Levente HALLGATÓ: The Changes in the Institution of the Regent in the Horthy Era

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DOI 10.21862/siaa.8.3

1. Introduction

The Horthy-era, spanning from 1920 to 1944, marked a period in Hungarian history that brought significant changes in society, politics, and the economy. Consequently, the country's legal system underwent substantial transformations compared to previous decades. Among these changes, the most notable was the reestablishment of the institution of the regent.

Although this office has considerable history, the variant held by Miklós Horthy differed in many respects. Several factors contributed to these differences. Firstly, Hungary emerged from World War I as a defeated country and ended up without a monarch. Subsequently, the Treaty of Trianon resulted in the loss of most of the the country's territory and population, which led to a turbulent period where extreme ideologies gained ground and various forms of government succeeded one another. This environment further divided society regarding how to plan the nation's future. To manage these challenges, the regent's office was chosen for its flexibility to adapt to the era's demands, resulting in a series of remarkable developments.

2. The Previous Regents

To make the said developments sensible, it is necessary to showcase the institution's historical background.

The regent (also known as gubernator or governor) was an position serving as a substitute for the king, that was used in cases of the king's incapacity due to insanity or minority. The

appointment was done by the monarch, or in his absence, by the parliament.[1] Using this definition, the first recorded use of this institution can be seen during the reign of Ban (Viceroy) Belos,[2] who governed Hungary during the minority of King Géza II.[3]

Of all the pre-Horthy regencies in Hungary, János Hunyadi's is undoubtedly the most important. In 1446, he was unanimously elected by the Diet to serve alongside László V.[4] His powers were derived from those of the king but were limited in some respects. This was the case in his judicial powers (he could not grant pardons), appointment rights (which did not belong solely to him) and the restrictions on the donation of property. In 1458, under similar circumstances, Mihály Szilágyi became regent during the minority of Matthias Hunyadi.[5]

However, over the centuries, there have been examples of broader, unconstitutional interpretations of the institution[6] as seen regarding the Gubernium, when the king – bypassing of the estates of the realm – appointed Johann Caspar von Ampringen as regent. In practice, he acted as a quasi-regent, because he merely carried out the king's instructions whilst the monarch was abroad.[7] This did not last long, as reflected by the short life of the Transylvanian Governorate from 1673 to 1677.[8]

On April 14, 1849, the Declaration of Independence was adopted (and published five days later), in which the National Assembly elected Lajos Kossuth as "governing president" following the dethronement of the Habsburg dynasty. Some argue that Kossuth was elected as a regent, but after the dethronement there was no monarch to replace. On the other hand, according to the grammatical interpretation suggested by Barna Mezey, the title

[1] MEZEY Barna – GOSZTONYI Gergely (szerk.): *Magyar alkotmánytörténet [Hungarian Constitutional History]*. Budapest, 2020. Osiris tankönyvek. 142. p.
[2] SZALAY József – BARÓTI Lajos (szerk.): *A magyar nemzet története [The History of the Hungarian Nation]*. Budapest, 1896-97. Lampel Róbert (Wodianer Ferenc és Fiai) Császári és Királyi könyvkereskedése.
[3] CSEKEY István: A kormányzó és jogköre [The Regent and his Jurisdiction]. *Magyar jogi szemle*, 1920. 5. sz. 17. p.
[4] SZALAY – BARÓTI 1896-97.
[5] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 142. p.
[6] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI, 2020. 409. p.
[7] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 141. p.
[8] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 187. p.

indicates a president who governs their country.[9] The latter argument led many to associate this "regency" with a republican presidency, making this the first Hungarian republic.[10]

Taking the previous into account, József Juhász distinguished three types of regents in the history of Hungary. The first were tutelary regents (e.g., Ban Belos and János Hunyadi), after them were lieutenant Regents, who were under a ruling monarch with active legal capacity. The final group comprises Kossuth and Horthy, since during their regencies the link between the king and the nation ceased. Thus, Miklós Horthy has only one true predecessor: Lajos Kossuth.[11]

3. Why the Regent?

On 13 November 1918, Charles IV in the Eckartsau Proclamation declared his resignation from participation in state affairs and stayed abroad until his failed attempts to return in 1921. The link between the king and the nation was *de facto* severed. It became essential to find an interim, temporary solution for the head of state's powers.[12] Shortly after, Hungary became a people's republic and then a Soviet republic. After the fall of the latter in August 1919, governments changed frequently, but they had one thing in common: the principle of legal continuity.[13] These ambitions aimed the restoration of the pre-war status quo, forcing them to find the suitable solution amongst the pages of Hungarian legal history.[14]

