

## THE HUNGARIAN ORIGINS OF JOSEPH PULITZER

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"We are a democracy, and there is only one way to get a democracy on its feet in the matter of its individual, its social, its municipal, its state, its national conduct, and that is by keeping the public informed about what is going on." — Joseph Pulitzer (32)\*

The name of Joseph Pulitzer (1847–1911) is known nowadays mainly for the Prizes endowed by him and awarded annually for notable achievements in American journalism, letters and music. In most countries outside America, including Hungary, few know more about him than that he was a millionaire who donated large sums for noble purposes. A penniless immigrant joining the Union Army in the Civil War, the youth kept body and soul together by hard labour; then as a newspaper editor and publisher, and later as a congressman, he came to live the life of a real American until his death. This is perhaps why so little was known about this great, self-made man even in his native town of Makó and in Hungary in general, which he left in 1864 with the purpose of making some sort of military career.

By way of introduction, we should begin with what is already widely accepted and acknowledged: Pulitzer was one of the greatest figures in modern journalism and a democratic reformer of his age. Trained under Carl Schurz, he first founded and made a respectable newspaper of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 1878. Meanwhile, he studied law and became active in politics. His career as an innovator of mass-appeal journalism really began in 1883 when he bought the nearly bankrupt *New York World* and made it a hardhitting exponent of democracy and social justice based on mass circulation and initially upon an appeal to the interests of working people. The period 1883 to 1885 is not only pivotal in the history of *The World*, but also in the history of the international press. There developed the subordination of politics to "news", with a consequent development of the highly efficient machinery of reporting and news-gathering. It was the era of the creation of chains, an age of enlargement and improvement in the appearance of newspapers. We note the growing importance of the editorial page and of advertising. With the development of printing technology, newspapers became the first real medium of mass communication, so influential in American political life even today.

No one better represented this new journalism than Pulitzer. As for techniques, he introduced many that other papers later borrowed, some guardedly and almost against

\*The numbers in brackets correspond to numbered items listed in the Bibliography at the end of the article.

their own will, others wholeheartedly. He was, for example responsible for the first extensive use of illustration (excellent, expressive cartoons), for the development of the sports page. He also played a role equal to that of any other publisher in making women part of the newspaper reading public. He established his credentials as a master journalist by responding quickly and adroitly to the drift of social change. "The American people want something terse, forcible, picturesque, striking, something that will arrest their



1. Joseph Pulitzer

attention, enlist their sympathy, arouse their indignation, stimulate their imagination, convince their reason, awaken their conscience. . . It [*The World*] is read by, well, say a million people a day; and it's my duty to see that they get the truth; but that's not enough, I've got to put it before them briefly so that they will read it, clearly so that they will understand it, forcibly so that they will appreciate it, picturesquely so that they will remember it, and, above all, accurately so that they may be wisely guided by its light." — Pulitzer thus summed up his views to one of his secretaries, Alleyne Ireland, as described in the latter's book (32).

As a publisher, Pulitzer's regard for the dignity and the responsibilities of his profession was also crucial. It influenced him in many ways, notably in making him a leader among those who agitated for social reform. The presence in *The World's* large readership of many who were dispossessed and helpless, lent a tone of personal involvement to its fearless and independent editorials that other papers did not share. *The World* became a "national institution." Although Democratic in its principles, it was one of the leading independent voices of opinion in the United States and frequently attracted notice as a

crusading organ. In the 1880's it successfully supported Grover Cleveland for the presidency and advocated the governmental curbing of monopolies, the right of workers to unionize, the imposition of stiff taxes on large incomes and inheritances, thorough civil service reform while taking the side of immigrants against a largely hostile native America. Pulitzer and his staff perfected (if not invented), the use of the news columns to support editorial attacks with campaigns of exposure.

In 1887 he established the *Evening World* and, in the meantime, he served in Congress, being the first Representative of Hungarian birth there. Pulitzer's newspapers temporarily — especially during a competitive war with William Randolph Hearst in the 1890's — resorted to sensationalism and other "yellow journalistic" practices. It was at that time that he became an advocate of war with Spain. But, again, *The World* was restored by its publisher to its former eminence, a high-minded journal of intelligent opinion. The repeated disclosures of municipal graft, state corruption and business abuses reached their climax in the crusade of 1905 against the mismanagement of the principal life insurance companies. *The World's* attacks on individuals, including President Theodore Roosevelt, resulted in the indictment of Pulitzer for criminal libel but the case was never prosecuted.

Pulitzer's chief efforts — as far as they may be summed up — were bent on the restriction of trusts and other aggregations of wealth at a time of steadily growing industrial capitalism. From 1883 to 1911 *The World* led all other American newspapers in demanding the break up of monopolies by antitrust laws, and a close watch over "money power". This paper was the most consistent crusader against governmental corruption and the economic exploitation of the poor, testifying to the publisher's steadfast loyalty to convictions formed at the beginning of his career. In Pulitzer's own words from his "confession of faith", "There is not a crime, there is not a dodge, there is not a trick, there is not a swindle, there is not a vice which does not live by secrecy. Get these things out in the open, describe them, attack them, ridicule them in the press, and sooner or later public opinion will sweep them away" (32).

