

## An Exceptional Case of Women's Self-Advocacy in Interwar Hungary: Cécile Tormay\*

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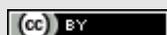
**Abstract:** A Hungarian writer who became a prominent public figure in the Horthy era, Cécile Tormay's (1875-1937) fame and success was principally due to her memoir, *Bujdosó könyv* ['The Hiding Book'], a work published in 1920-21 that depicts the two Hungarian revolutions following World War I. This popular work enjoyed several editions during the interwar period and was translated into English and French for propaganda purposes. After World War II, *Bujdosó könyv* was among the first works banned by Hungarian authorities for its anti-Semitism. Hailed as the most notable female author of the interwar period, Tormay's name rose anew after the fall of socialism in 1989. Fueled by the official biography written two years after her death in the Horthy era by the conservative professor of literature, János Hankiss, a revival in the cult surrounding Tormay's work has taken place in recent years. Hankiss portrayed Tormay as a woman of Hungarian noble descent whose deeds were motivated by sheer patriotism. This paper contends that Cécile Tormay was embraced by the interwar elite for her active role in the counter-revolutionary conspiracy against the First Hungarian Republic.

**Keywords:** *assimilation, anti-Semitism, Christian "gentlemanly" middle class, "urban" middle class, Cécile Tormay*

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\* This essay is the revised version of the article, "A női önérték-érvényesítés kivételes esete a Horthy korszakban. Tormay Cécile és a *Bujdosó könyv*," published in *Literatura* 3 (2019), 262-285.



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The career path of the novelist, pamphlet writer and political leader Cécile Tormay (1875-1937) comprises an exceptional case of women's self-advocacy in Hungary after World War I. Despite being unmarried, she was able to ascend to the highest social circles during the conservative Horthy era (1920-1944), a time that enacted restrictive policies on women's participation in public life. Her ascendancy might primarily be attributable to her political astuteness, as she almost instantly joined the counter-revolutionary conspiracy of the former ruling elite that tried to regain power following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the outbreak of the democratic revolution in 1918. Beyond this factor, her successful social ascension may have had much to do with her shrewdness in editing her famous (or infamous) memoir, the strongly anti-Semitic *Bujdosó könyv* ['The Hiding Book']. An open condemnation of Jews for Hungary losing the war and the subsequent disorganization of Hungarian society, this two-volume memoir aroused anti-Semitic incitement and nourished the cult of irredentism and revisionism. (The meaning of these two concepts is slightly different: irredentism aims to reclaim territories that have been transferred to other states while revisionism aims to renegotiate a particular international treaty. See Zeidler 2002: 11-12.) Within five years of its first publication in 1920 and 1921 respectively, Tormay's memoir proved so popular that it achieved four editions; two additional printings were published during World War II. It was also translated into English and French because the "old-new" ruling elite hoped the memoir would garner support for Hungarian aspirations among the former entente powers. Published in New York in 1923-24, the English translation appeared under the title, *An Outlaw's Diary*. After World War II, all editions of Tormay's *Bujdosó könyv* were banned by the *Fasiszta Sajtótermékek Jegyzékét Összeállító Bizottság* ['Commission for the Establishment of the List of Fascist Press Releases'], placing Tormay among such authors as Hitler, Mussolini and Gyula Gömbös, the former Hungarian Prime Minister who had endeavored to introduce a fascist system in the interwar period. (For a list of banned books see *A fasiszta...* 1946: 39, 62, 15).

After the 1920s and 1930s, *Bujdosó könyv* became a cult book for the second time in the first decades of the twenty-first century (Alexa 2017: 111). Although Tormay's book was not republished until 1998, this release was soon followed by many more from various publishers who issued editions in 2003, 2005, 2009 and 2015. It has even been suggested that Tormay be included in the Hungarian national school curriculum along with other authors accused of anti-Semitic writing, e. g. Albert Wass and József Nyirő (Huszár 2014: 303-304). The reason for Tormay's literary revival is that the ideological convictions expressed in her memoir have been serving as components for constructing the historical memory of the contemporary right. Thus, an analysis of the *Bujdosó könyv* and the revision of her biography may elucidate the formation of a particular cultural tradition. Similarly, this study may shed light on the historical roots underlying the kind of political propaganda which divides the population into right-wing citizens proud of their ethnicity [*nemzeti érzelmű*] versus "alien-hearted" [*idegenszívű*] left-wing citizens, a division which has strived for ideological hegemony.

### **Assimilation and the Tormay Family: Ascension to the Ruling Class**

During the nineteenth century, many families in Hungary (especially those of German or Jewish descent) who had benefited from industrialization's economic developments and wished to rise to the middle or upper-middle class of society assimilated into mainstream Hungarian culture. This assimilation process accelerated after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867,

when Hungarian state bureaucracy increasingly put pressure on ethnic minorities to adopt the Hungarian language and culture. Realizing that Hungarian identity was essential for social advancement, a large number of people chose assimilation willingly. During this period of intense Magyarization, many assimilated people hid their family's former ethnic identity in order to achieve greater success: Cécile Tormay's family was one of many such families. Most of her ancestors were German in origin: her maternal great-grandfather was a master builder originally named József Spiegel ['mirror'], which he Magyarized to Tüköry ['from mirror'] in the 1830s. József Tüköry's father-in-law Magyarized his German name from Kaldetter to Álgay. Originally known as Krenmüller, Tormay's paternal-grandfather married a woman allegedly of French descent who was from Hanover, Northern Germany; he Magyarized the family name to Tormay in the 1840s. Born in 1839, their son and Cécile Tormay's father, Béla, was renamed in his childhood. As the 'y' ending of family names indicates noble origin in Hungarian, the decision to add a 'y' to the end of their surname signals that Tormay's ancestors aimed to assimilate into the Hungarian nobility. In fact, the writer's German ancestry was entirely forgotten until Krisztina Kollarits's discovery of the original name, Krenmüller (Kollarits 2007).

The Tormay family's quest for ennoblement can be attributed to the structure of nineteenth-century Hungarian society. As the historian László Péter stated, "It appears that social classes exercised substantial influence on government policy as long as, and to the extent that, they had remained 'feudal', and that the alternative to the power of the noble landowning elite was not the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie but that of the *hivatalállam*, the East European authoritarian state" [*hivatal* means 'bureaucracy', *állam* means 'state'] (1992: 110). Cécile Tormay's male ancestors belonged to the bourgeoisie, i.e., Hungary's "urban" middle class because they had professional occupations; to attain leadership positions, however, they needed to possess both land and a noble title (Péter 1992: 88). The first requirement was fulfilled when the Tormay family purchased an estate and concomitant title: Cécile Tormay's great-grandfather, József Tüköry, and his father-in-law bought lands in Álgyst, Arad County (Aldești, Romania) and Daruvár, Pozsega County (Darugar, Croatia). Both men acquired letters of nobility as well. Her grandfather, Károly Krenmüller, the chief medical officer of Tolna County in Central Hungary, bought an estate in Nádudvar, Hajdú-Bihar County (Eastern Hungary) in 1859. Tormay's father, the veterinarian Béla (Krenmüller) Tormay, who was also Department Chair at the predecessor for the University of Veterinary Science and holder of other important positions, continued managing the estate in Nádudvar; as of 1896, after being ennobled by the Austrian Emperor and Hungarian King, Franz Joseph, he oversaw his lands as a noble landlord. This means that Cécile Tormay's father entered the nobility when she was twenty-one years old.



