From the 1830s "England" as the symbol of political freedom, constitutionalism, and material progress, and English as a culture has been looked upon with great respect and admiration by most educated Hungarians. From 1848 up to World War I and the Trianon Peace Treaty the Hungarians and many of their neighbours assumed that the British reciprocated these feelings toward the liberal nation of Kossuth, who survived the debacle of 1849 and wrested the recognition of their internal independence in the Settlement of 1867. Indeed there were many utterances in the English press expressing a very favourable view of Hungary and her hegemonic Hungarian nationality, especially around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. "That country is the bulwark of religious toleration in the Monarchy and the mainstay of the existing constitutional system", and "Led by a group of exceptionally able statesmen, all of them of the moderate liberal type, Hungary has developed into a model constitutional State". "The most stable element where all is instability is Hungary." In 1903 the "solid qualities" of Hungary were summed up as her liberalism, pertinacious adherence to the Constitution, lack of territorial ambition, steady Anti-Clericalism without becoming Anti-Christian, and the prevalence of the civil characteristics over the spirit of militarism. Even when in 1905, the demand of the majority of the newly elected Parliament, for the introduction of the Hungarian language of command, into the Hungarian part of the common "kaiserliche und königliche" Austro-Hungarian Army, led to a long political conflict with the Emperor King Francis Joseph. The Times was using warm words in advising compromise. "There is no people on the Continent of Europe which has more constantly commanded the sympathy and the respect of Englishmen than the people of Hungary. (...) We hope that before long those practical instincts which mark off the peoples born with traditional aptitudes for self-government from the nations who have no such heritage will assert themselves and lead the Hungarians to make a working compromise with their King which will at once leave their liberties intact and secure for them the solid advantages inseparable from their position as an integral element in one of the oldest and greatest of European States."

The Times, or more exactly its Vienna correspondent, Henry Wickham Steed, soon turned away from the Hungarians, and from an ardent champion of their hegemony over the non-Hungarian half of the population, he became a supporter of the federal transformation of the Monarchy. His conversion was due mainly to foreign political considerations: the unreasonable behaviour of the politicians of the Hungarian
Coalition of "1848-er" Independentists, Clericals, and "dissident 1867-ers" was, according to Steed, undermining the international position of the Monarchy, and demonstrated the incapacity or the unwillingness of the Hungarian ruling elite to perform their task of acting as force at promoted stability and liberalism in Austria-Hungary. Steed thought that only an internally strong Habsburg Monarchy was capable of curbing the aggressive instincts of her German ally.

The Hungarian Coalition did not really aim at complete independence, but their efforts to increase the strength and influence of Hungary over Austria, their strong and narrow-minded nationalism, indeed contributed to the weakening of the Dual Monarchy. After accepting office in April 1906 (on the King's terms) they tried to win British political and economic support for their aims. They invited and courted British politicians and businessmen, launched an intensive publicity campaign, and hoped that the illustrious name and Anglophile liberal reputation of the younger Kossuth, the younger Andrásy, and Apponyi, all members of the coalition government, will capture the new Liberal government of Britain.6

It is against this background that one must see the appearance in 1906 of "a travelling Scotsman, bent on the study of history and politics",7 who came to play a decisive influence on the British image of Hungary.

* * *

True to the Liberal tradition, the young Scotsman, R. W. Seton-Watson, came to Austria-Hungary in 1905 "imbued with conventional admiration" for the Hungarians and their Liberal heritage. His first experiences in Hungary, already undermined his "enthusiasm for the Independent cause".8 The resulting, mildly critical articles were not noticed in Hungary, but his optimistic analysis of The Future of Austria-Hungary and the Attitude of the Great Powers was welcomed.8a By the summer of 1907, however, Seton-Watson lost all his illusions about the Hungarians, and started to write strongly critical letters about their policies to the Spectator, signing them as Scotus Viator. These called forth angry answers and attacks on "the anonymous slanderers" from Budapest, especially when many other English papers joined in the campaign, following the tragic incident at Csernava.9 Foremost in the Hungarian efforts at refutation was Count Móricz Esterházy (a future Prime Minister), supported by Kálmán Széll, a former Prime Minister, remembered for his pro-British stand in the Boer War, (primarily his talks with politicians and public figures who supported the nationalist platform of the new Coalition Government). The "unfavourable psychological disposition" of the British public was attributed to the erroneous view that Hungary was aiming at separation from Austria. "An invisible troubleshootmaking hand", the influence of the many anti-Hungarian circles in Vienna was thought to be at work.10