In his later years Pulitzer, stricken with almost complete blindness and ill health, relinquished direct management of his publications, though continuing to control policy. His bequest made possible the founding of the Pulitzer School of Journalism at Columbia University and the establishment of the Pulitzer Prizes.

## 1.

After settling down in the *New World*, Pulitzer never denied his Hungarian background but neither did he emphasize it too often (28). And he was fully aware, even at the zenith of his career, that he could never become a president of the United States because he was a foreign born, an immigrant. As he himself left no autobiography or memoir behind, in most of the significant printed sources on him — monographs, histories of journalism, encyclopaedias, etc. — the years before his emigration appear as an almost perfect "terra incognita". This phase of his life is generally treated only briefly and vaguely. His descent and family background, along with the circumstances in which he spent his youth, have

never been revealed with full authenticity and precision for various reasons. Perhaps, the most important of these has been a lack of relevant source materials for those who wrote about him in the United States. This usually resulted in accepting what had previously been recounted about his family of the Hungarian period or fictionalizing it as Granberg did in his biographical story, *The World of Joseph Pulitzer* (38). The little that has been known so far about Pulitzer's origins was mainly derived from two of the earliest books on him: the first written by Ireland and the second by Don Seitz, another close associate of the publisher (32, 33).

In Hungary, the number of printed sources on Pulitzer are very limited and not based on genuine research. The first more or less thorough study on him was published in Budapest, in a series of books entitled *Karrierék* [Careers] (20) right after his death. More than fifty years later, Tivadar Ács in a chapter of his work on Hungarians in the American Civil War made a lengthier mention of Pulitzer but he, also, was far from giving new biographical details (21). From the period between the two books, only some superficial newspaper articles on Pulitzer are available. Nevertheless, almost all of the important Hungarian encyclopaedias, old and new alike, make brief mention of him or the Prizes, which are more or less correct.

As a matter of fact, Pulitzer's name was hardly known even in Makó, his native town. Until quite recently it has been impossible to discover any trace of his existence at his place of birth. No street was named after him, no building was marked and no statue or monument there kept his memory alive. A picture in the Museum and the widow of the last distant collateral relative were there only to remind the visitor of the name. It was mainly the old, local people who might have heard about him but even they hardly knew more than "that he made a legendary fortune in America". However, efforts have been made by the present author to uncover facts about Pulitzer's Hungarian background and, as a result, now it is better known in his native country and elsewhere. The town of Makó, too, has since expressed its respect for its great son in numerous ways: the publication of a bibliography in 1985, anniversary celebrations in 1986-87, an exhibition, a bronze marker, etc. Even a film report was presented by the Hungarian Television in April 1987.

There is perhaps, only one thing on which all the significant foreign and Hungarian printed sources unanimously agree: Pulitzer's date of birth. All other particulars referring to his Hungarian background differ according to the several biographies written and published about him. Such mistaken or disputed particulars are, for example, the place of his birth; the nationality and religion of his parents and hence his own descent; the particulars of his brothers and sisters; the occupation and property status of the parents; his education; the circumstances in which he left Hungary, etc. The writer of the present article would like to point out some of these, common mistakes and by disclosing new details to make an attempt at giving a brief sketch of the Pulitzers in Hungary.

## 2.

The religion and the nationality of the parents are crucial questions in judging Pulitzer's descent. Several of even the most significant monographs and biographies on him, including the German *Lexikon des Judentums*, accept as-factual the information which had been spread in America and printed by Ireland and Seitz: that Joseph's father was a Hungarian Jew while his mother had been a Christian, an Austro-German Catholic. Already in the thirties Edmund Vasváry, in his work *Lincoln's Hungarian Heroes*, rejected the veracity of this assertion as regards the mother's side (36). In fact the truth, as verified by numerous authentic documents, is that both parents were Hungarian born Jews. These documents, along with many other relevant sources used in this study, were discovered in the Csongrád County Archives of Szeged, the Municipal Archives as well as the Museum of Makó, and the Metropolitan Archive of Budapest.

In the popular conscription of Makó from the year 1850, each member of the Pulitzer family is entered separately and, unmistakably, under the heading of Religion as "Israelitic" and under Nationality as "Jewish". Besides, there are other official records from this time, such as e.g. registers of issued passes and passports, which, among the particulars and various other data, state the religion as well. They also confirm that Mrs. Pulitzer was also a Jew born in Hungary (1).