Fig. 1. Street scene of Nádudvar with passersby, circa early twentieth century

The Tormay family's German roots passed into oblivion because Cécile Tormay's official biographer, János Hankiss obscures the writer's origins in his book that was published shortly after Tormay's death. For example, Hankiss in describing the extensive travels Tormay's grandfather conducted as a young man through continental Europe in the 1820s, calls him "Károly Tormay" even though at the time only Károly Krenmüller existed. Hankiss's depiction of Károly Krenmüller's youth may have reminded the readers of tours made by enlightened young Hungarian noblemen during the Reform era (Hankiss 1939:11). By drawing associations of this type, Hankiss thereby helps maintain the image of Cécile Tormay as a lady born into an ancient Hungarian noble family whose members represented progress and thus displaying Tormay as an appropriate role model for lower-class female citizens. The first step to shape Cécile Tormay's image was the clever choice of her memoir's title. In Hungarian the word *bujdosó* ['hiding'] is associated with those leaders of Rákóczi's War of Independence who fled the country after their defeat in 1711 and became known as the authors of famous memoirs during their exile. Although the attributive 'bujdosó' refers to the manuscript itself, which had to be hidden from the Communists in a chimney, its use also designates the position of the narrator, Cécile Tormay, as a model patriot exiled for her love of country.

Although noble ancestry brought prestige, even some members of Cécile Tormay's environment doubted her membership among the nobility. In her book on Hungarian women's activism, Judith Szapor quotes from the diary of Tormay's sister-in-law and fellow author, Emma Ritoók, who, as a member of an ancient noble family, "saw in Tormay the social climber, the *parvenu*." Aware that the Tormays "changed the original German name, Krenmüller to the one ending with y," Ritoók sneeringly stated, "the old nobility is entirely missing from the

Tormay family" (Szapor 2018: 129). Cécile Tormay's grandfather and father were able to change the family's social position because they combined their roles as professional intellectuals, public officials and landowners. From the *polgári középosztály* ["urban" middle class'], they raised the Tormays to the *keresztény úri középosztály* ['Christian "gentlemanly" middle class']. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the "gentlemanly" middle class replaced that of the landed gentry, the class that found itself landless and forced to occupy various professional branches of state administration. By the outbreak of World War I, this "gentlemanly" middle class dominated society. Beyond their political power, the members of this stratum defined the system of norms and values and the ideological convictions in society. According to the social historian, Gábor Gyáni, this public bureaucracy that came to occupy the old landowner gentry's position, also took "the distinguishing feature of gentlemanliness from them around the turn of the century" (Gyáni 1998: 231).

Although Károly and Béla Tormay ascended to the "gentlemanly" middle class, both their careers as well as their mentality must have veered from the typical career path followed by the gentry who, having lost their land, lived as public officials out of necessity. In contrast, the Tormays were primarily professional intellectuals who reaped the benefits of also being public officials (Csekő 2009: 412). Cécile Tormay's two brothers followed their father's example and they, too, pursued careers in government administration after obtaining university degrees. One year before the outbreak of World War I, Géza Tormay became a Ministerial Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce and was later made *miniszteri osztálytanácsos* ['Counselor of Department'] at the age of forty in January, 1919. In the winter of 1919, Béla Tormay, two years younger than his brother, was appointed Counselor of Department at the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. From that time on, both brothers occupied the sixth out of the eleven grades of civil service salary grades, a status that guaranteed a high standard of living. (The eleventh—and lowest—salary grade was designated for elementary school teachers.) As such, they were accordingly addressed as *nagyságos úr* ['honorable sir'], a term that does not have an exact English equivalent, given that feudalistic Hungarian society used sixteen titles to denote social position above the lower classes. Cécile Tormay's two sisters also aimed to join this new "gentlemanly" middle class, but in their case, as women, marriage was the only route open to them. Vera Tormay married a royal industrial inspector, Dr. Elemér Szegedy-Maszák, who was appointed Senior Technical Advisor by the cabinet in 1917. Mária Tormay wedded a university professor, the physician Dr. Zsigmond Ritoók, who became a member in 1903 of the Forensic Medicine Council, an organization in justice administration.

By the beginning of World War I, through her family Cécile Tormay already belonged to the Hungarian "gentlemanly" middle class. However, her social position was more vulnerable than that of most female members in this group due to her single marital status. Presumably, as her later life testifies, Tormay did not want to marry; remaining single, however, placed serious restrictions on a woman's ability to participate in public life. Even private life was full of legal obstacles, since unmarried adult women existed in a legal state of non-adulthood. In fact, their surnames were left out of the address lists for Budapest residents, which had been regularly published since 1880. In this particular source, the names of single women were only included when they had a profession that required publicity (e. g., dairy merchants, seamstresses), had a property of their own, or could claim ownership interest in a company. While another woman writer, the thirty-six-year-old, married and employed Margit Kaffka was listed (albeit only under

her married name) in the 1916 edition of *Budapesti Czim és Lakásjegyzék* ['Budapest Address and Housing List'] as *Fröhlich Brunóné, polg. isk. tanárnő* ['Mrs. Brunó Fröhlich, middle school teacher'], the forty-one-year-old Cécile Tormay was excluded from this list. This was true even though she may have presumably achieved some level of fame by that time as the author of her first novel, *Emberek a kövek között* (1911) ['*Stonecorp*,' 1922], a work that had already been published in German and French. Although mother and daughter were living under the same roof during World War I—a fact known from *Bujdosó könyv*, a work rich in autobiographical elements—only Tormay's mother's name was added to the address list as *özv. Tormay Béláné* ['Wid. Mrs. Béla Tormay'] with her social status *magánzó* ['independent'], a term denoting "an individual who lives on his/her own income without occupation" [Gyökös 2011: 67]. This humiliating circumstance which virtually excluded unmarried women from the public sphere was not ameliorated when Tormay received the title *alapítványi hölgy* ['foundation lady'] from King Franz Joseph in 1902; for all of its prestige, even this title still indicated that she was not equal in value to a married woman. ('Foundation ladies' were unmarried girls of noble birth who were then authorized to use the title of *asszonyom* ['my madam'] and thereby appear at royal court events.) Given her uncertain status, it is likely that Tormay constantly feared being marginalized, a factor that had a profound negative impact on her personality until her death.

Although the motivating force driving her family in Tormay's childhood may have been the bourgeois ethos of autonomy, tolerance and sense of vocation, as she grew to adulthood she instead sought the company of the landed gentry and the aristocracy. During this process she may have gradually changed her identity by embracing the group consciousness of the Hungarian gentry, who placed great emphasis on ethnic belonging, an identification that is depicted in her second novel, *A régi ház* (1914) ['*The Old House*,' 1922]. In this novel, recipient of the first prize in a novel competition sponsored by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the work's protagonist, Anna Ulwing, is a third-generation member of an urban, German, middle-class family who resides in a rapidly developing Pest and adapts to the Hungarian nobility. Even more telling, after marrying a nobleman who lost his estate, Anna repurchases the land with her inheritance and, following her husband's death, decides to raise their children to become members of the historic middle class, i. e., the gentry.

After Hungary's defeat in World War I, Tormay's new identity as a Hungarian intellectual of noble birth in possession of land may have been both threatened as well as reinforced by the prospect of losing the favorite places of her youth (Álgyest, Daruvár), areas that would be annexed to new, neighboring states in the future.

### **Changes in Cécile Tormay's Financial Circumstances**

Tormay was born in a magnificent dwelling located on the bank of the Danube near the center of Budapest, on Fűrődő Street, a home built by her maternal great-grandfather. Two of the apartments in the building were evenly shared by his descendants, Hermina Barkassy (Tormay's mother) and Hermina's brother. (Tüköry's building was demolished, the new edifice built in 1905 now serves as the seat for the Ministry of Interior). She also lived in the apartment with her mother until she was over thirty, when both residences were sold.