Some argued that, based on the still effective 1485 palatinal articles, a palatine should have been elected as the king's general deputy, including during his absence.[15] However, it was impossible to implement due to the title's characteristics. According to Act III of 1608, the palatine was elected by the joint session of the lower and upper houses of parliament from four candidates proposed by the king. But the country was left without a king, and instead

[9] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020.
[10] MEZEY Barna: A köztársasági elnök a magyar joghistóriában (különös tekintettel a köztársasági elnök jogállására) In Pölöskei Ferenc: *A köztársasági eszme és mozgalom Magyarországon [The Republican Ideology and Movement in Hungary]*. Budapest, 1990. Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar. 97-100. p.
[11] JUHÁSZ József: Kormányzói jogkör és a kormányzóhelyettesi intézmény (The Jurisdiction of the Regent and the Institution of Deputy Regent). *Országút*, 1936. 2. sz. 3-7. p.
[12] CSEKEY 1920. 17. p.
[13] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 334. p.
[14] CSEKEY 2020. 17. p.
[15] KÉPES György szerk.: *Magyar alkotmány- és közigazgatás-történet a polgári korban*. Budapest, 2013, ELTE Eötvös Kiadó. 77. p.

of a bicameral Parliament a unicameral National Assembly (*Nemzetgyűlés*) was established.[16] Act XXII of 1526 stipulated that the palatine should be elected for life, which collided with the need of a temporary solution. Moreover, a palatine could not exercise full royal powers, such as sanctioning laws, so appointing a palatine would effectively leave the role of head of state unfilled.[17] However, this did not mean the complete uselessness of this title: the scholars of the Horthy era used the palatinal role to legitimize the institution of the deputy regent.[18]

The contemporary legal interpretation aligned with the idea of legal continuity. This led to the broad interpretation of the regent's constitutional role, allowing its appointment.[19] The National Assembly, temporarily elected in January 1920, re-established the regent's office in Act 1 of 1920, electing Miklós Horthy in March 1920. The law drew from historical traditions and laid down the fundations of the unique solution, which was named "Kingdom without a King".[20]

György Képes distinguishes three phases in the development of the regent's office, which accurately highlights the differences in Horthy's powers throughout his reign.[21] The following sections rely on this classification.

4. The Regent as President

The regent played a role similar to that of a president in Hungarian legal history from the re-establishment of the title (done by Act 1 of 1920) to the death of Charles IV on April 1, 1922. This view is supported by the contemporary writings of István Csekey, who noted that the state form was "essentially moving towards a kingdom but unable to completely break free from the forms of the republic".[22]

Act 1 of 1920 followed the practice developed during János Hunyadi's regency, which meant the explicit definition of the regent's powers,[23] but with stronger limitations than that of

[16] 1918. évi. I. néptörvény (Peoples' Law I. of 1918)
[17] CSEKEY 1920. 18. p.
[18] JUHÁSZ 1936. 6. p.
[19] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 298. p.
[20] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 143. p.
[21] KÉPES 2013. 352-359. p.
[22] CSEKEY, 1920, p. 17.
[23] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 410. p.

Hunyadi's.[24] This happened due to the uncertain nature of the position, because the goal of the National Assemby was to prevent the rise of a military dictatorship [25] from a title that was intended to serve as a temporary solution.[26] These restrictions weakened as Horthy's position stabilized.[27]

Horthy's legal status greatly differs from that of a monarch. Unlike the king, the regent was not considered *majestas*, hence the modification of the prerogatives conveying respect was required.[28] He had to be addressed as "His Excellency the Regent", which some opposed, because the same form was used for the dukes of the country, thus it did not symbolize the appropriate hierarchy.[29] He received honorarium from the National Assembly, but he was not entitled to royal compensation.[30] Horthy had immunity only from criminal prosecution, meaning he could be held accountable in a manner similar to the ministerial responsibility of 1848.[31] This impeachment-like[32] solution was dubbed as a legal absurdity by Csekey, who thought that immunity from criminal prosecution and accountability are mutually exclusive, which reflected the republican spirit of the National Assembly. [33]

