SIC ITUR AD ASTRA

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Collection of papers on Hungarian and Croatian legal history 2024

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Eötvös Loránd University / Faculty of Law / Department of the History of Hungarian State and Law / 2024

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Imre Farkas Küzmös: The Phenomenon and the Hungarian Law of Duels

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On an autumn morning in 1877, tragic events were reported in the Pest newspapers.[1] A young lawyer, Perczel Aurél, the barely 28-year-old son of Justice Minister Béla Perczel, was shot dead in a duel. Perczel's opponent, László Wágner, a professor at the Technical University, later committed suicide in a moment of great nervousness. The conflict between the two men began in Ausseen, where Perczel met Wágner's young wife. Although their relationship never went beyond the boundaries of simple flirtation, Aurél made insulting remarks about the beautiful woman while drinking with his friends. A friend of his asked him to retract his careless statement with manly sincerity in front of the same company, pointing out the possible consequences, but Perczel refused. On his return to Budapest, Wágner's assistants, Sándor Leövey and Dénes Szűry, ministerial secretaries, came to see him, and challenged him to a duel, no doubt seeking chivalrious satisfaction for the serious offence committed. Perczel's assistants were Oszkár Ivánka and Ödön Szitányi, Imperial and Royal Chamberlains. After it became clear that the matter could not be settled peacefully, the assistants agreed to a pistol duel, with ordinary pistols at a distance of twenty paces. The duel took place in the morning hours on the 26th of September 1877 in the forest of Rákospalota. Both parties fired simultaneously to the sign of the assisting conductor: Wágner was unharmed, but Perczel suddenly staggered and after taking a round turn, fell on the grass. The bullet pierced his neck and after a few seconds of dying, he passed away.[2]

[1] CLAIR, Vilmos: *Magyar párbaj. Magyar párbajok. Attila hun király idejétől az 1923. év végéig [Hungarian duel. Hungarian duels. From the time of King Attila the Hun until the end of 1923]*. Budapest, 2002, Osiris Kiadó, pp. 277–288.
[2] *Budapesti Hírlap*, 5 July 1888, p. 3.

The tragic outcome of the duel caused massive public outrage in the press, reviving the social discourse about duels. The incident made it clear that the feudal and harmful legacy of duelling, incompatible with civic ideals, is a phenomenon that must be eradicated from society's psyche.

The legislator dealt with duelling in Chapter XIX of Article 5 of 1878, the provisions of which – in themselves – are very difficult to understand. To understand them, we need to be familiar with the history, the concept, the function and the social significance of duelling.

What are the reasons for this? To answer this question, we need to understand the origins of the duel, its motives and its social relevance. Starting with the origins of the duel, many authors, including the already quoted Vilmos Clair, trace it back to antiquity, or – in the case of Hungary – even to the time when the founders of the state of Hungary definitively settled in the Carpathean Basin. It is important to note, that this position may be misleading, since, as Ede Gergely pointed out in his study,[3] these ancient duels were only similar in appearance to the duels that gradually spread from the 16th century onwards.[4]

The main difference lies in the motives, the most important of which is the harm of individualised honour, which was treated with a completely different attitude in antiquity. To illustrate this, consider, for example, the notion of honour of Homer's heroes, which is very specific in today's terms. Although this phenomenon exists only in the abstract today, in the ancient world 'collective' honour, i.e. the collective honour of communities, cities or whole nations, was much more predominant. In this context, heroes and leaders such as Hector and Achilles always fought in the name of someone

[3] GERGELY, Ede: *Az Országos Párbajellenes Szövetség megalakulásának története és működésének ismertetése [The history of the establishment of the National Dueling Association and description of its operation]*. Budapest, 1908, A szövetség kiadása, p. 6.

[4] Andrea Juhász, for the sake of simplicity, called them modern duels. JUHÁSZ, Andrea: A párviadal vétsége és az államfogház-büntetés a Csemegi-kódex szabályozásának tükrében [The offense of dueling and the state prison sentence in the light of the regulations of the Csemegi Code]. *De iurisprudentia et iure publico*, No. 2., 2014, p. 1.

or something, in their case the Trojan – or Greek – army and people. This phenomenon explains why, while the whole Greek world was set aflame for Helen, the duel between Hector and Achilles was not an act of individual revenge, but a way of settling a battle between two armies that cost little blood.[5]

