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Vol. 48 | No. 1 | 2021

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EDITORIAL

A History of Hungarian Studies as Reflected in Forty-Seven Years of Scholarship: *Hungarian Studies Review*, 1974–2020 1
Árpád von Klimó, Leslie Waters, and Steven Jobbitt

ARTICLES

Legitimizing Socialism? Hard-Currency Stores and Western Goods in Hungary, 1956–1989 19
Annina Gagyiova

"Put a Stop to the Excessive Influx": The Rhetoric of Restriction Regarding Female and Jewish Students at Budapest University, 1900–1930 48
Anna Borgos

FORUM

The Legacy of the Numerus Clausus One Hundred Years On
Organized and edited by Judith Szapor

Introduction 79
Judith Szapor

The Numerus Clausus: A Transitory Act between Liberal and Ethnic Nationalisms 86
Gábor Egry

A Cul-de-Sac or a Blazing Trail? The Significance and Long-Term Impact of the Numerus Clausus Legislation 92
Béla Bodó

Jewish Quotas on a Continuum of Time and Space 100
Ágnes Katalin Kelemen

REFLECTION

Thomas Mann and Hungarian Intellectuals: The Rewards of Shared Visions 106
Lee Congdon

BOOK REVIEWS

János Bak (†) and Géza Pálffy. *Crown and Coronation in Hungary 1000–1916 A.D.* 125
Reviewed by Árpád von Klimó

Paul Miller and Claire Morelon, eds. *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*. 126
Reviewed by Andrew Behrendt

Jonathan Wilson. *The Names Heard Long Ago: How the Golden Age of Hungarian Soccer Shaped the Modern Game*. 130
Reviewed by Alexander Vari

Maya Nadkarni. *Remains of Socialism: Memory and the Futures of the Past in Postsocialist Hungary*. 134
Reviewed by Jessica Storey-Nagy

Heino Nyyssönen. *A demokrácia lebontása Magyarországon* [The dismantling of democracy in Hungary]. 138
Reviewed by Stefano Bottoni

Call For Submissions 143

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EDITORIAL

A History of Hungarian Studies as Reflected in Forty-Seven Years of Scholarship: *Hungarian Studies Review*, 1974–2020

Árpád von Klimó, Catholic University of America, US

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Steven Jobbitt, Lakehead University, Canada

ABSTRACT | Surveying forty-seven years of *Hungarian Studies Review*, this editorial essay examines some of the major scholarly trends within Hungarian Studies, an interdisciplinary field that took hold in North America after World War II. Energized by the contributions of émigré scholars who fled Hungary in the wake of the 1956 revolution, Hungarian Studies was later shaped by the collapse of state socialism in 1989. Tracing the evolution of the field across different generations of scholars, the essay reflects on the various contributions that *Hungarian Studies Review* and its precursor *The Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies* have made over the last five decades, not only to discussions of Hungarian politics and history but also to the study of art, literature, and culture, as well as life and community in the diaspora. Highlighting ways in which contributors have pushed the boundaries of the field, the essay also looks at how the journal has provided a forum for scholarship on women and gender, and for studies that, for political reasons, have not always been possible to pursue in Hungary itself.

KEYWORDS | Hungarian Studies, Hungarian diaspora, émigré scholars, interdisciplinarity, post-1989 scholarship

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This is the first issue of *Hungarian Studies Review* (*HSR*) to be published by Penn State University Press, but a very rich forty-seven-year history lies behind its publication.[1] In the following, we would like to highlight some of the key developments in the history of the journal as well as the work of the different generations of scholars who have contributed to *HSR* and its precursor, *The Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies* (*CARHS*), during this (almost) half century.[2] From its inception as *CARHS* in 1974, this journal has provided a space for scholars working on topics related to Hungarian history, politics, society, art, and literature, and has also been among the most important resources for studies on Hungarians living in Canada and the United States. The journal has also provided a forum where scholars have taken stock of developments within Hungarian Studies and pushed the boundaries of the field. The articles and essays of the many scholars who have published in *HSR* therefore provide us with a good overview of the history of Hungarian Studies from the mid-1970s to the present and also a sense of the broader context within which this body of scholarship was produced. As we discovered while researching and writing this editorial essay, the contents of nearly half a century of issues serve as a treasure left behind by many of the giants of this interdisciplinary field. Anyone interested in Hungarian Studies can still benefit from their knowledge and insights, and contemporary scholars will be reminded that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. The evolution of Hungarian Studies from a specialized area of interest—one that was influenced by politics (especially during the Cold War) as well as by questions of immigration and identity in the diaspora—to an open, multidisciplinary, cooperative field that engages scholars from very diverse backgrounds is a rich story that is worth telling in some detail. Inevitably, the history of Hungarian Studies that we provide here is only a partial one, and what follows has had to omit mention of many of the journal's contributors and topics. We hope, however, this overview will nevertheless spark interest in the past accomplishments of the journal and the scholarship it has showcased.

Early Years, 1974–1980: The 1956 Generation and *CARHS*

The Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies was co-founded in 1974 by the Hungarian–Canadian émigré leader Ferenc Hárcsár and Nándor F. Dreisziger, then assistant professor of history at the Royal Military College

in Kingston, Ontario, who would become the journal's long-serving editor.[3] Dreisziger served continuously in that capacity until his retirement in 2018 and was joined in his editorship by George (György) Bisztray between 1981 and 2003. The early years of the journal were strongly influenced by the large Hungarian refugee population living in Canada and the United States and their scholarly interests and concerns. The World War II-era wave of refugees was followed by an even larger influx after the 1956 revolution, which included hundreds of émigrés with advanced degrees in a wide range of fields, many of whom taught in colleges and universities all over North America. Most of the early contributors to *CARHS* came from these ranks, and their collective works were very broad in scope, presenting research in a variety of disciplines, including architecture, art history, economics, literature, linguistics, political science, and sociology, although historical studies dominated from the beginning. Unsurprisingly, given the tense political climate of the Cold War era and refugees' tenuous professional networks in Eastern Europe, what was conspicuously missing from the journal were contributions from scholars based in Hungary. Rather, the émigré community collaborated with members of the greater Hungarian diaspora in North America as well as non-Hungarian scholars.

Many of the early contributors and founding members of *CARHS*'s editorial board were themselves émigrés, including historians Éva S. Balogh, Peter Pastor, and Stephen Béla Várdy, and literary scholar and writer Ágnes Huszár Várdy.[4] In the very first issue of *CARHS*, Pastor wrote about the historical aspects of Hungary's loss of Transylvania, a subject that was politically charged in Hungary but that could be explored with much greater leeway in North America. Also in the first issue, Huszár Várdy contributed an essay on the legacy of the poet Nikolaus Lenau in Hungary, and Canadian polyglot and translator Watson Kirkconnell wrote a piece titled "A Canadian Meets the Magyars."[5] Alfonz Lengyel, a participant in the 1956 revolution and an archaeologist and historian, contributed a review essay on a number of then-recent studies in Hungarian art history.[6] Thus, even from the first issue we can see the emergence of several trends: the interdisciplinarity of the journal, the contribution of non-Hungarian scholars, and the willingness to take on research subjects that were considered off-limits in Hungary.

Another characteristic of the early contributors to *CARHS* was their tendency to inhabit multiple worlds. It would be fair to describe many of these individuals as not only scholars but public intellectuals and even history makers in their own right. Ferenc A. Váli, a specialist in international law

and political science, was part of the Horthy regime's efforts during World War II to abandon its alliance with Nazi Germany. The Hungarian government sent Váli on an ultimately unsuccessful diplomatic mission to Turkey in 1944 to establish contact with the Allies and switch sides in the war. He then became a government consultant after the war, until he was arrested during the Stalinist period due to his "suspicious" contacts with the West. He was freed from prison in 1956 and left Hungary after the revolution failed. Váli authored an article on the János Kádár regime for the fall 1976 issue, among others.[7] His colleague at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he taught in the Department of Government, was another acclaimed Hungarian scholar and writer, Tamás (Thomas) Aczél, who had won the highest literary awards in Stalinist Hungary before he became disillusioned with the regime. Aczél also served as Imre Nagy's press secretary before he fled the country in 1956.[8] In 1976 he published a short article in *CARHS* about his experiences during the Stalinist period. Bennett (Bence) Kovrig, who became chair of the University of Toronto's Department of Political Economy in 1979 and was also for a time Director of Research for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, contributed a book review in 1976 and served as an editorial adviser for the journal between 1977 and 1994.[9] Iván Völgyes, a Holocaust survivor and fifty-sixer, worked for the US State Department and as an adviser to General Electric in Hungary after the 1989 regime change, in addition to his position as a political scientist, first at the University of Nebraska and later at the University of Maryland.[10] His article "Social Change in Post-Revolutionary Hungary, 1956–1976" was published in the spring 1978 issue of *CARHS*.[11] Finally, Gábor Vermes, another frequent contributor to *CARHS,* was also a Holocaust survivor and 1956 refugee. Vermes began his career as a geologist, but later received a PhD from Stanford University in history and worked as a professor at Rutgers University.[12] His first article for the journal, "Count István Tisza and the Preservation of the Old Order," appeared in 1975.[13] All of these scholars led very eventful lives, and their first-hand experiences in some of Hungary's most dramatic historical events added tremendous perspective to the journal.

While most of the early contributors to *CARHS* were men, the journal included women authors from its inception. In addition to Éva S. Balogh and Ágnes Huszár Várdy, literary scholars Anna Borbala Katona and Enikő Molnár Basa were frequent writers. Katona, an American Studies professor at the University of Debrecen before she moved to the United States

in 1975 to teach at the College of Charleston in South Carolina, wrote articles that highlighted reciprocal influences in politics and literature between America and Hungary.[14] Basa made many important contributions with regard to Hungarian literary studies in the first half-decade of the journal's existence, publishing an article on the reception of Hungarian poetry in the English-speaking world in 1977 and a review article on contemporary Hungarian poetry in 1978. A long-time member of both the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada (HSAC) and the American Hungarian Educators Association (AHEA), she served as an editorial adviser of the journal between 1975 and 1982 and in 2020 was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit.

No review of the journal's early years would be complete without discussing the contributions of Stephen Béla Várdy and George Bisztray. Várdy, a history professor at Duquesne University for fifty years, wrote dozens of articles for *CARHS* and *HSR*, many of which did the work of assessing Hungarian Studies as a field. In his first article in 1975, Várdy provided a broad overview of Hungarian Studies being taught in American and Canadian universities at the time. He also highlighted the problems and conflicts the field was experiencing because, as he argued, it was torn between three different "worlds": North American academia, the American Hungarian diaspora, and the scholarly community in state-socialist Hungary.[15] As a result, Várdy noted a decline in Hungarian Studies that followed what he considered the "Golden Age" of the field in North America from 1945 to 1970.[16] Despite his trepidation about the future of Hungarian Studies, Várdy himself was instrumental in keeping it robust by publishing on a wide spectrum of scholarly interests, including topics such as medieval castles, interwar irredentism, and general issues concerning Hungarian identity. Bisztray, a languages and literature scholar educated in Hungary, Norway, and the United States, was a key figure during the journal's early years.[17] Completing his doctorate at the University of Minnesota in 1972, Bisztray taught briefly at the University of Alberta between 1976 and 1978 before becoming the University of Toronto's inaugural (and, as it would turn out, only) Hungarian Chair. Under Bisztray's leadership, Toronto developed a Hungarian-language curriculum and regularly offered courses in Hungarian literature and film. His direct involvement with the journal began in 1976, when he joined the board of *CARHS* as an editorial adviser. He became co-editor of *HSR* in 1981 and, through his position as Hungarian

Chair, provided vital support for the journal in the 1980s and 1990s. He also ensured that literary topics were covered and represented among the studies published. His first article for *CARHS* was published in the spring 1976 issue. Titled "Man's Biological Future in Hungarian Utopian Literature," Bisztray's study examined Hungarian utopian fiction between the 1860s and World War II, with a focus on the ways in which key Hungarian writers of the period—especially Imre Madách, Mór Jókai, and Frigyes Karinthy—dealt with questions of biology, and with the emergent fields of anthropology, neurology, and behavioral science. Bisztray contributed his last article to *HSR*, "The World Visits Hungary: Reflections of Foreign Travellers, 1433–1842," in 2006.

The many accomplished contributors to the early years of *CARHS* set a strong agenda for the journal going forward. Though initially dominated by Hungarian émigrés, over time the contributions of first- and second-generation Hungarian-Canadians and -Americans and non-Hungarian scholars increased. *CARHS* continued to play a vital role in Hungarian Studies, in large part due to its ability to publish works that did not have to adhere to the strict Marxist standards of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and the willingness of its editors to cover controversial subject matter. Even as relations between Hungary and the West improved after the reestablishment of US-Hungarian diplomatic relations in 1978, the scholarly community largely remained divided.

HSR and the Last Decade of the Cold War

Although the level of scholarship published in *CARHS* was impressive from the beginning, editors Dreisziger and Bisztray acknowledged that changes in the field of Hungarian Studies in North America necessitated a further professionalization of the journal. In 1981 they relaunched it under the name *Hungarian Studies Review,* aided by the financial support of Bisztray's Hungarian Chair at the University of Toronto.

One of the editors' chief concerns was that the successful integration of Hungarian émigrés into North American society had led to rapid assimilation and a declining knowledge of—and interest in—Hungarian language and culture among subsequent generations.[18] Although Hungarian-language schools, churches, and societies had dwindled from their peak in the early twentieth century despite a resurgence after 1956,

there were nevertheless still a good number of individuals of Hungarian descent who showed an interest in Hungarian Studies and began engaging in the field as early as the late 1970s. Oliver Botar, a first-generation Canadian born in Toronto to 1956 refugees, became an important voice in the *HSR* beginning in the 1980s. Mentored by both Dreisziger and Bisztray, Botar's first scholarly article, "From European Capital to Ottoman Outpost: The Decline of Buda in the Sixteenth Century," appeared in the spring 1987 issue and was followed by two issues on art history that he guest-edited in 1988 and 1994. Now professor of art history at the University of Manitoba and a member of *HSR*'s editorial board, Botar was part of a new generation of scholars with Hungarian roots who contributed directly to the resurgence of Hungarian Studies in Canada, one that was centered in part around the Hungarian Chair at the University of Toronto, as well as around *HSR* and the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada, which Bisztray played a key role in founding in 1985. Dreisziger and Bisztray worked closely with a number of Hungarian-Canadian scholars, such as Susan M. Papp, who served as *HSR*'s assistant editor between 1981 and 1985 and who contributed an article to the spring issue in 1981, as well as Éva Tömöry, an instructor of Hungarian language courses at the University of Toronto since 1984 and associate secretary of HSAC from 1991 to 2010.[19] Tömöry played a key organizational role within the Hungarian Studies community beginning in the 1980s and like Papp was part of an emergent group of Hungarianists in Canada that would come to include Christopher Adam as well as Agatha Schwartz and Judith Szapor, scholars who have made significant contributions to *HSR* and to Hungarian studies in the last twenty years.[20]

The emergence of this new generation of scholars coincided with increased opportunities to travel to Hungary, as the country gained a reputation as the Eastern Bloc state most open to the West. The development attracted the interest of not only people of Hungarian descent but of political scientists, sociologists, literary scholars, and historians who were interested in Eastern European subjects and saw greater opportunities to research in Hungary than elsewhere. This helped further facilitate the professionalization of Hungarian Studies and led to an even more diverse authorship in *HSR*. Among the many specialists who published in the journal in this period were Lee Congdon, Robert Blumstock, Victor O. Buyniak, and Scott M. Eddie.

HSR continued to serve as a forum for subjects considered controversial in Hungary and allowed for the publication of scholarship that was not required to adhere to the Communist Party line. A case in point is both issues from 1983, which were dedicated to World War II in Hungary. Contributors included Nándor Dreisziger, Éva S. Balogh, former Hungarian diplomat Francis Wagner, and historian Thomas Sakmyster, among others. In the fall issue, a series of articles on the 1941 bombing of Kassa/Košice, the event that precipitated Hungary's declaration of war on the Soviet Union, introduced provocative evidence that directly challenged the Hungarian government's official version of events that blamed Germany for the bombing.[21] Sakmyster, a biographer of Hungarian regent Miklós Horthy, became a major contributor to *HSR* and a longtime member of the journal's advisory board. He also contributed to a special issue on the subject of Horthy in 1996.

Although Dresziger believed that *HSR* was received positively in at least some circles in state-socialist Hungary,[22] the journal did not publish works by scholars based in Hungary before 1989. The lone exception was a 1987 article by historian Géza Jeszenszky on the topic of historical reassessments of István Tisza, prime minister of Hungary in the late nineteenth century.[23] This altered drastically after Hungary's regime change. In fact, Jeszenszky, who would have an influential political career as a founding member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (*Magyar Demokrata Fórum*), and who served as Minister of Foreign Affairs in Hungary's first post-socialist government and later as Hungarian Ambassador to the United States, became a fixture at *HSR* and continues to serve on the journal's editorial advisory board. As a contributor to the journal, he was joined after 1989 by dozens of scholars based in Hungary, who published regularly in *HSR* going forward.

A Changing World: *HSR* and 1989

Beginning already in the spring–fall 1989 issue of *HSR,* we can detect a much greater level of accord between subjects covered in the journal and concerns in the Hungarian press and academy. That issue featured a number of essays on topics related to the Hungarian minorities of East Central Europe, which became a major focal point of Hungarian political discourse in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The issue included a contribution by Magda Ádám, one of the first scholars from state-socialist Hungary to work extensively at Western academic institutions, including Oxford University

and the Woodrow Wilson Center.[24] Dreisziger, historian Thomas Szendrey, and political scientist Walker Connor also contributed essays.[25]

In fall 1990, *HSR* brought out a special issue on "Reflections of Medieval Hungary in Western Europe and in Later-day Hungarian Literature," which was very timely in the context of debates around Hungary's "Western-ness" and the application made by József Antall's post-socialist government (1990–94) for membership in the European Community, which at the time consisted only of western European states. An issue on Oszkár Jászi published in 1991 was, in turn, dominated by leading Hungarian historians from the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest: Attila Pók, Péter Hanák, and György Litván.[26] By publishing the work of major Hungarian scholars, the 1991 issue of *HSR* demonstrated that the journal was committed to providing an English-language forum for these individuals and that Hungary was becoming more fully integrated into the orbit of international scholarship. In the 1993 issue, co-editors Dreisziger and Bisztray reflected on the post-socialist changes in Hungary and Eastern Europe, as well as on the bloody civil wars in Yugoslavia, and the rise of nationalist tensions in the region. Though they contended that "the main purpose of the *HSR* has always been, and will always be, apolitical," they also did not shy away from potentially controversial issues, noting that, since the 1970s, they had published articles by exiled Hungarians who could not publish in Hungary during the state-socialist period.[27]

A special issue from 2001, titled "Hungary 1001–2001: A Millennial Retrospection; Essays on a Thousand Years of Hungarian History and Hungarian Survival" demonstrates the degree to which scholarship in *HSR* could engender debate among Hungarian Studies scholars. Edited by Dreisziger, it contained articles by leading scholars who investigated the issue of "national survival" from a number of angles. It provoked a long, critical letter to the editor by Susan Glanz, a major contributor to the Hungarian Studies Association (HSA) and economics professor at St. John's University in New York, Éva Kiss-Novák from the University of Szeged, and Barnabás Rácz from Eastern Michigan University, who found fault not only with the empirical evidence that the special issue marshaled to make optimistic predictions about demographic and economic growth in Hungary in the first decades of the twenty-first century, but also with the "asymmetric and premature" proposals offered by the authors.[28] *HSR* was an important venue in which these critical issues were hashed out among scholars.

The early 1990s also marked the beginning of *HSR*'s close cooperation with both HSAC and the Hungarian National Széchényi Library in Budapest, which became co-sponsors of *HSR* in 1991 (the US-based HSA would become a co-sponsor of the journal in 2005).[29] Reflecting on the journal's new partnerships, Bisztray and Dreisziger wrote in 1992 that the support *HSR* received would, among other things, allow it "to do more in bringing to the world's attention the cultural problems and political situation of Hungarian minorities beyond the borders of Hungary."[30] Hungary's regime change enabled *HSR* and Hungarian Studies more generally to incorporate the voices of scholars from Hungary. Since that time, the journal has been much more international in scope, though it has retained its base in North America. Without the artificial barriers imposed by the former system, the journal could turn towards supporting scholars, further promoting Hungarian Studies, and focusing on the intellectual trends of the field.

A Forum for New Scholarship

The collapse of state socialism in Hungary brought serious challenges, along with new opportunities. Financial support for humanities and social sciences drastically declined in the 1990s, a trend that took hold in the West as well. Scholars at the beginning of their careers faced increased pressure for international publications but with less support than their predecessors had enjoyed. *HSR* provided a place for young scholars to publish their ideas. In the 1990s, up-and-coming Hungarian scholars such as Krisztián Ungváry and Béla Bodó began publishing in *HSR*. Ungváry contributed an article in the spring 1995 issue on the battle of Budapest, and Bodó wrote a comparative study of the urban development of Budapest and New York City that appeared in the fall issue of the same year. The second half of the 1990s was marked by the publication of some exciting new studies, some of which were by younger scholars who had been drawn to Hungarian themes because of the events of 1989, Eastern Europe's *annus mirabilis*. In the fall 1996 issue, Johanna Granville published an article on the "Soviet-Yugoslav détente" and the relations between Belgrade and Budapest. Sándor Agócs, who had become known for his study of the Catholic social movement in Italy, wrote on "Labour in Post-Communist Hungary," illustrating yet again how *HSR* informed its readers about important questions of the time.

Since the turn of the millennium, *HSR* has continued to provide a forum for both new and established generations of scholars working on innovative topics in the field of Hungarian Studies. This list includes András Becker, a visiting research scholar at Indiana University, Bloomington, Gergely Kunt of the University of Miskolc, and the late Mark Pittaway, a professor at Open University in the UK, whose article "The Revolution of Industrial Workers: The Disintegration and Reconstruction of Socialism, 1953–1958" provided critical insights into his innovative research on this topic.[31] In 2012, the Early Modern Russia specialist, Georg B. Michels of the University of California, Riverside, analyzed the seventeenth-century *kuruc* revolt waged by Hungarian insurgents against the Habsburgs. In fall 2013, Cintia Gunda of the University of Debrecen wrote about Hungarian "Post-World War I Propaganda" and was accompanied in the same issue by the agrarian historian Zsuzsanna Varga from Eötvös Loránd University, who published on trials against managers of agricultural cooperatives in 1970s Hungary. In 2015, Zsolt Nagy, history professor at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, published a study about cultural diplomacy in the interwar period, while Agatha Schwartz contributed an essay on Éva Heyman, a teenage girl from Northern Transylvania whose Holocaust diary sheds important light on narrative tools developed to respond to persecution and trauma. Other notable authors in recent years have included Zoltán Fejős, the former director of Hungary's Museum of Ethnography from 1997 to 2012; Anna Menyhért, a scholar at the University of Amsterdam who studies trauma processing in the digital age; Jason F. Kovács, who teaches at the University of Seoul in Korea and has written on the first Hungarian settlements in the Canadian West; and the Belorussian scholar Aliaksandr Piahanau, who received his PhD from the University of Toulouse and who published an article on interwar Hungarian-Czechoslovak relations in the 2018 issue.

