

OTTO VON HABSBURG
FOUNDATION

OTTO VON HABSBURG

20 November 1912 — 4 July 2011

**LIFE AND
HERITAGE**



The first child of Archduke Charles of Austria and Princess Zita of Bourbon-Parma, Otto von Habsburg was born on 20 November 1912 at Villa Wartholz in Reichenau an der Rax, Lower Austria. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, followed by the death of Franz Joseph I of Austria played a decisive role in the fate of Archduke Otto, who thus became heir to the throne. As a child he participated at the coronation of his father, Charles IV in Buda on 30 December 1916 as a child.

Following World War I, the restoration of the Habsburg dynasty in Austria was prevented by the so-called Habsburg Law (Habsburgergesetz) of 3 April 1919. After two attempts to return, Charles IV was also deprived of the Hungarian throne on 6 November 1921. He spent the last years of his life with his family, in exile on Madeira Island, Portugal, where he died shortly thereafter, on 1 April 1922. After his funeral, Princess Zita told Otto the following: *“Now the responsibility rests on you. You must live up to his legacy!”*

- 1912, CHARLES WITH THE NEWBORN OTTO
- 1917, VILLA WARTHOLZ
- ABOUT 1914, OTTO AND CHARLES
- 1916, THE CORONATION OF CHARLES IV OF HUNGARY
- THREE GENERATIONS: FRANZ JOSEPH I, CHARLES AND OTTO



“The coronation truly impressed me. (...) It was probably one of the last grand rituals celebrated in Hungary, which demonstrated the unity of the state for the last time. (...) I had to stay by the side of the King of Bulgaria throughout, who was a wise old gentleman; he knew many things, and he wanted to share everything with me. He gave me philosophical lectures during the coronation ceremony on the symbolic meaning of each part of the ritual. Naturally, I didn’t understand a word and was profoundly bored by it all, but I listened politely, because I have always been taught to respect my elders.”

Otto von Habsburg
on his father’s coronation in Buda



With the help of their relative, King Alfonso XIII of Spain, the Habsburg family moved first to El Pardo Palace in Madrid and then to a palace near Lekeitio, a small Basque fishing village. Otto spent his childhood in difficult material circumstances. After his first years of primary school in Switzerland and Portugal, he continued his studies as a private student with Hungarian Benedictine monks and Austrian, English and French tutors. Archduke Otto, consciously raised as heir to the throne, passed both Austrian and Hungarian secondary school-leaving examinations.



In October 1929, the family moved to Ham Castle in the town of Steenokkerzeel near the Belgian capital, where the church bell played the melody of Haydn's 'Gott erhalte'.

Otto enrolled in the Catholic University of Leuven under the name Duc de Bar, where he obtained his doctorate in political and social science in 1935. In 1933, German President Paul von Hindenburg, the holder of Austrian and Hungarian orders, received the undergraduate Archduke in Berlin, while Otto twice refused to meet Hitler.

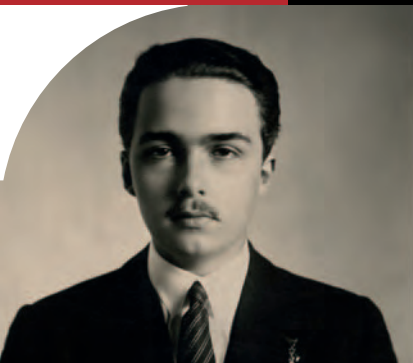


"I saw how Nazism was and I saw it coming. Therefore, first I bought Mein Kampf, and then I was brave enough to read it. Since it is written in such terrible German, it is almost unbearable for those who are interested in literature to read this book. But later on, I always gave thanks to God that I had already read it at that time, because he foretold everything, didn't he? The problem was that he openly declared everything, but people did not believe him. So, I knew what it was all about (...) I was always surprised that many Western politicians did not understand this (...)"

