

BALATONI BALÁZS:

**LIBERALISM, HUMANITARIANISM AND NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION IN
THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BRITISH BALKAN COMMITTEE (1903–1919)**

DOCTORAL THESIS

Summary

The aim of the dissertation is to present the activities of the British Balkan Committee between 1903 and 1919. The history of this organization, which can be characterized as a humanitarian, a political lobby, and last but not least as an expert group, is virtually unknown in Hungarian historiography. The dissertation discusses certain aspects of the Committee's history among the otherwise very concise international literature too. It undertakes to shed light to certain details and context which has remained obscure so far in regard the history of the Balkan Committee.

The backbone of the dissertation is provided by the Noel Buxton archival collection (Lord Noel-Buxton Papers), which is housed in the Rare Books and Special Collections of McGill University in Montreal. Nevertheless, besides the extensive use of archival primary sources, I relied on a massive body of contemporary press and other published testimonies.

After the Introduction, the thesis interrogates the history of the Balkan Committee in five main chapters. Each unit seeks to approach the organization from a different angle in order to thoroughly illuminate the multifaceted nature and impact of its activities. However, at bottom, I attempt to answer the following research questions: what role the Committee played in the development of the British Balkan image and what cultural traditions shaped its discourse, representational strategies? Which channels did it use to disseminate the information they collected? These fundamental questions appear in the subsequent chapters of the dissertation, where I examine, concerning specific events, what role the Committee played in shaping events, what answers it offered to them, and what relationship it established with British political institutions and society.