Literature, Art, and Translations in the *HSR*

Literary studies and art history were important components of *HSR*'s offerings from the journal's inception. Articles on Imre Madách by Dieter P. Lotze in 1984, Lászlo Moholy-Nagy by Diane M. Kirkpatrick in 1988, and Jozsef Eötvös by Virginia L. Lewis in 1993 ensured early on that scholarship on some of Hungary's most prized artists and writers were available

to English-language audiences. Over the course of its existence, the journal has also published translations of Hungarian sources into English. One of the earliest was Watson Kirkconnell's translation of János Arany's epic poem "Toldi" in 1977. The largest translation undertaking in *HSR* was however the special issue, "Thousand Years of Hungarian Thought" in 2000 that contained a unique collection of primary sources selected, introduced, and edited by György Bisztray.[32]

In 2004, Oliver Botar guest-edited his third special issue dedicated to art history for *HSR*. Titled "Twentieth-Century Hungarian Art at Home and Abroad," the issue contained six full-length articles that dealt with various aspects of twentieth-century Hungarian modernist and avant-garde visual arts. Focusing on individual artists, the issue included essays on László Moholy-Nagy, Lajos Kassák, and Hugo Gellert, as well as an article based on interviews with eight contemporary artists concerning identity and democracy since the end of state socialism in 1989–90.[33] In 2010, Botar published a fourth issue on art, this one based on presentations given at the international conference "László Moholy-Nagy: Translating Utopia into Action," held at the University of Delaware on October 20, 1995. Co-edited with Hattula Moholy-Nagy, the artist's daughter, the issue included essays by Lloyd Engelbrecht, Krisztina Passuth, Eleanor Hight, Botar himself, Éva Forgács, Alain Findeli, Jeffrey Meikle, and Victor Margolin. The issue also included translations of three short stories published by Moholy-Nagy early in his career, which the co-editors believed provided important insight into the "aesthetic and social thinking" of one of Hungary's most important and well-known artists.[34]

Women and Gender in *HSR*

Hungarian Studies Review has often shown a willingness to push the boundaries of what Hungarian Studies encompasses. In recent decades, it has become a forum for feminist and gender scholarship, a field slow to develop in East Central Europe but one that has a number of talented scholars who have published in *HSR*. Co-edited by Marlene Kádár, professor and coordinator of the Fine Arts Cultural Studies Program at York University in Toronto, and Agatha Schwartz, professor of German and World Literatures and Cultures at the University of Ottawa, the 1999 special issue, "Women and Hungary: Reclaiming Images and Histories,"

broke new ground for *HSR*. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, the volume brought together scholars from Hungary, Britain, Canada, and the United States and contained nine contributions in three main areas: politics and history, literature, and the arts. Chris Corrin of the University of Glasgow contributed an article titled "Gender Politics and Women's Political Participation in Hungary," and Éva Thun, professor of Education at Pannonia University in Veszprém and one of the first lecturers in Hungary on feminist pedagogy, wrote on "Women in Hungary in Times of Social and Cultural Transition." Sociologist Judit Acsády of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, another early scholar working on Hungarian feminism, contributed an essay on that topic.[35]

Three years later, *HSR* published a second special issue dedicated to the topic of women and Hungary in the twentieth century, presenting articles by guest editor Agatha Schwartz and other major scholars of the field, such as Katalin Fábián, professor in the Government and Law Department at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania; Andrea Pető, professor in the Department of Gender Studies at Central European University in Vienna; and Mária Palasik, formerly professor at Budapest University of Technology, and now a researcher at the Historical Archives of State Security Services (ÁBTL).[36] In 2014, a special issue dedicated to "Gender and Nation in Hungary since 1919" continued in the vein of the two earlier special issues, while broadening the scope of the reflections and making connections between the past and the present. Co-edited by Judith Szapor, associate professor of history at McGill University in Montreal, and Agatha Schwartz, the issue contained seven articles, a number of which were by junior scholars at the beginning of their careers. These studies included an article by Tímea Jablonczay, associate professor at the Department of Media and Cultural Studies of King Sigismund College, Budapest, on "Nation, Sexuality, and Gender in Literary Representations," as well as an article by Fiona Stewart titled "'The Parting of Ways': The Shifting Relationship between Anna Lesznai and Emma Ritoók, and the Restructuring of Hungarian Cultural and Political Life in the Early 1920s." Róbert Kerepeszki, one of a number of scholars educated and active at the University of Debrecen, contributed a study on masculinity in the right-wing radical student movements in interwar Hungary, while historian David S. Frey, founding director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, published a piece on the actress Katalin Karády as a

Hungarian "Mata Hari." Tanya Watson, who completed her PhD at the University of Ottawa, contributed a piece titled "Hungarian Motherhood and *Nők Lapja*." The issue also included new scholarship by Pető and Fábián.[37] As Gender Studies master's programs were recently banned by the Hungarian government, and the field faces major logistical and political challenges in Hungary, *HSR* will continue to provide a place for this critical discourse in upcoming issues as well.

HSR and Studies on Hungarians in North America

From the very beginning, *HSR* has stood out for its important scholarly contributions to the study of Hungarians in Canada and the United States, a tradition it has continued over its now nearly half-century of publication. The 1998 issue, for example, contained a collection of Hungarian-Canadian biographies as well as a comprehensive bibliography of Hungarian Studies in Canada.[38] In 2008, a special issue on the 1956 revolution included studies that examined its impact on Canada, especially as it related to questions of immigration and the legacy of Hungarian refugees in the country.[39] There were articles on various aspects of the history of Hungarian refugees in Canada, alongside a joint article by Emese and Dezső Iván on the Hungarian Olympic team during the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne. Károly Nagy, himself a 1956 refugee, wrote on the distorted history of 1956 taught under Kádár, and Judith Szapor contributed a piece on the life and times of Júlia Rajk. This issue also included newspaper editorials originally published in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* on November 24 and 26, 1956, and the report of the Ukrainian-Canadian politician John Yaremko on his mission to Austria after the revolution.

Over the years, the journal has featured pieces on a wide array of North American–Hungarian connections. In 2003, 2005, 2008, 2011, and 2013, *HSR* published special issues on the relationship between Hungary and North America, featuring contributions by, among many others, historians Tibor Frank and Gergely Romsics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, English musicologist Alan Walker, and Margit Balogh, historian of the Catholic Church in Hungary during the state-socialist period. Articles focused on such topics as Hungarian Cardinal József Mindzenty's visits to Canada, California viticulturalist Ágoston Haraszty, US perceptions of Hungary during the Cold War, and the Hungarian "voice" of Radio Canada International between 1956 and 1991.

HSR's New Era

In 2018, Nándor Dreisziger retired as editor of *HSR* and our new editorial team took over. The journal is now published by Penn State University Press, which will enable us to strengthen our digital presence, making *HSR* available to more readers going forward. We aim to continue the journal's long tradition of promoting Hungarian Studies and, alongside journals like *Hungarian Cultural Studies* and *Hungarian Historical Review*, we hope to provide a forum for new generations of scholars to disseminate their work to an international readership. There are serious challenges that lie ahead. Academic freedom in Hungary has recently declined to a point not seen since the state-socialist period. Once again, certain scholarly lines of inquiry have become off-limits, and many scholars have been forced to leave Hungary in order to practice their disciplines. The demographic changes among Hungarian diaspora communities in North America that Dreisziger, Várdy, and Bisztray observed with concern decades ago have continued, and Hungarian language and culture are taught at ever fewer institutions in Canada and the United States. Nevertheless, we believe Hungarian Studies is strong and capable of withstanding these challenges. Our contributors in this and upcoming issues are a testament to the high level of scholarship that is being produced on Hungarian-related topics today. We look forward to serving as editors of *HSR* and building on the work of Nándor Dreisziger, George Bisztray, and the many, many scholars who have made the journal what it is today.

ÁRPÁD VON KLIMÓ teaches European history as Ordinary Professor at The Catholic University of America. He is the author of *Remembering Cold Days: The 1942 Massacre of Novi Sad and Hungarian Politics and Society, 1942–1989* (Pittsburgh University Press, 2018) and *Hungary since 1945* (Routledge, 2018). He also co-edited the *Routledge History of East Central Europe since 1700* (2017) and is currently working on a project on global anti-communism in the early 1970s, focusing on the followers of Cardinal Mindszenty.

LESLIE WATERS is assistant professor of history at the University of Texas at El Paso. Her research focuses on the ways in which border changes affect broader society, including migration, ethnic cleansing, and identity politics. Her first book, *Borders on the Move: Territorial Change and Ethnic Cleansing in the Hungarian-Slovak Borderlands, 1938–1948*, was published by University of Rochester Press in 2020. Dr. Waters is a member of the Hungarian Studies Association and Slovak Studies Association executive committees. She teaches courses on modern Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, and comparative borderlands.

STEVEN JOBBITT is associate professor of history at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. His published work focuses primarily on topics related to Hungarian historical geography and includes the book *Fodor Ferenc önéletírásai* [The autobiographical writings of Ferenc Fodor] (ELTE Eötvös József Collegium, 2016), co-edited with Róbert Győri. He is a member of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada and the US-based Hungarian Studies Association executive committees.

NOTES

1. The authors would like to thank *HSR*'s editorial advisers for their helpful suggestions and critical comments on earlier versions of this essay. Any errors are ours, and any omissions or oversights are entirely unintentional.

2. The name of the journal was simplified and changed to *Hungarian Studies Review* in 1981, when it began being funded by the office of the Hungarian Chair at the University of Toronto. See Steven Jobbitt and Árpád von Klimó, "*HSR*: A History of New Beginnings and a Tribute to Founding Editor Nándor F. Dreisziger," *HSR* 46–47 (2019–2020): 2–4.

3. A very useful index of the contributors and articles for the first fifteen years can be found in *HSR* 15, no. 2 (1988): 45–63. For a more detailed account of Dreisziger's tenure as editor, see Jobbitt and von Klimó, "*HSR*," 1–8.

4. Éva S. Balogh was a university student when she emigrated to Canada. She continued her studies first at Carleton University in Ottawa and then received an MA and PhD in history from Yale University. Peter Pastor was born in Budapest in 1942. After emigrating to the United States, he received a BA in history from CUNY City College and a PhD from New York University. Ágnes Huszár Várdy has been among the most productive scholars in Hungarian Studies in the diaspora, her work ranging from literature to feminist studies and Jewish history. Stephen Béla Várdy (1935–2018) was born in Hungary and came to the United States as a child. He completed his PhD in history at Indiana University in Bloomington and taught at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. Among his numerous published works is *Modern Hungarian Historiography* (Boulder, CO: East European Quarterly, 1976), which is still valuable today as an introduction to some of the various historiographical schools in Hungary up to the second half of the twentieth century. For a tribute to Várdy, see John J. Dwyer, Géza Jeszenszky, and Tibor Frank, "In Memoriam: Steven Béla Várdy (1935–2018)," *Hungarian Cultural Studies* 12 (2019): 162–65.

5. In the early issues Kirkconnell (1895–1977) served as honorary editor. Of Scottish descent, Kirkconnell was president of Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, and was proficient in fifty languages and dialects, including Hungarian. During World War II, he was the architect of the Canadian government's "Nationalities Branch" (1940), later the Citizenship Bureau. He was also instrumental in the founding of the Humanities Research Council (1943) and the Baptist Federation of Canada (1944).

6. Lengyel (1921–2016) served as a corresponding editor and editorial adviser between 1974 and 1980. Trained as a specialist of ancient Roman art, he became an expert on Chinese art as well and even a pioneer in the study of the art of cartoons and comics. Among his many accomplishments, he was the very first foreigner to lead excavations in Communist China.

7. Ferenc Váli (1905–1984). For Váli's obituary in the NY Times, see https://www.nytimes.com/1984/11/20/obituaries/professor-ferenc-a-vali-79-taught-in-hungary-and-us.html. One

of Váli's most well-known books was *Rift and Revolt in Hungary* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961).

8. Tamás Aczél (1921–1994). Aczél's papers are housed at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. See http://scua.library.umass.edu/umarmot/aczel-tamas/.

9. Bennett Kovrig (b. 1940) is also a former president of the American Association for the Study of Hungarian History (the predecessor of today's Hungarian Studies Association). He has written frequently for *Foreign Affairs*, and among his most cited works are *The Myth of Liberation: East-Central Europe in U.S. Diplomacy and Politics since 1941* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1973); *Communism in Hungary: From Kun to Kádár* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979); and *Of Walls and Bridges: The United States and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1991).

10. Iván Völgyes (1936–2001). For his obituary, see *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34, no. 3 (2001): 700. His most well-known work is *Hungary: A Nation of Contradictions* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982).

11. Iván Völgyes, "Social Change in Post-Revolutionary Hungary, 1956–1976," *CARHS* 5, no. 1 (1978): 29–39.

12. Gábor Vermes (1933–2014). For his obituary, see https://ahea.net/members/in-memoriam.

13. Gábor Vermes, "Count Istvan Tisza and the Preservation of the Old Order," *CARHS* 2, no. 1 (1975): 33–42.

14. Anna Borbala Katona (1920–2005). Her articles for *CARHS* included "The Hungarian Image of Benjamin Franklin," *CARHS* 4, no. 1 (1977): 43–57; "American Influence on Hungarian Political Thinking from the American Revolution to the Centennial," *CARHS* 5, no. 1 (1978): 13–28; and "An Interview with Mark Twain," *CARHS* 9, no. 1 (1982): 73–81.

15. Stephen Béla Várdy, "Hungarian Studies in American and Canadian Universities," *CARHS* 2, no. 2 (1975): 116.

16. Várdy, "Hungarian Studies in American and Canadian Universities," 94–96.

17. George Bisztray (1938–2013). For his obituary, see *HSR* 40, no. 2 (2013): 229–30. An expert on Hungarian writers in the diaspora, one of his most notable monographs is *Hungarian Canadian Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

18. George Bisztray, "Hungarian Chair at the University of Toronto: A Decennial Report," *HSR* 17, no. 1 (1990): 19.

19. Tömöry also served as *HSR*'s subscription manager from 1990 to 2004, and contributed an article on Hungarian entrepreneurs in Canada in 2008. See *HSR* 35, nos. 1–2 (2008): 125–42. In 2020 Tömöry was awarded HSAC's Nándor Dreisziger Medal for Outstanding Contributions to Hungarian Studies in Canada.

20. Schwartz, who emigrated to Canada from the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, has served as an *HSR* editorial adviser since 2000. Among her most significant scholarly contributions is *Shifting Voices: Feminist Thought and Women's Writing in Fin-de-Siècle Austria and Hungary* (Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 2008). Szapor joined *HSR*'s editorial board in 2015. Her most recent book is *Hungarian Women's Activism in the Wake of the First World War* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018).

21. *HSR* 10, no. 2 (1983).

22. Jobbitt and von Klimó, "*HSR*," 3.

23. Géza Jeszenszky, "István Tisza: Villain or Tragic Hero? Reassessments in Hungary—Verdict in the U.S.," *HSR* 14, no. 2 (1987): 45–57.

24. Magda Ádám (1925–2017). For her obituary by László Borhi and Carole Fink, see https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/october-2018/magda-ádám-(1925–2017).

25. Together with Dreisziger, Szendrey served as guest editor of various issues of *HSR*.

26. Hanák (1921–97), and Litván (1929–2006) survived the Holocaust and began their careers after the war working mostly in the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Litván was later among the founders of the 1956 Institute.

27. George Bisztray and Nándor Dreisziger, "A Note by the Editors," *HSR* 29, nos. 1–2 (1992): 5–6.

28. Susan Glanz, Éva Kiss-Novák, and Barnabás Rácz, "A Letter to the Editor: Some Reflections on Millennial Retrospections," *HSR* 31, nos. 1–2 (2005): 139. The letter was followed by a reply by Nándor Dreisziger and a further reply by Glanz, Rácz, and Kiss-Novák.

29. Jobbitt and von Klimó, "*HSR*," 3–5.

30. Bisztray and Dreisziger, "A Note by the Editors," 5–6.

31. *HSR* 34, nos. 1–2 (2007): 115–54.

32. "Thousand Years of Hungarian Thought," ed. George Bisztray, *HSR* 27, nos. 1–2 (2000).

33. *HSR* 31, nos. 1–2 (2004).

34. Oliver A. I. Botar and Hattula Moholy-Nagy, "László Moholy-Nagy: Translating Utopia into Action; Introduction," *HSR* 37, nos. 1–2 (2010): 11.

35. *HSR* 26, nos. 1–2 (1999).

36. *HSR* 29, nos. 1–2 (2002).

37. *HSR* 41, nos. 1–2 (2014).

38. *HSR* 25, nos. 1–2 (1998).

39. "1956 in Hungary and in Canada: Events and Consequences," ed. Nándor Dreisziger *HSR* 35, Nos. 1–2 (2008).

Legitimizing Socialism? Hard-Currency Stores and Western Goods in Hungary, 1956–1989

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ABSTRACT | Throughout the Socialist Bloc, governments established hard-currency stores in an attempt to increase Western currency revenues. The Hungarian state launched IBUSZ Külföldi Kereskedelmi Akció [Foreign Commercial Enterprise, or IKKA] in 1949 and later replaced this enterprise with Intertourist stores in 1968. As in other socialist states, the purchase of Western and certain hard-to-get Eastern European goods was restricted and could only be acquired with hard currency. As a consequence, informal and black-market activities began to spread. Drawing on archival documents, Radio Free Europe research reports, local court cases, newspaper articles, and photographic material, this article examines how hard currency was perceived by ordinary citizens and explores whether the lesser buying power of the Hungarian forint in comparison to hard currencies contributed to the delegitimization of the Kádár regime. The study also explores the distinctiveness of socialist consumption culture to shed new light on the relative openness of Hungary's "goulash communism" within the Eastern Bloc.

KEYWORDS | socialist Hungary, consumption, hard-currency stores, Western goods, black market

Introduction

In late November 1961, Sándor Sólyom, a citizen of Budapest, was sentenced to six months in prison and a fine of 2,000 forints, the equivalent of two months of his salary. The Budapest court found the accused guilty not only of speculation and racketeering, but also of the illegal buying and selling of foreign and Western currencies.[1] This court case tied in with the general situation of Comecon countries at the time: not only was exchange between

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the currencies of socialist countries strictly regulated, but the legal purchase of hard currencies was nearly impossible. Only Hungarian travelers going on—at the time very rare—holiday trips to the West would be entitled to a limited amount of cash equivalent to seventy US dollars.[2] Otherwise, as the saying in East Germany went, “To each according to the residence of their aunt,”[3] which was an adaptation of the well-known slogan of Karl Marx on the promises of a classless Communist society to the features of really existing socialism.[4] According to this understanding, free access to hard currencies was only made possible via émigré relatives or friends, which randomly privileged some Hungarian citizens over others. As US dollars in particular were considered a universally accepted currency, opening up the possibility of access to otherwise inaccessible consumer goods and travel, the black market in illegal currency exchange was flourishing. Foreign tourists, who visited the country in increasing numbers, served as one of the main sources for the illegal influx of hard currency into Hungary.

Sólyom used these opportunities to make a relatively small profit to augment his state-regulated income. For his planned trip to Czechoslovakia, where he intended to buy goods for resale purposes, Sólyom was in need of more Czechoslovak crowns, exceeding the limits set by the socialist state. As the judgment against him stated: “He gathered foreign currencies by meeting tourists from foreign travel groups at their arrival in Budapest hotels, buying from them with Hungarian forints. Furthermore, he met the passengers of the Czechoslovak cruise ship *Bratislava* at the Danube riverbank in order to buy Czech [*sic*] crowns from them. In this way he managed to accumulate 2253.87 Czech crowns, 28.50 East German marks, 135 Austrian schillings, and 6 US dollars, which of course were not exchanged [into forints] at the Foreign Exchange Office.”[5]

Given that the potential profit earned through speculation distorted the socialist wage system and potentially threatened one of the most elementary socialist principles, social equality, it was first and foremost the illegal exchange and ownership of foreign currency that became legally prohibited. This is underlined by the fact that the state in a command economy had to ensure the balance between its own and foreign currencies in order to secure the stability of its domestic currency. In addition, an increasing level of informal money exchange was considered a threat to the reliability of central planning. Therefore, Sólyom was found guilty of challenging elementary principles of the socialist state and economy.

The scarcity of hard currency on an everyday level mirrored the struggle for it on the state level. In order to purchase raw materials, industrial goods, and finished products, socialist states were in need of hard currency, while never having sufficient amounts at their disposal. This was always true for the relatively effective functioning of the economy, all the more so after the consumerist turn under Khrushchev increased consumption levels for the majority of socialist citizens.[6] In this regard, Hungary was no exception within the Socialist Bloc. The institution of Bloc-wide official optimism that Western consumption levels would be surpassed in the not-so-distant future necessitated extra efforts to accumulate Western currencies, which were magnified after the shattering experience of 1956.

One way to secure additional flows of hard currency was to establish hard-currency stores, offering sought-after domestic and otherwise unattainable Western goods to foreign tourists and émigrés. Similar to a number of other socialist states, in 1949 Hungary established the mail-order retailer and hard-currency store IBUSZ Külföldi Kereskedelmi Akció [Foreign Commercial Enterprise], which was referred to as IKKA in everyday parlance. The establishment of IKKA involved direct marketing efforts to émigrés living in the United States, presenting it as a reliable and uncomplicated means of supporting family members back home. Given its urgent need for hard currency, the state was inclined to overlook the likely ideological contradictions even after 1956, when central participants of the "counterrevolution" were sentenced to prison and their families experienced considerable discrimination in social and economic terms in Hungary itself.[7] The establishment of IKKA challenged the socialist society of Hungary in other ways as well. While an additional influx of goods raised the overall consumption level in average terms, IKKA was likely to create a two-class system of consumers based on access to and ownership of hard currency.

Taking this historical context into consideration, this article explores the history of IKKA stores through their transformation in 1968 into Intertourist shops, paying special attention to the early 1980s, when Intertourist stores were opened to the wider public. Examining how hard currencies were perceived by ordinary citizens, the article further investigates the extent to which the lower buying power of the Hungarian forint in comparison to hard currencies and the existence of hard-currency stores contributed to the delegitimization of the Kádár regime, which had pledged to steadily increase living standards. As Mary Neuburger and Paulina Bren

have pointed out in their widely acclaimed edited volume *Communism Unwrapped*, "consumption in communist Eastern Europe followed its own rhythm and logic."[8] Following their assumption, this article elaborates on the distinctiveness of socialist consumption culture and sheds new light on the relative openness of the infamous Hungarian "goulash communism" within the Eastern Bloc.

This article relies on various archival sources for evidence, knitting together the altogether sparse information into a more comprehensive picture of hard-currency stores in socialist Hungary. Within the collection of the National Archives of Hungary, there are only a few sources generated by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Interior, with limited coverage of the 1960s and 1980s and without any reference to the initial establishment of IKKA back in 1949. More historical evidence was found in the reports by the research institute of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), covering the mid-1950s to the 1980s. Given the Cold War function of this US institution, whose ultimate goal was to bring state socialism to an end, the reports available on the topic require careful evaluation.[9] However, they have proven to be of incredible value, especially given the insufficient quantity of archival documents in the National Archives of Hungary. They also often reflect on everyday practices of ordinary people, enriching our perspective on the relationship between government and citizen. Apart from this, the article engages with local court cases retrieved from the Budapest City Archives, photographic material found on the community-based photo archive Fortepan, and media coverage published on hard-currency stores in various socialist media outlets. The latter reflects the official discourse on these special shops, which was usually in harmony with internal political strategies employed by the state.

A Survey of the Literature

In Hungary and many other socialist states, governments established shops that were accessible exclusively to tourists, diplomats, and ordinary citizens in possession of special shopping vouchers or hard-currency bank accounts. As was the case with the East German Intershop, the Soviet Beriozka, the Bulgarian Corecom, the Polish Pewex, and the Czechoslovak Tuzex, the Hungarian equivalent was supposed to increase the hard-currency income of the socialist state. These special stores offered domestic produce

and Western products that were rarely or not at all available in state stores. Although scholarship is still sparse, in the last years there has been an increased output of interesting research on the ambivalent socioeconomic function of these quasi-extraterritorial temples of consumption. Central to these works is the question of whether hard-currency stores contributed to an increase in the legitimacy of the state, or on the contrary undermined its elementary principle of social justice.

In *The Currency of Socialism*, the most comprehensive study on the subject, Jonathan Zatlin stresses the interconnection of two different competing German currencies, the GDR mark and the so-called "West mark." As only the latter offered access to the Western consumer worlds of Intershops, it created the schizophrenic situation that certain consumer products being sold within the GDR were not purchasable with domestic currency. After establishing the ambivalent social value that money had in the GDR, Zatlin shows convincingly how Intershop and Genex challenged the notion of social and economic equality within a socialist state.[10]

In her chapter in *Communism Unwrapped*, "Tuzex and the Hustler: Living It Up in Czechoslovakia," Paulina Bren offers a contrasting point of view based on late socialist Czechoslovakia. Through a concise analysis of the controversial 1987 film *Bony a Klid*, Bren shows how a net of syndicated criminal gangs was established, ensuring the profitable functioning of Tuzex stores.[11] Hustlers operating illegally mediated between the interests of state and population, selling hard currency Tuzex vouchers for Czechoslovak crowns to ordinary citizens, and securing a noticeable profit for themselves. These illegal, but largely tolerated, practices positioned hustlers not only outside the socialist framework but also outside the socialist value system. For most Czechoslovak consumers, access to sought-after Western products was only made possible through the existence of a highly visible corrupt network.[12]

Scholarship on the topic furthermore includes the systematic work by two historians, Rossitza Guentcheva and Anna Ivanova, on "dollar shops" in Bulgaria and the Soviet Union.[13] Guentcheva shows how Western products traveled via Corecom shops to Bulgarian consumers, and how the context of a socialist consumption culture changed the meaning of these traveled goods. She argues in detail how the dysfunction of the state retail sector was partially reproduced by the privileged Corecom stores. Finally, she concludes that those stores created new social hierarchies based on access to hard currencies.

Ivanova, in turn, shows a deep, grounded interest in the social and economic privilege of consumers who shopped in the Soviet Beriozka. In her study she finds that the possibility to shop in those stores was not limited to citizens loyal to the political system.[14] In many cases it would even thwart the established social hierarchy. Therefore, she concludes that the group of hard-currency-owning Soviet citizens formed a new elite, which only partly coincided with the socialist one.

Gifting via IKKA

As early as 1949, at the foundation of the Hungarian People's Republic, the new socialist state established IKKA, offering mail-order services from abroad and opening physical stores within Hungary. Through IKKA, Hungarian émigrés had the opportunity to purchase specific presents from a catalogue or send money that would be translated into vouchers to support family members and friends. Through these services, the Hungarian Worker's Party increased hard-currency revenue for the Hungarian state, which was much needed for the building of socialism and the shift to heavy industrial production. Before the political caesura of 1956, the offerings consisted not only of rare foodstuffs like Pick salami, cacao powder, chocolate, and natural stimulants such as coffee, foreign spirits, and American cigarettes, but also Western goods like the Swiss Doxa watch, jewelry, and English fabrics, as well as domestically produced but scarce household durables, like the Pacsirta or Fecske radio.[15] Gift packages were given resonant names such as "Susan," "Kitty," "Bettie," "Caroline," "Roma," and "Iris." With its price tag of twenty-five dollars, "Caroline" was the most expensive among them, and was designed for the generous gifter: it contained half a kilo of tea, two kilos of coffee, one kilo of cacao powder, two tins of sardines, one bottle of rum, one kilo of cookies, and one kilo of sugar. The contents of these packages were at the same time a reflection of the domestic distribution of goods, marking these items as being luxurious and difficult to obtain in contemporary Hungary.[16]

In 1956, following the exodus of around 200,000 Hungarians to the West, the hard-currency income obtained by way of IKKA multiplied.[17] As a result, products and services on offer not only diversified but included considerably more prized consumer goods. Émigrés could provide their friends and relatives with modern consumer goods they were fortunate

enough to enjoy in exile, such as vacuum cleaners, washing machines, sewing machines, bathtubs, TV sets, and motorbikes. Holiday journeys, flats, or the still very rare automobile allowed Hungarian consumers to cut the often years-long queue for the immediate satisfaction of consumer dreams.