The king's right of patronage[34] over the Catholic Church was taken away from Horthy by the act. This was unusual, as in 1446, the right was restricted to bishoprics and minor ecclesiastical properties. This decision aimed to deprive the Protestant Horthy from shaping the Catholic Church's organization, although Csekey thought this could have been achieved by other, less extreme ways.[35] By the end of the year, the Protestant Churches demanded the regulation of patronage rights.[36]

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[24] KÉPES 2013. 77. p.
[25] See: Béla Turi's speech in the National Assembly (*Nemzetgyűlési Napló*, 1920. I. Kötet 56. p.)
[26] OLASZ Lajos: A kormányzói és kormányzóhelyettesi jogkör [The Jurisdiction of the Regent and Deputy Regent]. *Rubicon*, 2009. 1. 29. p.
[27] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 410. p.
[28] KÉPES 2013. 78.p.
[29] KÉPES György: *A kormányzó: királyhelyettes vagy de facto köztársasági elnök? (The Regent: A Substitute for the King or de facto President?)* Budapest, 2020. Pázmány Press339. p.
[30] OLASZ 2009. 30.p.
[31] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 410. p.
[32] KÉPES 2013. 78.p.
[33] CSEKEY 1920. 261-262. p.
[34] See: MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 134. p.
[35] CSEKEY 1920. 262. p.
[36] See: Kováts J. István felszólalása, *Nemzetgyűlési Napló* 1920. I. kötet 408.p.

The restriction of legislative rights led to significant debate.[37] The National Assembly declared itself as the sole legislative power and drifted from the balance set up by doctrine of the Holy Crown.[38] As a consequence the king's absolute (constitutive) veto[39] turned into a weak, suspensive veto, meaning laws could be returned for reconsideration, but the National Assembly could maintain the original text.[40] Another restriction can be found in the operation of the National Assembly. The Regent was not able to prorogate its sessions, dissolvement was only possible in the event of a prolonged parliamentary dysfunction.[41]

In the field of justice, the limitation of pardon rights appeared, which have been present since the roots of the institution. Individual pardons remained a discretionary decision of the Regent – exercised with countersignatures –, while the right to amnesty was removed by the National Assembly, who incorporated it into its own powers.[42] Csekey found this unnecessary at a time when political crimes were becoming frequent.[43]

The relationship with the executive branch was based on Act 3 of 1848,[44] requiring ministerial countersignature for the regent's actions. He could propose legislation through the ministers.[45] Traditional powers of the head of state[46] were also affected. Horthy was unable to grant nobility, which the public opposed as it left wartime acts of heroism unrewarded.[47] His prerogative in foreign affairs allowed him to form alliances and treaties[48] through the government, but parliamentary consent was necessary for those affecting legislative matters.[49] Concerning the war prerogative, the regent remained the army's supreme commander, but war declarations, peace treaties and the deployment of troops abroad required parliamentary approval.[50] Horthy opposed these disproportionate restrictions, particularly regarding military matters, since he was a respected admiral of the

[37] Compare Béla Turi's speech, *Nemzetgyűlési Napló* 1920. I. kötet 51-60. p. and CSEKEY 1920. 17. p.
[38] CSEKEY 1920. 17. P.
[39] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 295.pp.
[40] OLASZ 2009. 29. p.
[41] KÉPES 2013. 78. p.
[42] KÉPES 2013. 79. p.
[43] CSEKEY 1920. 262. p.
[44] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 413. p.
[45] KÉPES 2013. 78.p.
[46] See: MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 403. p.
[47] OLASZ 2009. 30.p.
[48] CSEKEY 1920. 262. p.
[49] OLASZ 2009. 29.p.
[50] KÉPES 2013. 79. p.

Great War, causing him to consider rejecting his mandate.[51] This dilemma contributed to changes in his competences.

The first extesion of competences occurred relatively soon, with the enactment of Act 17 of 1920.[52] Among the powers related to the operation of the parliament, the new Law restored the just revoked prerogative of prorogation,[53] and reverted the regulations on adjournment and dissolution to their former conditions.[54] Prorogation was limited to a maximum of thirty days but did not prohibit its occurrence on multiple occasions consecutively.[55] The dissolution regulation expanded the narrow possibility of prolonged parliamentary dysfunction.[56]