Most Hungarians could better choice "in fact" not understand how Britain, a great power not unaccustomed to the policy of the strong hand, who established a huge empire comprising many alien peoples, could find anything wrong with the Hungarian
efforts “to weld her nationalities into one strong, united whole, united by a pious reverence for her glorious past (...) and the hopes of a glorious future”. Count Tivadar Batthyány, a prominent member of the Party of Independence, expressed the bewilderment of his class and party. “The foreign press is now waging an open war against Hungary”, but they should compare the state of Croatia, now in conflict with Hungary, to the situation of Ireland, or to the fate of Finland. The friends of the nationalities of Hungary should first visit Posen, Russia, or Rumania, where at least 100,000 Hungarians are denied their basic rights. “If they will do this, they will see for themselves that in no other land do its subjects of foreign race and tongue enjoy such liberties – the unrestricted use of their own language and literature, and perfect political freedom – as they do in Hungary.” This way of reasoning, throwing back the charge and drawing attention to the behaviour of others, was a typical pattern, recurring in the following years, too, and not only in Hungary. The other unfair methods of the Hungarian press were also rightly criticised by Seton-Watson. “While whole columns of their space have sometimes been devoted to reproducing and commenting upon Count Eszterházy’s (sic) letters to the Spectator, my replies were invariably passed over in silence, and their readers must have supposed that on each occasion I was reduced to silence.” One of the most ridiculous products of the Hungarian counter-campaign was the remarkable story that Scotus Viator was in fact a Hungarian Jew, Joseph Szebenyey, whose only motive was “desperation and the hungry desire for a few florins”, and he could sell himself because “foreign papers always gladly pay for articles tending to destroy the prestige of Hungary”. Obviously the editor of that paper, L. Holló, was not able to see that it was writings like his that tended “to destroy the prestige of Hungary”. A refreshing exception from the Hungarian reaction to Scotus Viator was the Népszava, the Social Democratic daily. According to its London correspondent Scotus Viator “knows Hungarian conditions very well, he characterized the situation of the Slovaks of Hungary and their treatment by the Hungarian ruling classes extremely correctly”. In the polemics with Esterházy Népszava saw the resounding victory of the Scotsman, who might have added, they said, that “nine tenth of the purely Hungarian population suffers under the same persecution and oppression as the non-Hungarian peoples.” As a result of the writings of Seton-Watson and others, the traditional British image of Hungary started to change. For a section of Hungarians the remedy seemed to be at hand: Scotus Viator and the correspondent of The Times should be silenced by a good dose of Hungarian propaganda. With the support of the Government a series of articles and books were published (in English), explaining the Hungarian policies vis-à-vis Vienna and towards the “nationalities”. One of the first was entitled The Constitutional struggle of the Magyars. An Answer to Scotus Viator & Co., This pamphlet was written by an Englishman, Dr. Arthur B. Yolland, Lecturer (soon professor) in English language and literature at the university of Budapest. He did not deal with any of the questions raised by Seton-Watson, only presented the Independentist version of the history of the relations of Austria and Hungary, and
took pains to refute views which were not those of Scotus Viator. He was more ingenious in a letter sent to the Spectator. The anti-Hungarian campaign is part of the Pan-German schemes, he argued, because if Hungary were “reduced to a polyglot State, ‘divided against itself’, nothing could prevent the hegemony of Germany being extended from the German Ocean to the Adriatic, and, in time, to the Black Sea. That is the real reason of all this agitation against the Magyars, which is not the outcome of some chivalrous pity for the lot of oppressed nationalities. Either ”Scotus Viator’ is ignorant of his own country”.

Most of the other propaganda publications of 1908–09 did not refer explicitly to Seton-Watson, they were merely reproducing the views, policies and hopes of the Coalition, and of course failed to make any perceptible impact.

That cannot be said of Seton-Watson, whose exposures caught the ears of an increasing number of people. His letters now appeared also in the Manchester Guardian and in the Conservative Saturday Review. A collection of the latest developments of the Hungarian nationality problem appeared in mid-1908 in French and German translation as well. He and his charges had to be taken more seriously in Hungary. He came to be called “a historian of no mean calibre”, who unfortunately “allowed himself to be led astray by information supplied him by the nationalist agitators and other enemies of Hungary”. As a refutation examples were given of the practical bilingualism prevailing in the areas of Hungary inhabited by large numbers of non-Hungarians. A direct answer to Scotus Viator was given by Count Joseph Mailáth in several articles appearing in respectable English journals, collected also in the form of a pamphlet. He denied the existence of any forced Magyarization by holding out the example of purely Slovak and German villages in the very neighbourhood of Budapest. He put the blame for the Csernova “massacre” on the “unscrupulous agitators”, therefore thought that the press trials for “incitement” were justified.

* * *

It is hardly necessary to discuss here the contents and significance of Racial Problems in Hungary. For the majority of the British public this work was a “convincing indictment”, an irrefutable argument against the policy of the Hungarians, and consequently it was a mortal blow to the traditional British image of Liberal, constitutional Hungary. This was indeed the author’s object: “to convince those of my countrymen who seem disposed to commit Britain to sympathy with the Magyar clique and thereby to promote the ruin of the Habsburg Monarchy and an European conflagration – to prove to them that Hungarian freedom is a myth for all save the Magyars, and even for the Magyars, if they espouse the cause of Socialism or Labour, and that the ruling classes stand for everything that is anathema to all enlightened politicians in this country, whether they call themselves Conservative, Liberal, Labour or Nationalist”. For most Hungarians it was enough to read this introduction, put aside the book and instead of discussing it on its merits, to condemn
its author in the most aggressive language. According to the leading Budapest daily it was a useless work containing "not mistakes but lies", the product of a Slav Press Bureau in London. Another came out with the discovery that it was a compilation from various obscure Slovak and Czech sources, probably not written by its professed author. It was rare that a Budapest paper reproduced one of Seton-Watson’s answers, too, from the British press.