The Hungarian state was conscious of the need to attract hard-currency gifts through IKKA. This is why individual gifting of money was less favorable: one forwarded dollar translated into only twenty-three forints, whereas it had a value of thirty forints in IKKA vouchers.[18] This bureaucratic construction ensured a steady turnover of goods, maintained the functioning of IKKA, and allowed for tighter controls and planning over allocated products. As sociologist Viviana Zelizer has pointed out for American society in her acclaimed book on the social meaning of money, "Certificates skillfully managed to turn cash into gift. Donors paid the store to transform their money into an often 'handsomely engraved and embossed' document, usually personalized by the name of the donor and the recipient. This new gift currency was further set apart from legal tender by restricting its spending to a particular store or even a particular item. Nor was this currency convertible into ordinary cash."[19] While Hungarians' relatives abroad were only able to choose from one store for gifting, the recipients of the gift certificates were capable of converting them into cash thanks to an established informal network. As Zelizer observes, they were thereby transforming the meaning and function of gift certificates just as capitalist consumers did in their own society.

The increasingly colorful and diverse world of goods in IKKA at the same time reflected a conscious shift in emphasis from heavy to light industrial production, aiming at a continuous increase in levels of consumption. The 1956 revolution shaped these policies in two ways. First, the uprising forced a discussion upon the newly founded Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) of possible ways to overcome the socialist state's loss of legitimacy. The result was a strategy to gain political support through prepolitical practices like consumption. Second, the uprising led to the emigration of a significant number of Hungarians, who eventually and indirectly supported the Hungarian state by sending hard currency back home. These two parallel historical developments resulted in a considerable increase of consumption for a privileged group of Hungarians, both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Despite the economic success of IKKA, the infusion of scarce Western and domestic goods into Hungarian society created new challenges for the socialist government. The Ministry of Finance in 1965 expressed its concern over the selling of IKKA products on the black market, where they would be sold for so-called "*nepper*" prices.[20] "*Nepper*" prices indicated that resellers were selling goods at a significant profit margin, which was considered imposturous. Although only a small segment of the IKKA selection was suitable for informal resale, state officials condemned the blooming black market, a phenomenon that was "in every way disturbing." The official position was based on the assumption that the scale of black-market activities was considerable.[21] Dollar vouchers, which were valid in IKKA as well as in regular stores for the purchase of goods, were presented as a possible approach to combat illegal market activities. By introducing dollar vouchers, officials believed recipients of gifts would use those to purchase items they actually wanted or needed instead of selling their gifts on the black market with a high profit margin.[22]

A court case against Oszkár Csöllei, who was responsible for the procurement of raw materials at the Délrost factory in Szeged and stood accused of *árdrágitás* [speculation], shows how little this thinking was linked to reality. In the indictment, one of the co-defendants described the illegal selling practices of IKKA vouchers after the factory director asked Csöllei to assist him in buying a car for private use. When visiting the Budapest-Csepel showroom together, they were informed that currently "only the Warsaw and Volga cars were available, but there was still an Italian Fiat, which admittedly could only be bought via IKKA. In this context the representative informed us about the possibility of purchasing dollar vouchers in front of IKKA in Tüköry Street. We then went to Tüköry Street and made inquiries concerning the car. In the office of IKKA they told us that the Fiat would be available for dollar vouchers in the value of $2,130. . . . The official told us that such vouchers could be purchased in front of the building from bourgeois citizens. I assured myself about it. One IKKA dollar was sold for 29–30 forints."[23]

Based on this eyewitness account, it becomes evident that IKKA dollar vouchers were deemed attractive, as the privileged owner could resell them on the black market given their universal utility. As the vouchers did not carry the name of the owner, every Hungarian citizen owning them was entitled to exchange them for goods at IKKA. This predestined the vouchers

for informal reselling. However, from the perspective of the state, one of the advantages of the vouchers lay in the fact that the price paid for them on the black market roughly equaled their real value. By contrast, IKKA products generated resale prices that easily multiplied the original price tag; the socialist state understood this kind of transaction as falling into the juridical category of racketeering. Furthermore, it is remarkable that IKKA officials played a mediating and therefore active role with regard to the informal selling and buying of IKKA dollar vouchers. As a result, the borders between state regulation and *eigensinnige* [stubborn] practices became blurred.[24] This is also underlined by anthropologist Frances Pine, who deduced from her field research in a village in southwestern Poland that the "existence of these peculiarly fake but official notes symbolically reinforced the perception of second-economy dealings as a competitive, individualist game with quite different rules from those of the state economy."[25]

The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 brought panic to Hungarian society as well, demonstrated by the dramatic change in the exchange value of the dollar to the forint on the black market: for a short time the dollar cost as many as sixty forints. This meant a doubling of the value of the dollar vis-á-vis the forint, making the fixed IKKA exchange rate of thirty to thirty-two forints to the dollar unattractive. Although prices in IKKA stores were for the most part slightly cheaper than in state stores—for example, one kilo of coffee beans cost between 300 and 320 forints in IKKA, but 340 forints in the regular shops—the illegal ownership and the possible resale of convertible currencies was considerably more lucrative.[26] To combat excessive black-market activities, the socialist government decided on stricter police controls, including in front of IKKA. Convicted black marketeers were threatened with a year's imprisonment. The state thus hoped to create sufficient deterrence to prevent émigrés from supporting family and friends without using the services of IKKA or the national bank.[27]

Another destabilizing development for IKKA was the easing of restrictions on travel within the Socialist Bloc as well as to Western countries at the beginning of the 1960s. As early as 1963, several thousand Hungarians traveled to the West, filling their suitcases there with sought-after goods. Lacking sufficient hard currency, Hungarian tourists exchanged Pick salami and apricot brandy for it. As an immediate consequence, at the end of October 1963 salami became temporarily unavailable to ordinary consumers in Hungary.[28] As their own currency was not freely convertible, travelers

had to rely on what anthropologist Caroline Humphrey called a “disguised or surrogate form of monetary exchange,”[29] creating a hierarchy among different currency systems.

For the first time in the history of the socialist black market, increased amounts of Western goods resulted in a sudden drop in prices. While nylon stockings previously sold for 70 to 80 forints, it became increasingly difficult to sell them even for 50 forints. The price of the popular Doxa watch also fell, from 900 to 500 forints, and the price of the ubiquitous raincoat from 600 to 400 forints. The price erosion on the black market challenged IKKA to adjust its prices in order to remain attractive to Hungarian consumers. There the price per kilogram for Australian wool fell from 850 to 700 forints, while the black market offered it for 500 to 600 forints, a bargain for consumers willing to engage in informal shopping practices. Price-conscious consumers, by contrast, opted to buy wool in Austria if they had the opportunity to travel there. With the possibility to exchange forints legally with the Austrian National Bank, the wool could be obtained for a mere 400 forints per kilo.[30] With the liberalization of travel permits, the Austrian consumer bounty at the doorstep of socialist Hungary developed into a serious competitor to Hungarian “dollar stores.”

The conditions for travel to the West also improved dramatically during the 1960s and 1970s. Not surprisingly, increasing travel possibilities made consumers less interested in the services offered by IKKA.[31] While Hungarians started to enjoy vast shopping opportunities on rare but possible trips to Western countries, from the mid-1960s émigrés traveled regularly back to Hungary as a result of the declared amnesty for participants in the 1956 revolution. It is not surprising that Hungarians living abroad started to bypass the state increasingly in order to support family and friends.[32] This helped émigrés overcome the problematic gifting of money or a voucher certificate, which Zelizer described as follows: “Money as a gift was problematic precisely because the call for display of intimate, affectionate knowledge of the recipient and the relationship contradicted, to some extent, the impersonality of the many other settings and relations in which money transfers took place.”[33] In connection with these new desires for a more personalized form of gifting, the Ministry of Finance labeled it as “direct” help from family and friends abroad, and expressed its concern over IKKA’s stagnating sales volume.[34]

Furthermore, many were tempted by the preferential exchange rate for convertible currencies on the black market. One of the well-informed sources of the RFE Research Service revealed in 1965 that the number of IKKA parcels had fallen by half. According to the source, this was one of the reasons why the Hungarian state intensified its efforts to prosecute currency offenses. Allegations were especially likely where no IKKA parcels had been received after a lengthy period of regular support. The source recommended to continue sending IKKA parcels once in a while in order to avoid arousing suspicion.[35] Given the corrosive effects on the functioning of IKKA, the socialist state had to handle two parallel trends: while the need for hard currency for travel to the West grew, because of this increased travel, less hard currency was being sent via IKKA or converted into IKKA goods. As a consequence of the travel regulations (which were reasonably liberal by Socialist-Bloc standards), both tendencies reinforced each other in an unfavorable manner, creating an even bigger, now self-induced foreign currency shortage within the state budget.

Despite these worrying trends, as of 1965 the Hungarian state still obtained substantial hard-currency income from IKKA activities, amounting to between six and seven million dollars per year, and direct bank transfers worth around two million dollars.[36] At the same time, the party appreciated the positive effects of IKKA on consumer standards and society as a whole. In 1967, the Ministry of Finance summed up its position on the matter by stating that "IKKA . . . is fulfilling its useful task to provide for a narrow circle of the population while 'freshening up' overall consumption with otherwise nonavailable products."[37] By stating this, the state bureaucracy stressed its commitment to the increase in living standards, even when improvement resulted in a segmentation of consumer practices. Interestingly, eventual worries about social differentiation through consumption and the "petty bourgeois" tendencies usually widely criticized in the media were pushed into the background.

After a long period of largely stable consumer prices, 1966 brought Hungarians the first drastic price reform, in preparation for the far-reaching economic reform, the New Economic Mechanism (NEM). Consumers were confronted with an average price rise of 1.2 percent. The state introduced these largely unpopular measures in order to bring prices closer to the real cost of production of consumer goods. Predominantly basic consumer items became considerably more expensive: prices for meat rose by

32 percent, butter by 18 percent, other milk products by 9 to 16 percent, and heating material by 27 percent. Although subsidies for these consumer items of daily importance were not fully abolished, they were drastically reduced.[38] The obvious cutback in subsidies was only meant as a prelude to the full "liberation" of thirty percent of consumer prices only two years later, this being part of the economic reform introducing market elements into the socialist command economy.

The mood of the population grew pessimistic with the prospect of declining buying power, affecting consumer behavior already before Christmas 1965.[39] With rising consumer prices, convertible currencies became correspondingly more expensive on the black market. For example, the British pound now cost 150 instead of the previous 100 forints, constituting an inflation rate of 50 percent in the hard-currency marketplace.[40] Growing fears of increasing police controls contributed to an artificially lower supply on the market, which further explains the acceleration of the exchange rate. The Hungarian population understood these tendencies to be an indicator for the declining buying power of the forint, undermining the trust in the stability of the command economy.

The informal marketplaces for IKKA vouchers and products in front of the IKKA store in Budapest suffered equally. Given the prospect of price increases, more people were not willing or able to invest in luxury expenses. While everything from IKKA was previously easy to sell, the situation became especially difficult for pensioners who were largely dependent on income from selling items gifted to them. More and more recipients asked their relatives, despite the official exchange rate being considerably worse, to send money through IKKA, preventing them from having to involve themselves in illegal activities.[41]

As economist János Kornai reminds us, in the context of the socialist black market, "Work in the informal, semilegal sphere contributes greatly to improving supplies to the public and the incomes of those who do it. But it is a very chancy income; no one knows when the rigor of the law will fall on those working in the shadow economy. It is the part of the private sector that best escapes bureaucratic control, but it is highly dependent on the bureaucracy's leniency."[42] The heretofore-tolerated practices of the informal IKKA marketplace were bound to become more risky for the participants. At this point, it became difficult to judge who was an informant of the secret police and who was not. The photo in

FIGURE 1 IKKA store at Tüköry utca 4, Budapest (1967). (Image courtesy of Fortepan; donor: Magyar Rendőr [Hungarian police].)

figure 1, submitted by the Hungarian Police to the open-source photo archive Fortepan, shows people subject to random controls just in front of the IKKA store, interrogated by a clearly identifiable Hungarian police officer. At one time, pensioners made sales in front of the IKKA store and used the time to socialize and chat, but with the new controls the sidewalk in Tüköry Street presented an increasingly sad picture.[43] With declining selling and buying practices, the space of social interaction largely ceased to exist.

Times were becoming even more complicated for professional middlemen who delivered IKKA goods to private businesses. On March 17, 1968, the daily newspaper *Népszabadság* reported on L. M., who was detained on suspicion of *üzerkedés* [price gouging]. During the investigation it turned out that he had been registered as a *maszek* [self-employed small trader] but loitered during the day in front of the Budapest IKKA store. Apparently,

he organized the illegal exchange of IKKA vouchers in the value of $14,000 there, buying sewing thread, washing powder, and Gillette razor blades for traders he befriended. The article pointed out that the profit amounted to tens of thousands of forints.[44] The representation of the case in the official narrative indicated that the winds had changed for the black market, which was no longer being nourished by Hungarian émigrés and the construction of IKKA.

The new tendencies evolving around IKKA seemed to have been in line with the interests of the socialist state. One informant reported to the RFE Research Service on a conversation with a friend who was a state official and did not seem worried about the decline in IKKA parcels. In the end, as the source pointed out, it was more beneficial to the state when relatives sent hard currency that would be paid out in forints to the beneficiaries. A worrying decrease in hard currencies was to be expected in the medium term due to biological reasons that the state was not able to influence: as the informant pointed out, the party was increasingly concerned about the dying out of a generation of beneficiaries, which in consequence would lead to a drastic decrease of hard-currency income for the state.[45]

The declining attractiveness of the selection of IKKA offerings, insufficient amounts of goods, and the sagging informal sales of IKKA vouchers harmed the image of the state-organized trade for convertible currencies. Self-employed traders with connections to IKKA personnel, after a phone call or through middlemen, bought goods in great amounts, as there were no restrictions on quantity.[46] In all likelihood, the state had purposely not introduced any restrictions, in order to allow scarce or Western goods to trickle into domestic sales and thus improve the selection of goods.

It also occurred, to the justified annoyance of customers, that they did not receive the goods for which hard currencies had been paid to IKKA. One source reported to the RFE Research Service in 1959 that, although a Western washing machine had been bought for her, she was only shown a washing machine produced in the Soviet Union.[47] Just two days later, when she visited IKKA again, the allegedly sold-out washing machine from the Netherlands was back in stock. In the end, she was able to acquire the product, which had already been paid for. Moreover, although IKKA was a privileged shopping experience, the sales personnel did not make an effort to create a positive customer service experience.[48] Scarcity and unmotivated salespersons, which were more characteristic of state stores, were partially reproduced in hard-currency stores because of their

entanglement with the more deficient state sector.[49] Parallel state and private stores improved the quality and quantity of their goods. Already in 1963 the department store Luxus opened its doors in close proximity to Váci Street, the traditional and elegant shopping street in Budapest. Here, Hungarian consumers had the option to choose from upscale, high-quality ready-to-wear clothing and fur coats.[50]

Probably the last nail in IKKA's coffin was the failure to build trust amongst émigrés living abroad. An IBUSZ representative who traveled to the United States in 1968 reported to RFE that IKKA did not enjoy a good reputation among younger generations of immigrants, mainly those who left in 1956 and settled across the Atlantic. They were of the persistent opinion that exchange rates were poor and selection and quality insufficient.[51] Therefore, it did not come as a surprise when the IKKA store in Tüköry Street was closed down in 1968. IKKA vouchers were now to be used in the recently founded hard-currency store Konsumtourist, or they could be exchanged at a rate of thirty forints to the dollar at the National Savings Bank, which was not much worse than the black market rate.[52] There were good reasons to believe that Konsumtourist was prepared to take over the functions of IKKA.

Konsumex and Its "Dollar Stores"

Starting on June 1, 1967, as the daily trade-union newspaper *Népszava* announced, Hungarian émigrés were invited via Konsumtourist to enable relatives and friends to cut the queue. With an appropriate transfer of hard currency to the Hungarian Foreign Trade Bank, loved ones would be able to choose a long-awaited car for immediate collection. Among the car models available were not only socialist-produced vehicles like Skoda or Wartburg but also Western cars. Models from Fiat, Renault, and Peugeot, with the help of hard currency, passed into the hands of Hungarian citizens.[53]

Growing problems with IKKA and increasing numbers of tourists had led in 1965 to the foundation of a new system of diplomat stores, which had been abolished after the 1956 revolution. Intertourist shops started under the umbrella of the Foreign Trade Company Konsumex, managed by the domestic operators of Csemege shops, pursuant to the proposal of Vice Minister for Domestic Trade Róbert Hardi. As opposed to IKKA, the offerings in the Intertourist stores catered to the needs of diplomats,

Western tourists, and Hungarian émigrés with a Western passport. In addition, Hungarians with official hard-currency accounts were allowed access, based on the party's calculation that hard-currency earnings of Hungarian citizens could thus be integrated into the foreign exchange budget.[54] In 1966, these earnings already amounted to half a million dollars.[55] The shops had different profiles, offering delicacies, cosmetics, electronic products, antique furniture, and everything that might be potentially bought by tourists. Soon they were to be found in every bigger city, and additionally placed in big hotels, even those on Lake Balaton in peak season. In 1968 alone, twenty-seven Intertourist shops opened in Budapest to a limited circle of customers.[56]

The success of these institutions, demonstrated by a constantly growing turnover, was for the time being unrestrained. As the Csemege Kereskedelmi Vállalat [Csemege Trade Enterprise] (CKV) announced at a press conference in 1968, the revenues of Intertourist stores had doubled between 1965 and 1967, and for the coming year they were expecting for the first time to reach $1 million.[57] The firm not only fulfilled the announced goal but within ten years increased the turnover to $6 million.[58] The commercial success was driven not only by products for everyday use but increasingly by the sale of antiques, art, jewelry, and porcelain, especially up-market Herend products. Foreigners bought these goods on a grand scale. The regional newspaper *Vas Népe* reported in 1965 that an Italian businessman purchased $20,000 worth of antique furniture for his castle.[59] In such cases, Intertourist demonstrated the ability to react quickly to newly emerging demands and appeared more flexible than the gradually outmoded IKKA.[60] Nonetheless, Intertourist was still dependent on an inefficient command economy: after such shopping sprees, the management often had no other choice but to close the shop until the assortment of goods could be restocked.

Tourists and especially Hungarian visitors coming from the West used dollar stores not only for personal needs but also as a source of presents for friends and family. In this way they avoided carrying extra weight while traveling and possible customs duties. Many took their relatives with them to the shop and let them choose directly from the goods on offer. The relative with the foreign passport paid for the articles with dollars, German marks, or Swiss francs.[61] This system also opened up a space for informal practices whereby visitors to Hungary were used by Hungarians as straw purchasers.

In this way, Hungarians who were not allowed to shop in Intertourist stores officially could do so through a foreigner serving as an intermediary. For the state and its budget the practice proved beneficial, attracting dollars that would have otherwise been spent by the visitor back home.

The apparent “sweetness” that the buying power of hard currency had for Hungarian citizens was a central theme in the musical “Hello, Dolcsi” [Hello, dollars].[62] The musical, which premiered in Budapest in 1967, depicted through everyday experience the tension between the socialist concept of rational consumption and Western consumerism. In line with Hungary’s liberal travel regime, it featured the increased trips of Western foreigners into socialist Hungary. The musical itself centers on the American tourist Mr. Dollchester, who is given the sobriquet “Dolcsi,” a familiar moniker for dollars. During his stay, it is his unlikely fortune to win two million forints in the lottery. From then on, he faces the challenge of spending this enormous sum effectively and wisely in socialist Hungary. As a review in *Népszava* outlined, the solution to the problem was anything but straightforward: “How and on what can a foreign citizen possibly spend two million forints? He cannot buy real estate, a car would only be available after two years, jewelry in Konsumtourist can only be had for dollars. Instead of going to a casino, he could gamble with pensioners for pennies.”[63]

Although Mr. Dollchester’s dilemma is eventually solved thanks to the inventive spirit of Budapest, resulting in the creation of beautiful memories to be enjoyed back home, the story is clearly grounded in the difference of the buying power between domestic and foreign currencies. Although Stalinist notions of the United States as the Socialist Bloc’s “ideological enemy” are replaced by an integration of American tourists into the Budapest way of life, the musical still serves as an arena for Cold War cultural competition. Despite ending on a conciliatory note by integrating Mr. Dollchester’s dilemma back into Hungarian socialist society, it nonetheless portrays Western consumerism as superior to its Eastern counterparts. This is because—according to the musical—socialism is where buying power exceeds the supply of desirable goods, resulting in the missing equilibrium that Kornai identified for socialist economies.[64] Finally, “Hello, Dolcsi” is an allegory of the necessity for improvisation in everyday life, anticipating the need for the economic reform introduced with the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) just one year later.

The limited convertibility of the forint for goods in comparison to the strictly regulated "dolcsi" is an example of the competing notions surrounding the presence of dollar shops in Hungary. Many Hungarians perceived it as discriminatory that domestic consumption culture included stores that were not accessible with their own currency.[65] As a result, the forint appeared less potent in comparison with the "sweet" currencies and lost a considerable amount of trust. This was especially the case when consumer prices rose in the context of the introduction of the NEM. The dollar appears here to have a similar symbolic value to what anthropologist Alaina Lemon found in post-socialist Russia: "The stable quality of the color is thus not only what makes 'green dollars' recognizable; historical stability is what makes the dollar's green-ness particularly apt for extension as a trope of economic vigor and endurance."[66]

The group of beneficiaries having easy access to convertible currencies cannot be sufficiently defined on the basis of sociological categories. On the one hand, such access was based on chance: on who had relatives or friends living in the West. Those émigrés who left the country after the World War II or in 1956 often belonged to the well-educated, bourgeois strata of Hungarian society. On the other, it could also depend on the particular profession someone had. Hotel receptionists or tourist guides were in regular contact with Western tourists, while professionals like artists or experts sent to work abroad received salaries or royalties in convertible currencies based on their work in foreign countries. Others, like lorry drivers and employees of the international shipping industry, had the opportunity to exchange forints informally during longer stays in the West.[67] Socialist factory workers had considerably fewer possibilities to acquire "dolcsi," as they rarely met with Western foreigners in the context of their work. Therefore, the informal, *eigensinnige* practices also contributed to a delegitimization of workers as the foundation of the socialist state and as instrumental for the building of socialism.[68] Although solving short-term problems, tolerated informal practices created inner contradictions for the party, which posed a threat to the very ideological foundations of the socialist state.

Aware of the potentially corrosive social effects, official discourse justified the existence of such stores to the population continuously. Among the most prominent arguments was the need to harness the growing number of foreign tourists visiting the country to support the hard-currency revenues of the state. This would support the national economy as a whole, as 65

percent of all goods on offer originated from domestic production. As an article in *Népszava* argued, it is "obviously a profitable business to sell these [goods] here for dollars, which additionally benefits the export trade. After all, the customer is coming right to us, without any transport cost, no insurance cost, or foreign trade agreements."[69] As the article further pointed out, even Western products bought with hard currency were warranted: in the final analysis one needed to accommodate tourists in their daily needs. To win over Hungarian citizens, official representation of the subject stressed the communal interests sustained by these quasi-extraterritorial sites of consumer bounty over the potential for social segregation in a supposedly egalitarian society.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the state firmly restricted the domestic population's access to dollar stores. Only those Hungarians who owned a so-called foreign-currency account were allowed to shop in Konsumex stores.[70] As explained in a popular 1977 finance guide, such an account could only be opened on the basis of salaries, royalties, author's fees, or income through export.[71] For the majority of Hungarians it was therefore not only easier to acquire convertible currencies through informal channels and to purchase goods in Western countries while on holiday, it was often the only possible way. Furthermore, Western products were also—especially after the introduction of the NEM—available in *maszek* [private] shops and even in state stores. In contrast to, for example, the Soviet Union, Western goods were not limited to hard-currency shops.[72] While Hungary faced economic difficulties due to the global oil crisis in the 1970s, this decade was successful for Konsumex, which enjoyed ever-growing sales.

The next decade, however, saw a major shift within the hard-currency sector. After the hard-currency retail business in Hungary had steadily become accustomed to success, the early 1980s brought the first drop in returns. As the managing director of Csemege Vállalat Intertourist, János Tóth, admitted in *Népszava*, 1981 had not been a successful year for Intertourist shops. Reasons were to be found not only in the growing frugality of tourists, but also in the fact that some products were overpriced.[73] The downward trend did not slacken: two years later the very same managing director had to announce that the yearly revenues had dropped by over 20 percent. The party adjusted to these new developments in the hard-currency sector by amending the currency law. This is why Tóth announced the groundbreaking news that, starting on August 10, 1983, Hungarian citizens

would be officially allowed to shop in Intertourist stores without having a foreign currency account.[74] This was a major concession, which until then had been implemented solely in East German Intershop stores. As early as 1974, the legalization of private ownership of hard currency opened the closed retailer to all citizens of the GDR in possession of West German D-marks.[75] Another reason for the liberalization of access to Intertourist shops was to be found in the dramatic deficit of the Hungarian state. A classified party report concluded in 1982 that experts estimated hard-currency assets of many tens of millions of dollars within the population.[76] The party considered the opening up of Intertourist stores to all Hungarian citizens a logical step in order to direct a portion of these funds into the state treasury (fig. 2).