Fig. 2. Fűrdő [now: József Attila] Street, Budapest, 1906. Cécile Tormay spent her youth in a house that stood at the end of the right side of the street and faced the Danube (Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library, Budapest-Photo Archive)

In 1905, Béla Tormay's family moved into an apartment building found in a less gorgeous, yet still elegant part of the capital, the *Palotanegyed* ['Palace Quarter'], which was also favored by the aristocracy. Most likely rented and not purchased, the new abode in Kőfaragó Street had five rooms, but was smaller than the previous one. When describing their new home in *Bujdosó könyv*, Cécile Tormay complained that a wardrobe did not fit into the smaller flat and its contents had to be kept in a box due to lack of space in their new home (2009: 219). Her father died in their new home in December, 1906. It can quite plausibly be assumed that an unmarried woman who still lived at home at age of thirty-one would have felt financially insecure, a feeling that may have intensified after the death of her parent who was the breadwinner. Following Béla Tormay's death, his property, mortgage bonds and an amount of money deposited in a savings bank deposit book was equally distributed among the three daughters and their younger brother. The siblings, however, opened a new savings deposit book, access to which was transferred to their mother. (Géza inherited the estate in Nádudvar.) After being widowed, Mrs. Tormay continued to rent or maintain possession of their apartment in Kőfaragó Street and had a summer villa built in Hűvösvölgy, the fashionable outskirts of Budapest. This dwelling was designed by the renowned architect, Dezső Zrumeczky, who also planned the home of the famous writer, Ferenc Herczeg, at the same time and in the same neighborhood. Mrs. Tormay most likely paid construction costs out of the amount garnered from the sale of the Fűrdő Street residence and her children's inheritance. The villa located on Szalonka Street was completed in 1912 and registered in Mrs. Tormay's name.

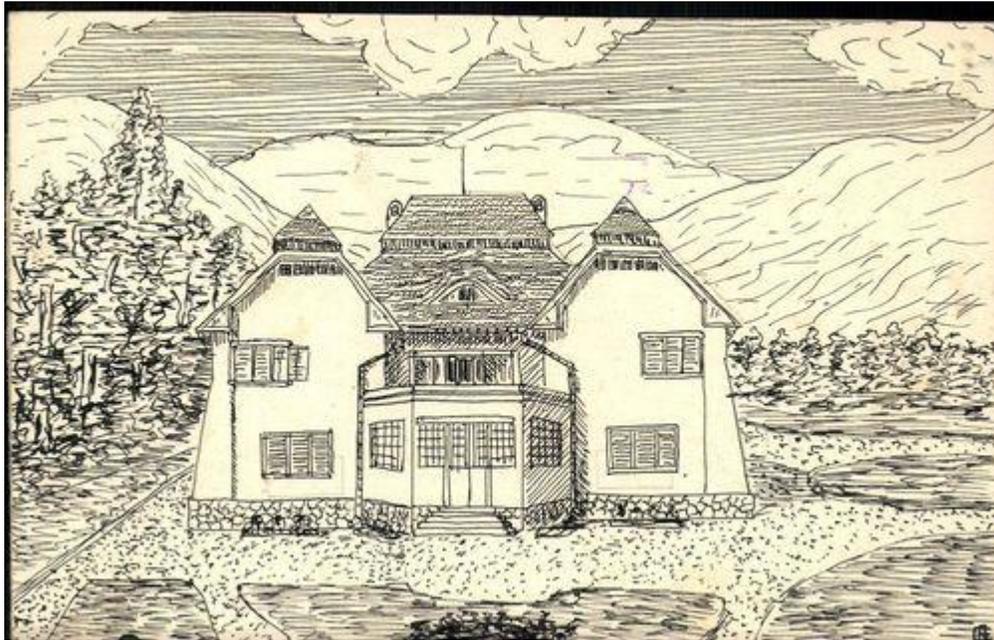


Fig. 3. A picture postcard of Villa Tormay, 1912 (gallery.hungaricana.hu, Zempléni Múzeum)

Even though Cécile Tormay and her mother, two single women with no outside income, were neither socially nor financially on the same level as the ruling elite, the new residence enabled them to follow a habit typical of the gentry and upper middle-class families living in the capital: in summers, they could now stay in their villa in the Buda hills, while winters were spent in their apartment in downtown Budapest. (Tormay's first book to bring her fame, *Emberék a kövek között*, was published during the construction of the building in 1911.) The summer villa in Húvösvölgy signaled Mrs. Tormay and/or her daughter's need for social advancement, even though the members of the family must have been aware that the properties would have to be distributed among all the children upon their mother's death. In terms of inheritance, Cécile Tormay was in the most unfavorable position because legally she was entitled to get only one-quarter share, not enough to purchase a high quality home for herself. What is worse, after her mother's death, as an unmarried woman she would have been expected to live with one of her siblings, presumably with the family of one of her sisters.

My hypothesis regarding Cécile's financial fears and horror of finding her social status diminished is supported by a dialogue between Mrs. Tormay and her daughter, the narrator of *Bujdosó könyv*. At the end of 1918, the First Hungarian Republic had to provide housing for thousands of refugees who fled the Romanian army, which occupied territories spanning from Transylvania to Budapest. In January, 1919, authorities planned to requisition part of the Tormays' apartment in Kőfaragó Street. Beyond the narrator's anxiety, the description of the situation employs various rhetorical tools (propositional fallacies, proof by assertion, hyperbole, modality/attitude of the narrator) to defend the need to protect private property while simultaneously blaming the government and the "Jews" (described as "Galician refugees" in the excerpt below) for the circumstances that had been created by the loss of war:

They went everywhere, looked at everything, and told her she would not be allowed more than two rooms.

Naturally, my mother was upset. A dentist with four children had put in a claim for three of our rooms with the common use of the kitchen and bathroom. If I remember rightly, his name was Pollak and he had lived till then in the ghetto.

I flew into a rage. I had never heard of any lodgings being commandeered for Transylvanian refugees: they are expelled, while Galician refugees of Austrian nationality are planted in our midst. What are they afraid of? What are they fleeing from, that they thrust their way into the homes of Christians? (1923: 223)

[*'Benyitottak mindenüvé, mindent megnéztek és azt mondták neki [özv. Tormay Bélánénak], hogy csak két szobát hagynak meg.*

*Anyámat kellemetlenül érintette az eset: – Egy négygyerekes fogorvos jelentett be lakásigényt három szobánkra, közös konyha- és fürdőszoba-használatra. Úgy emlékszem, Polláknak nevezték, és eddig a Dob utcában lakott.*

*Féktelenül dühbe jöttem. Sohase hallottam eddig, hogy ismerőseimnél erdélyi menekülteknek rekvirált volna a lakáshivatal; azokat kitoloncolják, míg az osztrák honos galíciai menekülteket közénk telepítik. De hát mitől félnek? Mi elől akarnak védekezni, hogy keresztények otthonába furakodnak?'] (2009: 175)*

Cécile Tormay's fear of deteriorating financial circumstances may have been the main reason for why she was actively involved in the counter-revolutionary movement against the First Hungarian Republic beginning in late 1918. She reported on the organization of the plot in *Bujdosó könyv*: after the old political elite overthrew the democratic republic, the reinstated leaders were presumably grateful both for her participation in counterrevolutionary activities and depicting them. Together with other rewards for her political participation, in 1923 Tormay was made editor-in-chief of a government-subsidized, new literary magazine, a position that provided her with a secure income. Tormay's financial success during the Horthy era made it possible for her to buy a villa located in the Mátra mountain range in Northern Hungary that she subsequently named *Meseház* ['Fairytale House']. In spite of this significant financial improvement, reminiscences from Countess Ambrózy Migazzi (who lived in the mountains with Tormay before the writer's death), reveal that she could never escape the feeling of financial insecurity. Tormay may have perceived of her interwar standard of living as one of decline:

Few people can help poverty with art. Few can substitute the prized possession, in good taste, what was once theirs from earthly goods and had been lost. No one ever knew about Cécile Tormay how poor she was. Her house was open for everyone, a place where the culture and traditions of the past have fought to maintain their standard of living. As she smoothed out an old tablecloth faded with lots of washings, or put a cheap little pine twig with a few snowdrops in an old crystal cup,

as she placed a bigger book on the worn out Italian brocade to cover, either being alone or with her guests always having the table set with her beautiful silver, it was art, which she did not want to give up and could not. (Translation by the author, J. K.)