In such an atmosphere it was a very courageous and honest act from Oszkár Jászi, the leading spirit of the Hungarian radical reformist group and the editor of their monthly *Huszadik Század*, who stood up for Seton-Watson, because he had been "insulted in his honour" by some Hungarian writings and depicted as a paid agent, or at best as an extremely naive author of unfair and ignorant pamphlets. In a detailed review article Jászi showed that *Racial Problems*... was "a profound, thorough and full analysis" of the most important issue of Hungary, written not by a "Pan-Slav agitator", but by a well-meaning and honest Western *Kulturmensch*, who was shocked by the corrupt and unlawful practices of the ruling class he had observed in Hungary. His proposals for internal reform were conceived in the Liberal spirit of Deák and Eötvös, and were diametrically opposed to the visions of Magyarophobe Austrian writers. Jászi’s comments were not uncritical, though. He found some of Seton-Watson’s facts or interpretations unsubstantiated or exaggerated, and regretted the author’s inability to make a distinction between assimilation as a natural, even beneficial process and as an enforced policy. Jászi thought the distinction between ‘Hungarian’ and ‘Magyar’ was impracticable and a little naive when trying to solve real differences with the help of a neologism. He also pointed out that it was a mistaken assumption that the electoral system favoured the Hungarian nationality, in fact the long-lasting parliamentary majority of the defunct Liberal Party had rested upon the bought vote of the non-Hungarian electors, who were in a majority in many peripheral constituencies. In conclusion the reviewer welcomed the newly born interest shown by foreign public opinion in Hungarian affairs, as it might facilitate the acceptance of radical electoral reform in Hungary, which in turn would transform the Hungarian public. In that hope he quoted the example of Britain, where, after the great reforms of the electoral system, Gladstone "was able to re-mould a century-old, narrow-minded, raging and sanguine public" on the Irish question.

No matter how critical *Racial problems*... was about the Hungarian policy towards the minorities, it expressly stood on the basis of the territorial integrity of Hungary, with Hungarian as its official language, it rejected all Pan-Slav and Daco-Rumanian hopes, and proposed territorial autonomy only for the Croatians: Seton-Watson wanted only the satisfaction of the "moderate" wishes, the rightful claims of the non-Hungarians, in the spirit of the 1868 Law of Nationalities. Prior to 1914 he did not completely abandon this platform, but – most probably influenced by his friends and by the extremist language of his Hungarian critics – came to accept quite a few historical fables and political distortions held and propagated by writers from the national minorities. These were in fact on a par with the Chauvinist effusions of
their Hungarian adversaries. The emergence of Seton-Waston's bias is also shown by his repeated admonitions addressed to his Rumanian, Croatian and Slovak friends to lay aside their internecine political differences and unite against the common enemy, the Hungarians.  

Seton-Watson's gradual drifting into a general anti-Hungarian stance was suspected by Jászi, but he apparently hoped that it was possible to counter this tendency by pointing out the difference between the Hungarian ruling classes on the one hand, and the Hungarian peasants, workers and progressive middle class on the other. This was an illusion: such a distinction is rarely observed, and Seton-Watson's anger with the Hungarian political elite had to be paid for by all Hungarians. What Jászi saw was only that the immediate enemies of the Hungarian Radicals and of Scotus Viator's protégées were identical, the political leadership of Hungary. Jászi therefore felt free to send the special issue of his periodical (devoted to electoral reform) to Seton-Watson, and this act started their long though intermittent correspondence.

The next showdown between Scotus Viator and the Hungarian establishment was the election of 1910. Most probably Seton-Watson agreed with his friends that they would record all the abuses and irregularities they might witness, and he himself went over from Vienna to the predominantly Slovak town of Szakolca (Škalice), to gain some personal impressions. He found ample material to shock the British public, his accounts were published in a number of papers, from the radical Nation to the conservative Standard and Morning Post. The outcry and furor of the Chauvinist section of the Hungarian press was boundless. Most of the papers said that by his behavior and writings Seton-Watson was inciting the non-Hungarians, and the authorities should not tolerate that. His facts were usually disposed of as mostly pure fabrications and lies. The traveller was advised to direct his investigations to Ireland, India, South Africa, Prussian and Russian Poland, and perhaps Siberia. The Commercial Commissioner for Hungary in London, W. (Vilmos) de Ruttkay explained in the Morning Post that the reason for the "anti-Magyar and pro-Slav journalistic campaign indulged in by 'Scotus Viator'" might be "the reconciliatory policy of the present (i.e. the post-Coalition) Government towards the non-Magyar nationalities in Hungary." If that succeeded, Scotus "would be deprived of a pet subject to write about."

It is unquestionable that Jászi, the other Radicals and the Socialists of Hungary were right in their criticism of Hungarian conditions and in their demands for reform. It is also sure that they were right, both factually and morally, in defending Seton-Watson. Whether this was expedient politically, it is another matter. The political opponents of Jászi (practically the whole political establishment) found an easy target: they could (and did) denounce Jászi as the ally, and even the instigator of the enemies of Hungary. Seton-Watson was aware of these charges and expressed his admiration for Jászi's moral courage. Jászi was not afraid to review Seton-Watson's condemnatory accounts of the 1910 election favourably in his Huszadik Század. He said that the Hungarians were indebted to Scotus Viator "for morally discrediting
the greatest ignominy of Hungarian public life. On the other hand Jászi found it necessary to remind the foreign critic that “the is greatly mistaken in thinking that this enormous corruption was directed almost exclusively against the Nationalities”: the supporters of the Justh-wing of the Party of Independence suffered similarly, and the general backwardness and the rotten borough system worked equally against all the opposition candidates.  

That was too much for the opponents of reform to swallow. Ferenc Herczeg, the popular “writer laureate” of Hungary and editor of the conservative-liberal review, Magyar Figyelő, came to the conclusion that Scotus Viator “has chosen the blackening of the Hungarian State in the eyes of international public opinion as the definite object of his life”. Herczeg expressed his suspicion that “Scotus Viator was indeed the hireling of the coalition made up of Austrian imperialists and the nationalities of Hungary, whose members are serving Great-Austrian aims on the one hand, alien state ideals competing with Habsburg power on the other, but are in temporary agreement in seeing the greatest obstacle in the way of the realization of their opposing aspirations in the Hungarian national State”. Seton-Watson's behavior reminded Herczeg of that “unctuous missionary hypocrisy, which takes no notice of the heaps of corpses rottening in the wake of British colonial policy”. He admitted that “real facts may have strayed into” these English accounts, but “the tendentious arrangement of the data, and the spitefulness shown in drawing conclusions makes his veracity worthless...” Herczeg expressed the opinion that the association of the Radicals with Scotus Viator will reveal where the path of Hungarian Radicalism leads to.