Looking at the later types of duels, let's examine the prominent medieval judicial duels. Its origins were traced by Frigyes Pesty to the judging customs of the pagan Germanic, Celtic and especially Scandinavian tribes. According to Pesty, the first written records of judicial duels are to be found in the Burgundian laws.[6] In a law passed in 502, King Gundobald of Burgundy summarised the legal customs of the time, thus for the first time in history mentioning and regulating the institution of the "decisive duel" (according to a document of Bishop Agobard of Lyon, he even thought that Gundobald was the one who had introduced this very institution).[7]

As far as Hungary is concerned, the rules of judicial duels are unknown in the medieval law codes. Only once was the subject mentioned in detail, when Matthias and Ulászló II decided to abolish them. According to Pesty, this is a sign that the custom had already developed and was being observed in the country by the 13th century. Similar cases were often mentioned in documentary practice.[8]

It was customary in the German territories for the would-be combatants to submit an indictment (libellus) to the judge, asking for permission to win their rights by jousting. In these, the accusing party presented his complaint and then asked the judge to allow them to fight a duel if the party he accused did not admit the allegations he had made.[9] Although no such indictment has been found in Hungary, it is assumed that one must have existed in Hungary, since the duel was always by mutual consent

[5] VUTKOVICH, Sándor: *A párbaj [The duel]*. Budapest, 1895. Eggenberger-féle (Hoffmann és Molnár) könyvkereskedés, p. 11.
[6] PESTY, Frigyes*: A perdöntő bajvívások története Magyarországon [The history of court battles in Hungary]*. Budapest, 1867, Eggenbegger Ferdinánd Akadémiai Könyvárus Kiadó, p. 8.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[9] GERGELY, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

of the parties.[10] In Hungary, the chewk, or chewewk, was the challenge token (a wooden stake), which was presented by the challenger to the challenged.[11]

It is also important to note that the fight was generally non-lethal, the first shed of blood or the discharge of a weapon was enough. The fight was also fought with specific weapons.[12] In Hungary, the most common form of combat was the cavalry clash, in which the parties would break heads and then fight with swords or clubs.[13]

To sum up the relationship between modern duels and judicial duels, it is important to point out that although the latter contributed greatly to the development of the customs and framework of the former, judicial duelists were driven by completely different motives than the modern duelists. The judicial duelist fought for divine justice, that is, for the irrefutable presumption that his victory was due to nothing other than his own righteousness. The presumption itself was irrefutable because a deeply rooted religious conviction in the society of the time held it to be self-evident that God would help the just in controversy. In contrast, the modern duellist fought to defend his own chivalrous honour to avenge a perceived or real injury inflicted upon him.[14]

Closely related to judicial duels is the institution of hired deputies, the "champions", which originates from France. The parties involved in judicial duels often did not fight in person, but had a pugil, a hired champion, to fight in their stead.[15] The pugil[16] was originally an object of public scorn in many European countries, a craft typically practised by slaves and people of servant status.

This was far from being the case in Hungary though, where pugils were respected and considered free, property-owning people, who could even be ennobled

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[11] PESTY, *op.cit.*, pp. 22-25.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[14] GERGELY, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[16] In France they call him the champion.

for their merits. Princes, lords and even abbots kept permanent pugils. Pugils could be used to substitute the elderly, those over sixty, clergymen and women as well. As for the public esteem of the pugilists in Hungary, I think it is in little details such as this where we can discover a quite specific Hungarian attitude towards dueling. An attitude rooted in the long past, which many refer to as the 'militant Hungarian spirit'. Arisztid Dessewffy, in his pamplhet called "Anti-duelling movement in Hungary" has made the following remarks about this phenomenon: "*Let us not forget that the Hungarian is a chivalrous race, and that it is in their blood to retaliate in a chivalrous way for the slightest offence, not to speak of insult*."[17] It was this same militant mentality that was behind the social prejudice that hindered the reform efforts of the 1878 legislation and which renowned figures such as Arisztid Dessewfy, Géza Kenedi and Rusztem Vámbéry tried to fight tooth and nail.

Another predecessor of the modern duel were the medieval jousting tournaments. These can, quite simply, be described as a ritualised, ritualistic-game form of war. They had a sporting and entertainment purpose, but were primarily used to practise armed combat.[18] In the early versions of these tournaments, the defeated man's arms and horse were taken into the possession of the victor, and often the loser himself became a prisoner of the defeated man, being released only in exchange for a ransom. By the 12th century, however, tournaments had become much more refined and civilised. The aim was no longer to get the loser's possessions, but to prove their worth to the dignitaries present, especially the king and certain ladies. All of this was closely linked to the cult of women in chivalric literature,[19] which, along with the growing desire to prove oneself, in my opinion, contributed greatly to the development of chivalric honour.

