicity for the cause of Hungarian revisionism, but more than a decade long relationship with Stephanie as his representative to the political leadership of the European Continent. Rothermere, in a telegram sent to the princess the day before the publication of the article and the firestorm to follow, made clear that the article was being published “boosting Hungary according to your desires”. [17]

As might be expected, after publication of the Rothermere article on 21 June 1927, speculation soared as to who had influenced Rothermere to take up the cause of the Hungarians as it seemed implausible that the British Press baron had



come up with the idea himself or through his advisors. Ignac Romsics takes us through all of the options voiced at the time in his well-researched study published in 2004. Needless to say, speculation was rife in all of Europe, with credence being given to the influence of István Bethlen to Benito Mussolini to various Hungarian expatriates who either worked with or for Rothermere. Of course the politicians of the Little Entente felt that the real instigators were in the British Foreign Office as it was hard for them to fathom that a private individual would take up a cause without the support of Whitehall. Ultimately, each settled on the answer that made most sense to them and nary a mention was made of the Princess Stephanie Hohenlohe.

However, as time passed and more pieces of the puzzle were revealed, the name of Princess Hohenlohe kept surfacing not just in regards to Rothermere's campaign for Hungary but also in relation to Rothermere's relations with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. The first question that puzzled scholars including Miklos Vasarhelyi – who wrote a book on the Rothermere campaign, published in 1977 – was: What role did this mysterious woman play in the wider picture? András Bán clearly substantiates in his 1998 book as can this author, having worked with the archival material, that indeed Stephanie von Hohenlohe WAS the instigator of Rothermere's support for Hungarian Revisionism as the original telegram from the *Daily Mail* to Princess Hohenlohe informing her of the launch of campaign exists in her papers at the Hoover Institution Archives. Ignac Romsics quotes the Ban version of the telegram text that does not give quite the personal import that the actual text does. He quotes the telegram as reading, "in tomorrow's edition an article in support of Hungary's claims is to appear, in accordance with your wishes." [18]

In fact the telegram sent by the editors of Rothermere's *Daily Mail*, on 20 June 1927, to the princess at her apartment in Paris on the Avenue George V, reads in full as, "We have received instructions from Vis count (sic) Rothermere to notify you that an article boosting Hungary according to your desires is appearing tomorrow." [19] By leaving out the key words relating the fact that the direction to notify her came directly from Rothermere himself and changing the word "boosting" to "support" the full personal nature of her influence is not felt, nor is the phrase "in accordance with your wishes" quite the same as "according to your desires."

However, regardless of the nuances that altered the translation of the wording of the telegram, it provides scholars proof that it was Stephanie who planted the idea of boosting the cause of Hungarian revisionism in Rothermere's mind. As does the subsequent correspondence between the princess and Rothermere related to the subject after the appearance of article and the firestorm of reaction that it caused.

Rothermere's article argued that the injustice of the new frontiers represented a standing danger to the peace of Europe and that the peace of Central Europe was of direct importance to Great Britain. He made the case that some reasonable revision of the Trianon peace settlement would benefit all of Central Europe and advocated the restoration of a monarchy in Hungary, "Why should not the Hungarians have a king, if such is their wish, so long as they conduct their affairs in a peaceful and proper manner? Rumania (sic) and Yugoslavia, which threaten to invade Hungary if she calls back her royal house, are both monarchies themselves..." [20]

There is no question that the response to the article was overwhelming. The Hungarian press printed the text of the article in full the next day in Magyar, along with articles hailing the new champion of Hungary. Cables, letters, phone calls and congratulatory messages poured into the editorial offices of the Daily Mail along with a flood of gifts. Franz Hohenlohe tells us that Rothermere had to hire two Hungarian speaking secretaries to deal with the "unexpected and fantastic" reaction, the "expression of a suffering country's boundless gratitude". Rothermere was hailed as Hungary's savior, feted and honored wherever he turned.[21] Rothermere turned to the princess to then put him in contact with important figures in Hungary and he made several official visits to the country as did she on his behalf. His support prompted the Hungarians to establish the Revisionist League that advocated for reforms to the Treaty of Trianon until the first Vienna Awards in 1938. All in all, Rothermere's advocacy of Hungary and justice for Hungary made the issue an item on the world stage.