One of the most obvious, for many Hungarians the only conceivable explanation for Seton-Watson’s selfless and untiring work was that he must have been paid for it, probably by some circles in Vienna. It took some time until it dawned on his opponents how baseless and inconceivable the charge was. But by 1911 the ultranationalist Budapesti Hírlap came to admit that “Mr. Watson is a financially independent, highly cultured gentleman”, and Dr. Yolland was also compelled to explain away his most offending statements. Jászi thought that “the psychological comment for” Seton-Watson “to come before the Hungarian public and speak to it in an article in the Huszadik Század” had arrived. “You would have now what you never had before: a fair chance to be listened (sic!) by all the Hungarian public as a man of good faith.” Even if Seton-Watson had written this article it is unlikely that it would have convinced the larger Hungarian public of the need for mending their ways, or that Scotus Viator was not in foreign pay.

The “travelling Scotsman” continued to travel in and around the Habsburg domains. Not abandoning his first love, the Slovaks, he shifted his attention to the southern confines of Austria-Hungary, where the growth of nationalist feeling, the annexation of Bosnia-Herczegovina and its wide repercussions, like the Zagreb trials, created a very tense situation. The summary of his findings was The Southern Slav Question and the Habsburg Monarchy, primarily a political work, which proposed the replacement of Austro-Hungarian Dualism with “Trialism”, the establishment
of a new Southern Slav political unit based on Serbo-Croatian friendship, and under a central government in Vienna. Reviewing the book Jászi did not dwell on this highly controversial aspect (which was set forth in detail only in the German version), and praised the description of the historical development of the Croatia question, because it was devoid of the customary legal sophistry. But he could not leave the remark about the dominance in Hungary of the Jews (that Hungary will sooner be a Zionist than a Hungarian national state) unnoticed: “our distinguished English colleague allowed himself to be influenced by the worst kind of Christian Socialist petty bourgeois ideology. We, who have always given prominence to the scourge represented by usurious Jewery in Hungarian politics, we are perhaps entitled to say that. A slip like that does harm to the beautiful seriousness of his work”. Seton-Watson’s double “slip”, his espousal of Trialism and his erroneous exposition of the “Jewish question”, gave the Magyar Figyelő a chance to score a few points against the unwelcome critics. It could point out that the non-Hungarian nationalities were constantly rebuking the Hungarian political leadership on account of its enlightened (“philo-Semite”) attitude, and that after the advocacy of Trialism no Hungarian could regard Seton-Watson as impartial: he was clearly working for an Austria dominated by the Slavs, whose foreign policy would be pro-Russian and pro-Entente. Reviewing the enlarged German edition of the Southern Slav Question Jászi did not think that Seton-Watson’s Trialist-centralist scheme was likely to materialize, in his opinion the real alternative was between a democratic Hungary, or continued class rule, oppression of the minorities, and then inevitably the formation of a separate Southern Slav state, which would mean the loss of Croatia together with Fiume. Jászi was increasingly unhappy about Seton-Watson’s now obvious bias: “he ascribes all the blunders committed in foreign policy, all the baseness of the Croatian political system to the Hungarian oligarchy”, forgetting about the responsibility of Vienna, its policy pursued in Dalmatia.

By the time Seton-Watson’s Hungarian campaign really got under way Britain and Hungary were already unequivocally in opposing power groupings, and the British public was increasingly critical of the foreign policy of both Germany and her Austro-Hungarian ally. Following the annexation of Bosnia a press polemics developed between Great Britain and the Monarchy. But Seton-Watson did not agree with the growing anti-German feeling, and up to 1914 he remained confident that a reformed and modernized Habsburg Monarchy was not only feasible, but also essential for the maintenance of peace. He thought that if the non-German and non-Hungarian majority of the Empire had its due influence over her foreign policy, then a larger Teuton-Slav conflict could be avoided. On the other hand, the supremacy of the Hungarians in Hungary, and their predominance over Austria would alienate the Slavs, thus increasing the danger of a European conflict arising out of some Slav issue. This conception was set out in several of Seton-Watson’s writings, but it was too subtle and too unsympathetic for the Hungarian public to understand, let alone accept it. It was far easier to think that Scotus Viator’s criticism was part of the
schemes of the British Foreign Office and “perfidious Albion” to “encircle” Germany, to weaken and undermine Germany’s ally. This plausible, although erroneous explanation was hit upon relatively lately, because Seton-Watson’s pro-Habsburg proclivities made him appear as the agent of Vienna rather than that of London. But his advocacy of the South Slav cause and his writings on current foreign political affairs opened the way to a new line of attack on him. In September 1912 the *Magyar Figyelő* wrote that Scotus Viator “is convinced that in the present international situation he can best serve his country in its difficulties by stirring up the Slavs and weakening the Hungarians”.46