The family of the Pulitzers on the father's side was extremely wide-spread in the Hungary of the last two centuries. The ancestors had several lines of descent with many branches distantly and vaguely related if they had any relationship at all except for a common name. The Pulitzers or Politzers, as the name was spelt by members of some other branches of the family, first came to Hungary at the beginning of the 18th century from Moravia. Their name can be derived from a place name there (12). In southern Moravia, then a province of Austria, the village of Pullitz or in the native language Pulice had a considerable Jewish population in the 18th century. Formerly, in the Middle Ages it also had the name of Policz (22). This village, from which the Pulitzers took their name, is now in the Třebíč district of Czechoslovakia, near the Austrian border and has the name of Police, not to be confused with another village of the same name in north Moravia.

In the 18th century, Nicolsburg, a major city in Moravia, also had Politzers living within its walls. Two of them were traders and another one was Chief Rabbi of the province around 1770 (8). It is a historical fact that a large number of Moravian Jews came to Hungary, first as traders, later as permanent residents at that time. Hungary, then, was also part of the Austrian Empire and Jewish immigration from Moravia increased in the second half of the century due mainly to economic reasons. Owing to the favours granted by big landowners the majority of Jews, suitably for their economic functions, such as e.g. delivery of goods, leaseholding, huckstery, village commerce, money-lending, first settled down in manorial centres, countrytowns and villages of the Treasury. The Moravian Jews, quickly spreading in many parts of the country with their commercial activities, contributed considerably to the economic revival of Hungary that had only shortly before been liberated from the long Turkish occupation. Hostility or

discrimination in some towns here, too, often made them wander on and seek a new place for permanent residence within the country.

In the Hungary of the 18th century, as is shown by local conscriptions of Jews, we can find Pulitzers [Politzers] living in several localities along the main pathways Moravian Jews followed to populate the country. In Nyitra County, formerly north-west Hungary, for example, where trading contacts had been the most intensive among Moravian Jews, we can find several Politzers in various places between 1730 and 1746. In Buda, the first Politzer, Isaac appears with his family in the conscription of 1735 as a kosher butcher. It is clearly indicated that he still paid an annual tax of 6 florins to Prince Valter, his hereditary lord in Moravia. Following the expulsion of Jews by a Royal Decree from Buda in 1746, the Politzer family moved to neighbouring Óbuda. Later, at the turn of the century and soon after, Politzers also lived in some other parts of central Hungary (where most of the Jews gathered because of its economic importance) like Zsámbék, Óbuda, Pest, Irsa, etc. (8). The southern parts, the Great Plain with its excellent possibilities of corn growing and trade in land produce soon attracted many of the immigrant Jews. Szeged and its neighbouring area was a thriving agricultural and business centre with many Jewish traders at its fairs already in the first half of the 18th century. Lebl Politzer, a goldsmith, and his family, who arrived here from Óbuda, were among the first Jews let into the city to settle permanently in 1786. His son Salamon, also a goldsmith and a leading figure in the community, moved in 1870 to Vienna where he ran a jewellery of good reputation (18).

The town where the earliest settlement of the Pulitzers was registered in Hungary is Nagyvárad, then south-east Hungary, now Oradea, Roumania. Abraham, son of Aaron Pulitzer, was recorded there living as early as 1722 (19). Several members of the family lived there throughout the century and in 1736 one of them, Moyses, still paid tax to his hereditary lord Count Berchtold back in Moravia, the lord who evidently owned the village of Pullitz there (8).

### 3.

Regarding Makó, Joseph Pulitzer's native town, it was the county town of Csanád and the property of Bishop Stanislavich in the first half of the 18th century. The Bishop, a big landowner himself, first granted Jews permission to settle there permanently around 1743. Csanád County and Makó, which lies on the right bank of the river Maros, 200 kilometres south-east of Budapest and 30 kilometres east of Szeged, had previously been a relatively scarcely populated area with fertile land and good agricultural possibilities. At first, as a favour from the Bishop to encourage settlement, Jews were not requested to pay any other tax than that for "tolerance". Earlier commercial experiences of Jews visiting the area – so conveniently near to Szeged, a thriving trading centre for land produce – along with the hospitality of local landowners must have provided a great impetus for those who thought of settling there permanently. It was recorded that the very first Jews who arrived there had come from the County of Pest. The first conscription of the Jews of Makó from 1773 shows that their community consisted of 158 people altogether and most of the common trade among the men was in raw hide. Most of these

retail dealers first had been hawkers or itinerant tradesmen with one or two horses, living in rather poor conditions (16).

It was especially after the turn of the century, following the Napoleonic wars, that with the upswing in corn production Makó really became a provincial market centre. Despite the great flood of 1821 and the great plague of 1831, by 1836 the Jewish population of Makó rose to 1120, of whom 144 owned houses. By 1828 there were as many as six Pulitzer families existing in the town (2). Outside Makó, many of the surrounding villages were also gradually populated by Jews who arrived as newcomers from more or less distant places. With the growth in population by the middle of the 19th century, at least a dozen of the neighbouring villages and towns such as Apátfalva, Csanád, Hódmezővásárhely, Csongrád, Arad also had several Pulitzer families living among their Jews (5).