Due to the lifting of Austrian visa requirements for Hungarians in 1979, Vienna became the most accessible Western site for consumer "bounty." With liberal travel regulations unique in the Socialist Bloc extending the consumer orbit into the West, the competition over domestic dollar assets logically led to the expansion of hard-currency stores. Consumers made careful considerations about where a specific purchase would be most advantageous. In the face of the commercial pressure from abroad, the

FIGURE 2 Intertourist Shop in Kígyó utca 5, Budapest (1984). (Image courtesy of Fortepan; donor: Magyar Rendőr [Hungarian police].)

CKV management decided to raise the allowed hard-currency amount for Hungarian citizens to the equivalent value of 2,000 forints per person. An average-sized family would therefore be able to purchase small consumer electronics, like radios and record players, to the value of 6,000 to 8,000 forints.[77] Products on the lower end of the price scale, such as Legos, Matchbox cars, and the washing powder Omo, as well as everything costing less than ten dollars, were equally popular. Cigarettes, cosmetics, and spirits were also bought frequently by Hungarians and foreigners alike, despite their relatively high price tag.[78]

With the considerable expansion in potential customers, hard-currency stores again entered a profitable phase in their history. Hungarian citizens expressed considerable interest in their wares, resulting in sales growth of an impressive 40 percent. Riding the crest of the wave, the management of CKV decided to enlarge its portfolio with shops exclusively offering products of one Western firm, like a Benetton or Sony store.[79] As a consequence, Western brands became more visible and increasingly accepted as an organic part of Hungarian consumer culture. News of consumer offerings in dollar stores spread fast among the population of Budapest.[80] On a November day in 1988, the interest in attractively priced consumer electronics brought more customers than usual into the Intertourist store at Ferenc Liszt Square. Even when prices were better than in Vienna, the 2,000-forint limit made purchases more complicated. Kornél Székely, the Intertourist advertising manager, described Hungarians' buying practices thus: "Many are coming several times, as they can purchase only 2,000 forints worth of goods at once. Of course, we don't control who buys what."[81] Liberal business practices again resulted in a yearly turnover of $30–35 million by 1988. "But," Székely asked, "how much is this in comparison to what Hungarians spend during one weekend in Vienna? It would really go well for us if our hard currency was fully allowed and we could spend it at home. Or even better: if we could get inexpensive and quality goods also for forints."[82]

The success of Intertourist paralleled the increasing inflation of the domestic forint. As a result, Hungarians tried to invest as much as possible in consumer goods. This was another important reason for an increase in revenues both in hard-currency shops and in stores in Vienna that catered to Hungarians. At the same time, as the Ministry of Domestic Trade reported to the Central Committee, shortages of goods like furniture, refrigerators, TV sets, and washing machines occurred.[83]

With the introduction of the "world passport" in 1988, which allowed Hungarian citizens to travel freely, the vicious circle became even more obvious to the Hungarian government. Hungarian citizens looked increasingly for goods abroad, taking considerable amounts of forints with them. In 1989, the Ministry of Economics remarked on the problems being caused by the introduction of the world passport, which had brought the value of the forint to a new low.[84] Even cashiers at hard-currency stores acknowledged in April 1989 the new loss in value, offering customers a price reduction of ten percent.[85] Only a few months later, Hungary faced near-insolvency, and as an emergency response suspended the sale of hard currency for seventeen days. Minister of Finance László Békesi saw one of the main reasons for the economic crisis in the huge drive of ordinary citizens to shop in the West. The statistics underlined a gross imbalance in hard-currency exchange. Through August of that year the revenue from tourists amounted to $480 million, while in the same period Hungarians spent $850 million abroad.[86] The government had misjudged the fiscal consequences of the world passport. By reducing Hungarian citizens' yearly exchange allowance from $113 to $75, the state desperately tried to manage the contradictions evolving from the politics of far-reaching liberalization.

Conclusion

The decision of the Hungarian People's Republic to establish hard-currency stores resulted in a complex set of ambivalences in social, political, and economic terms. These ambivalences were not the same for every generation over the long time period that this article examined, and changed often and considerably over time, especially given the long time frame under analysis here. Overall, it can be said that the Hungarian party-state incorporated modes of governance that prioritized the attraction of hard currency over the ideal of a socially and economically equal society as decreed by Marxist theory. Instead, it accepted the creation of an alternative elite whose interests might—but did not necessarily—conflict with those of the established elite. Interestingly, the party in certain contexts welcomed the creation of an "alternative elite," whose existence was contingent on their often arbitrary access to hard currency. Because this elite also included pensioners, the additional financial support served to create a greater economic balance between different generations in society.

To a certain extent, the state even embraced the black market, which was closely linked with hard-currency stores, although profiteering and price gouging qualified to varying degrees as criminal offenses. It allowed goods and vouchers as part of a largely closed retail circle to enter the socialist commodity cycle, where they compensated for shortcomings of the command economy. This is how these goods and services were capable of partly overcoming what has been described as a "dictatorship over needs," as consumers were not entirely at the mercy of the bureaucratic planning body.[87] Nonetheless, hard-currency stores did not qualify entirely as extraterritorial institutions, being themselves affected by the nature of the command economy. As has been shown, the relationship between supply and demand in the state sector did affect the assortment of goods in the dollar stores, which became a viable resort for bridging periods of short supply. Ultimately, the command economy's deficiencies were capable of reproducing partial scarcity in hard-currency stores as well; these entities were therefore dialectically intertwined.

The existence of stores that did not accept the forint as a means of payment shaped the general perception of the domestic currency vis-á-vis freely convertible ones. By their very existence, IKKA and the later Konsumtourist created a two-class system of currencies, which in the long term contributed to a severe loss of trust in the national currency.[88] Western currencies, by contrast, were not only reliable but created access to a consumer bounty the socialist state failed to provide. With travel to neighboring Austria being easy by the end of the 1970s, Hungarian consumers started to carry considerable amounts of money across the border. This resulted in the logical decision in 1983 to open hard-currency stores in Hungary to all citizens in order to keep money circulating within the domestic economy. These elevated but now freely accessible stores allowed Hungarians to benefit from both economic systems and to carefully adjust their respective advantages to individual needs. Therefore, the competition from the neighboring Austrian market changed the nature of hard currency stores within the domestic context tremendously, turning them from restricted to more democratic institutions where every Hungarian citizen was now allowed to shop—provided they had sufficient hard currency at their disposal. While this more egalitarian situation can be construed as a positive development, it nevertheless undermined citizens' trust in their own socialist currency.

The party introduced the world passport in 1988 as a far-reaching tool to further liberalize travel regulations. Among its wide-ranging consequences, state officials did not anticipate the devastating effect on the country's balance of foreign exchange payments. While the vulnerability of the domestic forint became more obvious than ever, the political success of the world passport reduced the hard-currency reserves that socialist citizens needed to travel to the West. The attempt to increase the legitimacy of the political system was representative of how a shift in governance aggravated inner contradictions of state socialism. In this sense, hard-currency stores were no exception.

ANNINA GAGYIOVA completed her PhD dissertation "From Goulash to Fridges: Individual Consumption between Eigensinn and Political Dominance in Socialist Hungary (1956–1989)" in 2018 under the supervision of Professor Ulf Brunnbauer at the University of Regensburg. Her thesis examines why socialism failed in Hungary even though its consumption culture was more Western and colorful than anywhere else in the Socialist Bloc. Gagyiova's research interests include the history of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, the history of consumption, and the history of everyday life. She currently holds a postdoc position at Masaryk University Brno and teaches at Charles University and other academic institutions in Prague, Czech Republic.

NOTES

1. Rendition of judgment against Sándor Sólyom, accused of currency offenses and profiteering, September 14, 1961, XXV.4.a – 5337 – 1961, pp. 90–96, Budapest City Archive (Budapest Főváros Levéltára or BFL).

2. In the year 1961, Hungarian citizens were approved for fewer than 50,000 trips to the West. Katalin Somlai, "Go West! A nyugati ösztöndíj-politika diskurzusai az 1960-as–1970-es évek Magyarországán" [Go West! The discourses on Western scholarship politics in 1960s and 1970s Hungary] (lecture, National Széchenyi Library, Budapest, November 25–26, 2015).

3. Within the Socialist Bloc, the GDR was most acquainted with the issue, as many German families were divided by the inner-German border. On this see Ina Merkel, *Utopie und Bedürfnis: Die Geschichte der Konsumkultur in der DDR* [Utopia and need: the history of consumption culture in the GDR] (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999). On the GDR see also Annette Kaminsky, *Kaufrausch: Die Geschichte der ostdeutschen Versandhäuser* [Shopping frenzy: the history of East German mail-order retailers] (Berlin: Links Verlag, 1998); Katrin Böske, "Abwesend anwesend: Eine kleine Geschichte des Intershops" [Absent present: a small history of Intershop], in *Wunderwirtschaft: DDR-Konsumkultur in den 60er Jahren* [Miracle economy: GDR consumption culture in the 1960s], ed. Ina Merkel and Felix Mühlberg (Cologne: Böhlau, 1996), 214–22; and Franka Schneider, "'Jedem nach dem Wohnsitz seiner Tante': Die GENEX Geschenkdienst GmbH" ["To each according to the residence of their

aunt": the GENEX Geschenkdienst GmbH], in Merkel and Mühlberg, *Wunderwirtschaft*, 223–32. For thorough insight into the subject, see the excellent research by Jonathan R. Zatlin in Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Culture in East Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). All translations are those of the author.

4. Cf. "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program* (Rockville, MD: Wildside Press, 2008), 27.

5. Rendition of judgment against Sándor Sólyom.

6. See especially Susan Reid, "Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev," *Slavic Review* 61, no. 2 (2002): 211–52.

7. See Adrienne Molnár and Zsuzsanna Kőrösi, *Carrying a Secret in My Heart: Children of the Victims of the Reprisals after the Hungarian Revolution in 1956—An Oral History* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2002).

8. Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger, "Introduction," in *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe*, ed. Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger (Cambridge and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.

9. For more detail, see Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003).

10. Zatlin, *Currency of Socialism*.

11. The movie title *Bony a Klid* is a play on the American movie "Bonnie and Clyde," and evokes its criminal theme. In contrast to the American original, *Bony* is a different kind of hero. In Czech the word is a slang expression for special vouchers traded in Czechoslovakia's hard-currency stores. *Klid* was a call to "relax" and "go with the flow," as everything will turn out all right in the end. The latter was underlined by the song "Relax" by Frankie Goes to Hollywood, which serves as the soundtrack played almost continuously throughout the film.

12. Paulina Bren, "Tuzex and the Hustler: Living It Up in Czechoslovakia," in Bren and Neuburger, *Communism Unwrapped*, 27–48.

13. Rossitza Guentcheva, "Mobile Objects: CORECOM and the Selling of Western Goods in Socialist Bulgaria," *Études Balkaniques* 45, no. 1 (2009): 3–28.

14. Anna Ivanova, "Shopping in Beriozka: Consumer Society in the Soviet Union," *Zeithistorische Forschungen / Studies in Contemporary History* 10, no. 2 (2013): 243–63.

15. Zsolt Csíkos, "Nápolyt látni Cezetával, 1964-ben [Seeing Naples on a Cezeta (Czech motorbike)]," *A sebesség oltára* (blog), January 26, 2009, http://sebessegoltara.blog.hu/2009/01/26/cezeta.

16. Csíkos, "Nápolyt látni Cezetával." Gift packages contained exclusively Hungarian products, which were therefore at an exceptionally increased price. See also "Complications Concerning IKKA Parcels sent to Hungary," March 5, 1954, RFE field report, item no. 2017/54, http://www.europeana.eu/portal/record/2022043/10891_osa_6f38eb0d_79a6_4a5f_8850_56d8f8df4a86.html.

17. Pénzügyminisztérium [Ministry of Finance], "Előterjesztés az Államgazdasági Bizottság részére az IKKA ajándékozási konstrukció módositásáról és kedvezményes vásárlási utalványok devizafizetés ellenében történő forgalombahozataláról" [Proposal for the Committee on State Economy on the changes of the IKKA gifting construction and the introduction of preferential shopping vouchers in exchange for hard currency], April 15,

1965, 288.f.15/94, p. 18, Hungarian National Archives (Magyar Országos Levéltár, or MOL), Budapest.

18. Pénzügyminisztérium, "Előterjesztés az Államgazdasági Bizottság részére," 18.

19. Viviana A. Zelizer, *The Social Meaning of Money: Pin Money, Paychecks, Poor Relief, and Other Currencies* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 109.

20. In contemporary Hungarian the word *nepper* refers to someone who cheats, trafficks, or cons. It comes from the German gangster slang *neppen,* meaning "to swindle."

21. Pénzügyminisztérium, "Előterjesztés az Államgazdasági Bizottság részére," 14.

22. Pénzügyminisztérium, "Előterjesztés az Államgazdasági Bizottság részére," 19. In 1979, the GDR for similar reasons introduced Forum checks as a new means of payment in Intershop stores. With the obligation to exchange hard currency into a substitute currency, the GDR leadership intended to combat informal exchange practices via the black market. Zatlin, *Currency of Socialism*, 255–56.

23. Lawsuit against Oszkár Csöllei and associates, accused of currency offenses and profiteering, witness account of side defendant Imre Kiss, May 26, 1961, p. 212, XXV.4.a-5337, BFL.

24. For in-depth insight into the historiographic concept of *Eigen-Sinn* I recommend the article by Thomas Lindenberger, "Eigen-Sinn, Domination and No Resistance," in *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte*, August 3, 2015, https://docupedia.de/zg/Lindenberger_eigensinn_v1_en_2015. As Lindenberger notes, "This word—commonly rendered in English as 'stubbornness'—has since become a key concept in German and even international scholarship for a specific approach referred to collectively as *Alltagsgeschichte*, the history of everyday life. Eigen-Sinn nowadays is a useful historiographic concept for understanding individual behaviors and actions that impact on the sphere of power and domination: submission and revolt, resistance and dropping-out."

25. Frances Pine, "Dealing with Money: Zlotys, Dollars and Other Currencies in the Polish Highlands," in *Markets and Moralities: Ethnographies of Postsocialism*, ed. Ruth Mandel and Caroline Humphrey (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 85.

26. "Black Market Prices in Budapest (Dollar and Gold)," December 21, 1961, item no. 3718/61, HU OSA 300-40-4: 19, Hungarian Unit: Subject Files in English, records of RFE/RL, Open Society Archives (OSA), Budapest.

27. "Situation Concerning Foreign Currency," November 22, 1961, item no. 3459/61, HU OSA 300-40-4: 19, Hungarian Unit: Subject Files in English, records of RFE/RL, OSA.

28. "Black Market Prices on Western Goods Decrease," December 18, 1963, item no. 2762/63, HU OSA 300-40-4: 19, Hungarian Unit: Subject Files in English, records of RFE/RL, OSA.

29. Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones, "Introduction: Barter, Exchange and Value," in *Barter, Exchange and Value: An Anthropological Approach*, ed. Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2.

30. "Black Market Prices on Western Goods Decrease," 19.

31. The East German mail-order retailer Genex faced a similar fate with the 1983 liberalization of direct hard currency and goods transfers from West to East Germany. As a result, Genex experienced a dramatic loss in revenue. For details see Zatlin, *Currency of Socialism*, 272–74.

32. “Morale—Official Complaints,” December 8, 1965, item no. 2126/65, HU OSA 300-40-4: 19, Hungarian Unit: Subject Files in English, records of RFE/RL, OSA.

33. Zelizer, *Social Meaning of Money*, 90.

34. Pénzügyminisztérium, “Előterjesztés az Államgazdasági Bizottság részére,” 18.

35. Pénzügyminisztérium, “Előterjesztés az Államgazdasági Bizottság részére,” 18.

36. Pénzügyminisztérium, “Előterjesztés az Államgazdasági Bizottság részére,” 18.

37. Pénzügyminisztérium, “Előterjesztés a Gazdaságpolitikai Bizottság részére a tőkés valuták nemkereskedelmi árfolyamáról” [Proposal for the Committee on Economic Policy on the non-commercial hard-currency exchange rate], March 4, 1967, 288.f.15/123, p. 14, MOL.

38. See Ádám Marton, “Inflácio, fogyasztói árak Magyarországon a második világháború után I. (1945–1968)” [Inflation and consumer prices in Hungary after the Second World War, part I (1945–68)], *Statisztikai Szemle* 90, no. 5 (2012): 384–85.

39. “Impact of Price Increases,” February 8, 1966, item no. 217/66, HU OSA 300-40-4: 19, Hungarian Unit: Subject Files in English, records of RFE/RL, OSA.

40. “Black Market Exchange Rate—IKKA Parcels,” July 8, 1966, item no. 1158/66, HU OSA 300-40-4: 19, Hungarian Unit: Subject Files in English, records of RFE/RL, OSA.

41. “Impact of Price Increases.”

42. János Kornai, *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 86.

43. “Black Market Exchange Rate.”

44. Judit N. Kósa, “Dolláros kosztüm a Lenin körútról” [A woman’s suit bought in dollars on Lenin Boulevard], *Népszabadság*, August 11, 2000, http://nol.hu/archivum/archiv-6731-2671.

45. “Black Market Exchange Rate.”

46. “Changes in the Delivery of IKKA Parcels,” May 30, 1968, item no. 976/68, HU OSA 300-40-4: 19, Hungarian Unit: Subject Files in English, records of RFE/RL, OSA.

47. In 1959, a specified number of washing machines being sold in state stores was only available for vouchers, distributed by the trade union. See Annina Gagyiova, “Modern Housekeeping Worlds, Or: How Much Is Thirty Percent Really?,” in *Socialist Dictatorship as Sinnwelt: Representations of Social Order and Transformation of Authority in East Central Europe after 1945*, ed. Celia Donert, Ana Kladnik, and Martin Sabrow (Budapest: CEU Press, forthcoming 2021).

48. “IKKA Store Trick to sell Soviet-Made Washing Machines,” December 4, 1959, item no. 50.45/59, HU OSA 300-40-4: 19, Hungarian Unit: Subject Files in English, records of RFE/RL, OSA.

49. Cf. Guentcheva, “Mobile Objects.”

50. Tamás Dombos and Lena Pellandini-Simányi, “Kids, Cars, or Cashews? Debating and Remembering Consumption in Socialist Hungary,” in *Communism Unwrapped*, 325. See also Krisztina Fehérváry, *Politics in Color and Concrete: Socialist Materialities and the Middle Class in Hungary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 111, as well as Tibor Valuch, *Hétköznapi élet Kádár János korában* [Everyday life in the János Kádár era] (Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 2006), 85.

51. “Tourist Office Makes Contacts in North America,” March 26, 1968, item no. 535/68, HU OSA 300-40-4: 19, Hungarian Unit: Subject Files in English, records of RFE/RL, OSA.

52. “Changes in the Delivery of IKKA Parcels.”

53. Konsumturist Autószolgálat [Konsumturist Automobile Service], "Közlemény," [Announcement], *Népszava*, May 28, 1967.

54. Cf. Somlai, "Go West!"

55. Pénzügyminisztérium, "Előterjesztés a Gazdaságpolitikai Bizottság részére," 14.

56. Budapest Főváros Tanácsa Végrehajtó Bizottsága üléseinek jegyzőkönyvei [Minutes of the sittings of the of the Budapest City Council Executive Committee], September 3, 1969, XXIII.102.a.1, 3, BFL.

57. Mária Lukács, "A kísérlet eredményes volt. A csemege már többet tud . . .," [The experiment was fruitful. Csemege knows more already . . .], *Népszava*, January 18, 1968.

58. Zsuzsa Gál, "Áruexport—itthon" [Export of goods—at home], *Népszava*, July 21, 1978.

59. K., "A franciák páncélöltözeteket, a svédek rézüstöket vásárolnak . . . Egy éves a haza Konsumtourist üzlethálozat" [The French are buying antique armor, the Swedish copper pots . . . The domestic retail chain Konsumtourist is one year old], *Vas Népe*, August 25, 1965.

60. n. a., "Exportcikk: öreg mozsár, faszenes vasaló," [Export items: old mortars, carbonized iron], *Népszava*, April 20, 1967.

61. See Gál, "Áruexport."

62. Gál, "Áruexport." "Dolcsi" is a Hungarian slang word for "dollars" and is at the same time a play on the Italian word for sweets or deserts. The Hungarian title is also a play on "Hello, Dolly," the American musical that inspired the Hungarian production.

63. "Hello, Dolcsi! A Kamara Varieté bemutatója," [Hello, dollars! The Kamara Varieté's premiere], *Népszava*, October 21, 1967.

64. János Kornai, *Economics of Shortage* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1980).

65. Gál, "Áruexport." Compare for the GDR, Zatlin, *Currency of Socialism*, 257–59; and for the Soviet Union, Ivanova, "Shopping in Beriozka," 259.

66. Alaina Lemon, "'Your Eyes Are Green like Dollars': Counterfeit Cash, National Substance, and Currency Apartheid in 1990s Russia," *Cultural Anthropology* 13, no. 1 (1998): 28.

67. See for example Ferenc Hammer, "A Gasoline-Scented Sindbad: The Truck Driver as a Popular Hero in Socialist Hungary," *Cultural Studies* 16, no. 1 (2002): 80–126.

68. On the increasing disadvantaging of Hungarian workers and the progressive legitimacy deficit of the socialist state see the seminal work of Mark Pittaway, such as "A magyar munkásság és a rendszerváltás," [Hungarian workers and the transition], in *Határokon Túl: Tanulmánykötet Mark Pittaway (1971–2010) Emlékére* [Beyond boundaries: studies dedicated to the memory of Mark Pittaway (1971–2010)], ed. Eszter Bartha and Zsuzsanna Varga (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2012), 337–50.

69. Gál, "Áruexport."

70. On the social hierarchy of experts working abroad and their access to hard currency and Western products, see especially Ivanova, "Shopping in Beriozka," 249–51.

71. Lajos Gergely, Sándor Kordé, and Mihály Mogyorósi, *Mindennapi pénzügyeink* [Our everyday finances] (Budapest: Minerva, 1977).

72. Ivanova, "Shopping in Beriozka," 248, 256.

73. Zsuzsa Gál, "Nem csemege a Csemegének az idénybolt" [Seasonal business no treat for Csemege], *Népszava*, September 12, 1981.

74. Zsuzsa Gál, "Árleszállitás az Intertourist-boltokban: Magyarok is vásárolhatnak—Jobb, ha itthon marad a valuta" [Price reductions in Intertourist stores: Hungarians are also allowed to shop—it is better if the hard currency stays at home], *Népszava*, August 10, 1983.

75. For details see Zatlin, *Currency of Socialism*, especially 252–54.

76. See Attila Mong, *Kádár hitele: A magyar államadosság története 1956–1990* [Kádár's credit: the history of Hungary's state debt, 1956–90] (Budapest: Libri, 2012), 217–18.

77. Zsuzsa Gál, "Dolláros üzletek" [Dollar stores], *Népszava*, September 26, 1985.

78. Zsuzsa Gál, "Dolláros üzletek."

79. O. S., "Új dollárboltok a nyári szezonra" [New dollar stores for the summer season], *Népszava*, July 5, 1988.

80. Attila Csarnai, "Bécsbe guruló dollárjaink" [Our dollars rolling into Vienna], *Népszava*, November 16, 1988.

81. Attila Csarnai, "Bécsbe guruló dollárjaink."

82. Attila Csarnai, "Bécsbe guruló dollárjaink."

83. Belkereskedelmi Minisztérium [Ministry of Internal Trade], "Tájékoztató az MSZMP KB Gazdaságpolitikai Bizottsága részére az áruellátás időszerű kérdéseiről" [Briefing for the MSZMP Central Committee Council of Economic Policy on contemporary questions regarding the supply of goods], October 22, 1987, 288.f.15/549, MOL.

84. Kereskedelmi Minisztérium [Ministry of Trade], "Előterjesztés az MSZMP KB Gazdaság- és Szociálpolitikai Bizottsága részére az idegenforgalom fejlesztése, a világutlevél bevezetésének tapasztalatai" [Proposal for the HSWP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) CC (Central Committee) on the experiences of the development of foreign tourism and the introduction of the world passport] March 20, 1989, 288.f.15/569, MOL.

85. "Az Intertourist visszatérít" [Intertourist reimburses], *Népszava*, April 1, 1989.

86. "Growing Shortage of Convertible Currency, 29 December 1989," December 29, 1989, HU OSA 300-8-3:37-6-196, Publications Department: Background Reports, records of RFE/RL, OSA.