Rothermere continued to rely on the princess for advice on the Hungarian situation and on 30 April 1928 Rothermere wrote to the following letter to the princess. This is reproduced in full as it clearly shows the influence that the princess had on Rothermere and that he turned to her for her counsel and advice.

"My dear Princess, My propaganda in the cause of Hungary has reached the stage where I must seek your advice. As I told you on several occasions, it was largely through my conversation with you that my



interest in Hungary was aroused. I had no conception that a recital of Hungary's sufferings and wrongs would arouse such world-wide sympathy. Now from all parts of the world I am in receipt of such a flood of telegrams. Letters and postcards that the work entailed in connection with the propaganda is rapidly absorbing all my energies and my most valuable time. I have to make the decision whether I shall neglect my work and interests and be preoccupied with the cause of Hungary only, or whether I should neglect the cause of Hungary and remain preoccupied with my world wide interests. Can you suggest anyone or any organization to whom I can hand over this, to my mind, most responsible work? Do you think from what you know of the Government in Budapest, it would be possible for them to continue without my aid the good work now, I venture to believe, effectually launched for the redress and restoration of Hungary? Will you reply and let me know, without undue delay, your views. You may say I am necessary in this matter. A woman's intuition- I mean yours - is usually much better than a man's reasoning, and anything you say will, as you know, receive my most careful consideration.

My kindest regards, and hoping to see you very soon in Paris.

Yours very sincerely, Rothermere" [22]

The princess' advice to Rothermere was that it was unthinkable for him to abandon Hungary after he had initiated the campaign that had focused the attention of the world on her situation. Rothermere took her advice and continued his advocacy of Hungary consulting with her on other issues, such as the immensely flattering offer he received from certain royalist Hungarian quarters that he be elected King of Hungary to fill the vacant throne. While a distinctly unexpected offer to Rothermere, both he and the princess were stunned by it, he was flattered and of course refused, but then the royalists began to float the idea of his son, Edmond as King of Hungary. He wrote to Stephanie from the Savoy Hotel in London.

"The Catholic Party in Germany is steadily disappearing. The German Elections mean no more Monarchies for Germany and no revival of smaller Monarchies like Bavaria and Saxony. Hungary cannot remain outside the orbit of this influence. If you wish to save the Monarchy of Hungary there is only one man who can do it, Esmond Harmsworth. No Habsburg or Royal prince from elsewhere can do it. The growth of Republicanism in Germany will give immense impetus to anti-Bethlen parties in Hungary.

R." [23]

The princess advised Rothermere not to pursue this line of action or thinking, that political adventurism would only harm Hungary as well as the Harmsworths. During this period, Rothermere consulted with the princess on more than one issue and saw her on a regular basis. The world-wide depression of 1929 impacted her luxurious life style and finally made her think about economizing. At this time she met Donald Malcolm, an American financial wizard who lived in Paris, who saved her from total financial ruin. In 1932 she gave up her Paris apartment and moved into the Plaza Athénée.

Later in 1932 she made the move to London, to the Dorchester Hotel, and Donald Malcolm moved as well. He knew the financial pressure she was under and suggested that she approach Rothermere about formalizing their arrangement and asking for a salary. She initially resisted but finally approached Rothermere, who agreed and she returned from her interview with him with an agreement that promised her five thousand pound sterling every year for the next three years. However, as her son writes in his biography of the princess, she also received two thousand pound sterling per every assignment that she took on behalf of Rothermere and "sometimes there were two assignments in one week". [24]

On 29 July 1932 she began her formal arrangement with Rothermere, with three assignments. The first to Empress Zita, widow of Karl, the last Austrian Emperor, the second to call on the ex-Emperor of Germany Wilhelm II and the third to see Regent Horthy in Budapest. All of the calls were related to the notion of restoration of monarchies in Europe, as Rothermere had one blind spot and it was the continuation of the royal houses of Europe. She continued on assignment for Rothermere, shuttling back and forth to the continent from London on a regular basis.