The classical form of combat on horseback was the "tjostírozás", the sport of "spear-breaking", which I have already mentioned above in relation to Hungarian

[17] GERGELY, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

judicial duels. This is the first thing that comes to mind when people of today think of jousting. Given that the main aim of these tournaments was for the participants to prove themselves, the tournaments became more and more athletic and the rules more and more refined.[20] These rules can in fact be seen as the precursors of modern duelling customs and frameworks.

To conclude, jousting was closer to modern duels than judicial duels in a sense, because between the motives of the jouster and the modern duelist, we can discover the first parallels. With this, I am referring in particular to the ever-rising importance of the king's, the court's and a particular social class's opinion. The acquisition of a presumption of competence became a key factor in maintaining the social status of the knights and hence their prosperity. This priceless presumption, like the presumption of divine truth in the case of judicial duels, could only be acquired through struggle. Despite all this, chivalrous jousting still cannot be considered a forerunner of modern duelling, because the combatants in chivalrous jousts always offered their victory to the king or a lady.

At this point, the cult of acquiring individual honour through sheer physical violence was beginning to take definite shape (though it should be noted that this idea was already present to some extent in the logic of judicial duels). But to arrive at the chivalric concept of honour which underlays modern duels, another important process had to go through. This process was the separation of the knighthood from the nobility.

Ágnes Kurcz (referring to Elemér Mályusz) explained that in the Hungary of the 13th century, there was a tendency to equate knighthood with nobility.[21] In the West, the knighthood and the nobility were already separated at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, but in Hungary this process took place only at the end of the century.[22] The

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[21] KURCZ, Ágnes. *A lovagi kultúra Magyarországon a 13–14. században [Knightly culture in Hungary in the 13–14th century]*. Budapest, 1988, Akadémiai Kiadó, pp. 113–114.
[22] GERGELY, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

development of the army also played a major role in the separation of knighthood and nobility. There is a theory originating from Schopenhauer, that where the state is unable to reward those who serve it adequately, it rewards them by other means, such as by giving them special prestige.[23] This prestige was becoming increasingly important for the knighthood as they lost their military importance and thus their legitimacy. Up to that point, their identity had consisted of their ordo militaris status and the primitive chivalric honour, which had become extremely valued as a result of the loss of the former. To support this phenomenon, Ede Gergely, quoting Sandberg, states that the increased cult of the concept of chivalric honour in the 14th century England compensated the chivalry for the loss of their military significance.[24]

After all this, the only thing that remained of the identity of the classical chivalry was the now valorised knightly spirit, also referred to as "knightly honour", an idea which sometimes can be felt nowadays as well. It is enough to think of the word 'knight' or 'knightly', which has a positive connotation to this day. This was even more prevalent at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, when if a duel was described as 'chivalrous', it meant, that all the rules had been properly kept. Furthermore, a "chivalrous settlement" meant the honest, 'clean' conclusion of a case. Thus the term "unchivalrous procedure" became synonymous with dishonesty. In the same way, the ideal man of this age, the gentleman of honour, considered himself the heir of the medieval knights when he demanded armed redress for his perceived or real grievances. [25] This is the type of man whose motives and fears are behind modern duels. Only by deeply understanding their psyche, can someone realistically set out to properly legislate duelling and thus, put an end to the phenomenon of duels.

In the light of these, I believe we are now adequately prepared to begin tackling the conceptual approach of the 1878 legislation. A duel, according to the trichotomous system of the Csemegi Code (crimes, misdemeanours and misconducts), is

[23] *Ibid.*,p. 2.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

conceptually distinct from both manslaughter (a crime) and assault (a misdemeanour). This is because a duel can lead to both manslaughter and assault – or even to nothing at all. Due to this, it is reasonable to classify duels as a *delictum sui generis*, inserted between crimes and misdemeanours.[26] This solution was not unique, as many legislators of criminal law in Europe had already reached this conclusion by that time.