In connection with the judiciary, the regent regained the right to grant amnesty. The only limitations were those of a king's, meaning only the National Assembly could grant pardons to government officials and the president of the State Audit Office.[57] Horthy promptly began exercising this authority. In his decree issued 25 December 1920, he granted amnesty to those convicted of political crimes between 1918 and 1920, unless they were associated with Bolshevism.[58] This simultaneously exempted perpetrators of the White Terror and participants of the uprising in Western Hungary from accountability.[59]

With the war prerogatives limitations being the most grieved by Horthy, a compromise was reached. Although the right to declare war and make peace remained bound to the National Assembly's prior approval, a new course of action was introduced. In the event of a direct and imminent threat, the armed forces could be deployed abroad, the only requirement being the subsequent approval of the parliament.[60] However, this consent did not have any

[51] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 413. p.
[52] KÉPES 2013. 80.pp.
[53] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 413. p.
[54] KÉPES 2013. 80. p.
[55] OLASZ 2009. 31.p.
[56] KÉPES 2013. 80.p.
[57] OLASZ 2009. 31.p.
[58] KÁNTÁS Balázs: *A Horthy-korszak első éveiben működő magyar ragikális jobboldali titkos paramilitáris szervezetek töredékes története, 1919-1928. I. Milicisták [Hungarian radical-far right paramilitary organizations in the first years of the Horthy Era, 1919-1928: I. Militias]*. Budapest, 2022. Horthy-Korszak Kutatásáért Társaság. 90p.
[59] OLASZ 2009. 31. p.
[60] KÉPES 2013. 80.p.

significance after a possible misguided decision, only the accountability towards the National Assembly remained as a response.[61]

The latter also played an important role in the fact that this law did not alter the Regent's accountability, because that served as a guarantee against the compromises. This period formed a moderately strong head of state, which was weaker compared to presidential systems or monarchies.[62]

Things became complicated, when Charles IV attempted to return to the throne of Hungary twice, citing the invalid nature of his resignation.[63] Both attempts ended in failure, the second being stopped by force in the battle of Budaörs, which led the National Assembly to declare the third and final dethronement of the Habsburg dynasty. This was declared in Act 47 of 1921, which also explicitly stated that Hungary's form of government remained a kingdom.[64] This sentiment paired with the 1922 death of Charles IV dispelled the (mis)belief of the regents' provisional nature.[65]

5. The regent, as the president of a republic with royalist undertones

The main ambition of the National Assemby, which operated from 1920 to 1922, was the restoration of the bicameral parliament. The legislative body failed in this aspect.[66] The reason of said failure was the lack of laws on suffrage and the unsuccessful restoration of the House of Magnates. This caused Prime Minister Bethlen to issue a decree scheduling a new parliamentary election, which resulted in a parliamentary majority that made the correction of previous letdowns possible. Bethlen's electoral decree was elevated to the force of law and the Upper House (*Felsőház*) of Hungary was set up by Act 22 of 1926.[67]

Accordingly, the legislative power was exercised by the new, bicameral National Assembly (*Országgyűlés*).[68] The rebirth of the second chamber opened the door for Horthy to acquire another pre-war royal prerogative, that was the right to appoint members to the Upper

[61] OLASZ 2009. 31. p.
[62] OLASZ 2009. 31.p.
[63] KÉPES 2020. 343. p.
[64] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 417.p.
[65] KÉPES 2013. 81.p.
[66] KÉPES 2020. 355. p.
[67] KÉPES 2020. 345. p.
[68] OLASZ 2009. 31. p.

House. The law from 1885 allowed the king to appoint 50 members for life. The new provisions, due to the decrease in population and membership, reduced the appointable members by the regent to 40, while the appointment's lifelong quality was not modified.[69]

The establishment of the Upper House warranted an overhaul of the accountability of the regent. The procedure used the scheme provided by Act 3 of 1848.[70] The House of Representatives initiated the prosecution, for which a two-thirds majority was required instead of the previous simple majority.[71] The judgement was made by a court composed of members of the Upper House.[72]

Its final amendment stated that in the event of a vacancy in the regent's title before the final resolution of the head of state, a new regent shall be elected.[73] This would have been done through a joint ballot of the two chambers. Because the government was not expecting a vacancy of the title, further details were not specified, the only criteria being the age of majority and Hungarian citizenship.[74]

Horthy was satisfied with these revisions and gradually withdrew from politics. He entrusted the prime minister with exercising the executive power, while he adopted a representative role. However, this changed at the early 1930s, since the Great Depression forced the regent to strengthen his political involvement. His primary goal was to ensure order.[75]