In 1933, Hitler came to power in Germany. Rothermere wanted to have someone take the measure of the man and gave



the assignment to the princess, who used her contacts with German Crown Prince Wilhelm to obtain an audience with Chancellor. At that time, many believed, as did this royal, that Hitler would provide a bulwark against the growth of communism and be the salvation of Germany. Introduced through the princess, Rothermere and Hitler established a long personal correspondence which lasted right up until the outbreak of WWII, with the princess often serving as the personal courier for the delivery of the letters between the two men. It is clear from the correspondence that Rothermere genuinely admired Hitler and felt that he had considerable support in Great Britain, and while it is true that the Cliveden set and pro-Nazi true believers such as Nancy Astor were pro-Hitler, the great portion of the British public were not.

Rothermere also carried on a regular correspondence with the Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Gömbös and with the Duce, Benito Mussolini, using the princess as an emissary. Rothermere in fact did not just use the princess as a courier, but she arrived to see these heads of state with questions that Rothermere wished her to submit to them, messages were also given to the princess to bring back to Rothermere. Several examples of these exchanges show that princess was not simply a messenger but also a participant in these dialogues. First a letter dated 24th of August 1932.

"My Dear Princess Stephanie,

I enclose a copy of an article by myself which has appeared in to-day's *Daily Mail*. I wish you would, during your forthcoming visit to Budapest, ascertain for me whether this article is in consonance with the view in official circles in Budapest.

The views of three and four of the leaders of the Government would interest me very much. As you know, I am entirely devoted to the cause of Hungary, and I wish nothing to appear over my signature except what accords with the views of those who are responsible for the government of the country. Will you let me know as soon as you return?

Yours very sincerely,
Rothermere" [25]

As another example, on the 4th of November 1932, Gömbös the Hungarian Prime Minister writes to Rothermere, "I very much appreciate your messages Prinzes[sic] Hohenlohe has given me. I am sending you my sincere thanks and everything else I have to say, the Princess will tell you verbetum [sic]..." Another undated letter written by Gömbös to Rothermere in 1935 reveals, "Princess Hohenlohe kindly promised to convey you [sic] a copy of the 'Blue Book' containing the summary of the Governments three years work...As regards to the affair of Princess Stefanie Hohenlohe I shall give instructions to the new minister in London, that he should proceed with all the proper regards and courtesy." Adding in his own hand, "That to do all that is necessary to amend and ___ the harm done to Princess Hohenlohe." [26] Gömbös clearly was replying to Rothermere's letter of 8 November 1935 in which Rothermere writes, "Within my knowledge the Princess has to the utmost of her power and influence done all she can on all occasions to help forward the cause of Hungary. The ill-treatment of the Princess, known to many of the friends of Hungary in London, has been very discouraging, particularly to myself." [27] In this case, the Hungarian Minister to London, László Szechenyi, was actually recalled and replaced as he had snubbed the Princess Hohenlohe and her English friends. There was no question that Stephanie had power and did not fear to use it.

Using the assignments from Rothermere, Stephanie being nothing if not an opportunist, ingratiated herself with Hitler to the point where he called her his "favorite princess" and she was invited along with Rothermere for a personal visit to Berchtesgaden in January of 1937. It was at this time that she became enamored of a member of the Führer's entourage, Captain Fritz Wiedemann, who had been Hitler's commanding officer in WWI and enjoyed his complete trust, served as Hitler's aide-de-camp. The princess charmed the Captain and soon they were more than just friends, with Wiedemann providing inside information and immediate access to the princess and Rothermere. In the meantime Stephanie went to see the Foreign Minister, Lord Halifax in the spring of 1938 and asked him to meet with Captain Wiedemann unofficially to have preliminary talks about preserving the peace. Unfortunately, this attempt at diplomacy failed badly, the meeting being uncovered by the press. It was a miracle that Wiedemann's career didn't end then and there and that he escaped punishment. The princess though was held in high regard by Hitler, having been able to arrange the meeting with Lord Halifax and thus was given use of the castle expropriated from the director Max Reinhardt, Schloss Leopoldskron, by Hitler and Göring, as a personal residence and a political salon in the spring of