This argumentation appeared in full armour in March 1914 in a debate of the Hungarian Parliament. Pál Farkas, a member of Tisza’s governing Party of National Work, and a noted writer on historical and sociological questions, expressed his opinion that Scotus Viator was leading “a very consistent, very systematic press and political agitation” in England “to draw the attention of ‘Europe’ to the Hungarian nationality problem”. England was successfully spreading the legend that “the oppressed nationalities of the Continent can find a natural friend, a noble advocate, a guardian, a protector in England, who raises her voice whenever there is a national struggle in the states of the Continent, and speaks out in favour of the weak and against the powerful in the name of universal justice, humanism, respect for the law, and philanthropy”. In reality, however, this was only egotism, Farkas thought, like in the 19th century, when England was threatened mainly by Russia, she welcomed the Hungarian and Italian exiles fighting against Russia’s Austrian ally. But now Germany is her main rival, “consequently English policy makes another turn, and that is why we have the honour to meet Scotus Viator, that is why there are English articles, meetings in London, which expose what is going on in Hungary against the national minorities. (...) In a word Austro–Hungarian Dualism must be weakened to the advantage of the Russian alliance”.47

The official representative of Britain in Hungary, the Consul-General Esmé Howard, was also admitting that his country was now “on the side of the Slav, and therefore, opposed to the Magyar”.48 All the Hungarian factions regretted that course,49 but none turned really against Britain, they behaved rather like wounded lovers. The foreign political setting nevertheless created a favourable atmosphere in Britain for the sympathetic reception of Seton-Watson’s charges, it gave motivation for the changed approach to all problems related to Hungary, and speeded up the change in the British image of Hungary. But it would be too simple to believe that it was the sole explanation.50 The changes that took place in British (and West European) society and politics in the early 20th century, the growth of democracy, were not followed in Central and Eastern Europe, and that made Hungary appear more backward and more conservative than she really was. And undoubtedly without the personal devotion of Seton-Watson no changes in British foreign policy or society would have resulted in such a rapid deterioration in the evaluation of Hungary.

* * *
The world war and its outcome put the events before 1914, the change in the prestige of Hungary, in a different perspective. The explanations about its causes became modified, the role of the various factors shifted, foreign policy occupying the central place. The activities of Seton-Watson, Wickham Steed, and others performed during the war appeared to justify the view that English criticism of pre-war Hungary was really the result of the foreign political conflict. From August 1914 Seton-Watson, with a few friends, was working with the utmost exertion, not sparing his health and his wealth, for the destruction of Austria-Hungary and for the creation of a New Europe. He did that in the belief that it would bring about the defeat of Germany, and would ensure a better future for all the peoples of East-Central Europe. The news of this activity reaching Budapest during the war were more than enough to look upon the pre-war campaign of these "dangerous agents provocateurs" not only as a manoeuvre of the new course of British foreign policy, but to range it among the war preparations of the Entente, to call it destructive, revolutionary agitation. A series of articles concluded that Hungary had dangerously underrated the effectiveness and harmfulness of the propaganda of her potential enemies, and neglected to counter it by promoting her own interests abroad. Soon a special Hungarian version of the German legend of the "Dolfstoss" (the belief that defeat in the first world war was due to the collapse of the "home front", where the victorious army was stabbed in the back) emerged: "the Hungarians lost the world war not on the battlefield but in West-European public opinion. They were unable to counter the image projected to the world by their enemies by a picture that could have defended their rights with convincing force". However, this was far from the truth. It was a comfortable explanation for the less of prestige and for its consequences, first of all for the dismemberment of Hungary at the end of the war. In such a way the ruling classes of Hungary could acquitted themselves from all responsibility, shifting it to outside events and circumstances, to the lies and distortions of enemy propaganda, and also to its – perhaps unsuspecting – accomplices: Jásci, the other Radicals, and the Social Democrats. The foreign political explanation for Seton-Watson’s appearance and success was accepted – with slight variations in wording – by most Hungarian and many foreign historians: Henrik Marczali, Benedek Jancsó, I. Mikó, also by the Czech Kofalka and the Soviet Islamov. Some, like Jenő Horváth and Miklós Asztalos in the 1950s, went further and gave voice to the quite unsubstantiated notion that Seton-Watson and his countrymen were working on the destruction and breaking up of historic Hungary already before the outbreak of the war. No wonder then that the latter view has become widely accepted by the Hungarian public. But the majority of the historians writing on the last decades of Austria-Hungary, including such authorities as C. A. Macartney, A. May, R. Kann, F. R. Bridge, and of course the sons of Scotus Viator do not give prominence to the foreign’ political factor in the growing criticism of Hungary in Britain.

Seton-Watson (with W. Steed) undoubtedly played a role in the territorial arrangement of the Trianon Peace Treaty by his work as propagandist, government
adviser, journalist and scholar, but not as a negotiator or a draftsman. That role, the crowning of his earlier activities, finally determined the attitude of the former Habsburg peoples to his person, both the generally inimical Hungarian reception, and the gratitude and enthusiasm of the others. Many Hungarian writers just heaped abuse on him: "an unscrupulous press-adventurer of the most dangerous type", who "made a living by his lies and slanders", "the notorius hater of the Hungarians", whose calumnies were dictated by his wish to dismember Hungary, the passing of time did not reduce the intensity of feelings. Scotus Viator was "one of the grave-diggers of the Monarchy", "he devoted the best years of life, much endurance, enthusiasm, one might say idealism to defending the Slavs of the Monarchy. What Scotus Viator was fighting for throughout two decades, could be translated into deeds by Seton-Watson, the director of propaganda of the great powers during the war. In Crewe House he laid the foundations of the treaties of Saint Germain and especially of Trianon. The Slav successor states owe their existence, their state configuration, the present-day Little Entente its power position, to no small extent to him". By the 1930's Seton-Watson became such an authority on Hungary that people found it almost hopeless to question any of his conclusions. "From the pages of the English books the resolute, clever, and terribly successful anti-Hungarian propaganda, resting on decades of work, was protruding to the Hungarian reader. The Hungarian shelves of all the big American libraries were filled with the works of Scotus Viator. The writers of the university textbooks were drawing from them, and the big encyclopaedias were misdirecting their readers in all questions relating to Hungary. If ten years ago somebody in America tried to give voice to the justice of Hungary, he had to feel, suffocating, that the public did not and could not believe him, because what he was saying was contrary to the teachings of all the authorities. All the wells had been poisoned."