[‘Kevesen tudnak a szegénységen művészettel segíteni. Kevesen tudják ízléssel pótolni azt, ami életükben egyszer földi javakból volt és onnan önhibájukon kívül kiesett. Tormay Céciléről sohasem tudta meg senki, milyen nehezen élt. Háza mindenki számára nyitva volt és a múlt kultúrája és tradíciói megválták az életszínvonal megtartásáért folytatott küzdelmüket. Ahogy ő egy öreg, sok mosástól fényes abroszt elsimított, olcsó kis fenyőgallyat pár szál hóvirággal egy régi kristálypohárba tett, ahogy a megkopott olasz brokátra, hogy fedje, nagyobb könyvet helyezett, akár egyedül, akár több vendéggel volt, szép ezüstjével egyformán terítettett, az művészet volt, amiről lemondani nem akart és nem tudott’] (Ambrózy Migazzi 1939: 295-296).



Fig. 4. Cécile Tormay's villa, the *Meseház* in Mátrafüred

### **Cécile Tormay's Goals in Publishing *Bujdosó könyv* and the Historical and Social Context of its Editing Process**

In Hungary, World War I and the subsequent collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was followed by severe economic crisis and a chaotic domestic political situation. During this period of preparation for writing her new work the now forty-three-year-old Tormay edited diary entries she had originally recorded from fall 1918 to summer 1919. It took her almost two-and-a-half years to prepare the dated entries used in *Bujdosó könyv* for publication. During the editing

process, she divided the manuscript into two volumes. The first volume recounted the events of the Aster Revolution, associated with Mihály Károlyi at the end of October, 1918, while the second volume covered the short period of the Hungarian Soviet Republic which commenced following a *coup d'état* in March, 1919. Despite the fact that Cécile Tormay viewed these insurrectionary events as merely two different phases of the same Bolshevik/communist rebellion against lawful authority, she separated her description of the two historical landmarks into two volumes. The last diary entry was allegedly written on August 8, 1919, immediately after the third, and finally successful, attempt to form a counter-revolutionary government in the southern city of Szeged. With palpable relief, this entry reported on the formal naval admiral, Miklós Horthy, taking command of a military force called the National Army, their departure from Szeged for the capital and the appointment by the Regent of Hungary, Archduke Joseph of Austria of István Friedrich as Prime Minister of a newly formed government in Budapest.

The first volume of *Bujdosó könyv* was published in late December, 1920; the second one was ready for printing by the end of 1921. Although the exact date of their appearance can only be inferred, one thing is certain: when Cécile Tormay's first volume was edited, a text discussing the same subject already existed. A political pamphlet entitled *Egy magyar vezérkari tiszt bíráló feljegyzései a forradalomról és ellenforradalomról* ['Critical Notes of a Hungarian Chief of Staff about the Revolution and Counter-Revolution'], a work written by Gyula Gömbös, one of Admiral Horthy's main supporters. Published in June, 1920, both Gömbös's work and the point of view it expresses may have influenced Tormay, a member of his circle. In any event, while finalizing the manuscript, Cécile Tormay had enough time to choose her phrases carefully, select data and withhold information in the interest of protecting the conspiring members of the former elite to which she had always wished to belong. Her caution was crucial because at the time the future of the country had yet to be settled: a wrong move, or the placing of inappropriate blame or praise for a would-be politician, might have imperiled her future prospects.

From the point of view of Hungary's twentieth-century social history, *Bujdosó könyv* can be viewed as a memoir that consists of dated notes presenting a narrowed focus. It is a chronicle of the history of both the democratic revolution and the proletarian dictatorship, events that were equally rejected by a female narrator who belongs to the Hungarian "gentlemanly" middle class. A passionate account by an amateur historian, it frequently displays a level of *pathos* that becomes especially touching with its usage of metaphoric expressions. Addressed to Cécile Tormay's own class and the aristocracy, this work was written with the author's unspoken intent of intervening in politics and the public sphere. For twenty-first-century readers, this intent renders *Bujdosó könyv* a historical document and part of the cultural heritage of the interwar era. According to today's understanding of history, "the formation and canonization of historical memory is a collective process in which groups that are often socially heterogeneous, but share certain ideological beliefs and/or experiences construct their past based on this background" (Romsics 2005: 131). *Bujdosó könyv* is the summary of the "gentlemanly" middle class's image of the past as written during the successive cataclysms following the military defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It contains the major elements of this group's ideological beliefs: conviction in Hungarian cultural and economic supremacy over other ethnic groups, an anti-egalitarian and anti-democratic approach, and anti-Semitism that had intensified as a result of new false stereotypes created during the war (Bihari 2008: 150, 154).

By writing *Bujdosó könyv*, Cécile Tormay aimed to shake the members of the pre-war ruling elite out of the shock caused by the collapse of the old form of state, the Kingdom of Hungary, and the accompanying erosion of their power. Members of this class had every reason to fear: after already losing their estates to successor states, should the planned land reform of the democratic revolution have been realized, their property in Hungary would have also been in danger. The need to provide housing for refugees arriving from occupied territories and the subsequent requisitioning of their private homes (a measure introduced during the Károlyi government) also raised additional fears.

In addition to reinforcing the spirit of the "gentlemanly" middle class, it seems that *Bujdosó könyv* was also meant to serve as a propaganda tool for achieving more specific goals; its immediate aim was to unite the forces of the disintegrated right and then help them win under the anarchic conditions that followed the collapse of the Monarchy. Cécile Tormay's purpose was possibly related to the next parliamentary elections, to be held under the pressure of the entente on the basis of equal, universal and secret suffrage for the first time in the history of the country. One of her motives for writing may have been fueled by the realization that targeted political agitation was needed to bring as many women to the voting booth as possible in order to support right-wing parties. Although the elections were originally scheduled for January 25-26, 1920 and the first volume of Tormay's book was only printed sometime at the end of the year (an excerpt was published in the magazine *Új Idők* ['New Times'] in mid-December), her collaborative propaganda may have had some effect at this time, too. The first part of the memoir could have had some success in influencing voters because elections were held in several segments depending on the withdrawal of the occupying troops; in the region beyond the Tisza River, elections were delayed until October, 1921. As if nothing had ever happened, on this occasion victory in the National Assembly elections was achieved by a single-party formed by pre-war political leaders. Count Pál Teleki became Prime Minister, but only remained in power for nine months. In April, 1921 (when the second volume of *Bujdosó könyv* was being redacted), Count István Bethlen formed a new government. Thus, power was gained in the spring of 1921 by the very Transylvanian landlord of aristocratic birth whose "counter-revolutionary" organization Cécile Tormay had supported from the beginning, almost from the day after the victory of the Aster Revolution.