1938. [28] In addition to the renovation of the castle, for which the chancellery paid at the cost over nine thousand marks, she also received a payment of over sixty thousand marks on November 1938 for "expenses" at a time when the average German worker earned about two hundred marks a month. [29]

30 September 1938 brought the Munich Agreement, which with the First Vienna Award restored Hungarian lands in Czechoslovakia to Hungary. Overjoyed at the result of his decade long campaign on behalf of Hungary, Rothermere then pressed Hitler for restoration of Hungarian lands in Romania, which Hitler was then not willing to grant but would do so later in the Second Vienna Award in 1940. The fact that Stephanie had played a not inconsiderable part in bringing about this political event was not left unnoticed by the press. The National Socialists also gave her credit, Fritz Wiedemann wrote to Lord Rothermere. "It was her [Princess von Hohenlohe's] preparation of the ground that made the Munich Agreement possible." [30] While working with Rothermere as a paid associate since 1932, Stephanie had long passed the terms of their original three-year agreement. Rothermere attempted to end the formal relationship in 1935 when the agreement expired, but was prevailed upon by Stephanie to continue as her son was then enrolled at Oxford and she had expenses related to his education that had to be paid. However, by 1938, Rothermere told her that he was discontinuing her arrangement, a decision she took very badly and made the ill advised decision to sue him in 1939. This led to a very public battle between Rothermere and the princess, which resulted in the German's holding the princess at arm's length and Rothermere losing his access to the Fuhrer. Stephanie eventually lost the lawsuit on 8 November 1939. Rothermere paid her court costs as she claimed to be without funds, but refused any further payment.

In January of 1939, Hitler found out that his aide de camp and the princess were lovers, which further lowered Wiedemann's standing with the Fuhrer. Wiedemann's enemies, particularly Ribbentrop used the fact that he had been less than supportive during the Czech crisis to undermine him and now the revelation that he was Princess Hohenlohe's lover added to his precarious situation. As a result Wiedemann was exiled to San Francisco as the German consul-general there. Stephanie immediately seized upon the idea that she would travel to the United States. Her intention to immigrate there was made clear by the fact that she traveled with 108 pieces of luggage, [31] even though she was traveling on a tourist visa under the name of Maria Waldenburg, obtained only after the Consul General for America at the Royal Hungarian Legation wrote a letter on her behalf on 24 August 1939 requesting that she be issued a visitors visa to enter the United States. [32]

After her move to America, she led an equally astonishing and controversial life in the United States, first with her lover Wiedemann, assisting him in managing Germany's espionage efforts in the US, then in a alien internment camp for four years, which we know about in detail as she was not often out of the sight of the FBI after her arrival. Later through her careful use of the patronage of prominent lovers she was totally rehabilitated in American society and developed a career in journalism becoming very close to the conservative press baron, Axel Springer after her return to the continent in 1962.. She lived in Switzerland, where she passed away in 1972. After 1939, Stephanie von Hohenlohe would not have contact with the Hungarians or the Hungarian government, although she continued to travel on her Hungarian passport and the press continued to refer to her as a "Hungarian Princess" although she really was neither a princess nor Hungarian.

It is difficult to think of any individual outside of government circles who had the extraordinary access that Princess Stephanie von Hohenlohe had during the interwar period. We have proof that she was a paid agent of Lord Rothermere and of the German government, and it is suspected that she received some form of compensation from the Hungarian government as well. She had access to and met with heads of state, former royals and countless other important personages. Despite her somewhat suspect reputation, each overcame his reservations about her and gave her access. She deserves the credit for giving Rothermere the idea of supporting Hungary and also the credit for continuing to promote Hungary's "place in the sun" through Rothermere and through her connections for the better part of a decade.

NOTES

[1] The Little Entente, a mutual defense agreement between Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania created in several agreements signed in 1920-1921 was directed against German and Hungarian domination in the Danube River basin and toward the protection of the members' territorial integrity and political independence.