In the last century, the Jewish community of Makó, then occupying a fairly centrally situated section of the town, had a reputation for their traditionally, religious spirit. It always had devout and learned rabbis like Salamon Ullman whose activity (1826–63) acquired a national reputation for the community. The Jewish tradesmen of Makó who had managed to accumulate a certain amount of capital, regularly came with their locally bought up land produce (mainly grain and wool) to the greater trading centres to sell them to wholesale merchants. In the period between 1800–1850 Hungarian Jews – and the community at Makó was no exception in this respect – despite the rigid feudal conditions, began to achieve a bourgeois status and emancipation. Article XXIX of 1840 annulled many discriminatory measures, such as the prohibition to move freely within the domicile, but it still did not give them full equality with other non-noble inhabitants of the country. At this time the majority of Jews inclined towards both linguistic and social integration and the religious reform necessary for this. During the revolution and struggle for independence against Austrian Habsburg rule in 1848–49, they took the side of the Hungarian liberation movement. It was in July 1849, shortly before the collapse, that at last the National Assembly passed the total emancipation of those being of the “Mosaic religion”.

#### 4.

Whether it was from Pest County or Nagyvárad or directly from Moravia that the first Pulitzers arrived at Makó is not clear. Their first representative there, was Baruch Simon Pulitzer who, in the conscription of 1773 appears as a newly married retail dealer in raw hide, with a house of his own (16). He was born in 1751 but the place of his birth is not known. As is reflected in the conscriptions of later years, he had several children, one of whom must have been Mihály, Joseph's grandfather (2). Baruch Pulitzer, who was among the leaders of the local Chevra Kadsha (Religious Society) of the community, died in about 1830 (17).

As compared to the existing hiatuses in describing his ancestry in the 18th century, the material available on Joseph Pulitzer's grandparents and parents is quite abundant. The grandfather, Mihály (Michael) Pulitzer was undoubtedly born at Makó, some time

between 1779 and 1784. (All the various sources state a different year for his birth within the period indicated.) According to the death register of the Jews of Pest, where he died, his death occurred on 22 April 1870, "at the age of 88" (5). He lived a long and active life as a well-to-do merchant trading in land produce. His wife, i.e. Joseph's grandmother, was a native of Csongrád town, not too far from Makó to the north-west, where several Jews from Pest County had formerly settled. Rosalie (Sali, Sara, Susan) Schwab, as her maiden name was, was born either in 1788 or 1789 and died in Pest on 5 January 1863, "at the age of 75" (5).

Mihály Pulitzer, as listed in a conscription of Jewish tax-payers at Makó from the year 1809, had a tenant, a maid and a servant in his household (2). In 1816, by way of an exchange for a house and 2500 florins he received a plot from the county authority. He established his new residence in the town centre of Makó, at No. 2410, Market Place (3). In 1834 he had a new stone house and fence built for himself, which was quite unusual at that time. In the 1820's he was already such a well-to-do merchant with such a well reputed business that even councillors turned to him for loans. In the 1830's and 1840's a juryman and member of the community leadership, he was the highest tax-payer among local Jewish shopkeepers (3). As a member of the Jewish community board he often served as a spokesman and a delegate in his people's affairs in the town, which included the demand for emancipation. In July 1849 he was nominated as one of five councillors to sit on the Municipal Council and to represent the Jews of the locality (16).

By all standards, Mihály Pulitzer was a successful businessman of his time. He had excellent trading contacts with the merchants of Pest (still not united with Buda officially at this time) whose great national fairs he regularly visited. What he sold there was the grain, wool and tobacco he had bought up locally at Makó and in its vicinity. In turn, for his shop he ordered consumer goods such as spices, coffee, sugar, pepper, grapes, lemons as well as such products as clothes, flannel, candles, matches and even playing cards. He was part owner of an oil stamping press and a mill on the river, and had large quantities of wheat in his barn. He also had a few cattle and horses necessary for the business, with some land outside the town used mainly for fodder-crops (1). By the mid-1850's he had moved his permanent residence from Makó to Pest, though he kept the house and a vineyard at Makó as his own property. He lived there in the Jewish district, at No. 1, Zwei Mohrengasse (Két Szerecsen Street) as a widower, to the end of his life (5).

## 5.

One of the most important source materials relating to Joseph Pulitzer was found in the Csongrád County Archives. It is an attested copy of the birth and death register of the Jewish community at Makó, from the last century. According to this register József (Joseph) Pulitzer was born on 10 April 1847, at Makó. He was ritually included in the religious community on 17 April. Consequently, the *Magyar Zsidó Lexikon* [Hungarian Jewish Encyclopaedia], *The Encyclopaedia Americana*, and *The Jewish Encyclopaedia* (ed. by I. Singer, New York) are definitely wrong in giving Budapest as his place of birth.