The *delictum sui generis* nature of duels is further reinforced by the fact that, although they cannot be left unpunished – as threats to the social order –, there is no doubt that the motives of the duelist are far from nefarious. This goodwill-inducing honourable motive ends up being a source of understanding and acceptance in society, the views of which laws must abide to at all times. After all, it is understandable that the sense of justice of many people would be offended if the winner of a duel were to receive the same treatment as some nefarious assassin. The institution of *custodia honesta* was created to remedy this problem, the essence of which is that although the offender is deprived of his liberty (for he has broken the rule of law and cannot be allowed to go unpunished), this is done in such a way that his honour is not damaged and the punishment is not morally degrading.[27]

Regarding the technical approach of the regulation, Chapter XIX consists of eight sections (Sections 293-300), which in itself raises concerns about its comprehensiveness. One is immediately struck by the institution of state prison, which is mentioned in these sections and in which *custodia honesta* is easily recognisable. State prisoners were allowed to receive visitors, wear their own clothes and were not required to perform forced labour.[28] However, after a closer study, it also becomes apparent that the passages have overlooked many eventualities and are incomplete. In addition to these shortcomings, the disproportionate nature of the legislation is also apparent. The party who wounded the other was punishable by two years in state prison, while the party who killed the other – either instantly or by causing a mortal

[26] JUHÁSZ, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[28] They were even allowed to consume alcohol to a certain extent. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

wound – was punishable by five years in state prison. All this, as we already know, can be partly explained by social perceptions. At the same time, there is no doubt that the situation created by this legislation was untenable.

Two realistic solutions to eradicate this "social prejudice".[29] were considered appropriate, as well as realistic in the late 19th century. The first solution was to convince the legislator to change the values and perceptions of society through strict regulation. The second solution, which proved more effective in practice, was rounding up the elite class to create and enter large-scale civic organisations, clubs and associations, that promoted anti-duelling views and prohibited duelling for their members. In the following, I will discuss the attempts to realize both the former and the latter ideas in Hungary.

Géza Kenedi, a prominent legal theorist at the time, was an advocate of legal regulation – although he took great part in realizing the second idea later on as well – , and thus believed that the responsibility of remedying social prejudices rested on the shoulders of the legislature. An 1902 article of his, published in the Journal of Legal Studies, called 'On the Legal Questions of Duel' sums up his views quite well.[30] He states in the attitude of *de lege ferenda* what he believes the legislator should do. The first thought he raises is that of making the penalties for libel and slander more severe, but he quickly dismisses this. It is important to stress, as I have already pointed out, that we are talking about the concept of noble honour. Given that duels were typically fought among members of the aristocracy, tightening up the principle of equality of rights merely with regard to the noble classes would have been a serious breach of the principle. Such class legislation would have led to draconian strictness in dealing with everyday conflicts between the common folk. [31]

[29] A term often used to refer to the permissive approach of society to duelling at the time.
[30] KENEDI, Géza: A párviadal jogkérdései [On the legal questions of duel]. *Jogtudományi Közlöny [Journal of Legal Studies]*, No. 52., 1902, pp. 437–439.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 437.

His second idea is the abolition of duels as a concept from the criminal law, but he dismisses this as well. France was the first to try to get rid of duels in this way, with little success.[32] To put it simply, they have ruled out every instance of the word "duel" from their criminal law, meaning all consequences of duels were to be treated as assault or manslaughter, depending on the outcome. Obviously both the judges and the people felt how unjust this was, so the judges continued to give lighter penalties or no penalties at all, despite the regulations. To regard the results of a duel as mere assault and manslaughter is extremely out of touch with society's perception and, as I have already explained in the definition of duels, it is very offensive to one's sense of justice. There was no doubt that both the common folk and the judiciary would treat such situations more leniently, were the legislator to walk the same path as France did. With that said, the only option left was to reform the duel chapter. Here Géza Kenedi refers to the works of László Fayer, who formulated the problems of the regulations with great precision. Fayer's observations can be divided into three main problem areas.[33]

The first problem area arises from the ignorance (real or deliberate) of the regulation. Section 299 spoke of the 'customary or mutually agreed rules' of the duel, but the alternation between the two is flawed. There are both customary and consensual rules present at a duel, which exist in parallel to each other. The customary rules were general rules that formed the basis of the whole chivalric procedure. The consensual rules concerned the execution and the conditions of the fight. Ignoring both the general rules and the consensual conditions would lead to unfair judgements. Without this knowledge, the judge would be unable to properly see through and analyze the case. Nevertheless, in practice, the judges ignored the general rules and did not examine the conditions of the fight.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 438.
[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 438–439.