[2] *Tibor Eckhardt: Recollections of Tibor Eckhardt: Regicide at Marseille*. New York: The American Hungarian Library



and Historical Society, 1964, 95-96.

[3] Note: Although Rothermere wanted to end his financial arrangement with the Princess in 1935 but she prevailed upon him to continue it as her son was at Oxford and she was in dire need of funds. Papers of Stephanie von Hohenlohe. Hoover Archives. Box 1 File: 1939 Letter from her solicitors dated 9 January 1939.

[4] Ignac Romscis. *Hungary's Place in the Sun: A British Newspaper Article and its Hungarian Repercussions*. László Péter, Martin Rady, editors. *British-Hungarian Relations Since 1848*. London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College, 2004, 193-204.

[5] Prince Franz Hohenlohe. *Steph, the fabulous princess*. London: New English Library, 1976.

[6] Including the biography written by her son, who followed the script prescribed by her to the "t."

[7] Martha Schad. *Hitler's Spy Princess: The Extraordinary Life of Stephanie von Hohenlohe*. Phoenix Mill, England: Sutton Publishing, 2004, 1-2. Although the above date of 1896 is given as her birthyear in her son's biography, Martha Schad dates her birth at 16 September 1891 (2-3). Her later documents completed when she entered the United States, changed the date again, making her even younger.

[8] Prince Franz Hohenlohe. *Steph: The Fabulous Princess*. London: New English Library, 1976, 8.

[9] *Ibid*, 9.

[10] Stephanie tells us about this period in an outline written by her for an autobiography, the preface of which was titled "Woman's Will." "It was pleasant to be thought beautiful and to be envied. It was especially useful to me, for about that time, I decided that my ambition in life was to marry a prince. I reasoned that looks would not be liability to such an undertaking." Papers of Prinzessin Stephanie Juliana zu Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Schillingfürst. Hoover Institution Archives. Stanford University, Stanford, CA. Box 3, Folder 2.

[11] Note: The personal papers of Stephanie von Hohenlohe, differ substantially on the dates of her marriage and the date of her son's birth. Her United States of America: Declaration of Intention Immigration Papers dated 30 November 1951, state her date of marriage as 5/9/1919 and shows her son's date of birth as 12/9/1921. Hoover Institution Archives. Box 1. Folder ID 1951, p 4.

[12] Schad, 8.

[13] Papers of Prinzessin Stephanie von Hohenlohe. Hoover Institution Archives. Box 1: Folder: Woman's Will, p 6.

[14] *Ibid.*, 7.

[15] *Ibid*.

[16] Franz Hohenlohe, 38-39.

[17] Papers of Prinzessin Stephanie von Hohenlohe 1914-1972. Hoover Institution Archives. Stanford University, Stanford California. Box 1, Folder 1927.

[18] Romscis, 193-204.

[19] Papers of Prinzessin Stephanie Juliana zu Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Schillingfürst, 1914-1972. Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, CA. Box 1, File 1927. Author's italics on the quote.

[20] Prince Franz Hohenlohe, 40-41.

[21] *Ibid*.

[22] Papers of Prinzessin Stephanie von Hohelohe. Hoover Institute Archives. Box 1 File: 1928.

[23] *Ibid*.

[24] Franz Hohenlohe, 53.

[25] Papers of Prinzessin Stephanie von Hohenlohe. Hoover Institution Archives. Box 1 Folder 1932.

[26] Papers of Prinzessin Stephanie von Hohenlohe. Hoover Institution Archives. Box 1, Folder 1933.

[27] Papers of Prinzessin Stephanie von Hohenlohe. Hoover Institution Archives. Box 1, Folder 1935.

[28] Schad, 92.

[29] Fabrice d'Almeida. *High Society in the Third Reich*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006, 190-191.

[30] Schad, 103.

[31] Schad, 122.

[32] Papers of Prinzessin Stephanie von Hohenlohe. Hoover Institution Archives. Box 1. Folder: 1939.