87. See Ferenc Fehér, Agnes Heller, and György Márkus, *Dictatorship Over Needs: Analysis of Soviet Societies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

88. For the GDR, see Zatlin, *Currency of Socialism*, 256–59.

"Put a Stop to the Excessive Influx": The Rhetoric of Restriction Regarding Female and Jewish Students at Budapest University, 1900–1930

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ABSTRACT | The idea of a numerus clausus at Hungarian universities was first directed against female students, the majority of whom were of Jewish origin. This intersectional study of the justifications articulated in favor of restricting the university admission of Jewish and female students highlights the shifting political and social ideas of the period. Based on archival and press sources, and drawing in particular on the faculty council minutes of the Faculties of Medicine and Humanities at Budapest University, this article explores both the common and distinct features of the rhetoric directed against female and Jewish students, respectively, and focuses on the interconnected interests and fears regarding the two social groups.

KEYWORDS | numerus clausus, Hungary, women, Jews, higher education

The social position of Jews and women has changed considerably over the course of the modern era, in both positive and negative directions. In Hungary, as in other modernizing nations in Europe, the nineteenth century saw a gradual widening of social and professional opportunities for both groups, though by the fin de siècle, both Jews and women also became targets of intensifying and often new forms of prejudice and exclusion. One common domain of inclusion and exclusion for both groups was higher education. By the beginning of the twentieth century, an increasing number of Jews and women had found a place for themselves in universities and advanced institutions of higher learning, and Hungary was no exception to this broader European trend. Hungary's numerus clausus law, however,

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marked a drastic reversal of these otherwise progressive developments. Enacted in 1920 to alter and "nationalize" the student body in Hungarian universities, the numerus clausus resulted in the dramatic reduction of female and Jewish students in universities in Hungary during the interwar period. Their parallel story is the subject of this article.

The history of the restriction of Jews and women in Hungarian higher education has been the subject of a few notable studies, some of which have discussed these histories in relation to each other. Published in 1988, Katalin N. Szegvári's groundbreaking book *Numerus clausus rendelkezések az ellenforradalmi Magyarországon: A zsidó és nőhallgatók főiskolai felvételéről* [Numerus clausus provisions in counter-revolutionary Hungary: on the college admission of Jewish and female students] was the first major Hungarian study to tackle the intersecting question of Jewish and female exclusion from Hungarian higher education in the interwar period.[1] More recent studies like Katalin Fenyves's "When Sexism Meets Racism: The 1920 Numerus Clausus Law in Hungary,"[2] as well as Michaela Raggam-Blesch's work on the similar experiences of Jews and women in Vienna,[3] have further emphasized not only the ambivalent social, cultural, and political attitudes toward assimilated Jews and female students during this period but also the increasingly exclusionary policies that affected them, especially after World War I. However, although important studies like these have considered the parallel histories of both groups in relation to each other, for the most part the histories of women and Jews in Hungarian universities and research institutions in the first half of the twentieth century are treated separately.[4] Perhaps more notably, what these studies have thus far neglected are the common motifs mobilized by nationalist politicians, publicists, and scholars to reduce the presence of both groups in Hungarian higher education.

Focusing on Budapest University (which after 1921 became the Hungarian Royal Péter Pázmány University), and relying primarily on the minutes of faculty councils of the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Humanities as the main primary resources, my study reflects on the parallel histories of the educational rights of Jews and women between the 1890s and the 1920s. Looking primarily at the views of the university leadership, politicians, and the press, I will explore the rhetoric that both reflected and reinforced shifting attitudes toward the two groups. Through a close reading of texts and speeches that addressed the issues of Jewish and female students between the late nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth, this article

reveals important connections between Jewish and female exclusion that have been less studied and that demonstrate the political and social ideologies of the era especially well. As my study will lay out, these discourses illuminate the similarities between arguments and attitudes directed toward Jews and women, as well as the underlying fears and ideas about who should, and especially who should not, become a member of the intellectual middle class.

Jewish and Female Students

Between the two world wars, nationalist and political antisemitism increased all over Europe. It was both the indicator and the consequence of political, social, and economic crises. In Hungary, World War I and its loss, which was followed in quick succession by the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1918, the short-lived Communist regime of the Republic of Councils in 1919, the national trauma of the punitive Trianon Treaty in 1920, and the violent counter-revolution that followed in the wake of Hungary's postwar revolutionary transformations, brought about a great deal of existential uncertainty and anxiety. The apprehension and unease of the period resulted in an escalating hostility toward "strangers," a phenomenon that Roger Griffin has characterized as a kind of splitting regarding those considered to be "others."[5] In this context, loyalty to the nation became a key issue, and although they had long been embedded in Hungarian society and had already enjoyed citizenship rights and religious emancipation for decades, the rising xenophobia and scapegoating were directed mostly against Jews.

The roots of this antisemitism were complex. In the image of the Jews, a set of anxieties and often contradictory projections met: those of the economically influential capitalist versus the politically dissident communist; the skillful materialist versus the hysterical feminine;[6] and the religious stranger versus the assimilated citizen whose racial origin was not visible (thus rendering the Jewish individual all the more "dangerous"). Denominational anti-Judaism had increasingly become political antisemitism at the state level by the turn of the century, and even more so after World War I.[7] From this perspective, the 1920 numerus clausus law can be seen as the "rationalization of the nationalist demonization of Jews."[8]

Looking at the international context, university quotas were prescribed during this period in several institutions in other countries, including Norway, Finland, and Scotland; however, it was nowhere coupled with such

system-wide racial or gender discrimination. Anti-Jewish quotas were also introduced in a few universities in the United States and Canada, for example, but these did not rise to a state or statutory level, so students could go on with their studies at other universities where quotas had not been introduced.[9] Within Central Europe itself, political and everyday verbal and physical antisemitism began increasing from the 1910s. As in Hungary, the numerus clausus was on the agenda in the 1920s in Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania as well, and though some universities applied it on an institutional level (for example, by seating Jewish students in segregated seats), it was not applied or enforced by law until the 1930s.[10] In this sense the Hungarian numerus clausus law enacted in 1920 was exceptional for its time.

Up until the numerus clausus law was implemented in 1920,[11] Jews—who constituted only 6 percent of the total population of Hungary—were significantly overrepresented at universities, both for historical and cultural reasons (more on this below). In 1920, 13 percent of Hungarian intellectuals with a university education were of Jewish origin. However, as Mária M. Kovács has pointed out, 75 percent of Jews in Hungary were city dwellers (25 percent of the inhabitants of Budapest and 13 percent of other cities were Jews); considering this population, and given that urban people in general were overrepresented in higher education, their university presence was not extraordinarily high. At the same time, whereas the proportion of Jews among merchants, physicians, lawyers, journalists, and artists was nearly 50 percent, their presence in public service or in the teaching profession was by no means high.[12]

As far as women were concerned, until the end of the nineteenth century, the principal issue was not so much the proportion of female students as part of the general university population but rather the question of admission itself. The struggle for and debates on women in higher education had intensified from the second half of the nineteenth century,[13] and they subsequently grew in strength from the early 1910s. The debates also reflected the emergence and transformation of feminist movements, in particular as university admission for women (as well as women’s work and suffrage) became one of the main fields of feminist struggle.[14] Though the arguments and counterarguments surrounding the admission of female students would change slightly after the (partial) opening of universities to women in 1896, some motifs, such as the question of women’s suitability

for certain fields of studies, remained constant. The level of acceptance also depended on the profession that the given university provided access to (the medical faculties being much more exclusive and "defensive" of their prestigious profession than faculties of humanities). Historical and political circumstances (and especially World War I, the Republic of Councils, and the conservative turn of the 1920s) would soon have a clear influence on decisions made at the university and state level, which affected Jews and women similarly, at least in part.

One aspect that linked Jewish and female university students as social groups was the significant overlap between female and Jewish student populations during the first decades of women's entry into higher education. In the early 1900s, the proportion of Jews among female students at Budapest University in some years approached close to 50 percent, though in the immediate period leading up to the implementation of the numerus clausus law, it was around 40–45 percent. The proportion of Jews among female students was highest (50–60 percent) at the Faculty of Medicine, while at the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Pharmacy it was 30–35 percent.[15] The proportion of Jewish women among female students was higher when compared to the percentage of Jewish men among male students. In 1910 that was 38 percent versus 21 percent, and in 1914 it was 42 percent versus 35 percent.[16] This difference persisted even after the introduction of the numerus clausus law, which adversely affected female students more than Jewish male students, if on a different scale.[17] The female student body in general was also characterized by other significant factors. In addition to having a higher representation of middle-class city dwellers of good social circumstances, female students tended to perform better than their male counterparts (in large part because of the stricter admission requirements for women than for men, such as an excellent high school diploma [*jeles érettségi*]) and also entered university with considerable cultural capital (for example, an ability in languages and music and a greater experience with "cultural consumption"). As Victor Karady notes, this phenomenon can be characterized as one of "intellectual overselection."[18] Female students therefore had a more homogeneous social background than male students: most of them came from intellectual or civil-servant families or were daughters of parents working in industry and commerce.[19] At the same time, during their university years many of them struggled with financial and housing difficulties as well as with limited earning opportunities.

As for the sociocultural reasons for the high representation of Jews among women at the universities, several factors played a role. On the one hand, modernization (which included urbanization, industrial development, and the transformation of the feudal social system and its stratification) made intellectual capital more accessible to women in general, a process that was itself facilitated largely by feminist movements. This affected first the better-off and more educated strata, where families were able and willing to make this long-term cultural "investment," often through the daughters. On the other hand, rapid secularization and rising emancipation in terms of religion and gender roles had an increased effect among Jews as a social group with high (or forced) social mobility. Jews also had a stronger desire for a partner with a similar education (and strongly valued studying in general), as well as greater openness to Western, modern, civic female models and lifestyles compared to the Christian middle class, which remained more attached to traditional family and gender roles.[20]

The other historical connection between the restriction of female and Jewish students is quite direct, as the idea of the numerus clausus at the university was first raised with regards to female students.[21] In August 1919, the Medical Faculty of Budapest University made a proposal to temporarily suspend or restrict the admission of women, a recommendation that was implemented soon after. Between 1920 and 1926, the Medical Faculty in fact applied a *numerus nullus* to women. Of course, the principle of "two birds with one stone" was clearly visible and articulated. The overlap between female and Jewish students was explicitly recognized at the meeting of the University Council in December 1919, already in connection with a restriction based on ethnic origin. As the minutes of the December 4 University Council meeting recorded, "it is obvious that in the case of the [ethnic] numerus clausus, the proportion of female students could be fixed without any theoretical or practical difficulties."[22]

Apart from the treatment of Jews and women as a "common set," similarities can also be found in the decision-making mechanisms, motives, intentions, arguments, and background of hate and fear toward Jewish and female students. Antisemitism and anti-feminism are often associated, and their roots are in part similar, or, rather, are common indicators of the mechanisms of exclusion and "defense" of a society. In this context, the university was a symptomatic space with both symbolic and practical significance, reflecting and shaping attitudes toward a marginalized group.

Women at the University: Openings, Barriers, and Opinions

In 1896, following the 1895 decree issued by Gyula Wlassics,[23] the Minister of Religion and Public Education, three university faculties (Humanities, Medicine, and Pharmacy) were opened to women in Hungary (similar openings occurred in Austria and Germany at about the same time). The text of Wlassics' ministerial order represents very clearly the transitional situation of women. The decree expressed an attitude that was open to change and sensitive to inequalities, but that at the same time perceived women's gainful employment and qualifications in terms of "constraint," in that it provided reassurances regarding the conservation of traditional roles, as well as women's "vocation" and "virtues."[24] As Wlassics indicated: "Changing social and cultural conditions have forced women to look for other livelihoods instead of the occupations they have held so far and to acquire the knowledge needed for this purpose. . . . And who would not feel that the exclusion of the female sex from a part of scientific bread-winning paths with principled rigor is one of the great social injustices that will never be the glory of the bourgeoisie? . . . The admission of women with considerable talent and inclination for scientific careers . . . does not preclude the fulfillment of a woman's vocation, the preservation of women's virtues, and, in this connection, public morality. The vast majority of women continue to perform their task solely by fulfilling family duties."[25]

In the debates around women's access to higher education that were conducted in the university faculties, the press, and in parliament, the key word was "suitability."[26] The liberal press was generally supportive. Opponents, however, typically wrapped their fears of change in worries about women's bodies, "mental constitution," and femininity.[27] This was not a phenomenon particular to Hungary. Austrian philosopher Otto Weininger and German neurologist Karl Möbius are prime examples of influential public intellectuals whose misogynist preconceptions both represented and perpetuated general cultural stereotypes. Their views about the "abnormality of female scholarship" or concerns about the ability of female intellectuals to bear children were very similar to those that appeared in Hungary. So, too, was the general perception of femininity and intellectuality as opposed traits.[28] According to comments made in 1898 by the medical professor Géza Mihalkovics, for example, learning "can result in the complete extinction of secondary sexual characteristics."[29] It is important

to note that anti-feminist views were not exclusive to the politically conservative side. According to an 1899 parliamentary speech by the Liberal Party MP and physician Samu Pap, women who pursued higher education would "lose all external signs of their femininity and turn into unidentifiable beings."[30]

Philosopher Gyula Kornis (who from 1927 to 1931 served as Secretary of State for Public Education under Minister of Religion and Education Kunó Klebelsberg) devoted several studies to the issue, summarizing practically all the concerns and stereotypes regarding women's higher education. According to his thesis, "the female body is unsuitable for strenuous mental activity" because of the "over-emotionality, subjectivity, aversion to abstraction, and dependence inherent in the female constitution."[31] He believed that this educational effort was not really desired by women either, and that they suffered from it physically as well. "Most women," he wrote, "feel intensive learning a constraint because their natural tendencies are in a different direction. Strenuous mental work is unfavorable for physical development (just observe the skinny-pale, physically undeveloped, neurasthenic maidens in a girls' high school graduation examination!) . . . the end is premature withering, like a lily dying (*liliomhullás*)."[32] Women's learning, he asserted, was a fashion coming from America, and was a station on the road to "female domination." "Universities must be open to aspiring and fit women within the indicated framework. But women's university studies should not be a trend. . . . In America in 1910, 430,000 women and 828,000 men were pursuing an intellectual career. There, female domination, gynocracy, has become almost a dogma, as H[ugo] Münsterberg, the great psychologist, says."[33] Kornis examined the various intellectual fields and found that women were unfit to pursue virtually all of them. He declared that the medical career was "inconsistent with women's natural physical and mental constitution" and that patients had no confidence in them either (he generously allowed them the possibility of studying pharmacy, however). Women were not recommended for positions as engineers or professors either, though he was willing to make a few exceptions for those in possession of "masculine intelligence."

The legal profession was a particularly delicate point, as it was obviously also a matter of power; at stake was the potential to influence the affairs of the public sector, and the state. This appeared openly in Kornis's writing, too, as he portrayed the apotheosis of patriarchy as an order of "nature."

"The doctor does only private work, but the legal career is a matter of the *imperum* and *jurisdictio*, and as long as the state remains a male state (as it has been for so many millennia), it will not easily give these two into the hands of women. . . . Even without men's *conscious* aspiration for power, it is a natural state, the division of the roles of men and women according to the order of nature. This is essentially not a 'power' issue, but a historically proven fact of correct complementarity."[34]

A poll in the 1906 Christmas issue of the newspaper *Az Ujság* focused on the admission of women to the faculties of Law and Engineering.[35] The inquiry demonstrated the typical standpoint that, while doctors found women more suitable for the legal career, lawyers found them more suitable for medicine. The respondents to the poll were presumably motivated by the desire to restrain female colleagues from generating competition in their own profession.

Various "moral" concerns appeared as well in the debates over women's admission to the university, with warnings that men and women learning together may lead to dangerous, unwanted relationships; women, it was thought, would distract men's attention from science and would become immoral themselves. An anonymous article published in *Egyetemi Lapok* [University Papers] on December 2, 1895 saw the opening of the university as a direct path to prostitution. Written presumably by a professor, the article claimed, "The higher women's literacy is, the freer their thinking is . . . and the flightier their morals are. And if every woman becomes a scholar, then it will not be 30,000 women in Budapest selling love, but all of them."[36] According to another author's sarcastic characterization, female students were recognizable just by their sour expression and apparent disregard for their outer appearance: "In today's society, women university students are a very separate group that the world looks at with some kind of amazement. Although for about twenty years they haven't been wearing eccentric clothes like they used to, they can still be recognized for their elongated faces and total contempt for flirtations and vanities."[37]

Of course, worries about the "natural" primacy of the family and maternal vocation were also recurring. In his 1915 article published in *Nemzeti Nőnevelés* [National Women's Education], the geologist Elemér M. Vadász declared that "this effect is manifested in the freedom of conversation, in the decline of femininity. And since, in spite of their university studies, the goal of all women can only be marriage, the question is whether the

diminished glaze of their femininity is in this respect beneficial."[38] More than a decade earlier, the journalist and cultural historian Aladár György had pointed out the hypocrisy of this line of argumentation. As he wrote in the same journal in 1901, opponents to female admission to the university saw the misery of factory workers, widows, and orphans to be compatible with traditional (patriarchal) "family happiness" and the "feminine constitution," yet felt these virtues were being endangered by a few hundred university students.[39]

In his January 1907 parliamentary speech, Károly Kmety, an Independence Party MP and professor of law, contended that the new roles of women were not in line with the liberal worldview: "I do not consider it a requirement of liberalism . . . that girls be taken out of their natural vocation. . . . I express my concern that the number of female students is greatly increasing. . . . Won't the inevitably emerging graduate female proletariat bring us more trouble?" He perceived the new type, called "female monsters," such a threat that he put the responsibility for a potential national catastrophe on their shoulders: "If national life in Hungary starts to perish, we will owe it to this . . . female type."[40] Rózsa Bédy-Schwimmer, the president of the Association of Feminists (Feministák Egyesülete), responded to the speech in a vitriolic editorial in the then newly-launched magazine *A Nő és a Társadalom* [Woman and Society]. Already using the term numerus clausus, Bédy-Schwimmer wrote, "Kmety asks for a numerus clausus against female students at the university. Bánffy[41] goes further and believes that, on the issue of women's education, the minister should take a position of restriction not only at universities but already at high schools. If the budget were not so urgent, there might possibly appear some friends of darkness who would glorify women's lack of education as a national virtue at the level of primary education and even kindergartens."[42]

The first attempts at restriction on the part of the university faculties had already appeared as early as 1903. Gusztáv Heinrich, professor of literature at the Faculty of Humanities of Budapest University (and the brother-in-law of Wlassics) proposed to determine the conditions for the admission of female students. The report of the Faculty of Humanities commission claimed that the university should recruit only eminently talented women, in order to prevent the "mass influx" of female students.[43] The University Council also took the stance of "preventing women's unjustified influx into scholarly careers."[44] As a result of the corresponding ministry decree, from

1904 onward, both at the Faculty of Humanities and the Medical Faculty, women could become regular students only if they had graduated with an excellent high school diploma; they also had to apply to the minister for admission. Protests began in response to the action taken by the two faculties, and in December 1904 the Association of Feminists was formed, which in the following years made several submissions to expand higher education. By contrast, *Keresztény Magyar Ifjúság* [Christian Hungarian Youth], a magazine of conservative university students, justified to its readers the provisions being proposed by the University. "The number of female students," the magazine stated, "has already reached terrible proportions this year."[45]

From 2 percent at the turn of the century, the proportion of women in the Faculty of Humanities in Budapest University rose to 25 percent by the beginning of the 1910s (it was around 5 percent in the Faculty of Medicine). The impact of World War I, in turn, was decisive for the transformation of women's roles and the proliferation of women's work, and also involved a significant rise in the proportion of female students. In 1918, this proportion was already 52 percent in the Faculty of Humanities and 28 percent in the Faculty of Medicine. The first female teaching assistants were also appointed during this period. Erzsébet Hamburger was appointed at the Faculty of Medicine (Department of Pharmacy) in 1910, and Eleonóra Harmos at the Faculty of Humanities (Department of Geography) in 1915.[46]

In April 1915, at the initiative of humanities students, 242 female students issued a memorandum requesting the lifting of restrictions against women. Supported by the Faculty of Medicine of Budapest University, the ministry nevertheless set the matter aside.[47] On the proposal of Bernát Alexander, dean of the Faculty of Humanities, the university council also discussed the issue shortly afterward. In his speech, he pointed out, among other things, the untenability of prejudice in the university's policy: "It is certain that women, with their supposedly lesser talent, outdo men and learn exactly what they need to know, while men, with all their genius, fail en masse."[48] According to the statistics, women's examination scores were indeed better, a fact that was partly due to the more rigorous selection criteria outlined above, and partly (and presumably) due to greater effort on their part.

In December 1915, the influential left-wing students' society, the Galileo Circle, called for the opening of all faculties to women. Though they had

the support of several professors, their demand was ineffective. In July 1917, female university students applied again to the ministry for the opening of all faculties; the ministry then sent their appeal to the universities for comment. In his report, Dean Ignác Goldziher conveyed the conservative position of the Faculty of Humanities at Budapest University. "Overflow" had become a cause for serious concern, and beyond the problem of seats, university leaders were also worried about the seriousness and prestige of the institution: "Today's state of affairs, which has been induced by the mass influx of female students, brings about a legitimate concern . . . for all those who take university education seriously. . . . We are not led by any animosity toward female students; with good-natured sympathy, we look at the struggle they face, first of all, with the difficulties of studying at a university and then with the obstacles in their professional careers, the struggle of which, unfortunately, mostly results in their premature withering and the draining of their capacity for work! . . . The university is a men's institution. . . . If the current flood continues to increase . . . the student youth will not fit in our lecture halls and some kind of numerus clausus will have to be implemented."[49]

Goldziher argued that the faculty should definitely reject the proposal to allow women to be admitted as special students (*rendkívüli hallgatók*)[50] from the age of sixteen (just as men could be), thus devaluing the abilities and ambitions of potential female students. As he stated in an indignant and ironic way, "access to university would be almost as easy as to a theater or a cinema; what a female audience we would get here—one that would make any scientific work illusory anyway." He suggested that opening the *other* faculties would be beneficial to the Faculty of Humanities, inasmuch as it would divert some of the female students "to institutions where they might be more appropriate." It is not clear where he thought women's place was "more appropriate," however.[51] Typically, each faculty found the others more suitable for women.

The situation was not necessarily better for women who were directed into the fields of art and music. In a letter written in March 1917, Béla Bartók (who in the late 1930s would protest against the anti-Jewish laws) expressed reluctance toward his private students, both as women and Jews: "All [12] are girls and, with the exception of one, all are Jewish. . . . And they are all private students. Isn't it awful, to take care of so many Ellas, Erzsis, and Lilis, and feed them all."[52]

In the journal of the Association of Feminists (*A Nő* [The Woman]; originally *A Nő és a Társadalom* [Woman and Society]), the poet Géza Szilágyi and the mathematician Manó Beke refuted prejudices and supported the full opening of universities to women.[53] The Association of Feminists in 1912 and the National Alliance of Hungarian Women (Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége—MANSZ) in 1917 requested the opening of legal faculties for women. Professor of Law Gusztáv Szászy-Schwarz supported the request, and so in 1918 the faculty temporarily admitted female students, and some women lawyers graduated.[54] In November 1917, Albert Apponyi, Minister of Religion and Public Education, made a proposal to the King to open all university faculties and academies of law. There was no answer to this, and his successor, János Zichy, subsequently considered the matter no longer urgent. From 1918 onward, however, Hungary's economic academies as well as the Reformed theological academies accepted women.[55]

After the liberal "Aster Revolution" in 1918, left-wing students and social organizations began demanding that university faculties be opened unrestrictedly to women. The female special students of Budapest University also demanded in a memorandum to lift the admission restrictions. In the fall of 1918, the Galileo Circle prepared a plan for higher education reform, part of which was to provide women with equal access to all faculties and departments. The Károlyi government accepted the proposal, and thus for a short time all universities opened to women without restrictions.[56] This decree remained in effect during the Communist Republic of Councils in 1919 as well and was only altered by university faculties after 1920, as will be detailed in the next section.

The Women's Numerus Clausus

As Szegvári, Fenyves, and Kovács have all pointed out, much like the evolving negative attitude toward Jews, the perception and public response to emancipated women had become more critical by the late 1910s.[57] Women's growing access to higher education at the turn of the century and in the 1910s, coupled with the influence that World War I had on extending women's social roles, was followed by a significant backlash against women's emancipation in the 1920s—which was represented in the feminist movement as well. Alongside the legislated racial quota imposed by the numerus

clausus, the pre-1918 limitations on women's educational rights were also restored.

The collapse of the Republic of Councils on August 1, 1919 was followed by violent, overtly antisemitic reprisals and by the cancellation of the decrees and appointments that had been implemented during the Communist period. The conservative turn imposed drastic restrictions on women's access to education as well. By the end of 1919, the proportion of female students fell by almost half. At Budapest University, women constituted only 12 percent in the Faculty of Medicine, and 33 percent in the Faculty of Humanities. Until 1918, members of the Medical Faculty (for example, Ernő Jendrassik and Emil Grósz) had been especially supportive of female students, but from the 1920s the anti-feminist and antisemitic Károly Hoór and János Bársony became prominent figures at the university. In August 1919, the Medical Faculty made a proposal to temporarily suspend and then restrict women's admission: female students needed to be a minimum of twenty-two years old and have a high school diploma of excellent qualification, which meant having achieved the best final grade in all subjects of the finishing exam.[58] Although the "general disappointment" and exhaustion of female doctors was emphasized, the main argument was the "existential competition" caused by the emergence of women physicians. To quote Károly Hoór, "During the war, women took the place of the soldiers; in the absence of male contenders they became assistant professors, got important and lucrative jobs, and got ahead of their male colleagues. It became an urgent duty to prevent mutilated Hungary from being inundated with female doctors, that is, with doctors being definitely, and in all respects, less valuable compared to male doctors."[59] According to Szegvári, the perception of an increasing "intellectual proletariat" in fact justified the resurgent religious and gender discrimination and exclusion.[60]

Conservatives very much saw the presence of women in the university and in intellectual professions in terms of a "takeover," one that required them to be on the "defensive." The rhetoric that they employed strongly evoked the discourse of the numerus clausus directed at Jews. The rhetorically declared goal was not exclusion, but rather "defensive struggle"[61] in both cases (in the case of Jews, a further slogan was "proportionality"[62]). In September 1919, Ernő Fináczy, the dean of the Faculty of Humanities of Budapest University (who would later protest against the numerus clausus law), noted that although women did not disappoint in the teaching

profession, many were enrolled in the university without "physical and mental aptitude" and without a "true sense of vocation."[63] In the end, he fell short of calling for a complete exclusion of women from the university, suggesting instead that enrollment be limited to female students who were at least twenty-one years old.