So were earlier the inscription in the Museum of the Statue of Liberty in New York (Pulitzer launched the fund raising campaign for the construction of its pedestal) and the Hungarian book in the *Karrierek* series, the former naming Budapest, the latter Miskoic as his place of birth. The parents indicated in the register are: Fülöp Puliczzer (sic!), a "trader" as father, and Elize Berger, as mother. The sponsors were a certain Anna Brüll a relative, and Salamon Ullman, the local rabbi (3).

According to the register of birth, Joseph was the fourth child in the family Seitz, and after him Swanberg in his excellent monograph Pulitzer, mistakenly assert that there were altogether four children in the family, placing Joseph as second after "Louis" and before Albert and "Irma". In fact, the first was actually Lajos Lázár (Louis), born on 7 January 1840. The second and third children were: Borbála (Barbara), born in 1842 and died 20 March 1847, a few weeks before Joseph's birth; and Breindel, born in 1845 and living thirteen months until 24 June 1846. Both little girls died of what were then incurable diseases. The fifth child of the Pulitzers was Anna Fanny Franciska, born in 1849 and living eleven years until her death on 13 July 1860. Albert, who was born 10 July 1851 and later went to America after Joseph, died in Vienna, in 1909. The seventh child was a boy named Gabriel (Gábor), born in 1853, and who died in 1855, also at a very early age. All these children were born at Makó. But later, after the family's move to Pest, an eighth and a ninth child were born to them as well: Helene and Arnold, the latter living nine months until he died on 26 October 1856 (3,5).

The eldest boy, Lajos, as verified by documents, first went to the Jewish elementary school in Makó. Then, from 1852 on he was taken each year by his parents to an "economic school" in Vienna until he died on 7 June 1856, in Pest. His untimely death was caused by tuberculosis at the age of 16 (1,5). He had probably been considered by the family as a would-be successor to the father's business. Interestingly, however, no mention was ever made in the registers or other documents of a sister called "Irma" in the family.

## 6.

The father, whose real name was Fülöp (Philip) Pulitzer, and who sometimes signed his name as *Puliczzer* (but never "Ignác" or "Frigyes" and "Politzer" as Kende and after him Lengyel put it in their books *Magyarok Amerikában* and *Americans from Hungary*), was, also, born in Makó, in 1811. The earliest official record on him is the copy of a certificate in the minute-book of the Municipal Council of Makó, dated 26 May 1841. As a recommendation, it is stated there that "Fülöp, son and partner of the merchant Mihály Pulitzer, trading in wool, tobacco and other things has a house and shop of his own and is a sober, peaceful man of good will, an honest and popular trader" (1). Fülöp was not the only child of Mihály: he had several brothers and sisters. His brothers, Mihály-Mayer, Simon and Áron all became businessmen, too, the latter two having served as members of the National Guard in the Revolution of 1848. The eldest brother, Mihály-Mayer, himself

a "respected tradesman of high repute at Makó", moved his residence to Pest around 1850. The names of his sisters were Katalin, Róza, and Josefa ("Pepi") (1).

Fülöp Pulitzer was a tall, intelligent man with dark brown hair, a moustache, beard and a hooked nose, as described by contemporary records of issued passports. He was a well-trained businessman. It was on 5 October 1838 that he married Elize Louise Berger, Joseph's mother who also came from a Jewish family of traders in Pest. Born there in 1823, a tall, dark haired woman with a round face and blue eyes, she may have been a "beauty" but she did not prove to be a clever enough successor in her husband's business when troubles came years later (1). There were scores of Bergers in the Pest of the last century, and which part of the empire the ancestors migrated from remains to be discovered. What is known with certainty about Elize Berger, is that she came from a family of Jews and was not born in Austria proper, as is asserted in several biographies. The Bergers were given permission to settle permanently in Pest in the second and third decades of the 19th century. The name of Lazar Berger, Joseph's maternal grandfather, was mentioned for the first time in the conscription of "nontolerated" Jews in Pest from the year 1811. In a few years his family became "tolerated", with a residence in Király Street. His wife, Catharina, the maternal grandmother of Joseph, was referred to as a "Jewish proselyte" by the 1838 wedding record of the Budapest Jewish Community Archive. According to the Jewish conscription of 1837, Ludwig Berger, brother of Joseph's mother, was a married merchant and living in Pest (4).