When Gyula Gömbös was appointed Prime Minister, he pledged to accomodate Horthy's demands by incorporating the unrestricted prorogation and dissolution of the National Assembly within his competences.[76] Therefore, act 33 of 1933 was enacted. It stated that the regent was only tied by the bounds set by the final accounts act and budget laws in regards to the adjournment and prorogation of the National Assembly, while he did not need to take even these to account for its dissolution.[77] As the head of state thus obtained complete royal

[69] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 413. p.
[70] KÉPES 2020. 345. p.
[71] 1848. évi III. törvénycikk [Law III of 1848] 33. §
[72] OLASZ 2009. 31. p.
[73] KÉPES 2020. 345. p.
[74] OLASZ 2009. 31.p.
[75] OLASZ 2009. 31. p.
[76] OLASZ 2009. 31. p.
[77] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 413. p.

prerogatives towards the legislative body, the time limit of 30 days regarding prorogation ceased to exist.

In the 1930s, prime ministers aimed to maintain a strong relationship with the regent, as it bolstered their political power, because exercising the newly institutionalized powers freed them from "the need to bargain with parliament".[78] The evaluation of this expansion does not classify it as an establisher of an anti-parliamentary system, because both conservative and liberal circles who voted for it shared the same belief, that the range of the Regent's powers will be used to fight such tendencies.[79]

6. The Regent, as the Uncrowned King of Hungary

Law 19 of 1937 was the turning point in the perception of the regent's constitutional status. The law became the subject of "legal-political debates", even conservative circles rejected the original proposal.[80] The revised – and eventually passed – version, according to Csekey, made Horthy the uncrowned king of the country.[81]

The suspensive veto from 1920 was modified, but it did not give the regent an absolute veto. This allowed laws passed by the National Assembly to be returned twice for reconsideration, both being six-month intervals.[82] This meant that Horthy could have obstructed the adoption of laws he objected to for up to a year, [83] but he never exercised this power.[84]

Hidden within the legislation is a crucial change stating that the „Regent cannot be held accountable by the National Assemby". This rendered the head of state immune, abolishing the "legal absurdity" criticized by Csekey.

In 1937, the 68-year-old Horthy mentioned in his letter to Prime Minister Kálmán Darányi, that he did not request the previous extension of his powers. Based on his 17 years of

[78] OLASZ 2009. 32. p.
[79] OLASZ 2009. 31. p.
[80] OLASZ 2009. 32. p.
[81] KÉPES 2013. 81–82. p.
[82] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 411.p.
[83] If after the returns the parliament was dissolved by the governor or its mandate ceased, the law was removed from the agenda. However, there was no discretion regarding a law of identical content adopted by the new National Assembly. Thus, it could delay enforcement for up to a year and a half. (OLASZ 2009. 32.p.)
[84] KÉPES 2013. 82.p.

experience, his sole desire was to regulate succession in a way that would prevent an unworthy individual from assuming the title.[85] This law granted him the right to nominate successors. The regent could select three adult citizens as potential successors (neither more nor less, as either would invalidate the nomination), without ministerial countersignatures.[86] The nomination did not bound the National Assembly, as the chambers during joint sessions could put forward another candidate through a ballot.[87] From the start of the would-be vacancy until the new regent's oath, the duties of the head of state would have been carried out by the National Council consisting of the highest dignities with some restrictions.[88]

Horthy did not find this solution sufficient, because the National Assembly could easily bypass his nomination.[89] Foreign pressure and domestic extremism kept growing, and with their influence the integrity of the position could become compromised.[90] With the outbreak of the Second World War the need for the continuous exercise of presidential powers was clear, since the Regent was the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Act 2 of 1942 established the title of deputy regent, which was the last milestone in the institution's development.[91]

The deputy regent (just like the Vice President of the United States of America[92]) could substitute the regent in case of his absence, illness, or other obstructions, and exercise his rights from the vacancy of the regent's seat until the new regent's oath. Despite Horthy's wishes, he was not given the right to directly nominate a single successor. The regent could commission his deputy (with ministerial countersignature) to temporarily undertake tasks within his competency. This commission could be revoked at any time.[93] A deputy's appointment did not influence the nomination of the three candidates, only stripped the

[85] OLASZ 2009. 32.p.
[86] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 411. p.
[87] KÉPES 2013. 82.p.
[88] See: OLASZ 2009. 33. p.
[89] Hozzájárult a módosítás szükségességéhez Darányi Kálmán halála is, ki az általa jelölt három utód közül az egyik volt. Az ajánlás három fő alá csökkent, az érvénytelenné vált, utódajánlási joggal többet már nem élt. Kálmán Darányi's death added to the necessity of modification, since he was one of the three people nominated by Horthy. Without three names, the nomination became invalid. (MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 415. p.)
[90] OLASZ 2009. 33.p.
[91] KÉPES 2013. 82-83.p.
[92] KÉPES 2020. 351. p.
[93] OLASZ 2009. 33-34.p.