The second set of problems were the issue of assistants. The law made no provision for a duel without assistants or witnesses, nor for cases where the assistants themselves broke the rules of the duel. It is an omission that, apart from Section 294 (Assisting in a simple challenge), there were no provisions for the punishment of assistants for any other reason, although, as there was a saying at the time: 'It is not the duel that kills, but the assistants'. Section 300 laid down a saving clause: 'Witnesses and physicians present at the duel, and [...] assistants who have endeavoured to prevent the duel: they shall not be punished.', but it did not speak of assistants who had – in fact – not endeavoured to prevent the duel. Even an unscrupulous assistant of a duel that led to death was not liable to a punishment more severe than six months in state prison.[34] Not to mention that this six-month punishment was based on the acceptance of the challenge (Section 294), not on the immorality of the act in any other respect. Section 299 seems also unfair, as it deems assistants who were otherwise unable to prevent duelists who broke the rules of the duel from doing so their accomplices in this act (e.g. a rule-breaking, "cheap" shot). It is clear from all of this that the punishment of the assistant was not at all consistent with the punishment of the offending duelist.

The third set of problems relates to shortcomings and disproportionalities, of which the assistant's section has already taken a great part of. For taking stance (being present and armed at the pre-arranged time and place), Section 296 spoke of imprisonment for up to one year, while in the case of simple wounding (Section 298) it was up to two years, the difference between the two hardly being proportionate. Cases in which the fight took place without wounding, even the cases where a bullet has pierced the clothes of one of the combatant were treated simply as "taking stance" as well. The judge in these cases was forced to classify the offence as taking stance. The greatest disproportionality, of course, was the regulation of duels resulting in death, which was punishable by a meagre five years of imprisonment. The Belgian code

[34] Which, as we are by now aware of its circumstances, is hardly a punishment at all.

imposed a 10-year prison term and a fine of 20,000 francs for a repeated offence, while the German code sentenced recidivists (repeat offenders) to 2 to 3 years in prison for the mere act of recidivism. The Austrian code punished the surviving party with a prison term of 10 to 20 years. In the light of all this, the leniency of the rules could hardly be justified. Chapter XIX of the Csemegi Code did not deal with recidivism, nor did it deal with ancillary penalties. The former would have helped the legislator to deal with regular duellists, while the latter would have helped the legislator to take a more vigorous stance against the wealthy classes, who are generally responsible for duels. With Chapter XIX, the legislator has distorted an already flawed situation and despite the many loopholes in the legislation, he has not sought to fill them. Assistants were often praesumed exempt and sentences were pushed towards the minimum.

In that time, an extensive literature of anti-duelism was developed, in which the works of Rusztem Vámbéry, who was also a member of the board of directors of the National Anti-Duelling League together with Géza Kenedi, deserves mention. In his writings, he recognized that tightening the rules would not prevent 'duelling' and he agreed with Géza Kenedi that the state prison was too lenient as a punishment and in fact had no deterrent effect.[35] He also did not think that it would be a good solution to increase the penalties for defamation, because society – if the offence was serious enough – would put such great pressure on the victim to act, that it would be hardly realistic to expect him to resist. The victim himself had to avenge the offence, the stain on his noble family prestige and honour, otherwise the reputation of his unmanliness would have begun to spread and he could have very quickly found himself the subject of public ridicule. Vámbéry's final conclusion was that the second solution, the path of civic organizations should be tread, following the example of England. In other words, the elite, specifically the nobility and the army, had to be round-up under the banner of anti-duelling, in a sort of a "civil organisation".[36] Then, with an organisation or group

[35] VÁMBÉRY, Rusztem: A párbaj [The duel], *Jogtudományi Közlöny [Journal of Legal Studies]*, No. 50., 1917, p. 431.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 432.

of organisations such as this, it would have been possible to democratically and organically eradicate the idea of duelling from psyche of society.