When Seton-Watson had to see that the countries of the new Europe were zealously persecuting their national minorities, whom they had received by the generously drawn frontiers, and they were turning from democracies into dictatorships, he tried to warn their leaders (sometimes his old friends) and gave voice to his disapproval. This was immediately noticed and welcomed in Hungary. Ferenc Herczeg, now President of the Hungarian Frontier Readjustment League, admitted that Scotus Viator "hoped to fight indeed for the rule of law and liberty, and it must have been a painful humiliation for him to realise that without his knowledge and against his will he was a soldier of force and racial selfishness". Watson would never admit how mistaken he was about the behaviour of Hungary’s successor states and their politicians, and what a failure the new Central European state system was. Doing that would be tantamount to renouncing his life’s work. Herczeg proved right, in 1934, when an increasing part of the British public appeared to admit the gross injustices of the Trianon Peace. Seton-Watson wrote a new pamphlet explaining why the revision of the frontiers of Hungary was impracticable. Instead of making the most of Seton-Watson's argument that the true solution lay in “reducing so far as possible the importance of frontiers, whether political or economic, and by perfecting the
machinery for safeguarding the rights of minorities" the Hungarian public noticed only the opposition to frontier changes, and the British author was again found to be "a learned, tricklish and self-seeking hater", who, "conceals the truth by the arbitrary grouping of the facts". One of the Hungarian newspapers retorted to the pamphlet by arranging a competition among the young readers: "An answer to the anti-revisionist book of Scotus Viator." Naturally there were more serious answers, too, which challenged many of Seton-Watson's arguments.

In view of such recalcitrance it was really difficult for a Hungarian to approach Seton-Watson with anything but hostility, since – rightly or wrongly – he and his associates were held to be primarily responsible for the unjust frontiers and thus indirectly even for the mistreatment of millions of Hungarians in the successor states. One should not be surprised that the name Scotus Viator became a stock phrase in Hungary, the synonym of anti-Hungarian national prejudice. The debate was joined by writers calling themselves Hungarus Viator, Transylvanus Viator, Secundus Scotus Viator. There was even an effort to discredit the leader of the Hungarian National Socialists, Ferenc Szálasi, by showing that the elements of his "Hungarist solution" for the question of minorités were derived from Seton-Watson.

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It had to be faced, however, that Scotus Viator the one-time political writer, in whom once "the historian was merged in the publicist and the politician", became a widely respected professor of history. It is customary to draw a distinction between the polemical writer and the historian, but the difference is perhaps not so great. His early works were based on extensive reading, personal interviews, and all the relevant official documents were used. The later historical analyses made use of all the pre-war findings and experiences. We have seen that Jászi always praised Seton-Watson's painstaking researches into the historical background of the various national questions. On the other hand, many of his Hungarian readers questioned his ability (or willingness) to be pragmatic, to treat the sources with criticism, to draw independent conclusions.

This charge had to be dropped in connection with his later scholarly works. Among them naturally his History of the Romanians ... attracted the greatest attention, testified by four long reviews. The authors ranged from a Conservative journalist to a Radical social scientist to professional historians. They all agreed that the book had considerable merits, but also saw many factual mistakes in it, not to mention the disagreements over interpretations. They found the treatment of the Middle Ages, and the question of the origin of the Rumanians in particular, inadequate. All valued the author's striving for impartiality, although they were not satisfied with the result. They found most to criticise in the chapters dealing with the last hundred years, where they discerned an obvious bias. L. Makkai's very balanced review deplored the little sympathy shown to the various efforts made throughout the centuries for the cause of Hungarian–Rumanian reconciliation. Perhaps the best
scholarly work of Seton-Watson, the diplomatic history of the 19th century, was also favourably reviewed, with mostly valid critical remarks.\textsuperscript{72a}

By the late 30's a balanced and more sober view of Seton-Watson was emerging. Scholars and serious students were already capable of swallowing their misgivings and opened these much abused books to consider them on their merits. They conceded that there was some truth in them.\textsuperscript{73} If one was able to forget about the passionate words and the pain-inflicting phrases Seton-Watson's \textit{bona fides} could be accepted. István Gál, the editor of \textit{Apollo}, a periodical courageously advocating the cooperation of the peoples of Danubian basin (later he became one of the best authorities on British–Hungarian connections) pointed out that "The great classics of Hungarian self-examination have spoken on the vital issues of Hungarian life and history in the same spirit as the radical intellects of English political journalism (...) Comfortable thinking still remembers only the pseudonym Scotus Viator and the charge that he was a tool of the Czechs, while his views about the Hungarian ruling classes, the nationality policy of old Hungary, Danubian co-operation – which are largely identical with those of Jászi – are professed by the younger Hungarian generation as results of their own, often not only in principle but in details as well."