Otto von Habsburg on his Berlin experiences

- 1920S, BY CAR BY THE COAST
- AFTER 1923, LEKEITIO, THE URIBARREN CASTLE
- 1920S, OTTO AND HIS TUTOR, PÁL ZSÁMBOKY
- 1930S, STEENOKKERZEEL, CHATEAU DE HAM
- ABOUT 1928, OTTO AND HIS SISTER, ADELHEID
- ABOUT 1928, FAMILY RADIO
- 1930S, THE QUEEN WITH CHILDREN, STEENOKKERZEEL

III. “THE NAME HABSBURG MEANS A POLITICAL MISSION IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES”



Otto reached adulthood on 20 November 1930, inheriting thereby his father’s royal titles. However, until the completion of his studies, the dynasty’s political direction was defined by Queen Zita, who continued to have influence afterwards. As Otto said later: *“She made the decisions, but always asked me beforehand.”*



From the second half of the nineteen thirties, the attention of the young Habsburg and the legitimists supporting him was focused on the preservation of Austria’s independence. Chancellor Dollfuss said: *“I’m not a legitimist, I’m an Austrian patriot. If you show me proof that the monarchy will benefit the country, Austria should become a monarchy today rather than tomorrow.”*

After the death of Dollfuss, murdered by the National Socialists in the summer of 1934, the legitimist Schuschnigg became the head of government. In July 1935, the laws on the expulsion of the imperial family were repealed; however, Schuschnigg asked *“His Majesty”* not to return to Austria without prior consultation.

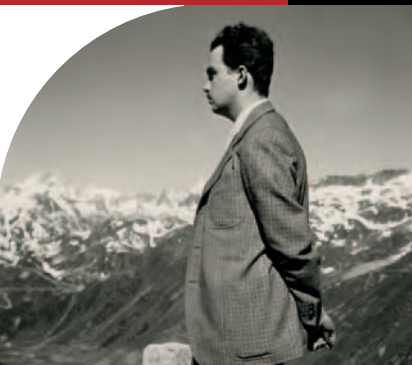


- ABOUT 1930, OTTO VON HABSBURG
- ABOUT 1937, IN UNIFORM
- CHANCELLOR ENGELBERT DOLLFUSS
- THE LATE 1930S, THE EIGHT SIBLINGS WITH QUEEN ZITA
- THE END OF 1930S, FAMILY TRIP WITH QUEEN ZITA



“For me, the name Habsburg means that we are a political family. We have been living in politics for centuries. Therefore the name Habsburg means a political mission in any circumstances. The form of state in itself doesn’t matter much; it’s the content of the state that matters, and we have to serve that (...) Besides, you know, I have children and many grandchildren, and I would like to work also for them, as they will live in the world to come. After all, our duty is to work for future generations.”

Otto von Habsburg on family tradition



While Schuschnigg deemed restoration irrelevant, in his New Year message of 1937, Otto called on his supporters to act. In line with his motto *“Not shooting at all is the same as missing”*, his aim was to take even the slightest chance to

save the Austrian state. The Schuschnigg–Hitler meeting in February 1938 increased the German pressure on Vienna. At that point, Otto, setting aside restoration for the moment, put himself forward as federal chancellor. Schuschnigg, however, declined the offer.

The annexation of Austria to the German Empire destroyed all hope a return to power. Hitler, in his Vienna speech, outlined Austria’s new “mission to the great German future” vis-à-vis the royalists. An arrest warrant was issued on Otto, who was declared a German citizen by the Nazis – and a traitor. According to an order of 1940, he and his mother should not be arrested – they were to be immediately shot instead.



- 1936, SWITZERLAND
- CHANCELLOR
KURT VON SCHUSCHNIGG
- 1937, IN UNIFORM
- ABOUT 1937, QUEEN ZITA
WITH EIGHT CHILDREN
- ABOUT 1940, ZITA AND OTTO,
UNITED STATES
- 1940, WINTER PLEASURES,
STEENOKKERZEEL

“It is my firm determination to go all the way in protecting the people and the State, and I am convinced that I will meet a considerable response among the people. With regard to the situation that would not allow the long recognition procedure on the part of the major powers, I have no intention to ask of you (...) the restoration of the monarchy. I would merely call upon you to transfer the Chancellery Office, and

in this way without changing the constitution, without a new recognition (...) we would enjoy the same advantages as those provided by the formal act of the restoration of the monarchy.”