In December 1919, Alfréd Doleschall, dean of the Faculty of Law, made a more drastic proposal, calling for the postponing of enrollment and the introduction of a numerus clausus for women. The Medical Faculty proposed that, until the "mass shifts [that] appeared during the war in favor of women equalize," the faculty should not admit any more female students and even after that only women above the age of twenty-two.[64]

Doleschall's proposal is particularly noteworthy as, in addition to gender discrimination, the "racial" aspect first appeared in its wake. Writing in support of Doleschall's recommended restrictions, Mihály Kmoskó, dean of the Faculty of Theology, proposed a numerus clausus "by religion, progress, and race" in each faculty. The Faculty of Humanities agreed that, in general, it would be necessary to set limits and to admit nationally loyal and reliable students, although it would be difficult to realize this in practice. However, the faculty did not support a racially based numerus clausus, "since, according to our basic state laws, all citizens of the Hungarian state have equal rights before the law without any difference in denomination or nationality."[65] They were also relatively liberal regarding women: although they regretted that the Károlyi government repealed the restrictions that existed before 1918, they also considered it illegal to restore them, and merely proposed an age limit of twenty-one years.

At an "extraordinary" meeting (*rendkívüli ülés*) of the Medical Faculty of Budapest University on September 25, 1920—that is, after the passing of the numerus clausus law—the issue of female students was put on the agenda. The two kinds of exclusion mutually reinforced each other. Professor János Bársony, one of the leading figures in support of racial and gender discrimination at the university (and rector after 1922), offered a specific religious-racial objection to women's admission, saying that female students would "displace boys, namely Christian boys."[66] On the basis of Bársony's discriminatory initiative, *numerus nullus* was introduced; that is, the total exclusion of female students from the medical profession, a provision which remained in effect until 1926. Some women could go on with their studies at the medical faculties of Pécs, Szeged, and Debrecen, while

others went abroad. Many of these women, however, were hindered in their university studies.[67] The proportion of women in the medical faculties was reduced to around 8 percent in the 1920s.

In July 1920, Lajos Méhely (professor of zoology at Budapest University and advocate of racial biology and eugenics) submitted a report on the numerus clausus to the Faculty of Humanities. This report is one of the most horrific documentary examples of undisguised racism from the period. It also documents some of the parallels between the restrictions of women and Jews in the twisted rhetoric of "excessive influx." Stressing the need to "defend" the rights of Hungarian/male students and the "danger" of Jewification/feminization of the university, the report called on the university to preserve the prevailing (gender/"racial") privileges. Méhely believed that the earlier proposals had been too cautious and had avoided addressing the main point head on. By contrast, he did not mince his words: "Even if I did not say it, we would all know that one of the main, if not the only, aim and legitimacy of the numerus clausus is *to prevent the excessive influx of Jewish students*! . . . Here, with the sincere openness of the Hungarian soul, one must say that we strive to put a stop to the excessive influx of Jewish students with measures that are saturated with national spirit, but are sober and just. We do not in any way question the right of the Jews to send their sons [sic!] to university, but we demand the same right for the nation-maintaining Hungarians and other races and nationalities living in Hungary." Institutional constraint was essential, he added, "because following the current pace would lead to the *complete Jewification of Hungarian universities.*"[68]

Placing the issue in broader political context, Méhely referred to the unpredictable consequences of "rampant" liberalism. "We have to take it upon ourselves to see if we will preserve the unbridled liberalism that has run through all our institutions like a red thread since 1848 in the government of the university." As Méhely emphasized, Hungarian statesmen Loránd Eötvös, Gyula Andrássy, and Ottokár Prohászka also "pointed out the great national danger that has torn us from the unbridled liberalism of recent decades." Méhely proposed a 5 percent quota for Jewish students, but the question still remained whether baptized Jews should be included in this. Launching into a long racist and eugenic discussion about the relationship between religion and race, Méhely came to the conclusion that anthropologically and spiritually Jews remained Jews even after baptism. Moreover,

under Mendel's rule, a "half-breed mongrel" is also Jewish. Such investigations had not yet taken place, he noted with regret, because then one would immediately be "labeled as antisemitic." He proposed a quota for women as well, limiting their enrollment to 5 percent of the total number of male students. Like many of his contemporaries, he also emphasized that female students should be a minimum of twenty-one years old and in possession of an "excellent" high school diploma.

Conservative Women's Movements of the 1920s and the University Issue

From the 1920s on, the aims and rhetoric of women's movements changed in line with political ideology, and this turn significantly affected arguments both for and against women in higher education. From the 1920s onward, MANSZ took over the representation of the interests of female university students from the feminists, and the issue of women's education (although it was also a fundamental issue for MANSZ) took on a national-conservative direction and became increasingly a matter concerning Christian middle-class women.

In the spring of 1923, MANSZ and the women's branch of the National Association of Hungarian University and College Students (Magyar Egyetemi és Főiskolai Hallgatók Országos Szövetsége – MEFHOSZ) appealed to the faculties to cancel the female *numerus nullus* at the Medical Faculty of Budapest University and to open all faculties to women.[69] In their justification, the two organizations emphasized not only economic and social-policy arguments but also the aspect of class. As they wrote, "the issue of women is fundamentally an economic issue," one that was rooted in the growing number of women whom men could not support. By limiting opportunities for learning and intellectual careers, middle-class women would be forced to renounce the social class that they were "born into"; they would become "declassed." In their basically feudal submission, the main argument was to maintain the economic and social status of young middle-class (that is, Hungarian Christian) girls.

The appeal by MANSZ and the women's branch of MEFHOSZ was written in a fundamentally different tone than the straightforward student submissions of 1915, or the earlier petitions of the Association of Feminists

in 1911 and 1912. Here, "loyal" women with Christian-national affiliations appealed to decision makers with "daughterly confidence" in the interests of a "Hungarian resurrection." In their appeal, the "nation" emerged as a priority, and the issue of women's education was embedded in and subordinated to the Trianon trauma and the great issues of "national fate." "Young Hungarian girls," they declared, "have been silent for a long time; in the time of the great disaster that befell our country, it was not right to complain about our own problems. We thought that the country would not be able to deal with . . . the questions of students or women until the millennial borders had been regained."[70]

While the text was not explicitly antisemitic—in fact it expressed some appreciation for the capabilities of Jews—it nevertheless formulated a clear distinction between Jews and Hungarians. Racist reasoning did not contradict (and in this case explicitly supported) women's rights: "It is Jews who produce the intelligentsia in the greatest numbers. The literacy of Jewish girls is higher than that of Christian girls, all the more so because (having the appropriate financial means) they have easy access to colleges in Germany, Vienna, or Prague, while to the poor Hungarian girls, if they are excluded from Hungarian universities, the world closes."[71]

Every faculty at Budapest University rejected the request. As Ernő Fináczy, dean of the Faculty of Humanities put it, "we have reached the limit of concessions." The issue was indeed a social one, as he admitted, but its solution was not opening up new careers but helping women "by protecting marriage and motherhood." The faculties, in turn, asked Gyula Kornis to study the matter and make a proposal.[72]

Kornis's proposal was ultimately published in 1925 in the form of an extensive study, "Women at the University," in the conservative journal *Napkelet* [Orient], which was under the editorship of Cécile Tormay, the head of MANSZ. I have already quoted Kornis's arguments about the "fitness" of women for study. This was accompanied by national and race-related concerns in women's scientific, or any bread-winning, career. "But all this is suicide for the race," he concluded. "Americans do not reproduce at all. . . . Because women are self-employed, they take the jobs away from men, so the latter are less able to marry. The woman rises individually, but the warmth of family life disappears. . . . The leading role of women in intellectual careers is more and more apparent in the image of public life too. It is beginning to lack strength and consistency."[73] With both

hypocritical and guilt-inducing rhetoric, he contrasted family/nation/race and existential independence: "What do I consider more valuable: family life and the resulting deep family and national solidarity and the health of the race or the abstract right of individuals to economic independence?"[74]

The study was answered by the conservative philosopher-writer Emma Ritoók and Marianne Czeke, the first female librarian in Hungary, who defined themselves as "non-radical feminists."[75] They pointed out that women had had the opportunity to work in scholarly fields for barely half a century, so the reference to historical examples was rather doubtful. Nevertheless, the authors did not question the priority of mother/family/nation over professional and material independence; their main argument was that these could be "reconciled." In the wake of Kornis's article—and with the support of MANSZ—The Association of Hungarian Women Graduates of University and College (Egyetemet és Főiskolát Végzett Magyar Nők Egyesülete) was established in 1925 by Czeke and Ritoók.

In 1928, an article by historian Ida Bobula was published in *Napkelet*.[76] As she wrote, the "great collapse" and the loss of wealth reached the daughters of the Hungarian middle class "in their flowering years." A diploma would provide a livelihood for them, or at least knowledge. "'*Wissen ist Macht*' [knowledge is power] is not just a phrase," she asserted.[77] Moreover, the working woman would take the burden off the man. That is, she also believed that there was no conflict between the interests of the race and the rights of the individual in the issue of women's university studies; in fact, these supported each other. Furthermore, according to the author, it was "the ugly and the poor" who went to university, those who would have little chance of getting married anyway. The issue of women was couched in nationalist rhetoric in this characteristically conservative feminist stance, which left no doubt about the priority of motherhood: "We must recognize that the nation cannot be deprived of the female workforce that is de facto not occupied by the most sacred profession of motherhood and the managing of the household. We need to recognize that reorganizing the female workforce in the spirit of the age is one of our biggest and most vital national tasks."[78] Jews also came up in the article. Bobula pointed out that most of the first female students in Hungarian universities were of Jewish and German descent, noting that "their pragmatic cultural disposition helped them to recognize the utility of university studies earlier than others." "The problem," she added, "was that these first-generation students obviously could

not gain the sympathy of the teaching staff."[79] It is not clear from Bobula's formulation, however, whether the presumed antipathy of the professors was directed at the students because of their Jewish background, or because of their status as "first-generation" female students.

Finally, Klebelsberg's 1926 ministerial decree ordered the increased enrollment of female students at Hungary's universities and declared the exclusion of women from the medical profession illegal, as it prevented "those who have the inclination, the opportunity, and the ability to study."[80] At the same time, however, he insisted that the "personal conditions" of the numerus clausus still needed to be met in terms of ethnicity and "political reliability." In the same year the Faculties of Protestant and Lutheran Theology, the Department of Economics, and (with a 5 percent quota) the Department of Architecture[81] of the Technical University, as well as the agricultural and commercial majors in the Faculty of Economics, opened to women. Women continued to be excluded from the Faculties of Economics (with the exception of the above two majors), Law, and Political Science.[82] In 1928, habilitation and thus an associate professorship also became possible for women. But in practice, (Christian) men continued to be favored.

Behind references to the "female constitution," or to "intellectual overproduction," biologization, or philosophizing, there were, in fact, vital social considerations and fears, particularly with respect to the rearrangement of the family and the social system, as well as shifting notions of gender and the challenge to power that came with increased female competition. Besides the recurring motives, the rhetoric changed according to the sociopolitical circumstances. In addition to "aptitude," with the opening of the university the terms "overproduction" and "influx," as well as the "protection" of the middle class, the family, the race, and the nation were frequently deployed by decision makers and also by the conservative women's movement.

In critical political-economic periods, it becomes especially apparent that "woman" is not a homogeneous social category. From the 1920s on, the fight for university access was waged not for the sake of *all* women, but rather for the daughters of the Christian-national middle class. Similar ruptures had already appeared around the issue of suffrage, too, mostly between the differing priorities of the socialist and bourgeois women's movements. As Szegvári has argued, from the 1920s, "equality was replaced by the program of 'class-appropriate' literacy."[83] We could add "race-appropriate"

to this assessment as well. The shift away from gender to race as the basis of discrimination coincided with the alignment of the conservative women's movement with a racialized form of nationalism, whose proponents sought to protect "Christian" Hungary from the so-called threat of Jews in the country's institutions of higher education and therefore in the state itself.

Starting in the 1930s, the heretofore similar trajectory of women and Jews in Hungarian higher education split: the proportion of female students stabilized (on average around 30 percent, at the Faculty of Humanities around 50 percent), while the proportion of female and male Jewish students decreased drastically to 5–6 percent, and in the early 1940s, after the introduction of more restrictive anti-Jewish legislation, to 2 percent. The meaning and consequence of the "intersection" of the two minority identities was transformed: Jewish female students were no longer excluded from education as women, but on the basis of their Jewish origin.

Although in 1934 the Minister of Religion and Public Education, Bálint Hóman, drafted a confidential announcement restricting female students to 30 percent, to improve the job prospects of graduates, this was not observed—in the Faculty of Medicine, their proportion was already below 20 percent; and in the Faculty of Humanities, as noted above, it remained well above 30 percent, at almost 50 percent.[84] The exclusion of Jews intensified both inside and outside the walls of the university, taking increasingly direct forms with the introduction of anti-Jewish laws (1938, 1939, 1941) and ultimately the complete deprivation of civil rights. A close reading of the texts relating to the numerus clausus thus makes it even clearer that the story of Jewish exclusion and persecution did not begin on March 19, 1944 with the German occupation of Hungary.

The Experiences of Jewish Women

For Jewish women intent on attaining a university education, the situation both before and after the passing of the numerus clausus was fraught with difficulties that emerged at the intersection of gender and ethnicity. Prior to World War I, for example, Jewish women—like female students in general—had to negotiate the anti-feminist terrain of the university, even as opportunities began opening up to them and as voices emerged from inside and outside the institution to support their place in it. Faced with normative representations of both traditional and morally and culturally "appropriate" gender roles,

female students and intellectuals had to deal with their own inner conflicts, a struggle that was made all the more challenging by the lack of role models. Some of them coped by being "gender-neutral" and by accomplishing more than the average in order to overcome stereotypes. As Raggam-Blesch shows in her study of the Viennese case, this was especially true for Jewish women, who tended to distance themselves not only from femininity and feminism but also from their Jewishness.[85] In Hungary, the situation became even more complicated after World War I. Aggression toward Jewish students became more and more frequent during the 1920s, as did physical and verbal assaults against women. Female Jewish students were doubly affected by the antisemitic and misogynist atmosphere at the university, but overt discrimination was directed more at their Jewish background than at their sex.[86]

A brief overview of the individual experiences of three Jewish women helps to illustrate the nature of the struggles Jewish women in general faced with regard to gaining access to higher education in Hungary. Anna Pór (1913–2009), for example, the sister-in-law of Emmi Pikler, a renowned Hungarian pediatrician, was unable to earn a university degree at a Hungarian institution in the interwar period. After being refused admission as a Jew to all the Budapest universities, Pór studied eurhythmics (*mozdulatművészet*) in Budapest and dance and choreography in Paris. In her recollections she discussed her unsuccessful attempts to apply to Hungarian universities. "After high school graduation [in 1931], with my excellent high school diploma I applied to all the universities in the country for a degree in Hungarian literature, biology, and medicine, and I was rejected everywhere because the 'quota was filled.'"[87]

The experiences of Alice Bálint (1898–1939), the eminent Hungarian psychoanalyst who had once dreamt about teaching at Budapest University, tell a similar, if perhaps even more poignant, story about the nature of exclusion in the counter-revolutionary period and about the antisemitic atrocities transpiring at the university.[88] In her diary entry for August 19, 1919 (shortly after the fall of the Republic of Councils), she noted insightfully that "strangers" become threatening in times when the "basic tone" in society becomes precarious. For Bálint the events that were unfolding were simultaneously sad, tragic, and misguided: "The pogrom is going on at the university. You are firing a lot of good people now, but you will regret it later. My heart aches very much. I liked and wanted to be there. I wanted to work there. . . . And now I have to leave. . . . Budapest culture was rootless

anyway; the country as a whole won't miss it. It's not professors that are needed here but more production. There is no need for us. We are needed where culmination is achieved already, there they can bear strangers as they don't have to worry about the basic tone anymore."[89]

The story of Erzsébet Kardos (1902–1945), a pediatrician and psychoanalyst killed by a Hungarian Arrow Cross squad in January 1945, sheds further light on the varied experiences of Jewish women in Hungary and on the lengths that some of them went to in order to achieve their educational and professional goals. Due to the restrictions on both Jews and women, Kardos studied medicine at the University of Würzburg between 1921 and 1923. There she also experienced antisemitism and therefore looked for other places to go. Unsuccessful, she finally came back to Hungary and finished her studies at the medical faculty of the Erzsébet University in Pécs, where *numerus nullus* was not applied to women and the numerus clausus was applied less strictly, especially to upper-year students. In a letter to a friend written from Würzburg in 1923, she anticipated the future: "Whatever happens, please have my passport extended and have Switzerland included. . . . I can anyway see that we must sacrifice the values we consider important in life and all the opportunity for what beauty it would provide perhaps for many a year to come, for something that is beyond our control, that people refer to as history."[90]

As the ongoing research by Judith Szapor and Ágnes Kelemen into the life paths of Hungarian Jewish women after the numerus clausus shows, there is a clear need for further scholarship dedicated to the analysis and preservation of the memories of this group of Hungarian women.[91] Beyond conducting continued research on the way in which the Hungarian press framed the issue of Jewish and female inclusion and exclusion at the university, or studies on the literary representation of women and Jews in higher education, it would be desirable and indeed fruitful to collect and further analyze the personal recollections of and about Jews and/or women whose studies were hindered by discriminatory regulations or who were forced to study abroad. As the above cases suggest, women, and perhaps especially Jewish women, did not simply give up on their ambitions. Despite similar restrictions in other countries, some actively sought opportunities elsewhere, while others like Pór turned to alternative intellectual and/or cultural fields and professions (photography, eurhythmics, or psychoanalysis were some typical examples) that did not require a university diploma.

Conclusion

Looking at the rhetoric of politicians, university professors, and the conservative women’s movement around the issue of women’s and Jews’ admission to higher education, beyond the group-specific aspects, one can also notice a number of parallels. In the case of women, notions of “suitability” and “naturally given vocation” were obviously gender-specific—it would have been difficult to employ these arguments in regard to Jewish male students. At the same time, discourses about both groups were characterized by a kind of apologetic, self-justifying, scapegoating and evasive argumentation that mixed biological, economic, and political elements that referred to psychological constitution, national interest and defense, and survival of the race, underscoring the danger of intellectual unemployment and the displacement of both Christians and men. The apologetic and false nature of the arguments becomes obvious when we realize that the numerus clausus did not provide a “solution” to any of these perceived problems. Christian students did not storm the universities, and after the introduction of the law there was even a shortage of students.[92] Women, moreover, did not “occupy” men’s places; they just had more opportunities to study.

The actual goal, which was often concealed by the rhetoric but was sometimes overtly expressed, was to limit the number of Jewish and female graduates and intellectuals in order to strengthen the Christian-nationalist, politically loyal middle class, support “fitting” students and ultimately maintain the status quo of middle-class Christian men.[93] This agenda called for the drastic reduction of university admission for Jews, who were considered socially and “racially” harmful, and women, who were seen as threatening to traditional gender roles. As fellow targets in this story, the fate of women and Jews ran parallel, at least to the 1920s, while for Jewish women, who were doubly targeted, the experience was, as we have seen, even more complicated.

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NOTES

1. Katalin N. Szegvári, *Numerus clausus rendelkezések az ellenforradalmi Magyarországon: A zsidó és nőhallgatók főiskolai felvételéről* [Numerus clausus decrees in counter-revolutionary Hungary: on the college admission of Jewish and female students] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1988).

2. Katalin Fenyves, "When Sexism Meets Racism: The 1920 Numerus Clausus Law in Hungary," *Hungarian Cultural Studies* 4 (2011): 87–102.

3. Michaela Raggam-Blesch, "Zwischen Antifeminismus und Antisemitismus: Jüdische Frauen an der Wiener Universität 1897–1938" [Between anti-feminism and antisemitism: Jewish women at the University of Vienna, 1897–1938], in *Alma Mater Antisemitica: Akademisches Milieu, Juden und Antisemitismus an den Universitäten Europas zwischen 1918 und 1939* [Alma mater antisemitica: academic milieu, Jews, and antisemitism in European universities between 1918 and 1939], ed. Regina Fritz, Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, and Jana Starek (Vienna: Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien, 2016), 245–64; Michaela Raggam-Blesch, *Zwischen Ost und West: Identitätskonstruktionen jüdischer Frauen in Wien* [Between East and West: identity constructions of Jewish women in Vienna] (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2008).

4. See, for example, Katalin N. Szegvári and Andor Ladányi, *Nők az egyetemeken I: Küzdelmek a nők egyetemi tanulmányaiért* [Women in universities I: struggles for women's university studies] (Budapest: Felsőoktatási Pedagógiai Kutatóközpont, 1976); Viktor Karády (Victor Karady), "A társadalmi egyenlőtlenségek Magyarországon a nők felsőbb iskoláztatásának korai fázisában" [Social inequalities in Hungary in the early stage of women's higher education], in *Férfiuralom: Írások nőkről, férfiakról, feminizmusról* [Male domination: writings on women, men, and feminism], ed. Miklós Hadas (Budapest: Replika Kör, 1994), 176–95; Victor Karady and Péter Tibor Nagy, eds., *The Numerus Clausus in Hungary: Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe* (Budapest: Centre for Historical Research, History Department of the Central European University, 2012); Andor Ladányi, "Nők: Két évforduló; A nők felsőfokú tanulmányainak száz éve" [Women: two anniversaries; one hundred years of women's higher education], *Educatio* 5, no. 3 (1996): 375–89; Mária M. Kovács, "Numerus clausus Magyarországon: 1919–1945" [The numerus clausus in Hungary: 1919–1945], in *Jogfosztás – 90 éve: Tanulmányok a numerus claususról* [Disqualification—90 years ago: studies on the numerus clausus], ed. Judit Molnár (Budapest: Nonprofit Társadalomkutató Egyesület, 2011), 29–59.

5. Roger Griffin, "Politikai vagy ontológiai bizonytalanság? A modernitás szerepe a magyar antiszemitizmus megerősödésében a 20. század eleji Európában" [Political or ontological uncertainty? The role of modernity in the strengthening of antisemitism in early twentieth-century Europe], in Molnár, *Jogfosztás*, 13–26.

6. On the representation of Jews as "feminine" and the Jewish body in general, see Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

7. Paul Hanebrink, *In Defense of Christian Hungary: Religion, Nationalism, and Antisemitism, 1890–1944* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

8. Griffin, "Politikai vagy ontológiai bizonytalanság?," 24. All translations from the Hungarian are my own.

9. Mária M. Kovács, "Numerus clausus Magyarországon: 1919–1945."

10. See István Kovács, "A lengyel zsidóság helyzete a két világháború között" [The situation of Polish Jews between the two world wars], in Molnár, *Jogfosztás*, 292–99; Róbert Fiziker, "'Hetz muass sein': Antiszemitizmus a múlt század húszas éveinek Ausztriájában ["There must be a hunt": antisemitism in Austria in the twenties of the last century], in Molnár, *Jogfosztás*, 300–17; Hildegarda Pokreis, "A Komenský Egyetem zsidó hallgatói, 1920–1940" [Jewish students at the Komenský University, 1920–40], in Molnár, *Jogfosztás*, 318–26; Felicia Waldman, "A numerus clausus rögeszméje a 20. századi Romániában és az ezzel kapcsolatos jogalkotás" [The numerus clausus obsession in twentieth-century Romania and related legislation], in Molnár, *Jogfosztás*, 327–44. See also the studies by Konrad H. Jarausch, Grzegorz Krzywiec, Natalia Aleksiun, Zofia Trębacz, Raul Cârstocea, and Marija Vulesica (among others), in Fritz, Rossoliński-Liebe, and Starek, *Alma mater antisemitica*. On the development of antisemitism in Germany, see Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

11. The numerus clausus law (introduced in September 1920) limited the proportion of all non-Magyar nationalities among university students to 6 percent. The law clearly aimed at the reduction of Jewish students, as they were the only group that the law negatively affected. On the numerus clausus see Karady and Nagy, *Numerus Clausus in Hungary*.

12. N. Szegvári, *Numerus clausus rendelkezések,* 53; Mária M. Kovács, "Numerus clausus Magyarországon."

13. See, for example, Ildikó Müller, "Vélemények a nők felsőfokú képzéséről a dualizmus időszakában" [Opinions on the higher education of women in the period of dualism], in *Nők a modernizálódó magyar társadalomban* [Women in the modernizing Hungarian society], ed. Gábor Gyáni and Nóra Séllei (Debrecen: Csokonai, 2006), 223–39; Anna Fábri, Fanni Borbíró, and Eszter Szarka, eds., *A nő és hivatása II: Szemelvények a magyarországi nőkérdés történetéből 1866–1895* [The woman and her profession II: excerpts from the history of the Hungarian women's question, 1866–95] (Budapest: Kortárs, 2006); and Katalin Kéri, *Hölgyek napernyővel: Nők a dualizmuskori Magyarországon 1867–1914* [Ladies with parasol: women in dualist Hungary, 1867–1914] (Pécs: Pro Pannónia, 2008).