Difficult situations often have a sombering effect on people. One can hardly think of a more impossible situation than what faced Hungary in 1940, when Germany was rapidly becoming master of almost the whole of Europe, and Hungary's immediate choice was only collaboration at the price of losing most of her independence and suicidal resistance, without even a slight hope of regaining some territory. In the spring of that year Gyula Szekfű, the most influential Hungarian historian of the 20th century, wrote a short, politically motivated appraisal of Seton-Watson for the unequivocally anti-Nazi daily paper \textit{Magyar Nemzet}. It reflected both the "lessons" of the previous half century of nationalism and the historic moment. The article advocated what was clearly impossible in 1940 but which, in the long run, was the only sensible course for the Hungarians, and also for their neighbours: reconciliation between the peoples of the Danube Basin, attachment to the political and social principles of the West, and internal democratization. After pointing out the significance and wide influence of \textit{Racial Problems}, Szekfű laid down two basic theses. First that Seton-Watson was unquestionably honest, a man of principles and political steadfastness, who made thorough studies of his subject. Secondly that he was undoubtedly partisan, "in the debate between the Hungarians and their neighbours he took the side of the latter without further considerations", he associated the Hungarians with feudalism and the other nationalities with democracy, and thought that the latter would \textit{a priori} respect the national minorities. Szekfű's preference was for "the other Scotus Viator", for "the stern impartiality" of C. A. Macartney.\textsuperscript{75}

The end of the second World War restored the territorial \textit{status quo} which was to a considerable degree created by Seton-Watson, but political conditions in Central and Eastern Europe soon took a turning that distressed this maker of the New Europe. In Hungary the name Scotus Viator, once so strongly criticized, was not even
mentioned for thirty years. Orthodox Marxists, who sternly condemned Hungarian nationalism, did not know what to do with a Western bourgeois opponent of that phenomenon, who was himself a nationalist endorsing the platform of rival nationalisms. For some time not only Hungarian, but anti-Hungarian nationalism, too, was banned and appeared to be weakening or totally disappearing. In the 1970's, partly responding to the need to come to terms also with the distortions and taboos of the past, Hungarian historians started to face the troubled relationship of the peoples of East-Central Europe. Seton-Watson clearly played some role in it, and he was also prominent in the formation of the Western image of Hungary, a subject of vast importance for a small Central European nation having a delicate geographical, economic and political position.

It turned out that the long silence did not eradicate the memory of Seton-Watson from the consciousness of the Hungarian public. When the biography written by his sons appeared, the quality daily Magyar Nemzet lamented his partisan attitude and its unfortunate repercussions on the history of Hungary. Some readers saw the dangerous recurrence of Hungarian Chauvinism in these remarks, and when the present writer attempted to sum up his own view of R. W. Seton-Watson and his impact on the history of the Hungarians, that called forth a surprisingly vivid reaction in the form of published and privately communicated letters. A short gloss in the popular literary-political weekly Élet és Irodalom categorically condemned my efforts: "No whitewashing!" of Scotus Viator, "one of the spiritual preparers of [...] the cruel mutilation of our country", it declared, adding that all that agitation was serving the interests of "the British world empire [which] did not come into being on the principle of the self-determination of peoples". Other remarks emphasized that the policies of the pre-war Hungarian governments toward the non-Hungarian minorities was incomparably more tolerant than the record of the successor states. On the other hand another published letter held that any anger expressed about Seton-Watson, "who unequivocally denounced the feudal-style Hungarian oppression of the non-Hungarian nationalities", was "neo-irredentist hysteria", and "even during the Horthy-era the more sane press appreciated that Scotus Viator was committed not to an anti-Hungarian course but to justice, whether it was perceived correctly or incorrectly".

A still brief but scholarly effort of mine attempted to balance both the merits and the mistakes of Seton-Watson, but it was apparently not convincing enough, because soon an essay appeared which reiterated many of the old insinuations about the original prejudices and doubtful motivations. In addition to many factual mistakes made by the young author the essay also grossly misunderstood the role and aims of Seton-Watson in the peace settlement of 1919–1920. Hopefully my recent book and another article dealing specifically with the "anti-Hungarian prejudices" of Seton-Watson give an acceptable answer to the questions still worrying many Hungarians.

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I think it is unnecessary to argue that Seton-Watson was not a blind hater of the Hungarians, he was only a passionate champion of what he thought was truth and justice. Circumstances and the behaviour of many Hungarians made him an opponent of practically all the governments and the political systems Hungary was having in his lifetime, and the victories of the causes Seton-Watson advocated left a tragic mark on the lives of generations of Hungarians, especially in the case of the Hungarian minorities in the countries now bordering upon Hungary. Although his intentions were undoubtedly honest and well-meaning he will be never liked in Hungary, and this will not be changed by pointing out that he felt genuinely sorry about the harsh treatment the Hungarian minorities received in the countries he did help to create; indeed he tried to mitigate the sufferings of those Hungarians.

The present paper tried to show how various Hungarian groups and individuals saw and treated Seton-Watson, what the name Scotus Viator meant for succeeding generations of Hungarians. I had no wish to attempt here a critical evaluation of Seton-Watson’s writings and activities. If I wanted to criticize anyone it was those Hungarians who failed to understand young British visitor’s intentions, and by unfair and impolitic treatment alienated a keen, not unsympathetic observer. This treatment was typical from a still youngish, immature public, which was incapable of overcoming hurt pride and to treat criticism from outside as a challenge. But I feel I cannot conclude this survey without pointing out that Seton-Watson was the advocate of the narrow national solution, his New Europe consisted of small, isolated units, claiming themselves to be national states, but in fact burdened with large, discontented and mistreated ethnic minorities. Inevitably they became tools and an easy prey of the great powers. After 1914 Seton-Watson seems to have lost interest (or hope) in a common, supra-national solution to the problems of the Danubian lands, in the policy of mutual concessions. In that he may have become a political realist, the opposite of Oszkár Jászi, the steady dreamer, but as the latter said, “there are dreams which are stronger and more real than the petty games and scrambles of day-to-day politics”.