As *Bujdosó könyv* was being finalized, the Paris Peace Conference was still in session, albeit without having invited the conquered states. Although it was already obvious that Hungary would suffer enormous territorial loss, the referendum that was meant to decide whether the city of Sopron would be assigned to Austria or to Hungary only took place in December, 1921. Produced in a relatively short period of time, the two thick volumes comprising *Bujdosó könyv* may have had a related goal: expressing rejection of the two revolutions in the name of the whole nation, its author tried to persuade the Allies to respect Hungarian interests when defining the new borders and support Hungarian revisionist aspirations. *Bujdosó könyv* can additionally be seen as a publication designed to prove that Cécile Tormay had played a key role in organizing a counter-revolutionary conspiracy against the new democratic government; she even tried to convince the readers that this was why she had had to escape from the capital, even though in fact she had only fled the city after the communist takeover.

Although Cécile Tormay's writing career during the Horthy era was based on *Bujdosó könyv*, proving that she was the sole author of the work requires further research. According to the late literary scholar, Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, the second half of the manuscript that has been found but remains privately owned was "handwritten in pencil, on poor quality paper, presumably already in a distressed state in 1919." He cautiously adds that the book may have been "based on this manuscript" (Szegedy-Maszák 2013: 18). This wording raises the suspicion that Tormay did not write the book alone. During his divorce proceedings, Count Rafael Zichy accused Cécile Tormay of conducting a lesbian relationship with his wife, Countess Edina Pallavicini; at the time some witnesses testified that the writer, who had been staying at the Zichy Castle at Sárszentmihály near Budapest in the summer of 1920, had been sick abed all the while. Instead of editing the manuscript herself, Tormay dictated the entire work to Countess Pallavicini (Döme 2013: 25). The question therefore arises whether the creative, unconventional similes, metaphors, metonymies that contributed greatly to the aesthetic value of the *Bujdosó könyv*, yet were not typical of Tormay's work, can be attributed to Cécile Tormay. Although the first volume was being brought to print during her stay at Sárszentmihály, it remains possible that the countess also played a role in editing the second volume since the two women were in close contact until the divorce process in 1923 and the subsequent criminal lawsuit in 1924. After the count's attempt at divorce failed, Countess Pallavicini and Cécile Tormay launched a joint defamation lawsuit against Count Zichy. Under pressure from Regent Horthy, the court found the count guilty and he was sentenced to one-and-a-half years of suspended imprisonment (for details see Kurimay 2016b).

Other than her personal and perhaps literary connection with Tormay, Edina Pallavicini became president of the Hungarian Literary Society. Founded in 1922, in 1923 this organization launched a conservative literary magazine, *Napkelet* ['The Orient'], for which Pallavicini commissioned Tormay to be its editor-in-chief. Countess Pallavicini and Tormay had most likely met during World War I and probably came into contact with each other while establishing the *Fényűzés Elleni Liga* ['Anti-Luxury League'], the purported aim of which was to prevent women from spending money abroad, wasting the country's fabric and leather supplies and to defeat the enemy's "evident fashion dictatorship" (Kádár 2018: 191). Striving to consolidate her social status, or even to advance within the social hierarchy, Tormay participated in the founding of this group. She was joined in this effort by distinguished women of high rank, including the wives of Count Gyula Andrássy Jr., Count Gyula Batthyány, Count Pál Teleki, etc.



Fig. 5. Countess Edina Pallavicini, wife of Count Rafael Zichy in Rome (Photo from the Catholic literary weekly, *Élet* [‘Life’], 1925: 26: 533)

It is significant that in the history books detailing this period scant attention is paid to how women assessed the postwar situation, their ideas, or their participation in political life. Regardless of their social status, women's thoughts and aspirations during this time remains a largely neglected area of research. Cécile Tormay's memoir proves the fact that—while a small group of men who had been ruling the state since the Compromise of 1867 remained paralyzed—their female relatives recovered from their state shock much earlier. In *Bujdosó könyv*, Tormay first attributed the idea of organizing women to her sister-in-law, Emma Ritoók, who allegedly said, “We must do something. The men do nothing. We ought to organize the women” (2009: 115, 1923: 145); elsewhere in the book she ascribed the initiative to herself, which made Ritoók, who also longed for social advancement, forever angry (Szapor 2018: 97-98). Tormay was allegedly entrusted with the leadership in late November, 1918 by an influential lady, Countess Batthyány, a member of a revered, historical family. Ordered by Countess Batthyány to “Do the program and lead the movement!,” two months later, on January 11, 1919, Tormay established the *Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége* [‘National Association of Hungarian Women,’] or MANSZ, a right-wing organization for Catholic and Protestant women (Tormay 2009: 133, 181).

It is plausible that the idea to establish a women's organization originated not with either Emma Ritoók or Cécile Tormay but came from the Catholic Church, which realized at the beginning of the century that giving women the right to vote would eventually be unavoidable. Although the clergy was divided on the issue of women's active and passive electoral rights, it mattered that the prestigious bishop of Székesfehérvár, Ottokár Prohászka, advocated for limited rights, aiming to exclude women from direct participation in political life in order to preserve the traditional, subordinate role of women, who would then be expected to vote for the right. This goal could be achieved by establishing a properly guided women's organization that included members of all social classes. The exclusion of "Jewish" women (considered left-wing voters) from public life may have been an important aspect of the organization since prospective members had to prove their Christian background (Pető 1997: 278). In 1920, one year after its formation, MANSZ advocated the introduction of the anti-Semitic *numerus clausus* law. There is no doubt that Prohászka, a supporter of MANSZ, also held anti-Semitic views. The bishop, probably not counting on the possible publication of his diary, wrote about the administration of Mihály Károlyi rather harshly and cruelly: "All kinds of Jewish sparrows, males and females were freely gathered in this leader's empty attic! (...) There were candidates for everything, for foreign affairs, domestic affairs; Jewish slut, debt accumulator Rózsa Bédi-Schwimmer was sent as ram-nosed Hungarian ambassador to Bern" [*Mindenféle zsidó verébnek, kan- és nőténynek szabad ki-begyűlése volt e vezető üres padlásába!... volt vállalkozó elég mindenre, külügyre, belügyre; került zsidó rüfke Bédi-Schwimmer Rózsa adósságcsináló, kosorrú magyar követnek Bernbe*] (Prohászka 1997: 3: 86, translated by the author, J.K.).

According to the *Bujdosó könyv*, the writer was greatly assisted in the organization of MANSZ by Countess Edina Pallavicini, who was also highly regarded by Prohászka (1997: 2: 229). During the war, the Countess had been involved in founding various Catholic women's groups, the most important of which was the *Magyar Katolikus Nőegyesületek Országos Szövetsége* ['National Alliance of Hungarian Catholic Women's Associations'], formed in December, 1918 uniting all associations to prevent a left-wing election victory. Following the formation of MANSZ, Pallavicini's right-wing women's organization joined the Tormay-led assembly. Thus, when István Bethlen founded the *Nemzeti Egység Pártja* ['National Union Party'], or NEP, in February, 1919 in an effort to gain power, Tormay could join him as the leader of an already extant political organization. According to a report in the February 20, 1919 issue of the *Budapesti Hírlap* ['Budapest Newspaper'], "Cecília Tormay, a delegate of the Hungarian Women's Association, announces the association's joining the national union because she sees it as the sister organization of the Women's Association." She was then elected a member of the Organizing Committee of the new party that formed from the leaders of the various allied groups, including Count Gedeon Ráday, Count Kunó Klebelsberg (both of them future ministers), and Count Bethlen himself (*Budapesti Hírlap*, 20 February, 1919: 4). At that time Tormay presumably wanted to become a female politician; NEP proved to be short-lived, as it ceased to exist almost as soon as it was formed while the election that had brought Bethlen to power was later won by a different formation.