14. See Dóra Czeferner, "A magyarországi feminista mozgalom első hivatalos lapja: A Nő és a Társadalom (1907–1913)" [The first official journal of the Hungarian feminist movement: *Woman and Society* (1907–13)], *archívNET* 19, no. 2 (2019), http://www.archivnet.hu/a-magyarorszagi-feminista-mozgalom-elso-hivatalos-lapja-a-no-es-a-tarsadalom-1907-1913.

15. N. Szegvári and Ladányi, *Nők az egyetemeken I*, 72; see also Péter Tibor Nagy, "Nemi esélyek a két világháború közötti bölcsészkarokon" [Gender chances in the humanities in the interwar years], in *Bölcsészek és tanárok a 19–20. Században* [Humanities students and professors in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries], ed. Zsuzsanna Hanna Bíró and Péter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Wesley János Lelkészképző Főiskola, 2012), 106–11.

16. Karády, "A társadalmi egyenlőtlenségek," 181, 191.

17. In 1924, 13 percent of female and 8 percent of male students were Jewish. Karády, "A társadalmi egyenlőtlenségek," 193. Data from the same period for the University of Vienna indicates that 26 percent of all female students, 20 percent of female humanities students, 48 percent of female medical students, and 38 percent of female law students were Jewish (foreign students are not counted in this data). Although there was no legal restriction in Vienna, the proportion of Jewish female students still fell by more than 50 percent compared to five years earlier; on this see Harriet Pass Freidenreich, *Female, Jewish, Educated:*

The Lives of Central European University Women (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 206. The proportion of female students was higher in Vienna than in Hungary. See N. Szegvári, *Numerus clausus rendelkezések*, 82.

18. Karády, "A társadalmi egyenlőtlenségek," 180–83. See also Nagy, "Nemi esélyek," 111–12; and Zsuzsanna Hanna Bíró, "A társadalmi nemek közötti különbségek a Horthy korszak bölcsészdiplomásai körében" [Gender differences among humanities graduates of the Horthy era], in Bíró and Nagy, *Bölcsészek és tanárok*, 161.

19. Ildikó Müller, "A Budapesti Tudományegyetem nőhallgatóságának társadalmi összetétele (1896–1914)" [The social composition of the female students at Budapest University, 1896–1914], *Korall* 3–4 (2001): 203–20.

20. See Karády, "A társadalmi egyenlőtlenségek Magyarországon," 183–87.

21. See Mária M. Kovács, "A magyar feminizmus korszakfordulója" [The turning point of Hungarian feminism], *Café Bábel* 1–2 (1994): 179–83; Mária M. Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva: A numerus clausus Magyarországon, 1920–1945* [Down by law: the numerus clausus in Hungary, 1920–1945] (Budapest: Napvilág, 2012); Fenyves, "When Sexism Meets Racism."

22. Minutes of the session of the university council, December 4, 1919, files of the Rector's Office, Eötvös Loránd University Archives.

23. A vallás- és közoktatásügyi m. kir. miniszternek 1895. évi 65.719. sz. a budapesti és kolozsvári egyetem tanácsához intézett leirata a nőknek a bölcsészeti, orvosi és gyógyszerészi pályákra léphetése tárgyában. [Announcement no. 65.719 of 1895 of the Minister of Religion and Public Education to the council of the universities of Budapest and Cluj-Napoca on the admission of women to the faculties of Humanities, Medicine and Pharmacy]. Published in *A Nő és a Társadalom*, 10, no. 2 (1916): 24–25. See also Fábri, Borbíró, and Szarka, *A nő és hivatása II*, 176–79.

24. Wlassics was asked to write about his decree 20 years later by the journal of the Association of Feminists, where he basically reinforced his decision regarding the opening but also argued for its "graduality." See Wlassics, "A nők a főiskolákon" [Women in the colleges], *A Nő* 12 (1915): 188–89.

25. Wlassics (1896), quoted by Fábri, Borbíró, and Szarka, *A nő és hivatása II*, 177.

26. For a collection of contemporary articles on this subject, see Fábri, Borbíró, and Szarka, *A nő és hivatása II*, 159–82. See also Müller, "Vélemények."

27. N. Szegvári, *Numerus clausus rendelkezések*.

28. Raggam-Blesch, *Zwischen Ost und West*; Raggam-Blesch, "Zwischen Antifeminismus und Antisemitismus."

29. Géza Mihalkovics, Rector's Inaugural Speech, September 25, 1898. *Természettudományi Közlöny* 30, no. 349 (1898): 561–84. Cited in N. Szegvári and Ladányi, *Nők az egyetemeken I*, 34.

30. Speech of Samu Pap in the House of Representatives, April 10, 1899. Cited in N. Szegvári and Ladányi, *Nők az egyetemeken I*, 35. The speech was answered by Vilma Hugonnai, the first Hungarian female doctor (a graduate of the University of Zurich in 1879), who declared: "Such claims are merely nightmares of veiled selfishness." See Vilma Hugonnai, "Nők az orvosi pályán" [Women in medical careers], *Pesti Napló*, April 16, 1899. Hugonnai's degree was not accepted by the Hungarian administration until 1897, so until then she worked as a midwife. The first female doctor to graduate in Hungary (in 1900) was Sarolta Steinberger. On the history of women and medical studies in Hungary, see László Szögi, "A

nők egyetemi tanulmányainak kérdése a budapesti orvostudományi karon 1896–1926" [The question of women's university studies at the Budapest Faculty of Medicine, 1896–1926] *Orvostörténeti Közlemények* 115–116, nos. 3–4 (1986): 139–42; Mária H. Péter, "Nők az egyetemen: Az első okleveles orvosnők és gyógyszerésznők a budapesti felsőoktatásban és a kolozsvári Ferenc József Tudományegyetemen" [Women at university: the first female doctors and pharmacists graduated from the Franz Joseph University in Kolozsvár (Cluj) and Budapest], *Erdélyi Múzeum* 80, no. 1 (2018): 137–51; Judit Forrai, "Orvosnők társadalmi és szakmai szelekciójának ontológiája: A kezdet" [The ontology of the social and professional selection of female physicians: the beginning] *Kaleidoscope* 10, no. 19 (2019): 32–58; Éva Bruckner, "Az első magyar orvosnők nyomában" [On the trail of the first Hungarian female doctors] *Polgári Szemle* 15, nos. 1–3 (2019): 381–98.

31. Gyula Kornis, "Nők az egyetemen II" [Women at the university II], *Napkelet* 3, no. 2 (1925): 181.

32. Kornis, "Nők az egyetemen II," 181.

33. Kornis, "Nők az egyetemen II," 183.

34. Kornis, "Nők az egyetemen II," 178 (emphasis in the original). Compare Ervin Szabó's supportive article from twenty years earlier: Sz. [Ervin Szabó], "A nők jogi studiumáról" [On women's legal studies], *Huszadik Század* 4, no. 2 (1903): 173.

35. *Az Ujság*, December 25, 1906.

36. *Egyetemi Lapok*, December 2, 1895. Cited in N. Szegvári, *Numerus clausus rendelkezések*, 63.

37. B. T., 1895. Republished in Fábri, Borbíró, and Szarka, *A nő és hivatása II,* 173–76.

38. Elemér M. Vadász, "Nők az egyetemen" [Women in the university], *Nemzeti Nőnevelés* 36, nos. 7–8 (1915): 287.

39. Aladár György, "Ne romboljátok szét a családi boldogságot! Előadás a Mária Dorothea Egyesület tanítónői szakosztályának 1897. Ülésén" [Don't ruin family happiness! Lecture delivered at the 1897 meeting of the schoolmistress section of the Mary Dorothea Association], *Nemzeti Nőnevelés*, 22, no. 1 (1901): 63–75, cited by N. Szegvári and Ladányi, *Nők az egyetemeken I*, 34. He also wrote on women in medical education. See Aladár György, "Nők mint orvosok" [Women as doctors], *Nemzeti Nőnevelés*, 12, nos. 8–9 (1891): 441–44.

40. Cited in N. Szegvári and Ladányi, *Nők az egyetemeken I*, 44; and in Kéri, *Hölgyek napernyővel*, 120.

41. Dezső Bánffy was prime minister from 1895 to 1899 and then served as an opposition MP.

42. Rózsa Bédy-Schwimmer, "Női szörnyetegek" [Female monsters], *A Nő és a Társadalom* 1, no. 2 (1907): 17–18.

43. Minutes of the faculty council, session of September 21, 1903, Eötvös Loránd University Archives.

44. Cited in N. Szegvári and Ladányi, *Nők az egyetemeken I*, 39.

45. *Keresztény Magyar Ifjúság*, April 3, 1904, 10.

46. N. Szegvári and Ladányi, *Nők az egyetemeken I*, 74. The first Hungarian university professor was the chemist Irén Götz (1889–1941). Having graduated in 1911, she was first the student of Marie Curie in Paris for a year. She was appointed as a professor during the Republic of Councils, and emigrated in 1920. She worked in Cluj, Berlin, and from 1931 in

Moscow, where she was imprisoned on fabricated charges in 1941. She was released from prison but died shortly after from typhus.

47. N. Szegvári and Ladányi, *Nők az egyetemeken I*, 58. Gyula Wlassics reacted to the students' request in the journal of the Association of Feminists, acknowledging its legitimacy and seeing confirmed his own decision from twenty years earlier regarding the (partial) opening. See Wlassics, "A nők a főiskolákon."

48. Session of the university council, June 25, 1915, 8.b.21. 2123/1914–15, Eötvös Loránd University Archives. Cited in N. Szegvári and Ladányi, *Nők az egyetemeken I*, 58; and in Müller, "Vélemények a nők felsőfokú képzéséről a dualizmus időszakában," 231.

49. Files of the Dean's Office, October 10, 1917, Eötvös Loránd University Archives.

50. Extraordinary or "special" students ("*rendkívüli hallgatók*") did not become university "citizens," and although they could attend classes and take exams, these semesters could not be counted when they were admitted as regular students. Nor could they receive a tuition exemption.

51. Files of the Dean's Office, October 10, 1917, Eötvös Loránd University Archives.

52. Cited in Péter Bihari, *1914: A nagy háború száz éve* [The Great War one hundred years on] (Budapest: Kalligram, 2014), 388. On the history of women's higher education in fine arts, see Éva Bicskei, "Nők az országos magyar királyi mintarajztanoda- és rajztanárképezdében, 1871 és 1908 között" [Women in the National Hungarian Royal Drawing School and Art Teacher Training School between 1871 and 1908], in *A Mintarajztanodától a Képzőművészeti Főiskoláig* [From the Drawing School to the College of Fine Arts], ed. Katalin Blaskóné Majkó and Annamária Szőke (Budapest: Magyar Képzőművészeti Egyetem, 2002), 223–42. http://www.mke.hu/mintarajztanoda/konyv2-07.htm

53. Géza Szilágyi, "Szomoru jubileum" [A sad jubilee], *A Nő* 2, no. 8 (1915): 124; Manó Beke, "Az egyetem megnyitása a nőknek" [The opening of universities to women], *A Nő* 3, no. 2 (1916): 22–24; Manó Beke, "A főiskolák megnyitása a nőknek" [The opening of colleges to women], *A Nő* 4, no. 9 (1917): 140–41.

54. Kornis, "Nők az egyetemen II," 175.

55. N. Szegvári and Ladányi, *Nők az egyetemeken I*.

56. Decree of Márton Lovászy, Minister of Religion and Public Education, December 7, 1918. Cited in N. Szegvári and Ladányi, *Nők az egyetemeken I*, 83.

57. N. Szegvári, *Numerus clausus rendelkezések*; Fenyves, "When Sexism Meets Racism"; Mária M. Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva*.

58. Minutes of the faculty council, September 25, 1919, Semmelweis Medical University Archives.

59. Károly Hoór, *A nők orvosképzése* [The medical training of women] (Budapest: Centrum, 1923), 22.

60. N. Szegvári, *Numerus clausus rendelkezések*, 46.

61. Ottokár Prohászka, "Elég volt-e?" [Was it enough?] (1918) in *Iránytű*: *Összegyűjtött munkái XXII*. [Compass: collected works XXII], ed. Antal Schütz (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1929), 189–93.

62. Alajos Kovács, *A zsidóság térfoglalása Magyarországon* [The Jewish occupation in Hungary] (Budapest: Kellner Nyomda, 1922).

63. Minutes of the faculty council, September 18, 1919, Eötvös Loránd University Archives.

64. Minutes of the Rector's Office, December 4, 1919, Eötvös Loránd University Archives.

65. Minutes of the Rector's Office, December 4, 1919, Eötvös Loránd University Archives.

66. Minutes of the faculty council, September 25, 1920, Semmelweis Medical University Archives.

67. Based on the research of Judith Szapor, she and Éva Karádi have been assembling a database and are working on an exhibition about the impact of the numerus clausus law on women.

68. Minutes of the faculty council, July 5, 1920, Eötvös Loránd University Archives (emphases in the original).

69. Minutes of the Dean's Office, December 6, 1923, Eötvös Loránd University Archives.

70. Minutes of the Dean's Office, December 6, 1923, Eötvös Loránd University Archives.

71. Minutes of the Dean's Office, December 6, 1923, Eötvös Loránd University Archives.

72. Minutes of the Dean's Office, February 8, 1924, Eötvös Loránd University Archives.

73. Kornis, "Nők az egyetemen II," 183. A similar line of argument was put forward by Károly Lechner, *A női lélek és a feminizmus orvos-természettudományos megvilágításban* [The female soul and feminism in medical-scientific light] (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Természettudományi Társulat, 1922). The position of the Catholic Church was conveyed by Ottokár Prohászka, "A házasságról" [On marriage] (1908), in *Világosság a sötétségben: Pásztorlevelek*, Összegyűjtött munkái IX [Light in the dark: pastoral letters, collected works IX], ed. Antal Schütz (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1928), 31–49.

74. Kornis, "Nők az egyetemen II," 184.

75. Emma Ritoók and Marianne Czeke, "Nők az egyetemen" [Women at the university], *Napkelet* 3, no. 5 (1925): 496–504.

76. Ida Bobula, "Az egyetemi nőkérdés Magyarországon" [The university women's question in Hungary], *Napkelet* 6, no. 8 (1928): 581–95.

77. Bobula, "Az egyetemi nőkérdés," 592.

78. Bobula, "Az egyetemi nőkérdés," 595.

79. Bobula, "Az egyetemi nőkérdés," 586.

80. The minister's announcement is described in the minutes of the faculty council, September 7, 1926, Semmelweis Medical University Archives. Cited in N. Szegvári, *Numerus clausus rendelkezések*, 160.

81. On women's participation in technical higher education see Éva Vámos, "A nők részvételének megteremtése a tudományban és technikában Magyarországon – recepciók sorozata" [Creating the participation of women in science and technology in Hungary—a series of receptions], in *A honi Kopernikusz-recepciótól a magyar Nobel-díjakig* [From the domestic Copernicus reception to the Hungarian Nobel Prizes], ed. Gábor Palló (Budapest: Áron, 2004), http://www.phil-inst.hu/recepcio/htm/6/609_belso.htm.

82. See Béla Pukánszky, *Fejezetek a nőnevelés történetéből* [Chapters from the history of women's education] (Budapest: Gondolat, 2006), 119.

83. N. Szegvári, *Numerus clausus rendelkezések*, 83.

84. See Ladányi, "Nők: Két évforduló," 383.

85. Raggam-Blesch, "Zwischen Antifeminismus und Antisemitismus."

86. Raggam-Blesch, "Zwischen Antifeminismus und Antisemitismus."

87. Recollections of Anna Pór, 2008. National Institute of Theatre History, Dance Archive, courtesy of Mátyás Pór J. and Éva Karádi. The quotation will be presented at the exhibition

"Tanulni szerettek volna: A numerus clausus és a lányok" [They would have wanted to learn: the numerus clausus and the girls], curated by Éva Karádi and Judith Szapor, 2B Gallery, 2021.

88. Alice Bálint's husband, Michael Bálint, became a well-known analyst and theoretician in England.

89. Entry from Alice Bálint's notebook, August 19, 1919. Archives of the British Psychoanalytical Society, Alice and Michael Bálint's bequest.

90. Letter from Erzsébet Kardos to Ödön Bánki, Würzburg, 1923. Courtesy of Esther Bánki.

91. See also Ágnes Kelemen, "Peregrination in the Age of the Numerus Clausus: Hungarian Jewish Students in Interwar Europe" (PhD diss., Central European University, 2019).

92. See Mária M. Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva*, 28, 34, 150–54.

93. The status quo was also served by the 1928 amendment of the numerus clausus law and the introduction of the occupational quota. This, instead of "people's races," regulated the proportion of people belonging to different occupations, on the basis of the father's profession. The provision continued to disadvantage Jewish students, favoring the children of civil servants and those working in agriculture, where the proportion of Jews was traditionally lower. See Mária M. Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva*, 200–201.

FORUM

The Legacy of the Numerus Clausus One Hundred Years On

Introduction

A little over a hundred years ago, in September 1920, the Hungarian National Assembly enacted Act XXV/1920 "On regulating enrollment at universities, technical universities, the Faculty of Economics, and the academies of law."[1] Ending the previous system of unlimited university enrollment, which until then had been guaranteed for every high-school graduate, Article 1 of the law instructed the Minister of Religion and Public Education to determine annually and "based on the recommendation of the academic staff of the relevant department"[2] the number of places at universities. Article 2 of the law specified that the new regulations would apply only to incoming students.

Defenders of and apologists for the law—then and since—have argued that the widely perceived "intellectual overproduction," aggravated by the massive influx of refugees (including many former civil servants) from territories lost to Hungary as a result of the Trianon Treaty, more than justified the ending of open university enrollment. They have pointed to examples of other countries tightening their enrollment practices in the years after World War I, according to specific economic and employment needs. But such a narrow interpretation of a "closed number" (the literal translation of "numerus clausus") fails to explain the heated debates before and following its introduction, or the bitter legacy of it, still lingering after a century. Rather than a neutral term to indicate a technical change to university enrollment policies in the interwar era, in Hungary, as well as other countries of Central and East Central Europe, and even in North America, the

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numerus clausus acquired a sinister connotation and came to be used as a synonym for anti-Jewish discrimination in secondary and postsecondary education and the professions.[3]

Article 3 hinted at the underlying agenda of the law by outlining the two conditions university administrators should consider above all else: applicants' "loyalty to the nation and upstanding morality" and the conditions of a newly introduced nationalities quota—that is, an obligation to assign university places in proportion to applicants' "nationality" or "race" in the general population. The former of these conditions required no further explanation; it led to the instant ban (and, as stipulated in Article 2, the expulsion of already enrolled students) of any applicant of known revolutionary activity or membership in left-leaning political or student organizations, such as the Galileo Circle. The latter, however, needed further clarification; after all, no national minority (whose numbers were in any case drastically reduced in Trianon Hungary) constituted a larger proportion of university students than their prescribed quota. It was only in the enacting clause (*végrehajtási utasítás*)—more precisely, in a small table attached to it—that the actual target of the law was finally pointed out: there, Jews were listed among the ethnic minorities. Previously considered "Hungarians of the Israelite religion," they were reclassified overnight as a nationality.

The history and context of the introduction of the numerus clausus law leave no doubt that contemporaries on both sides of the law were acutely aware of its aim: to stem and reverse what antisemites had come to call "the Jewish takeover" of the professions and, generally, the intellectual elite. While such calls had been voiced since the first decade of the century, the war gave rise to—and the military defeat, the postwar revolutions, and the Trianon Treaty provided more fodder for—the myths of a Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy. Combined, these events intensified the demands to solve, once and for all, "the Jewish question."[4] In the press and the parliamentary debate, advocates of the law called for radical measures to provide a solution to it; and all this played out against a backdrop of the counter-revolutionary violence of officers' detachments and radical right-wing student organizations, such as the Turul, which specifically targeted Jewish university students. Conversely, representatives of the liberal Jewish intellectual elite, such as the editors of the weekly *Egyenlőség* [Equality], immediately recognized the law's break with the legacy of the liberal era and its principle of equal citizenship, which had been granted to Jews since 1867.[5]

There is no question about the deliberate doublespeak at work here—one for domestic use, the other for outside consumption—and the aim to conceal, in careful legal language, the anti-Jewish motivation behind the legislation. The parliamentary minutes attest to leading advocates of the law, such as the Catholic bishop Ottokár Prohászka, warning lawmakers to make sure "it would not lead to any difficulties for the country or the nation from anywhere."[6] The Hungarian government, with millions of ethnic Hungarians now living outside of its borders, could not afford to be caught in breach of the newly established international standards of minorities' rights. This was also the reason the law was amended—and, despite the prevailing common perception, not repealed—in 1928, when the Jewish quota was formally removed from its text, only to be replaced by an occupational quota, carefully calibrated to keep Jewish students out of universities, largely at the previous rates.

Even among historians who agree on the law's primarily anti-Jewish agenda, there are disagreements when it comes to such details as the relative importance of appeasing militant extremists or the evolving position of individual, leading politicians—among them István Bethlen, Pál Teleki, or Kuno Klebelsberg. Although a newly militant and official antisemitism and the need to accommodate and reward the radical right was certainly a main contributing factor, the numerus clausus law was prompted by a combination of economic and social pressures as well. According to an early historian of the legislation, it was also fueled by the impetus to eliminate the liberal and leftist tendencies in intellectual life, to strike a conservative cultural direction in public life, and to halt the upward trend in women's participation in higher education.[7] We should add to this list the growing concerns around competitive elites, social mobility, and the rise of potent nativist agendas in the wake of World War I, which could be observed across the region. In Hungary, these factors were further aggravated by what Wolfgang Schivelbusch has termed the "culture of defeat," and the social and political fallout of Trianon, which came together and found an outlet in the first antisemitic legislation of postwar Europe.[8]

In its immediate effect, the law fulfilled the expectations attached to it: it drastically reduced the previously high representation of Jewish students from the prewar 25 to 28 percent to around 10 percent in the first decade of its application.[9] At the same time, it failed to fill the vacated university spots with non-Jewish students, even after significantly reducing the high-school qualifications required for them. As an unintended consequence, the numerus clausus prompted thousands of Jewish youth to seek university

education abroad. Their trajectories and subsequent fate are the subject of a 1992 article by Victor Karady, as well as some more recent studies.[10]

As the references already cited here indicate, the political and legal history of the numerus clausus has been quite thoroughly covered. Following the pioneering, comprehensive legal historical studies of Katalin N. Szegvári and Andor Ladányi, the monograph and articles by Mária M. Kovács provided a definitive political history of the legislation. What, then, justifies our modest attempt here to call for a reassessment of the numerus clausus law? Two reasons come to mind, the first of which is the lack of consensus among historians as to the content, impact, and significance of the legislation. More than a century after the event, there is a growing divide between the historians who posit a continuity between the numerus clausus and the explicitly anti-Jewish laws that began to be introduced in 1938, and those who deny this continuity along with the significance of the law in terms of its breach of the liberal concept of citizenship and the ripple effect of the discrimination inherent in it. Far from being trivial, this debate has wide-ranging ramifications about the nature of the interwar Horthy regime, the chronology of its anti-Jewish measures, and, ultimately, its responsibility in the Shoah. Historians who argue for a continuity of increasingly racially motivated antisemitic measures that began with the numerus clausus and found its logical conclusion in the anti-Jewish laws of 1938 and beyond square off against historians who minimize the significance and pernicious impact of the numerus clausus on Hungarian society and who instead highlight the pressure from Nazi Germany to introduce the openly racial anti-Jewish law of 1939.

The second aspect pointing to the need to revisit the numerus clausus is the continuing, unresolved social trauma around it that deserves to be, however belatedly, acknowledged and considered among the other major historical traumas of twentieth-century Hungarian society. As my own research demonstrates, well before the murderous final act of the Shoah, thousands of young Hungarian Jewish men and women lived under the shadow of the numerus clausus, stigmatized as second-class citizens. In their memory, there is no question about the continuity of the 1920 legislation and the openly anti-Jewish laws of the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Rather than providing opportunities for an open discussion and resolution, these traumatic historical events continue to be used and abused for political aims. In public and scholarly debates they are increasingly

articulated as competing, irreconcilable strands of historical memory, with their victims—both perceived and real—pitted against one another.

In conceptualizing this forum, we asked historians of the interwar period to address some of the following questions:

1. Where would you locate the numerus clausus law on the continuum of anti-Jewish legislation in Hungary in the interwar period? Would you tie it to the openly discriminatory anti-Jewish laws of the late 1930s, and if so, how closely or directly?
2. How would you compare the Hungarian numerus clausus law to other, de facto anti-Jewish measures and practices in academia in interwar Europe and North America?
3. Can you speak to the degree and specific ways in which the legislation and practice of the numerus clausus shaped antisemitism in interwar Hungary?
4. What can you say about contemporary Hungarian society's reaction to the law by representatives of Jewish organizations, as well as political and intellectual leaders from all sides?
5. How did the numerus clausus shape the Horthy regime's image abroad? Can you comment on instances of international reaction to the law, in the annexed territories, by local and international organizations and public figures?
6. Looking back on the centennial of the law, how do you see the long-term impact of the numerus clausus on Hungarian social, political, and cultural life in the interwar period, during the Shoah, and after World War II?