One may be entitled to believe that Jászi’s Utopian concept of a United States of the Danube was a theoretically better solution. Whether this Utopia will ever remain also a Uchronia, a Neverland, that cannot be answered.

Jászi was not a lonely dreamer. A close witness of Scotus Viator’s Hungarian campaign, perhaps the most perceptive British diplomat in those years in Austria–Hungary, Esmé Howard noticed what neither Seton-Watson nor the latter’s Hungarian adversaries understood: “this ideal pursued by the Magyars is still that of so many nations all the world over, namely the establishment of national security on the firmest possible basis, and the pursuit of national aggrandisement. [...] One cannot but hope that in a new age new national ideals may spring up, according to which it will be a more magnificent achievement to respect the desire of liberty in others that to found an empire by force of arms, and to do as one would be done by will be more worthy of renown than to carry one’s country to the highest pinnacle of greatness at the cost of others. When that time comes the problem of Hungary will solve itself”.
Notes


1. The Times. 9 Nov. 1895.
2. Ibid., 2 Dec. 1897, 5.
3. The Edinburgh Review, vol. 188. no. 385. (July 1898), 31.
4. The Spectator, 7 Nov. 1903, 756.
5. The Times. 17 April 1905, 9.
8. Scotus Viator, Racial Problems... XI–XII.
8a. At least by the liberal daily Az Újság, and the Alkotmány of 23 May, 1907.
9. At Csernova fifteen peasants were killed by the gendarmerie in a disturbance. Connected with the Church authorities' refusal to allow Father Mlinka, the Slovak nationalist priest-politician, to consecrate the new church.
12. Ibid., 15 Dec. 1907, 11–12.
17. Spectator, 9 May 1908.
18. The more important ones were the following: J. Ajtay, The Hungarian Question ... (London 1908), Education in Hungary (London 1908), J. Vargha (ed.), Hungary, A Sketch... (Budapest, 1908), J. Andrássy, The Development of Constitutional Liberty (London, 1908), C. M. Kastechbull Hugessen (Lord Brabourne), The Political Evolution of the Hungarian Nation (London, 1908), A. Apponyi, A Brief Sketch of the Hungarian Constitution (Budapest, 1908), P. Alden (ed.), Hungary of To-Day (London, 1909).

22. It appeared towards the end of 1908, still under the pseudonym, but its preface was signed R. W. Seton-Watson.


29. E.g. the supposed but mistaken Slovak origin of Kossuth and Petőfi, the completely irrelevant ethnic background of medieval Hungarusz authors, scholars and even Kings. In this version the Hungarian lordly invaders of the 9th century pushed the autochtonous non-Hungarian population to the edges of the country into serfdom, and preventing the growth of a united Slav empire.


31. “These attacks are unquestionably made in good faith and are mostly well informed, but nevertheless represent a grave injustice against Hungary: they present as the offense of the whole Hungarian nation, the whole people, what is in fact the lawlessness of a small, decaying, selfish and exploiting caste.” *Huszadik Század*, 1910, vol. 1. 217–218.


35. Seton-Watson to Jászi, 6 Feb. 1911. OSZKK (National Széchényi Library, Department of Manuscripts) Found 114/43.


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49. Blaskovich Sándor, Monarchiánk és Anglia (Our Monarchy and England), Nyugat, 1913. vol. 1. 443-471.


54. Gesztesy Gyula, A magyarság a világsajtóban (Hungary in the world press) (Budapest, 1918) 41., 52—57., Révai Mór, A magyarság ügye a külföldön (The cause of the Hungarians in foreign propaganda) (Budapest, 1917). Cf. his lecture at the Hungarian Foreign Policy Association in 1925: the unjust Trianon Peace Treaty was not the result of the fact that because of the given political constellations we were fighting for the interests of the Triple Alliance, but due to the fact that prior to the war we had been slandered”.


57. Jenő Horváth, Az angol—magyar érintkezések utolsó évszázada (The last century of Anglo—Hungarian connections), Történeti Szemle, 1929, 155—156.; Miklós Asztalos, A Monarchiától az utódállamokig (From the Monarchy to the successor states) (Budapest, 1934), 82.

58. A contemporary Hungarian view from Romania: “His writings provided a kind of legal source for the treaties and procedures which have determined our fate.” Magyar Kisebbség, (Lugoj, Romania), 1923, 112.


61. Endre Moravek in the Magyar Szemle, June 1930, 147.


64a. A motion was brought forward in the British House of Commons by Sir Robert Gower and Llewellyn Jones to bring the revision of the Hungarian frontiers “before the Assembly of the League of Nations at the earliest opportunity”, and this was backed by 168 M. P. s. — Cf. Robert Donald, The Tragedy


66. Ferenc Herczeg, Watson és a gyerekek (Watson and the children), op. cit. 61.


71. Lajos Steier, A tót nemzeti mozgalom fejlődésének története (The history of the development of the Slovak national movement) (Liptószentmiklós 1912), 314–315.


75. Gyula Szekfű, A két Scotus Viator vagy a demokrácia (The two Scotus Viators or democracy), *Magyar Nemzet* 10 March, 1940.


82. This proposal was made in a short book published in October, 1918: Oszkár Jásci, *A Monarchia jövője. A dualizmus bukása és a Dunai Egyesült Államok* (The fall of Dualism and the United States of the Danube) (Budapest, 1918) It was also published in German: Der Zusammenbruch des Dualismus und die Zukunft der Donaustaaten (Wien, 1918).