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GREINDL, Count Jules (Mons, 7 September 1835 –Forest (Brussels), 30 July 1917), diplomat and honorary minister.

Jules Greindl is the son of general Léonard Greindl, who was Minister of War in 1855, and Éléonore Fouillé. Greindl is a brilliant student at Mons secondary school, showing a talent for languages and drawing, but his father prefers that he should pursue a diplomatic career.

On 26 May 1855, after succeeding the diplomatic exam with great distinction, he enters the diplomatic corps as attaché in Saint-Petersburg. This posting is followed, on 10 October, by a nomination as legation secretary. His passion for languages and arts continues to dominate his interests and Greindl frantically studies, amongst others Arabic, Russian and Turkish. Eventually, he masters sixteen languages. He also takes on sculpture. In August 1857, he obtains a degree in law from the University of Ghent and, in November 1857, he travels to Rome as secretary second class. Less than one year later, in October 1858, he goes to Constantinople (Istanbul) where, in 1860, he encounters the Duke of Brabant, the future Leopold II, and becomes part of the prince's entourage. The two men are exactly the same age and the prince sees Greindl's potential. At the same time, Greindl also develops a friendship with the Ottoman diplomat and notable art collector Khalil Bey (Halil Şerif Paşa, 1831-1879), whom he first met in Saint Petersburg where Khalil was Ottoman ambassador. They meet each other regularly in Paris from the mid 1860's onwards. On 8 October 1860 Greindl is nominated in Paris, but he stays on in Constantinople until, in January 1862, he is called to Saint Petersburg again. In May 1863, Greindl marries Aline Correa Henriquez de Seisal. Aline, who was born in Copenhagen (14 April 1840 – 1 April 1922), is the daughter of José Mauricio Correa Henriquez, count of Seisal and Portuguese minister in Brussels, and Alexandra Stjernvall. Greindl and Aline will eventually have eight children. In September 1864, Greindl goes on a special mission to Bern. He is promoted to resident minister in Rio de Janeiro on 10 July 1864. In that capacity he goes again to Constantinople (11 September 1867) and Athens. In May 1869 he becomes resident minister to the Bavarian Court.

After the suppression of this posting in 1871 due to the German unification process, Greindl becomes director of the Commerce and Consulates division of the Foreign Office (8 December 1871). He negotiates a new commercial treaty with France and starts to invest his time in the expansionist plans of Leopold II, albeit without conviction. Leopold II wants him to bring the Philippines into Belgian hands; therefore, in November 1872, Greindl is nominated as plenipotentiary minister and extraordinary envoy in Madrid. There, as he predicted, he fails to convince the Spanish government of Leopold's plans and, at his own request, becomes inactive at the end of November 1876 but is almost immediately nominated by King Leopold II as secretary of the *Comité National Belge de l'Association Internationale Africaine* (AIA). The committee was officially founded on 8 November 1876 to implement the resolutions taken at the Geographical Conference of Brussels (12 to 14 September 1876). It organizes and equips various expeditions (amongst them the Cambier expedition) from the African East coast into the interior towards Lake Tanganyika in order to establish trading posts. Once Stanley disembarks in Marseille, after returning from a voyage descending the Congo River down to Boma, Leopold II sends Greindl and General Sanford, a member of the executive committee of the AIA, to meet with him in January 1878. They ask Stanley to enter the service of the AIA, more precisely of the *Comité d'Etudes du Haut-Congo*, recently founded by Leopold with Greindl's aid, amongst others. The committee's goals are to study the economic possibilities offered by the Congo River and to establish a commercial and railway company. Greindl subscribes personally for 5.000 Frs. (the capital being 450.000 Frs.). He is earmarked to become secretary general of the *Comité d'Etudes du Haut-Congo*, but, contrary to expectations, he returns to diplomacy, perhaps due to a difference of opinion with Leopold II. What is certain is that Greindl is unconvinced by the King's expansionist agenda for Africa.

On 3 September 1879, Greindl is nominated as minister to Mexico where he is meant to renew Mexico's relations with Belgium, which were severed due to the tragedy surrounding Emperor Maximilian and Charlotte. He is nominated resident minister in Lisbon on 27 December 1880 where African affairs will, once again, determine his activities and force him to work against his own preferences and beliefs. He keeps Leopold informed on the actions and position of the Portuguese government during the negotiations for a treaty between Portugal and Britain. By this treaty, Britain would recognize Portuguese claims on the Congo, thus dismantling Leopold's ambitions. This situation makes Lisbon a primary diplomatic posting. Although Greindl actively tries to counter such a treaty, his efforts are fruitless and, on 26 February 1884 Britain and Portugal sign a treaty

recognizing the Portuguese claims on the Congo estuary in exchange for British control of navigation on the river. However, as it turns out, France and Germany are so outraged by this agreement that Britain and Portugal have to abandon the treaty on 26 June 1884. Now only a major conference on the Congo can offer a solution and that is precisely what happens. In his capacity of Belgian minister in Lisbon, Greindl's participation in the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 is crucially important.

Finally, Greindl finishes his diplomatic career in Berlin where he is nominated by his friend and secretary-general of the Foreign Office, Auguste Lamberton, on 28 April 1888. Greindl stays in Berlin for twenty-four years to become not only the dean of Belgian diplomacy, but also a strong advocate of Belgian-German relations. He keeps the King well informed about Prussian sentiments during the Brussels Conference (1889-1891) and is further considered as a sort of oracle, a beacon of knowledge for the ministers of Foreign Affairs. From 6 May 1907 he is considered an honorary minister. Greindl is honorably dismissed from the diplomatic corps on 16 May 1912 but is allowed to retain the honorary titles of his diplomatic functions. Furthermore he is raised from baron to count. In 1915, during the occupation, the Germans abuse the parliamentary archives to discredit influential diplomats and politicians who, before the war, in *tempore non suspecto*, expressed amicable feelings towards Germany. Greindl, as long time minister in Berlin, is one of those and is sorely disappointed by this manipulation of official documents. He dies on 30 July 1917, almost blind and separated from his sons, who are fighting the Germans on the Yser.

Dr. Jan Anckaer
1 June 2012
Library Federal Parliament

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Langue
Undefined

Tomaison:

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