During World War II, the young Otto von Habsburg used his diplomatic contacts to assist thousands of persecuted people. In the United States, he established a relationship with US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, gave numerous lectures against Nazism, and advocated the restoration of Austria's independence at every opportunity. He returned to Europe in October 1944, but the objection of the Allies and the re-entry into force of the Habsburg Law forced him to leave Austria again. This is how Otto reacted: *"To have to live abroad all the time is simply not a life. This is true even if I, a confirmed European, do not feel truly alien anywhere in Europe."*

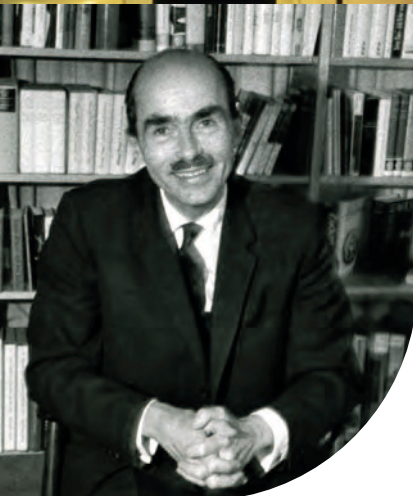
In the 1950s, he focused on the unity of the anti-communist Hungarian emigration; at the request of the legitimists, he even visited the old Miklós Horthy in Lisbon. He paid close attention to events in Hungary, the show trials, and news of the 1956 Revolution.

Otto moved to France in 1951. In 1954, he married Princess Regina of Saxe-Meiningen in Nancy, and they settled in Pöcking, Upper Bavaria. They had seven children: Andrea, Monika, Michaela, Gabriela, Walburga, Karl and Georg.

"I always tried to be a man of reconciliation, and to shake hands with those who hadn't quite acted in the past quite as I would have wished. To give just one example: we were not really friends with Miklós Horthy, as you might imagine Nevertheless, I shook hands with him when I felt that it was a national interest to make the emigrés more unified. It was the same, for example, when we saw the 1956 events coming. (...) And then everyone had to work together! (...) This is why I shook hands with Miklós Horthy. Only for this reason."

Otto von Habsburg on his relations with Miklós Horthy

- ABOUT 1940, OTTO VON HABSBURG
- 1943, FAMILY CIRCLE, QUÉBEC
- 1951, REGINA AND OTTO'S WEDDING, NANCY
- 1953, THE PROUD PARENTS
- MID-1950S, OTTO AND HIS FAMILY



In 1954, the Archduke applied for Austrian citizenship and wished to clarify the exact usage of his name. After being granted Austrian citizenship as Otto Habsburg-Lothringen, and in accordance with the law of 1919, he renounced his reigning claims and resigned from belonging to the dynasty on May 31, 1961. Otto had already signed the “flepni” (a slang word of German origin for certificate), as he referred to the document in his calendar, the day after the birth of his first son, Karl.

After more than five years of political dispute, Otto von Habsburg received an Austrian passport by the decision of the Supreme Administrative Court, and on 31 October 1966, set foot again his ancestral land. His mother, Queen Zita, could not follow him for more than one and a half decades. Otto later said: *“I was blackmailed, but my signature is valid. I do not claim any monarchical or property rights.”*

On 4 May 1972, a historic handshake took place between Federal Chancellor Bruno Kreisky and Otto von Habsburg. An indication of the slow change in official Austria’s attitude to its own history is shown by the fact that in 2001 Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister Susanne Riess-Passer greeted Otto, who was committed to defending the authority of the Republic of Austria, on behalf of the government as “Imperial Highness”.



- 1960S, MINNEAPOLIS
- 1967, BOOK PRESENTATION, MUNICH
- 1966, SALZBURG
- 1960S, UNITED STATES
- 1966, WELS

“I, the undersigned, hereby declare that in accordance with Article 2 of the Act of 3 April 1919, published in notice 209 in the Austrian Federal Law Gazette, I resign from belonging to the House of Habsburg-Lorraine, and from the monarchical rights following therefrom, and I declare myself to be a loyal citizen of the Republic.”