In Hungary, there were two such prominent organisations. The Nagyvárad League, of which Endre Ady, a famous Hungarian poet was a committed member of, and the National Anti-Duelling League, which was modelled after the Nagyvárad Leauge, but on a national scale. The anti-duelling movement in Nagyvárad began with Vilmos Vázsonyi, a Member of Parliament. He was provoked by another member for his speeches in the Parliament, after which, it would have been the natural course of things to continue the debate in a clearing in the woods, with pistols in hand. But Vázsonyi, showing no little moral courage, refused the challenge, based on his principles. His supporters formed an organisation in Nagyvárad, and among the organisers was Ady, who was also the probable author of an appeal published in the Nagyvárad issue, on the 8th of December 1901, in which he wrote the following: „Citizens! It is your most sacred rights. Your most sacred rights are at stake. Your example will be followed elsewhere, the whole of public opinion will be stirred up and that medieval prejudice, that patented murder, whose name is duel, will be swept away." This was the basis of the country's first anti-duelling association.[37]

At the turn of the century, duelling became so rampant that at the meeting of the Peace Association of the Countries of the Hungarian Holy Crown, convened on 21st January 1903, the idea was raised that a national association should be formed on the model of the Nagyvárad League. The association itself was originally concerned with war-related matters, but the proposal was accepted, since as they put it, war was nothing more than a 'war between individuals'. On the 12th of July 1903, the inaugural meeting was held in the building of the Court of Audit, and István Rakovszky, the head of the State Audit Office, was elected president. Arisztid Dessewffy, Árpád Bókay and Károly Zipernovszky were elected vice-presidents of the anti-duel association. There were also a few familiar names on the board, them being Rusztem Vámbéry and Géza

[37] GERGELY, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

Kenedi. One of the main reasons for Kenedi's membership was that he had already proven himself as a duelist in his youth. The federation payed great attention to avoid giving the public the impression that it was made up entirely of people who have never held a sword in their lives. However, immediately after their formation, they came into conflict with the Nagyvárad League. In the statutes of the National Anti-Duelling Leauge,[38] the following lines were written: „As our laws do not afford honour a sufficient and complete protection, the league does not require of its members the promise never to fight a duel, but reserves to each of its members the freedom of action in this respect."[39]

For understandable reasons, this has led to a great deal of controversy. It is perhaps not surprising that among the most vocal critics of the national league we find the name of Endre Ady, who commented on the developments the following: "The National Anti-Duelling Association was founded yesterday in Budapest. [...] The Budapest League, among other decrees, has decreed that a court of honour formed from the League may order – in necessary cases – a chivalrous match. Europe has never seen such an anti-duelling league. István Rakovszky, Arisztid Dessewffy and the others have completely twisted the meaning of the league, ruining a Western European idea born of a new age's intuition. They have codified the existence of chivalrous honour, whereas there is no such thing, and there cannot be." Arisztid Dessewfy responded to the position of the Nagyvárad League in his pamphlet, called "The Anti-Duel movement in Hungary". According to him, the League of Nagyvárad took a too rigid position. He considered their efforts to reject all duels honourable, but he believed that this would isolate them from society and would lead to contempt from the supporters of duelling. This "intransigence", he felt, would do more harm than good. As he himself put it: "Let us not forget that the Hungarian is a chivalrous race, and that it is in their blood to retaliate in a chivalrous way for the slightest offence, not to speak

[38] § 10.
[39] GERGELY, *op. cit.*, pp. 167–168.

of insult."[40] So, if they wanted to achieve their goal, they had to keep the chivalrous forms, all the while trying to insist on other forms of satisfaction.

In the end, neither the legislator nor the associations were able to bring about the end of duels in Hungary. During the events of World War I, the number of duels decreased considerably, as most men were needed on the fronts. Although duelling flared up again towards the end of the war, due to all the insults that the parties had not been able to remedy during the war, the period of 1921–1925 saw a significant reduction in court judgements of duel cases. Of course, due to the prestige of duels and, according to Ede Gergely, the socio-psychological motivations of noble men,[41] the number of duels continued to fluctuate even in the 1930s. Another such inner motive was a sort of desire for dominance, which noble men acquired during their socialisation. A compulsive sense of duty, the *'libido dominandi*', as it was called by Pierre Burddieu.[42]

As time went on, and as the concept of 'the gentleman' was becoming obsolete, so too was the concept of dueling. In the years of 1935–39, social perceptions changed. The social pressure that had been referred to so often in the past, the pressure that was forcing people into duelling, has faded by that time. Although the older generations still clung to the old chivalrous forms of settling their differences – in their case, by duels – World War II swept away these older generations.[43] And with this older social stratum gone, so was the idea of duelling, which thus vanished from the psyche of the Hungarian society.

[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 168–169.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] *Ibid.,* p. 189.