Although it lost its opportunity for parliamentary politics, from the outset MANSZ was an organization in line with the ideas of Bethlen and Prohászka, as is evidenced by Tormay's words of her welcome speech when Bethlen's NEP was formed: "It is not the new rights but the old holy duties that call us women into the fields of politics. It is not politics

anymore, but saving the country. Where one will was enough before, two are needed today. So the Hungarian woman puts her Hungarian will to the Hungarian man's Hungarian will...." [*Nem az új jogok, hanem a régi megszentelt kötelességek hívnak minket asszonyokat a politika mezőire. Nem is politika az többé, hanem országmentés. Ahol azelőtt elég volt egy akarat, ott ma kétfőre van szükség. Odateszi hát a magyar asszony az ő magyar akaratát a magyar férfi magyar akaratához...*] (Tormay 2009: 212, this excerpt of Tormay's speech was omitted from the English translation of *Bujdosó könyv*). Built on a "national basis," MANSZ embraced women of all classes and of any denomination (except Jews) whose votes the writer counted on, and who remained within the framework of family life tailored for women, with the exception of the life of its functionaries. After Bethlen's party failed, the already well-known author, Cécile Tormay, was pushed out of party politics. As the leader of MANSZ, however, she remained in the forefront of public life.

Since she took notes beginning in the fall of 1918, another opportunity arose that she could somehow connect writing with her public life role as head of the National Association of Hungarian Women. According to her dated notes in *Bujdosó könyv*, it was shortly after the defeat of Bethlen's party that Tormay envisioned transforming her extant material into a diary. At the time, the writer was hiding from the agents of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in Northern Hungary, at the Bercel castle owned by the widow of Béni Kállay (the former Austro-Hungarian Minister of Finance), Countess Vilma Bethlen, a relative of Count István Bethlen. Based on Tormay's record dated March 27, 1919, the Countess's daughter, Erzsébet Kállay (also a lady-in-waiting to Queen Zita), encouraged Tormay to continue her "notes" that had been entrusted to her nephew, "the young Zsiga Ritoók" before her escape. "Write your diary, there will come an age that understands" [*Írd meg a naplód, eljön még az a kor, amelyik megérti*], Erzsébet Kállay said while comforting the idle writer (Tormay 2009: 267-268). Cécile Tormay took her advice; since in the early spring of 1919 she changed her career plan from becoming a politician to becoming a public figure, she reported in her book on the formation of Bethlen's Party because appearing in influential political circles put her in a good light. In spite of this, she did not mention her membership in the Organizing Committee. Another sign of this constant self-positioning is that Tormay sets herself up as belonging to the elite: she claims to have spoken to the Prime Minister, István Tisza in person, or shares confidential information about Mihály Károlyi after he seized power. Remaining silent about her role in the Organizing Committee of Bethlen's party was not the only time Cécile Tormay thought it better to hide certain facts. Since her book was written with the aim of relieving old political leaders of their responsibilities by making Mihály Károlyi and the Jewry scapegoats, she said nothing about the fact that, after the outbreak of the democratic revolution, István Bethlen "not only did not attack Prime Minister Károlyi until mid-December, but he even tried to help him from the background" (Romsics 1999: 105). It therefore cannot be forgotten that *Bujdosó könyv* was published during a state of turmoil following the downfall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, when it had not yet been settled whether the old elite would finally regain power; moreover, neither was it clear whether the country would remain a kingdom at all. Therefore, the cautious Tormay merely lifted the veil here and there regarding the counter-revolutionary conspiracy: "I had to leave out a lot of data and details that cannot yet be revealed, the secrets of living people," she writes in the Preface. It is possible, however, that not only did she protect the identity of the "living people," but she also took great care to conceal from where counter-revolutionary circles received financial support.

As the victory of the counter-revolution was still uncertain, this historical circumstance may explain why Cécile Tormay indeed tried to make the identity and activities of one of the main organizers difficult to identify. This conservative lady who played a proactive role in organizing both Transylvanian women and the female citizens living in Budapest was mostly referred to as "my Transylvanian friend." It was this person who first brought up at a meeting in Budapest that financial means were needed to build the organization; this individual probably helped raise money as well. Mentioned elsewhere as Countess Ármin Mikes, in one instance Cécile Tormay revealed that her friend was a close relative of the assassinated István Tisza. However, she never wrote down her friend's maiden name, Klementina Bethlen, and thereby concealed her identity as the sister of István Bethlen, the leader of the opposition. While István Bethlen sought to establish a right-wing party based on nationalism for men, from the background his sister tried to unite their wives and daughters in an organization that shared the same ideology. The key to Tormay's career between the two world wars may have been that from the beginning of their counter-revolutionary organizations she stood behind both István and Klementina Bethlen. The brother of Klementina Bethlen's husband, Count János Mikes, (also of Transylvanian descent) took part in the anti-government conspiracy as well, even though Tormay also concealed his role. For example, her statement, "Bishop János Mikes visited me and gave an assignment," did not contain relevant information either about the reason behind the Catholic high priest's visit or the subject of their discussion (2009: 196). She was similarly close-mouthed regarding Károly Kiss, the newly recruited secretary of the women's organization, when telling her readers that Kiss had been sent by her "Transylvanian friend," and soon after his arrival, the young man "talked" about the "things to do" with another famous bishop, Ottokár Prohászka (2009: 236). In any event, it seems presumable that MANSZ was financially supported by the Catholic Church: a few weeks after its formation, the Association opened an office in the same Mária Street building located in the Palace Quarter, where the headquarters of the *Katolikus Háziasszonyok Országos Szövetsége* ['National Association of Catholic Housewives'], founded in 1908, was located. (2009: 187, 200, 223)

Despite carefully protecting the identity of key actors in her writing, the prudent Tormay still found it important to refer to the names of other counter-revolutionaries. Other than the well-known names of nobles and aristocratic dignitaries, she also mentioned the members of her extended family, the Tormays, the Szegedy-Maszáks and various cousins and their husbands (albeit sometimes by their first names alone) as protectors of bourgeois [*polgári*] values, a term synonymous with "gentlemanly" [*úri*] in the contemporaneous language. Despite the fact that both of Tormay's brothers made their way up the ranks as Counselors of Department during Dénes Berinkey's government, who took over as Prime Minister after Mihály Károlyi became President of Hungary in January 1919, her siblings' names were also inserted into the story of the conspiracy. The inclusion of their names as participants in the counter-revolutionary organization was meant to create the impression that—even though Géza and Béla Tormay had accepted their appointment by the head of the Hungarian Democratic Republic—they had also been secretly working to overthrow the new democratic order.

It must also be mentioned that Cécile Tormay was generous in her calculations of kinship. For example, she described Sándor Eperjesy as a nephew even though he was the child of a second marriage made by the husband of her deceased aunt and therefore had no biological connection to the Tormay family. According to the description in *Bujdosó könyv*, Sándor

Eperjesy accompanied Tormay as she left the Kőfaragó Street apartment for safer accommodation following the communist *coup d'état*. Another paternal relative, Miklós Kozma, aided Gyula Gömbös (1886–1936), the leader of the *Magyar Országos Véderő Egylet* ['Hungarian National Defense Association'], or MOVE, a far-right paramilitary group founded and immediately banned during the Károlyi government, in escaping internment. Later in 1919, Miklós Kozma took over the leadership of the National Army Propaganda and Defense Department in Horthy's counter-revolutionary government in Szeged.