In the early 1840's Fülöp Pulitzer became quite independent in business. In 1843 he bought himself and his family a plot of about middle size for 3 000 florins. He established his new trading enterprise in the town centre of Makó by having a new house with outhouses built on the plot right across from the County Hall (3). It was here, at No. 1637 Megyeház (Úri) Street, that on a spring day in 1847 their son Joseph saw the world for the first time. Already by 1844, Fülöp had been trading in land produce "in large quantities". Just like his father, he also bought up locally grown tobacco, grain, onion and wool to sell to other wholesale merchants in various parts of the country. He ordered rape, spices, sugar for his shop and occasionally stored fish in his warehouse. Before his business trips he often turned to the magistrate for letters of recommendation and it is obvious that he always got the best certificates, usually describing him as a punctual tax-payer, a sober and honest merchant who enjoyed great respect in town and was a "man of excellent means" (1).

In the late 1840's he had servants of his own, went on business trips with his own wagons and horses for which the fodder was grown on his own piece of land just outside the town. Sometimes he advertised hay for sale. During the Revolution of 1848-49 he was food-supplier to the insurgent troops in southern Hungary (1). At this time he also served as juryman in the Jewish community (16). Following the defeat of the War of Independence the Austrian victors imposed punishments on Jewish communities for their alignment to the cause of freedom; the invading troops brought affliction upon the Jews of Makó, too, by looting their homes and shops. But Fülöp Pulitzer, although two of his brothers had previously served in the revolutionary army, was clever enough to avoid disaster with his family: he went on with his trading activity as a "military food-supplier"

to the Austrian troops as well, for a couple of years more. In the 1850's he remained a successful, wealthy merchant who still often went on business trips in the Austrian Empire, occasionally accompanying his eldest son, Lajos to an "economic school" in Vienna (1).

The family of the Pulitzers by no means suffered any kind of privation at this time and little Joseph must have had a really carefree and cheerful boyhood. A private tutor was even hired to come and teach the children at home (27). Their father, with the help of loans from the council, made new investments in his business on a large scale. With his wares, he frequently visited the great national fairs in Pest which, by then, was already considered the capital of Hungary, especially from an economic point of view. By 1854, Fülöp Pulitzer had become the "foremost merchant with the highest credit" in the town of Makó (1).

## 7.

In the spring of 1855 the Pulitzers made a great decision: in the possession of an excellent letter of recommendation from the Chief Magistrate of Makó they turned to the Council of the City of Pest for permission to settle there permanently (1). Joseph was exactly eight years old when this happened. The father, in his petition addressed to the Council, gave several reasons why they had decided to move to the capital. These included the enumeration of his trading in land produce on a large scale; that he had already had business contacts with many of the merchants of Pest; that with his stock and shipments of land produce he was always present at the national fairs; that his wife was a native of Pest and her relatives were tradesmen of high repute in the markets of Pest, etc (4). Still in the same year, on receiving permission to settle, the Pulitzers sold their fine house and having fulfilled their obligations in taxation they left Makó for good. The incentives for the family's move to Pest with five young children were far from anything like being threatened by bankruptcy or the father's illness and wish to retire. Simply, they had a desire for greater chances of prosperity in business and they followed in the footsteps of some other members of the family (e.g. Mihály-Mayer, Fülöp's brother), who had already successfully taken up residence and established themselves in Pest, which was not just an economic and cultural centre of the country but also a centre for the Hungarian Jewry.

On 1 January 1856 Fülöp Pulitzer reopened his business in Pest, extending it by trading in raw products as well. The family first took up residence at No. 6 Waitzner Street, at the Golden Stern Inn, which was near the Jewish area of Pest, where the old Pulitzers (i.e. Joseph's grandparents) lived, and quite close to Újvásártér, i.e. the New Market Place, where the great national fairs were held. Pulitzer's enterprise soon held out promises of such prosperity as never experienced before. His turnover for the first year was 90 000 florins. In a short while he was able to do business on a large scale again and managed to raise the necessary trading fund requested from tradesmen who wished their firm to be incorporated. Early the next year, following a thorough auditing of his



## Hochw. H. St. Rathhaller's. Mittheilung!

a

Ich habe den für den letzten Jahrestag alljährlich  
 stündigen Anwesenheitsliste in der zur Annahme  
 gebracht, und damit das für das A. angeführte  
 Datum der städt. Rathhaller's. In die diesen  
 Geschäftsbesitz in nächstbesten Anwesenheit  
 so habe ich den für die auf den letzten Jahrestag  
 von 1000 fl. über den der für den Jahrestag  
 wurde. Daraus und dementsprechend mit dem  
 damit die Rathhaller's. B. anfallen.

b

Daß ich in dem meine Geschäftsbesitz  
 auf die jetzt hier für die in der für die  
 der für die meine Rathhaller's. so habe ich in  
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 der Rathhaller's. in der für die Rathhaller's  
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 auf die Rathhaller's. mit der Rathhaller's  
 für die Rathhaller's. zu der für die Rathhaller's.  
 Pest, den 12. Januar 1857.

Philipp Sulzer  
 Rathhaller's. in Pest.