Waiver of Otto von Habsburg





Otto von Habsburg was Vice President of the International Paneuropean Union, working for a free, Christian, social and unified Europe from 1957, and became President of the organisation in 1973. Between 1979 and 1999, he worked in the European Parliament, with the mandate of Bavarian Christian Socialists (CSU) to establish a common foreign and security policy for the continent and for the early accession of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. On several occasions, he spoke in Hungarian before the members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

The political administration of János Kádár kept an eye on his activities; his name was on a blacklist until the second half of the 1980s. On 1 August 1987, after seven decades, he came back to Hungary as a private individual. In February 1989, he made his first official visit as a Member of the European Parliament. Otto von Habsburg was the patron of the Pan-European Picnic organised on 19 August 1989, which played a key role in the fall of the Iron Curtain.

In the late 1980s, he applied for Hungarian citizenship, which was finally restored by the Antall government. In autumn 1989, the Independent Smallholders' Party (FKgP) raised the possibility of electing him as President of the Republic; he rejected the candidacy, however. He continued his political activities in the 2000s, remaining a respected public figure as a government adviser, speaker and commentator.



- 1970s, OTTO VON HABSBURG
- 1981, IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, STRASBOURG
- 1979, IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, STRASBOURG
- EARLY 1980s, TV INTERVIEW
- 1989, BUDAPEST, EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY
- 1989, NEXT TO THE POSTER OF THE MOVIE "BY THE WILL OF GOD"

"First and foremost, I am European (...) I became European in America. (...) because I saw that the difference between being a Greek and an Irish, a Portuguese and a Danish person is smaller than what unites us: our common European culture, common European freedom. And so, my home has been Europe ever since. However, I must admit that there are countries where I feel more at home than in others: Austria and Hungary. Especially Hungary; when I talk about Hungary, I talk about my homeland..."

VIII. THE DEATH OF OTTO VON HABSBURG AND HIS SPIRITUAL HERITAGE



The eldest son of the last Hungarian King and Austrian Emperor, politician, publicist and respected European statesman died on 4 July 2011 in Pöcking. His earthly remains were buried in the Capuchin Crypt in Vienna, while his heart urn was laid to rest in Pannonhalma, in the lower church of the Basilica of the Abbey, at his request.



Otto Habsburg represented the European ideal of Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman and Alcide de Gasperi, which was based on the diversity of European nations and Christian civilisation. At the time of his death, Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament (EP), said in a statement that a “*European giant*”, a leading figure of EU integration, had passed away. At the burial ceremony in Pannonhalma in 2011, Archabbot Asztrik Várszegi recalled that Otto von Habsburg had been a professed Catholic Christian, a politician of European education, as well as “*a great person with a Hungarian heart*” and a good family man.

In addition to his 37 volumes on European historical, social and political issues published in 9 languages, his spiritual heritage is now also honoured by the Otto von Habsburg Foundation in Hungary.



“Faced with death, man doesn’t delude himself. He is alone, and earthly merits do not matter anymore. When a man enters the presence of his Creator, in front of Him all that matters is the fulfillment of duty and goodwill. This lesson remained the most precious experience of my entire life, as my father wished. His death showed that if we have a clean conscience, no failure can be real.”

Otto von Habsburg on the life and death
of his father, Charles IV



- AT THE EVENT OF THE PAN-EUROPEAN UNION
- AT HIS HOME, 2000S
- OBITUARY SERVICE FOR OTTO VON HABSBURG, VIENNA, 2011
- HEART URN AND MEMORIAL SITE IN PANNONHALMA



OTTO VON HABSBURG FOUNDATION

The Foundation's primary purpose is to preserve the tangible and intangible heritage of Otto von Habsburg in a dignified manner, arrange it into a single collection, process it and provide access to it. The Foundation also aims to support the creation of a future-oriented European ideology based on the work of Otto von Habsburg.

The collection includes his political articles published in different languages, books published, book collection, studies and memoranda based on his conversations with heads of state and important politicians, the reports of his 20 years' work in the European Parliament, press reports on his return to Austria, his personal correspondence, awards, film and photograph archive, and further documents and memorabilia forming Otto von Habsburg's legacy. Altogether, the collection consists of approximately 700 archival storage boxes, 101.65 linear feet.







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