If the writer thought that the careful mention of the names of those involved in the counter-revolutionary organization, while obscuring their exact role, would be beneficial in case the winner was the old elite, she was not mistaken. During the Horthy Era, quite a few of her counter-revolutionary relatives took an important position. Dr. Sándor Eperjesy became Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the *Földbirtokrendezés Pénzügyi Lebonyolítására Alakult Szövetkezet* ['Cooperative Established for the Financial Management of Land Tenure']. One year after the formation of Count Bethlen's government, Miklós Kozma was appointed head of the Hungarian Telegraph Office in 1922. During the 1930s, he was promoted to the position of Minister of Interior. To return to the careers of Tormay brothers, Géza Tormay was appointed Secretary of State in 1929; as of 1935 he was designated to the second salary grade for ministers while Béla Tormay became CEO of the Postal Savings Bank in 1926 and was designated to the fourth salary grade. Vera Tormay's husband, Dr. Elemér Szegedy-Maszák, Senior Technical Adviser, was granted the title of Ministerial Counselor in 1928. Mrs. Aladár Szegedy-Maszák, President of the National Association of Catholic Housewives, was nominated in 1941 by the Minister of Religion and Public Education to be honored by the Regent of the Kingdom of Hungary, Miklós Horthy. According to her granddaughter's recollections, despite this high honor Mrs. Aladár Szegedy-Maszák saw the change in her post-war social status as a decline: even though her husband had been made Deputy Secretary of State, she had always wanted the title of baroness (Szegedy-Maszák 2013: 34-35, 140). Sadly, noble titles could no longer be bestowed during the Horthy era as this right belonged only to the king.

Other than filling a role as the leader of MANSZ and editor-in-chief of *Napkelet*, following the death of the scientist, Marie Curie, in May, 1935, Cécile Tormay became a member of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations. Her appointment was proposed by the French Foreign Minister Pierre Laval, a proponent of first Italian and later German fascism. (Laval was later executed after World War II for his role as Prime Minister in the Vichy government.) Although Tormay was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1936, the Nobel Prize Commission decided that, "her writings did not meet the requirements" (Kollarits 2011 12: 41).



Fig. 6. Countess Ambrózy Migazzi, Cécile Tormay, András Hóry, Hungarian Ambassador to Italy and Countess Gedeon Ráday, members of MANSZ delegation to Rome in 1932 (Hungarian National Museum Photograph Collection)



Fig. 7. Cécile Tormay, new member of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations (*Friss Újság* [‘Fresh Newspaper’], 23 May 1935: 10)

Tormay was not only savvy when it came to alluding to the financial background of the counter-revolution (presumably provided at least in part by the Catholic Church) or the names of counter-revolutionary participants, but she also acted cautiously when discussing Hungary's future form of state, an issue that was called *királykérdés* [‘the royal question’]. According to historians, the end of the monarchy as a form of state did not emerge as a traumatic element of Hungary's past during the decades after World War II, a factor that rendered the republican form of government permanent. As Gergely Romsics states in his analysis of memoirs discussing the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: “Due to the primacy of a Hungarian identity that remained independent of the Empire—or at least considering itself independent—the Aster Revolution, the Soviet Republic and Trianon Peace Treaty became the primary sources of twentieth-century Hungarian myths. The revolutions and the peace treaty have traumatized society much more than the dissolution of the Monarchy” (2005: 109).

In spite of this accurate summation, the issues surrounding which form of state would emerge in Hungary was one of the key issues for Hungarian domestic politics from the fall of 1918 and remained so even after the counter-revolution triumphed and political power became relatively consolidated. As the authors of two other women's memoirs, Duchess Eugénie Odescalchi and Countess Eleonóra Zichy (wife of Count Gyula Andrassy Jr., mother-in-law to Count Mihály Károlyi), described the situation: the majority of Hungarian aristocrats were legitimists. This meant that aristocrats supported either Charles IV or his son Otto; for them Horthy was only viewed as a provisional governor. Although many members of the gentry were also royalists, they did not want a Habsburg king (Odescalchi 1987: 149, Zichy 2018: 60). In contrast to the memoirs written by the female aristocrats mentioned above, Gyula Gömbös (one of Tormay's personal acquaintances), stated in his book that, “I was never an enthusiastic royalist; instead, I was, and still I consider myself a Republican, and I generally do not accept birth privileges” [‘*Sohasem voltam lelkes királypárti, inkább köztársasági érzelmű voltam és*

vagyok, a születési előjogokat általában nem ismerem el'] (Gömbös 2017: 62). Beyond balancing between the different views held within the circles she either belonged to or aspired to, what made it even more difficult for Cécile Tormay to express her position was that several people aspired to the Hungarian throne. Other than Charles IV and his legal heir, Otto, two other Habsburgs, Archduke Joseph and Archduke Albrecht Franz, also wished to rule Hungary. Openly backed by Gyula Gömbös and more tactfully supported by the previously legitimist István Bethlen, Miklós Horthy meanwhile took his place among these "royal" aspirants.

The issue of succession to the throne had not been settled by the time Tormay's second volume was published, as Hungary remained a kingdom until the end of World War II. This precarious political situation makes it understandable why Tormay—vocally proud of the Hungarian kingdom's thousand-year-old past—remained silent regarding Hungary's future form of state in her *Bujdosó könyv* apart from making a few dissatisfied comments about the young king's susceptibility and uncertainty (2009: 102-103). Tormay's criticism was commonly expressed by many members of the "gentlemanly" middle class due to the fact that Charles IV had forced the still bellicose Prime Minister István Tisza to resign in 1917 while Tisza's supporters remained convinced that the king's decision had been influenced by Hungary's enemies. In any event, without examining the manuscript of *Bujdosó könyv*, it cannot be confirmed whether Tormay expressed her true opinion in her notes or omitted relevant passages from the edited version only because she recognized the danger of making any kind of open statement. She must have known that Pál Teleki, who had held the prime minister's position shortly before István Bethlen came to power, was overthrown in April, 1921 for his legitimist loyalties (Ablonczy 2004: 2: 24-25). It is conceivable that she may have changed the text of the manuscript afterwards, since—when the first volume of *Bujdosó könyv* was published—Miklós Horthy had already "temporarily" replaced the king as governor after having prevented the return of Charles IV with the support of former Allied Powers. By the time the second volume was published, István Bethlen, who had meanwhile established a good relationship with Horthy, became prime minister and was therefore trying to avoid any open stance connected to "the royal question." It is worth repeating the fact that Tormay's last note is dated August 8, 1919, one day after Archduke Joseph declared himself Regent of Hungary and two weeks earlier when he resigned on August 23. According to her note on August 7<sup>th</sup>, Tormay welcomed Archduke Joseph as Regent.

Beyond concealing her opinion of "the royal question," due to her desire for personal advancement Tormay avoided mentioning the political elite's responsibility for the war. Although she generated propaganda targeting the elite's enemies, her choice of scapegoats was not exclusively her own idea. The targets of hatred might have been emerged in the evolving collective memory which coalesced by the end of the war. By blaming Mihály Károlyi, she presumably adopted the reasoning of Ferenc Herczeg, an eminent writer and public figure of the time. Chief Editor of the popular magazine of the Hungarian middle class, *Új Idők*, Herczeg launched his attack against Károlyi's character in the fall of 1919. In an article that drew upon the old gentry's hatred of the pacifist aristocrat, Herczeg claimed that the "degenerate" oligarch, Count Mihály Károlyi, was responsible for the loss of the war. According to Herczeg, this "demonic dilettante" "did not share internal solidarity at all with the classes that form the backbone of the state" [*'nincs semmiféle belső szolidaritásban az állam gerincét alkotó osztályokkal'*], i. e., with