2. Fülöp Pulitzer's request to the Council of Governor-general for permission to have his firm registered in Pest. (Fővárosi Levéltár – Metropolitan Archive, Budapest)

business matters by the authorities, his financial condition and commercial expertise were found sufficient enough for having his enterprise registered. At the same time he became a member of the Commercial and Industrial Chamber of Pest. No doubt, a turnover of 84 000 florins achieved already in the first three months of the year 1857 proved to be a new upswing in business and indirectly in the family's wealth (4).

Despite the sorrow over the deaths of their eldest son, Lajos, and their youngest child, Arnold in 1856, the family was well off, and Fülöp and Louise Pulitzer probably did their best to provide their children with everything they could afford including a good education. As no trace of the Pulitzer children has been found in the existing school registers of Pest it is likely that Joseph continued receiving a private elementary education.

## 8.

A real disaster came to the family when Fülöp Pulitzer suddenly became ill with tuberculosis and business had to be neglected. At this time they rented a different flat, at No. 2 Göttergasse [Bálvány Street] in the fashionable Leopoldstadt district of Pest, not far from their previous residence by the New Market Place. Everything seemed to collapse at once when the father died on 16 July 1858, at the age of forty-seven (5).

Pulitzer's testament was officially opened on 27 June 1859, almost one year following his death, in the presence of his widow and her brother. It was written on 22 June 1855,

Wollte die übereinstimmung dieser beiden nicht erreicht werden  
 können, so soll meines Vaters (Kasimir Pfeffer) und, soll Kraft  
 dieser Verfügung und die bestimme, wie ich Anweisungen erhalten  
 werden, und verwahrt werden soll.

4te Teil von abgeben meines geliebten Gutes, so  
 die ich angefallen habe, so kann Leben befreit werden  
 geben, und anfallen solches für die Gerechtigkeit, so  
 angefallen werden.

Wollte ich nicht, so soll diese Verfügung, so  
 angefallen, gegeben mit anderen. (S. am 22. Juni 1855)



3. The finishing lines of the testament written and signed by Fülöp Pulitzer, the Publisher's father. (Metropolitan Archive, Budapest)

at the time when the family had only just moved from Makó to Pest. It was written in the testator's own handwriting throughout and signed by himself. The document, as customarily requested, was written in German, in Gothic script. The handwriting itself, too, reflects a highly intellectual mind and an educated person's good command of German (4).

The will suggests uncertainty and worry about the family's prospects in case of trouble. It was made at a time when Fülöp Pulitzer had only just settled with his family in their new place in the capital city of Hungary; when he was only about to reestablish himself as a new merchant there; and when recent political and economic restrictions had been imposed on Jews, such as e.g. their prohibition from purchasing any real estate. All these circumstances plus fear of an untimely death, the doubtful fate of the children and that of the fortune in the future are reflected in the testament. Though it was written in a condition "sound in body and mind" the father's chief anxiety, that he would die while all his children were still under age, proved, unfortunately, to have been well founded. All things considered, and above all, what the will reflects indeed is the father's philanthropic feelings and an overwhelming fondness for his family: his children and his wife.

In the first place, Fülöp Pulitzer left to the local poorhouse and the Jewish hospital ten florins each. In the second paragraph of the testament he bequeathed each of his children — "Lajos, József, Albert and Franciska and Helene" — their compulsory share of the inheritance, with the appointment of their mother to be "their guardian and curator" while they were minors. His "beloved wife née Louise Berger" was given right to the free administration of the children's share and to become a beneficiary of it under the reservation that she would always require the approval of her acts from either his brother Mihály-Mayer Pulitzer or her brother Ludwig Berger. He chose this solution because, he thought, the compulsory shares themselves, being hardly enough for education and upkeep, would provide a greater income for these purposes than by dividing the inheritance up and placing the children under public guardianship authority.

As regards Louise Berger, she was named "heiress general" in the testament, though with the condition that "she may enjoy the fruits of her own share only". And, despite the fact that she received the right "to administer and make use of the property falling to her to the best of her knowledge", again, she was bound in her acts to the approval and agreement of either one of the two brothers already mentioned, or of Pulitzer's aunt, Rosalia Hoffmann. Nothing was left in the last will to any of the collateral relatives, the brothers or sisters of Fülöp. He also ordered that following the death of his wife or any of his minor children, even their shares would have to pass on to the remaining children within the family, as soon as they became of age.

