

# Hungary's Fall to Nazis Recalled by Kallay

Reviewed by  
Dr. Nicholas Nyaradi

Former Hungarian Finance Minister

**HUNGARIAN PREMIER.** By  
NICHOLAS Kallay. Columbia  
University. 518 pp. \$6.

WHEN NICHOLAS Kallay was appointed premier in 1942, the vessel of the Hungarian state was already hopelessly wrecked on the rocks of its alliance with Nazi Germany.

The pro-Nazi attitude of three of Kallay's predecessors had not only brought Hungary's active participation in the German invasion of Russia, but it also was responsible for Hungary's inexcusable declaration of war against the United States.

The author—a bitter foe of both nazism and communism—was appointed by Admiral Horthy in an attempt to save Hungary at the last minute from the catastrophic consequences of Horthy's previous pro-Axis policies.

Kallay tells here the tragic story of his two years in office, ending with the total German military occupation

of Hungary. During this time, his attitude toward Germany was to "... follow a cautious and uncompromisingly Hungarian policy; to develop ... spiritual and moral resistance; to allow ... the minimum of concessions ..."

THIS RAISES the question of whether "resistance through concessions" could be regarded as real resistance or as just a camouflaged form of collaboration. Kallay's book gives a realistic account of this tragic period and convincingly explains that "resistance through compromise" was the only course open to Hungary.

Kallay is correct in his assumption that Hungary was an island of liberty and liberalism compared to the other German satellites. The cruel persecution of the Jews did not begin in Hungary until after Kallay's forced removal from office, but even so the loss of the Jewish population was larger than he puts it; only about 150,000 of some 700,000 Hungarian Jews survived.

Discussing the events prior to his appointment, Kallay

dismisses with a few casual words the suicide of Count Teleki, which he calls a noble gesture that "saved nothing." However, Teleki's "gesture" was both a protest and an act of resistance against mounting Nazi pressure. Having been guided by the same intentions, Kallay might have given it more recognition.

It is also remarkable to note the loyalty with which he still writes about Admiral Horthy. This is the more surprising as Horthy not only remained in office after the Nazi occupation of Hungary but also remained silent when his closest collaborators—among them Kallay himself—were rounded up by the Gestapo.

The author and Columbia University Press have rendered a real service to historians and researchers with this book. It is a solemn testimony of the good will and noble intentions of a small nation and a somewhat gloomy gravestone for an era which—even were Hungary to be free again—is gone forever.

KALLAY, Nicholas  
Premier of Hungary