National Council of ruling in the interim period of vacancy, narrowing the Council's powers to only organizing the upcoming elections.[94]

In terms of the deputy's legal status, his official address was „His Excellency", had immunity from criminal prosecution and was able to be held accountable. If a violation were to be committed, the procedure would have been started by the head of state (in case of vacancy it would have been done by the National Assembly).[95]

The Regent could nominate three people as his deputy and if he acted upon this right, the National Assembly would have been excluded from nominating. All names needed a countersignature from a minister; the final decision was made by a joint session of the chambers. The quorum of the plenum required 3/5 attendance, while the deputy governor was elected with a 2/3 majority vote.[96] The governor's confirmation was necessary for inauguration.[97]

The title was given to István Horthy, the regent's son. This position would have served as a springboard to achieve „dynastic succession", but it did not come to pass. The deputy regent died a hero in an airplane accident in the Soviet Union on 20 August 1942.

It is also worthy of mentioning, that following the territorial gains of Hungary, the regent could appoint 87 members to the Upper House.

The ultimate obstacle to the preservation of the regency was the unsuccessful attempt to exit out of the war.[98] Only a fraction of the army executed the rushed maneuver on 15 October 1944, while the Gestapo had already begun to blackmail Horthy with his only remaining son.[99] This made the regent resign from his office, appointing Ferenc Szálasi as Prime Minister. He went on to become the Leader of the Nation (*Nemzetvezető*) after merging the presidential and prime ministerial powers, and ruled over the Arrow Cross state until the fall of Hungary in March 1945.[100]

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[94] KÉPES 2020. 351. p.
[95] OLASZ 2009. 34. p.
[96] OLASZ 2009. 35. p.
[97] KÉPES 2013. 83.p.
[98] Lásd: UNGVÁRY Krisztián: *Magyarország a második világháborúban [Hungary in the Second World War]*. Budapest, 2013. Kossuth Kiadó.
[99] KÉPES 2013. 84.p.
[100] MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 488-489. p.

7. Conclusion

Based on József Juhász' categorization, Horthy's regency resembled his predecessors only in name. The evolution of the institution transformed a title reminiscent of a republican president into one of almost royal stature. The initial parliamentary dominance gradually shifted towards the regent's side, who did not abuse his newfound powers. This solution reached back into the roots of monarchies, reintroducing the doctrine of the Holy Crown, which reinforced the era's dominant Christian-national ideals.[101]

The last years of in office, Miklós Horthy became the uncrowned king of Hungary, which can be seen in comparison with the characteristics of a monarchical form of government.[102] Attributes of a republic diminished, whilst those of a monarchy were fulfilled. This included lifelong appointment, total immunity, hereditary succession of the head of state.

The turning point brought by the death of Charles IV transformed the originally elected title to one with a royalist undertone, dispelling the idea of temporality and relevancy of a simple substitution. The regent's legal immunity was present from the start, but full immunity was brought on by the last extension. The deputy regent did not influence the order of succession, the dynastic intention behind its institutionalization was clear.[103] Trait of ceremonialism grew as the power consolidated. Massive celebrations took place on the anniversaries of Horthy's entrance into Budapest and even on his name day.[104]

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[101] VÖLGYESI Levente: A Regnum Marianum-eszme alkotmányjogi vonatkozásai. In *Regnum Marianum: Az eszme története, jelentősége és hatása [The Idea's History, Importance and Effect].* Magyarságkutató Intézet, Budapest. 2022. 24. p. https://doi.org/10.53644/MKI.RM.2022.13

[102] KÉPES 2020. 335. p.

[103] Some scholars think that the three nominations already made it heredetary (MEZEY – GOSZTONYI 2020. 411. p.)

[104] See: Keleti Ujság, 1943. december 10. 279. szám. 6. p.