## 9.

After Fülöp Pulitzer's death, the business went nearly totally bankrupt. No reserve fund seems to have remained and neither of the brothers (both tradesmen) appointed in the testament seem to have been able or willing to help the widow. Louise Pulitzer's tax

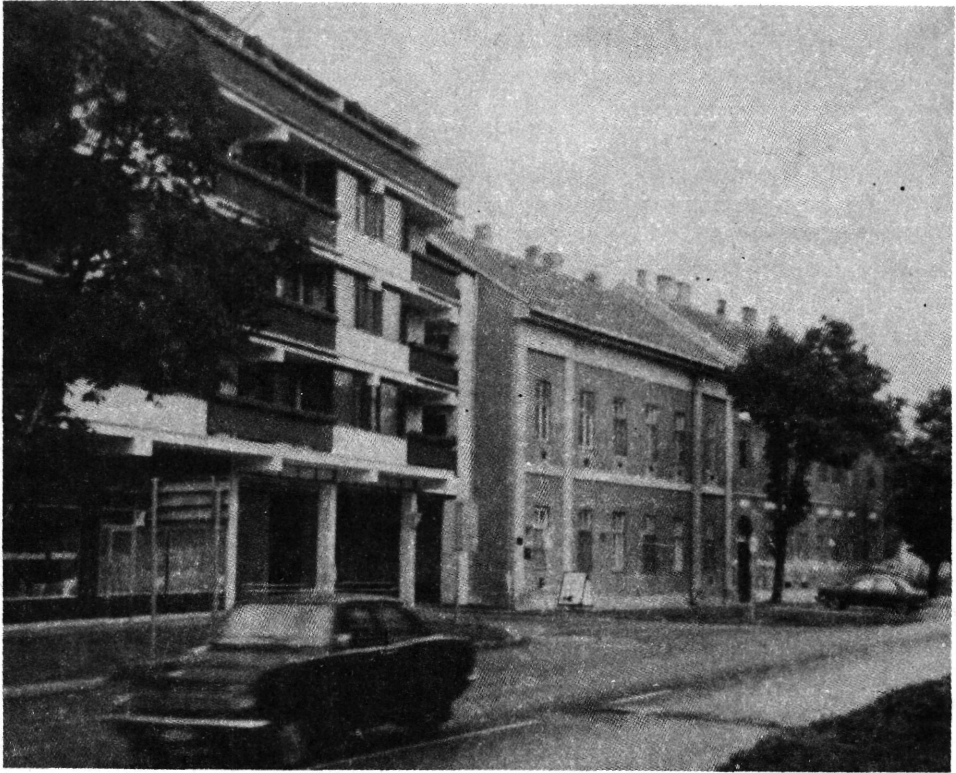
arrears grew so high that in a few months she was unable to pay them and her property had to be seized. The family, heavily in debt, was plunged into poverty. Finally, following petitions to reschedule terms of payment, the widow was granted permission by the revenue office to settle her tax arrears in monthly installments beginning in February 1859 (4).

The future fate of the Pulitzers after these events remains in relative obscurity. Joseph, now eleven and the eldest child in the family, along with his brother and sister became Fatherless, whose support and further education in those circumstances must have meant a real ordeal to their widowed mother. Nevertheless, by some later Hungarian newspaper accounts, Mrs. Pulitzer was said to have continued business activities by running a small flour shop while Joseph attended Hampel's Economic School in the following years (26). Yet another distress came to them when Joseph's little sister, Anna Fanny, suddenly died in July 1860, at the age of eleven. At this time the family, poverty-stricken, still occupied the same home in Göttergasse that their father had established (5). The fact that Joseph left home at seventeen against his mother's will to become a soldier in the United States may well have been the result of an effort made to lighten the burden of the family as well as an outcome of some sort of disagreement with his stepfather, Max Blau (Frey?). His unsuccessful efforts, to enter the various armies of European countries are well-known from Hungarian and American sources published at the beginning of this century. Albert, his younger brother, shortly followed suit: he also sailed to America later to become a newspaperman himself.

Reading biographies about Joseph's excellent knowledge of German after his immigration to the United States one might raise the question: how is it that his German was so good if his mother was not Austrian born? After the defeat of the Struggle for Independence in 1849 the whole of Hungary was brought under the absolute political control of the Austrian government. Though Hungary had formed a part of the Habsburg Empire even before, now oppression became so strong after the Revolution that the Hungarian language was not acknowledged as official. German was introduced as obligatory in all the offices, schools and other public institutions all over the country. In such circumstances, it would have been more difficult for an open-minded young man to ignore German than to master it.

The Vienna connection of the family must have been on the father's side. Earlier, about the middle of the century, three Pulitzers went from Hungary to study medicine at the University of Vienna. Theodore and Ignatio Pulitzer published their doctoral dissertations there in Latin (23,24). Adam Pulitzer became the most famous of them, a well-known otologist and professor of medicine in Vienna, and already the author of several studies in the 1860's (25). They were probably closely related to one another, the latter being a cousin of Joseph's.

The home where Joseph Pulitzer was born in Makó is no longer there in its original form. In 1895 the one-story building was remodeled by one of its new owners for use as a post office which functioned until the 1920's. The one-time residence of the Pulitzers is now No. 4. Dózsa György street, opposite the old Country Hall (*vármegyeháza*) — a last witness to Joseph's childhood.



4. Joseph Pulitzer's birthplace at Makó

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