the ruling classes (Herczeg 1919: 390). In the summer of 1920, Mihály Károlyi was also described as "a degenerate count with an imperfect brain" [*tökéletlen agyú, degenerált gróf*] and a "traitor of his homeland" [*hazaáruló*] by Gyula Gömbös in his *Notes* describing the two revolutions. (2017: 10) Shocked by the murder of his close friend, former Prime Minister István Tisza, Herczeg implicitly, albeit in an unusual way, allowed himself the anti-Semitic statement that Károlyi had been persuaded to support the land reform by his radical, i.e., Jewish followers because they hoped to "oppress the Hungarian landowner class" [*megnyomoríthatják a magyar birtokos osztályt*] (Herczeg 1919: 392). Concerning the role of Jews, in his aforementioned small book published in 1920, Gömbös referred to his article "Die Juden in Ungarn," written in September 1918, in which he claimed, "I described the disruptive effect of Jews on a statistical basis. In my study, I pointed out that in the world Hungary has the relatively largest Jewish population (the Christian and Jewish ratio is 18: 1, compared to 396: 1 in France), so if we do not prevent the disintegration caused by the Jews, they will disorganize not only our prisoners of war in Russia but the Hungarian people as a whole" [*Statisztikai alapon a zsidók bomlasztó hatását mutattam be. Rámutattam tanulmányomban arra, hogy a világon viszonylagosan a legtöbb zsidó Magyarországon van (18 keresztényre esik 1 zsidó, míg Franciaországban 396:1 az arány), és így, ha a zsidók bomlasztását meg nem akadályozzuk, nemcsak oroszországi foglyainkat, hanem a magyar nép összességét fogják szétzülleszteni*] (Gömbös 2017: 10, translated by the author, J.K.).

In *Bujdosó könyv*, Cécile Tormay followed these same anti-Semitic concepts in that she pointed to the "degenerate" Karolyi as the main scapegoat and also leaned on the anti-Semitic viewpoints expressed by Herczeg and Gömbös as her "pillar." According to Tormay, members of the "corrupt and untalented aristocrat's" environment of Jewish origin used Károlyi to seek revenge on all Hungarians. As a rhetorical tool, she often made use of propositions: almost every page of the first volume contains a repeated negative statement that serves to persuade the readers to hate Károlyi and the Jews. However, it is not inconceivable that she used the tool of anti-Semitic hate speech only to achieve propaganda goals. Published in *Új Idők* in 1915, her short story, "Ő volt" [*It Was Him*], takes place in a Galician pub. In this work, the narrator despises people of low fortunes, yet not because they are Jews, but rather because they are wretched. Nor does Tormay appear to be anti-Semitic in a letter she addressed to the Jewish poet and editor of a literary magazine, *A Hét* [*The Week*], József Kiss. Dated January 1, 1917, Tormay ends her letter "with great respect, warm greetings" [*nagy tisztelettel, meleg üdvözléssel*]. Even though Tormay remained a militarist even after the defeat of the war, based on this letter she appears to agree with Kiss's pacifist stance:

Deeply Respected Dear Master,

Only now that the beautiful fruit of "War Poems" has become mine: now that I have read all her songs quietly, I begin to thank their master with all of my heart for the most beautiful Christmas present....

Thanks! And I am greeting you on New Year's Day, and wish that you regain your health as soon as possible in the young year. The one who ignited campfires for us to warm by on the lightless night of war is entitled to light the bonfires of peace as well.

[*'Mélyen tisztelt kedves Mester!*

*Csak most, hogy a "Háborús versek" gyönyörű termése enyém lett: most, hogy csendesen, lassan elolvastam minden énekét, - indulok el mesterükhöz meghitt köszönetet mondani a legszebb karácsonyi ajándékért. [...]*

*Köszönöm! És köszöntöm az Újesztendő alkalmából és kívánom, hogy a fiatal év mihamarabb adja vissza régi egészségét. Az, aki melegedni tábornöveket gyűjtött nekünk a világtalan háborús éjszakában, hivatva van, hogy a béke örömtüzeit is meggyűjtsa'] (Komlós 1941: 105, translated by the author, J. K.).*

In addition to making Károlyi and the Jews scapegoats in her book, Tormay did her best to blur the theoretical and operational differences between Social Democrats, Socialists, Liberals and Communists, all of whom mutually opposed Hungary's extant semi-feudal/semi-capitalist system. To provide one example, in February, 1919, Károlyi (who had good reason to fear of the advance of the extreme left) imprisoned dozens of communist activists, including their leader, Béla Kun; in spite of this, he gave instructions for their proper care over the telephone. When describing this event, Tormay declared that people were "already loudly speaking in the city that Károlyi is in contact with the Communists" [*'Károlyiról most már hangosan beszélnek a városban, hogy érintkezik a kommunistákkal'*] (2009: 214). Although she must have known the details of the imprisonment from the press she was referring to, she attributed their arrest not to any decision made by the head of state, Károlyi, but to impersonal authorities: "Friday's newspapers reported the arrest of Communist leaders at dawn" [*'Aztán a pénteki lapok hozták a hírt, hogy hajnal felé letartóztatták a kommunisták vezéreit'*] (2009: 213). She then reinforced these facts taken out of context and half-truths by making unsupportable propositions, such as the one stating that Károlyi's wife had visited Béla Kun in prison: "She brought them flowers! And she made sure the arrested Communists were given mattresses with springs, feather pillows, blankets, good food and tobacco" [*'Virágokat vitt neki! És maga gondoskodott róla, hogy a letartóztatott kommunisták ruganyos matracot, tollpárnákat, pokrócokat, jó ételmezt és dohányt kapjanak'*] (2009: 215). When Admiral Miklós Horthy entered Budapest at the head of the National Army on November 16, 1919 to seize power as Regent/Governor in a move that removed King Charles IV, he was greeted in front of Parliament by masses of people; it was Cécile Tormay who handed over the Hungarian women's flag as the head of MANSZ.



Fig. 8. Admiral Horthy's entry to Budapest. A newsreel recorded his greeting by Cécile Tormay: <https://filmhiradokonline.hu/watch.php?id=5329>. (0.00-0.16)

Tormay and her women's organization stood behind the canny politician, István Bethlen, at just the right time and helped his counter-revolutionary efforts. In March, 1920, Horthy was appointed the Regent of the Kingdom of Hungary with Bethlen's support. In April, 1921, Horthy asked Bethlen to form a government, thereby heralding the beginning of Hungary's interwar era. Although modern political agitation had barely been born, Cécile Tormay had already mastered the writing of political propaganda that served both the interests of the old political elite as well as her own purposes. When the first volume of *Bujdosó könyv* was published barely a year after Horthy's rise to power, Cécile Tormay became a celebrity. The "gentlemanly" middle class embraced her work for a price: her absorption and propagation of their worldview was mostly marked by a lack of erudition and a complacent and arrogant mentality that shifted responsibility to others. In contrast to her actual status as a childless lesbian, Tormay's emergence as "the most visible female representative of Christian Hungary" reveals the falsities underlying the ruling class's ideology in interwar Hungary (Kurimay 2016a: 7). The fact that Tormay has gained status as a cult figure for the second time in Hungarian history while her controversial opinions regarding vital issues such as the desirable form of government still goes largely unnoticed is a circumstance that underscores the deficiency and fragmentation of Hungary's historic and cultural past.

Cécile Tormay's career is an exceptional case of women's self-advocacy in interwar Hungary. At the time her death in 1937, Governor/Regent Miklós Horthy, Prime Minister Kálmán Darányi, the Minister of Culture and the Mayor of Budapest sent condolences to her younger brother, the Secretary of State and Royal Secretary Géza Tormay. In the Prime

Minister's condolence, Géza Tormay was addressed as *Nagyméltóságod* ['Your Excellency'] while Cécile Tormay was remembered by the phrase *Nagyasszony* ['Grand Dame']. An expression generally used to pay respect to the Blessed Virgin Mary, addressing Tormay as such was not so much an exaggeration, but rather a reflection of the fact that Hungarian society had no standard rule regarding the etiquette for addressing independent, single women.

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