Each of the three contributors to this forum adds a unique perspective—inspired by their respective scholarly interests—to this debate. Gábor Egry, director of the Institute of Political History in Budapest and a leading historian of ethnic minority rights and policies in the East Central European region, offers a novel interpretation of the seemingly illiberal impetus behind the legislation. This is not to say that he denies its anti-liberal nature; rather, he finds its real foundations in the transformation of citizenship through welfare and redistribution attached to group membership and the idea of higher education as the entry point to the authentic leading strata of

the nation, the middle class, which gained prominence during World War I. Béla Bodó, a preeminent scholar of postwar violence in Hungary, provides an assessment of the numerus clausus in terms of the radical coalition of political and social elements pushing for its introduction, coming together in the early counter-revolutionary period but surviving to the end of the interwar period. He also offers both a broader and longer view, comparing the Hungarian numerus clausus with earlier and parallel Russian and German demands and practices. Ágnes Kelemen, whose recently defended doctoral dissertation is, to date, the most complete study of the so-called numerus clausus exiles, offers her perspective on the legacy of the thousands of young Hungarian Jews who went abroad to study, and also on the legacy of the numerus clausus in terms of shaping Jewish solidarity.

These short contributions by no means represent the last word on the topic. But it is our hope that these and similar, future conversations will contribute to a continuing exchange between historians and perhaps even lay people, and, in the process, will help them reach a modicum of understanding of opposing positions, and perhaps also consensus.

Judith Szapor, McGill University, Canada

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NOTES

1. "A tudományegyetemekre, a műegyetemre, a budapesti egyetemi közgazdaságtudományi karra és a jogakadémiákra való beiratkozás szabályozásáról" [On the regulation of registration for the arts and science universities, the technical university, the Faculty of Economics of Budapest University, and the faculties of law]. The text of the law was published in *Magyar Törvénytár* [Hungarian Legislative Record] 1920, no. 17 (September 26, 1920), https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/OGYK_RT_1920/?pg=1521&layout=s&query=386. All translations are those of the author.

2. "A tudományegyetemekre."

3. Two edited volumes offer an overview of the phenomenon. See Regina Fritz, Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe, and Jana Starek, eds., *Alma Mater Antisemitica; Akademisches Milieu,*

Juden und Antisemitismus an den Universitäten Europas zwischen 1918 und 1939 [Alma mater antisemitica: academic milieu, Jews and antisemitism at European universities between 1918 and 1939] (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2016); and Victor Karady and Péter Tibor Nagy, eds., *The Numerus Clausus in Hungary: Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe* (Budapest: Pasts Inc. Centre for Historical Research, History Department of the Central European University, 2012).

4. Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018); János Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon* [The Jewish question in Hungary] (Budapest: Osiris, 2001), especially chapters 4–8.

5. Judith Szapor, "Between Self-Defense and Loyalty: Jewish Responses to the Numerus Clausus in Hungary, 1920–1928," *S.I.M.O.N. Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation* 6, no. 1 (2019): 21–34; Andor Ladányi, "A kisebbséggé nyilvánítás kérdéséhez: A történelmi előzmények" [On the question of a declaration as a minority: historical preliminaries], *Múlt és Jövő* 17, no. 1 (2006): 99–106; Andor Ladányi, "Az első zsidótörvény megszületése" [The birth of the first Jewish law], *Múlt és Jövő* 21, no. 2 (2010): 102–21.

6. *Nemzetgyűlési Napló* [Parliamentary diary], 1920. Vol. II, 395 (session of April 29, 1920), cited in Mária M. Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva: A numerus clausus Magyarországon, 1920–1945* [Down by law: the numerus clausus in Hungary, 1920–45] (Budapest: Napvilág, 2012), 17.

7. Katalin N. Szegvári, *Numerus clausus rendelkezések az ellenforradalmi Magyarországon* [Numerus clausus decrees in counter-revolutionary Hungary] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1988), 90–91. This monograph is also the first and still unparalleled attempt to provide an account of the legislation's secondary but significant, negative impact on women's university education.

8. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Kultur der Niederlage* [The culture of defeat] (Berlin: Fest, 2001). See also Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, "Vectors of Violence: Paramilitarism in Europe after the Great War, 1917–1923," *The Journal of Modern History* 83, no. 3 (2011): 489–512.

9. For a detailed analysis, including the socio-economic reasons leading to the much-maligned "overrepresentation" of Jews in higher education and the professions, see Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva*, 130–65.

10. Viktor Karády (Victor Karady), "Egyetemi antiszemitizmus és érvényesülési kényszerpályák: magyar-zsidó diákság a nyugat-európai főiskolákon a numerus clausus alatt" [Academic antisemitism and forced paths of achievement: Hungarian Jewish students at western European universities during the numerus clausus] *Levéltári Szemle* 42, no. 3 (1992): 21–40; Ágnes Katalin Kelemen, "Migration and Exile: Hungarian Medical Students in Vienna and Prague, 1920–1938," in *At the Crossroads of Human Fate and History: Studies in Honour of Tibor Frank on his 70th Birthday*, ed. János Kenyeres, Miklós Lojkó, Tamás Magyarics, and Éva Eszter Szabó (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd University, School of English and American Studies, 2018), 222–41. My own research project, titled "Academic Antisemitism, Women's Emancipation, and Jewish Assimilation" and funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Insight Grant, explores the impact of the numerus clausus on Hungarian Jewish women and the course of women's emancipation at large.

The Numerus Clausus: A Transitory Act between Liberal and Ethnic Nationalisms

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ABSTRACT | This contribution situates the numerus clausus law in the process of the transformation of Hungarian nationalism, which started around the 1890s. The law was a transitory piece of legislation, consciously worded not as a radical break with, but rather a continuation of the emancipatory aspects of liberal nationalism. Its more immediate foundations can be traced to the transformation of citizenship through the welfare and redistribution attached to group membership, as well as the idea that higher education provided entry into the authentic leading strata of the nation, the middle class. Both were ideas that gained in prominence during World War I.

KEYWORDS | liberal nationalism, emancipation, social reform, numerus clausus, World War I

The law on the numerus clausus was a deliberate attempt to demonstrate the end of an era: that of liberal nationalism. Proponents of the legislation in Hungary's parliament were outspoken in their anti-liberalism, not to speak of the association of Jews with "dangerous" ideas of individualism, cosmopolitanism, enlightenment and—confusing for posterity but quite natural for contemporaries—Bolshevism simultaneously. The exclamation mark the law intended to put at the end of the long history of Hungarian liberal nationalism (and thus the founding ideas of modern Hungary) was also intended to signal the beginning of a new era, and it is often understood this way by subsequent observers. Strangely, such a reading is based more on the

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discursive surroundings of the law and on the fine text of its application, and not on the text that was carefully worded not to depart too much from legal equality toward discrimination based on uniform group characteristics. It left the brunt of the execution to university administrations and attempted to disguise ethnic discrimination as ethnic or religious equality.

It is easy to see this as a refutation of liberal nationalism and its core tenets, but the fact that the law pretended to bring equality and remedy an injustice points to the more complex and often conflictual relationship within the triad of values of modern liberalism—liberty, equality, solidarity. In fact, the law and the discourse surrounding it demonstrated the strength of one of liberalism's key promises: emancipation. As a scholar of nationalism, I'm prone to perceive the sad history of the numerus clausus through this much broader lens, and its significance for my work derives from what it tells us about the politics of Hungarianness in the first half of the twentieth century. Juxtaposing liberal nationalism as an emancipatory idea—and Jewish emancipation in Hungary was the triumph of liberalism, after all—with the nationalism that drove the numerus clausus—let's call it, for the sake of brevity, ethnic nationalism—as discriminatory is comfortable and comforting. But, truth be told, nationalism is not that simple. Discrimination is almost an inherent part of it, as its aim is twofold: to define national membership and emancipate potential members. Exclusion and inclusion go hand in hand, and emancipation often happens at the expense of those excluded.[1]

Furthermore, the paradoxical emancipatory promise of the numerus clausus is even more closely related to the classic Hungarian liberal nationalism than its proponents, who wore the mantle of critical anti-liberalism, admitted. It is worth noting that at the birth of the modern Hungarian nation, during the 1848 revolution, former serfs were not simply emancipated in legal terms, released from the bonds tying them to their landlords. They were also accepted into the body politic of the nation through the redistribution of property: namely, the plots they held earlier as part of the feudal property of their landlord. Liberal nationalism, however, did not aim at the immediate emancipation of everyone in political terms and deliberately kept it limited to the "propertied" and the "educated classes"—an idea that helped the emancipation and integration of those Jews and serfs who managed to acquire property or education. After all, the basic idea behind liberal emancipation—be it former serfs or Jews—was adaptation,

the accumulation of the means for an independent life, and acceptance of its social rules.[2]

Since 1848, however, this very basic notion of citizenship gradually shifted, a process that was accelerated around the turn of the twentieth century through the inception of welfare institutions, and during World War I with state-led relief efforts and the emergence of a new symbolic hierarchy of social groups. With the beginnings of welfare provisions that were meant to alleviate hardships for ever-broader segments of society up to the point where they started to aim at providing the basics of a decent life, citizenship gained new content. As a result, emancipation was not simply about the holding of mere political rights through property or education anymore: as a member of the nation, being emancipated became more complex, to entail material redistribution. Emancipation turned out to be an extension of rights without adaptation, merely on the basis of group membership.[3]

On a symbolic level, this material broadening of citizenship was accompanied by the emergence of a new cult during the war, with rather premodern roots. The peasantry, which bore the brunt of conscription into the army and the losses at the front during World War I, was idealized because of its perseverance, loyalty, bodily strength, and readiness for sacrifice. All of these were crucial elements of the arguments in favor of political emancipation (extended suffrage), while the traditional elite—the gentry and to a certain extent the middle class—was also hailed for its heroism, illustrated with scenes that recast the classic tropes and topoi of noble chivalry and valor. In a sense these two trends conflicted, but with one thing in common: Jews were located at the intersection of their blind spots as neither traditionally valorous, nor in need of welfare and redistribution for their emancipation. They were easily left out of the pantheon of heroes who deserved to be members, if membership was achieved through belonging to social groups that were seen as necessarily within the nation.

Obviously, there were many other reasons for these developments, one of the notable ones being the shift from elite to mass politics and the appearance of mass parties that could mobilize people without suffrage. I'm not trying to argue here that the numerus clausus was liberal in any way. But its core logic, as far as it was emancipatory, was the same as that of Hungarian liberal nationalism in 1848, when emancipation and redistribution—the acquisition of former noble property by liberated serfs—were two sides of the same coin.[4] The numerus clausus did not appropriate feudal property,

but it claimed to offer state resources and state services on a discriminatory (and not affirmative) basis for groups who were assumed to be deserving members of the nation. Furthermore, since 1848 society had changed, and symbolic capital had become more important for social status. As education was one way to achieve the status of (educated) middle class, a role symbolically reinforced by the wartime discourse among the destined "leaders" of the country, restrictions placed on access to it were de facto redistribution.

Those who prepared the law were fully aware of the connection with liberal nationalism, and their resorting to a wording that avoided open discrimination and pretended to be emancipatory is proof of this deliberate positioning. In this regard the law was less a rupture or break with the past but more a continuation of the strange shift of Hungarian nationalism from liberal to ethnic, without ever publicly acknowledging the latter (as the ever stranger and ever more paradoxical, yet predominant, use of the phrase of a unitary Magyar political nation after the 1920 Treaty of Trianon demonstrates). But the law also knowingly deviated from liberal nationalism in its rejection of assimilation, quite similar to the logic of nationalist mass politics: entitlements were to be shared among co-nationals, and adaptation (assimilation) alone did not make anyone Hungarian. This inherent logic already heralded the anti-Jewish laws implemented between 1938 and 1941 and makes the 1920 legislation a transitory piece between the ultimate demise of the elitist liberal nationalism and the rapid rise of radical, often palingenetic ultranationalism.

Thus, like many similar acts situated in moments of upheaval in between distinct eras, the numerus clausus was bound to both worlds. It was a precursor to an era when redistribution at the expense of Jewish material wealth and not just access to resources—as demonstrated by Krisztián Ungváry[5]—became crucial for the idea of a new form of national unity, one that was corporatist but also emancipatory, to the extent that corporatism can emancipate members through the extension of merits and duty-based social assistance and the elimination of individual liberty. But its transitory character is not the only reason why it was accepted beyond the new nationalists and the anti-capitalist right (such as by Christian Socialists of Ottokár Prohászka's ilk, or by those who identified as the "defenders of the race" [*fajvédők*]). It is an example of how seemingly diverging and even opposing political currents could unite around something that demonstrated some kind of affinity between political ideologies and that offered a chance

of identification for weaker actors with supposedly more popular political trends.[6] The new ethnic nationalism and the way it perceived the nation from within was vague enough to offer points of identification for practically everyone right of center, even for those who worked for more social justice; and, similarly, the subsequent realignment of political life revealed the same logic as the one behind the numerus clausus.

The law's ideological connections to liberal nationalism, anti-liberal interwar and even modern Christian Democracy,[7] and National Socialism, to name just the most important ones, also derived from how it reconfigured nationalism's core ideas of exclusion, inclusion, emancipation, and redistribution. Repeating the core logic of "emancipation with redistribution" from 1848, the numerus clausus offered emancipation on a new level. By ensuring access to symbolic capital and knowledge, the law held out the promise of becoming more than merely a propertied member of the nation and its political body. Instead, membership in its core was the offer. It was achieved through redistribution, but not by dispensing material wealth. Access to scarce state resources on a differentiated basis was the offer, and as such it also followed the logic of welfare. The last, crucial element, one that pointed toward a break with tradition, was that, contrary to the liberal attempt in 1848, which was often framed as a sacrifice by the nobility for the sake of the nation, this redistribution did not happen at the expense of co-nationals, but rather alleged strangers. Thus, while the numerus clausus was anchored in historical tradition, it was nevertheless a precursor of the coming century.

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NOTES

1. On the almost irresolvable ambiguity between social closure and its usurpation for emancipation, see, most recently, Christian Karner's inventive study *Nationalism Revisited: Austrian Social Closure from Romanticism to the Digital Age* (New York: Berghahn, 2019).

2. On the conflict between the original, antique, and Enlightenment emancipatory and the conservative—in this case liberal—understanding of freedom see Annelien de Dijn, *Freedom: An Unruly History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020).

3. See Sergiu Delcea, “Pro-Urban Welfare in an Agricultural Country? Economic Nationalism and Welfare Regime Problems of Fit; Lessons from Interwar Romania,” in *Nationalism and the Economy: Explorations into a Neglected Relationship*, ed. Stefan Berger and Thomas Fetzer (Budapest: CEU Press, 2019), 139–61, esp. 141–43.

4. The liberal political system established with the April Laws in 1848 offered political rights only to holders of a certain level of wealth. However, former serfs acquired their plots for free from the noble landholders (the state took over responsibility for compensating these landholders). As the most important qualification was to hold at least one-fourth of a normal serf’s plot, freeing these properties from socage meant providing the bulk of the new electorate with the means to acquire suffrage at the expense of the landlords.

5. Krisztián Ungváry, *A Horthy-rendszer és antiszemitizmusának mérlege: Diszkrimináció és társadalompolitika Magyarországon, 1919–1944* [Balance of the Horthy era and its antisemitism: discrimination and social policy in Hungary, 1919–44] (Budapest: Jelenkor, 2017).

6. For this phenomenon, see Karner, *Nationalism Revisited*.

7. See Jan Werner Müller’s argument in his lecture “Is Christian Democracy Illiberal?” (lecture, Central European University, Budapest, January 23, 2020).

A Cul-de-Sac or a Blazing Trail? The Significance and Long-Term Impact of the Numerus Clausus Legislation

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ABSTRACT | This essay discusses the origins and the short- and long-term consequences of Hungary's numerus clausus legislation of 1920. The legislation enjoyed widespread support in the non-Jewish middle class and played an important role in the rise of a stable social coalition, which provided the backbone of popular support for the Horthy regime in the interwar period.

KEYWORDS | antisemitism, numerus clausus, students, Pál Teleki, anti-Jewish laws

The numerus clausus legislation of 1920 marked a watershed in the history of Hungary and Hungarian antisemitism. By violating the principle of legal equality before the law, the legislation ended the age of Enlightenment and liberalism, which had begun in the late eighteenth century and led to the gradual emancipation of Jews in both halves of the Habsburg Empire before 1914. The numerus clausus was never fully revoked or repudiated during the Horthy era; after removing the direct references to religion and ethnicity in 1928, it remained on the books until 1945. In contrast to other laws, which had either been ignored and sabotaged from the start or had been put into effect belatedly and piecemeal (such as the infamous "lashing law" of 1920, which reintroduced the lash as punishment for smugglers and black marketeers), the authorities took the numerus clausus legislation very seriously. At most schools and faculties, university administrators, who shared both

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the intentions and antisemitism of the lawmakers, not only followed but also often went beyond the letter of the law. As a result of this support from below and the fanaticism of local administrators, the share of Jewish students declined continuously in the interwar period.

The numerus clausus remained the point of reference even after the onset of political consolidation and the end of pogroms and other types of violent antisemitic excesses in 1921. Beside anti-socialism and anti-communism, it was antisemitism, both as an ideology and political program, which served as the basis of cooperation between the state and its right-wing critics in the interwar period. The anti-Jewish alliance had been formed among the representatives of various social groups, such as provincial administrators; army and police officers; better-off farmers; non-Jewish artisans and shopkeepers; university students; radical clergy; and liberal professionals, such as "Aryan" doctors, journalists, dentists, and others. As such, it also had survived the counterrevolution and continued to serve as the popular basis of support for the Horthy regime until 1944.

It was the same social alliance that continued to demand the extension of the numerus clausus legislation into every aspect of life and every profession in the 1920s and early 1930s and that pushed for the anti-Jewish laws after 1938.[1] There was also continuity in personnel: Prime Minister Count Pál Teleki played a major role in the passing of both the numerus clausus law of 1920 and the First (1938) and Second (1939) Anti-Jewish Laws.[2] But the law also generated tension between the state and the right-wing protest groups. While the conservatives celebrated the numerus clausus but were reluctant to go beyond it, the Right-radicals in the 1920s and the national socialists in the 1930s regarded the legislation only as a start and the basis for a much more ambitious legislative agenda.[3] Thus a race began in the second half of the 1930s between the state and the traditional political elite, on the one hand, and its right-wing critics, the various Right-radical groups and the national socialists, on the other hand, to capitalize on popular antisemitism. To take the wind out of the sails of the right-wing protest groups, Hungarian prime ministers from Kálmán Darányi and Pál Teleki to Béla Imrédy, László Bárdossy, and Miklós Kállay supported antisemitic legislation in the late 1930s and early 1940s, which impoverished, socially marginalized, and isolated Hungarian Jews.

These politicians, and Regent Miklós Horthy, were prone to claim, in the presence of Nazi dignitaries, that Hungary had been the first country

in Europe to "stand up to the Jews" by imposing a cap on the enrollment of Jewish students in 1920. There is no proof that Nazi Germany or the states neighboring Hungary took the numerus clausus law of 1920 as the model for their similar laws in the 1930s. Nevertheless, the Hungarian legislation was clearly a trailblazer in Europe in the interwar period.

The numerus clausus was, nevertheless, part of a larger trend and of a European or even global phenomenon. A Russian law enacted in 1887 that limited the ratio of Jewish students at high schools and universities was in many respects similar to the numerus clausus law of 1920 in Hungary. Both were inspired by political events of great magnitude: the assassination of the tsar and the ongoing terrorist threat in Russia; in Hungary the lost war, the democratic revolution, the Communist dictatorship, and the Treaty of Trianon. In addition, both were influenced by the spread of new and increasingly pernicious stereotypical images and metaphors that portrayed Jews as traitors, anarchists, and terrorists in Russia and as war profiteers, shirkers of military duties, and Communists in Hungary. But in contrast to the origins of the numerus clausus in Hungary, the Russian law was not the product of wartime deprivation, the influx of refugees and refugee students, moral disorientation, or the "culture of defeat."[4]

Similarly, the cap on the admission of Jewish students at German universities at the turn of the century had precious little to do with a lost war, or even with competition with Jewish graduates on the job market. The German measures were a reaction to the influx of Russian Jews, who by 1900 had made up the largest group of foreign students at German institutions of higher learning. They were informed by a mixture of anti-Slav, anti-Eastern European and anti-Jewish sentiments and prejudices (which saw Jewish students as "eager beavers" and political radicals who were, however, on the whole less hostile and pernicious than their Russian counterparts).[5] The failed attempts, after long parliamentary debates and proposals, to limit the number of Jewish students in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania in the 1920s also had their roots in ideological developments and cultural trends, featuring more or less the same prejudices as in Hungary, rather than in economic and social problems, serious as they had been, after the war.

However, unlike in Hungary, in these countries foreign powers got involved and put an early end to the preparations.[6] In all these countries, the presence of large ethnic minorities tended to dampen antisemitic aggression by diverting attention to more obvious targets from the perspective

of national unity and security. Finally, discrimination against Jewish students and the limitation of their numbers at Canadian and American universities in the interwar period were informed by nativist ideas, typical of Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, and immigrant countries.[7] They were motivated by hostility toward Eastern Europeans, increasingly perceived and described in a racist language as genetically inferior and prone to crime, and by the fear of, and contempt for, Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Jews. These countries relied on immigration and were victors in the war; they experienced very little misery that could be attributed to immigrants, Jewish or otherwise, and developed no "culture of defeat" to justify harsh measures. While economic motives were frequently cited by the protagonists of measures limiting university enrollment, there was in fact a shortage of doctors, engineers, dentists, and other professionals in the Western hemisphere. Until the Nazi Civil Service Law of April 1933, which then quickly found imitators in most East Central European countries, the numerus clausus law of 1920 was the only legislation in Central or East Central Europe that limited the number of students by federal law.[8]

The numerus clausus was the product of student radicalism and violence practiced on a large scale in Budapest and university towns, such as Debrecen, after World War I.[9] It was also the product of mass politics and democratization after 1918: the introduction of universal suffrage, the entry of new social and political groups into the parliament, lobbying, street demonstrations, press campaigns, and negotiations with the powerful behind the scenes. The law was meant to channel "Aryan" students' aggression toward Jews and ensure that non-Jews would find employment after graduation. It is doubtful that the lawmakers' intention was to deflate or defeat student radicalism and antisemitism; if it had been, the law was a failure, since student demonstrations periodically flared up and attacks on Jewish classmates continued, albeit on a lesser scale, in the late 1920s and 1930s.[10] The numerus clausus law and its origins in violence had created a pattern that students then regularly used to draw public attention to their plight and obtain elite support. The law gave credibility to anti-Jewish stereotypes, such as Jews as potential traitors and Communists, and justified self-serving lies, such as that Jews had "stolen" the jobs of well-deserving Christians and that the anti-Jewish laws were not violating anyone's rights but only righting wrongs. Thanks to the numerus clausus and similar measures, these hostile images and stereotypes became an integral part of political culture in Hungary in the Horthy era.

The numerus clausus came as a shock to the culturally assimilated Jewish middle classes. However, we can assume that it was less a concern for Jewish workers and poor peddlers, artisans, and shopkeepers in the countryside in northeastern and eastern Hungary, where the majority of Jews were culturally less assimilated and religiously Orthodox. Conservatives, such as Prime Minister István Bethlen, supported the numerus clausus legislation; however, they refused to apply it to the professions. They also feared that the survival of the law in its original form would damage the country's reputation abroad and jeopardize its chances to obtain badly needed financial assistance and foreign loans.

In contrast, the Right-radicals in the Christian socialist and legitimist camps and among Smallholder Party politicians believed that the law did not go far enough. This was true for the leaders of the nationalist student fraternities, such as the Turul, and patriotic and veterans' organizations, such as the Ébredő Magyarok Egyesülete [Association of Awakening Hungarians] (ÉME) and the Magyar Országos Véderő Egylet [Hungarian National Defense Association] (MOVE) as well.[11] With a few exceptions, such as the popular author Jenő Rákosi, conservative writers supported the measure; even some of the intellectuals associated with the left-liberal journal *Nyugat* [West], such as Dezső Kosztolányi and Dezső Szabó, served as its advocates. The elites of the Christian churches, with few exceptions, mainly among the leaders of the Reformed Church, tacitly embraced the new law; some, like Bishop Ottokár Prohászka (but also the Jesuits and the Franciscans), openly voiced their support for it.[12] By and large, the numerus clausus remained a middle-class concern; and while the moderate leaders of the social democratic party, its more radical leaders in exile, Hungarian Communists in Vienna and Moscow, and the exiled radical democrats in Vienna, Berlin, Prague, and Paris expressed their disgust and deep disappointment, the large majority of workers, peasants, and the underclass (in a country of "three million beggars") seem to have paid little attention to the new legislation and its consequences.

The international reaction to the numerus clausus legislation was negative. The law played into the hands of the leaders of the neighboring states, who sought to diplomatically isolate Hungary and undermine its efforts to gain sympathy abroad as the first step toward the revision of the highly unjust peace treaty. The numerus clausus provided the perfect excuse for the "nationalizing" leaders of the victorious states to violate minority rights in

the recently annexed Hungarian-majority territories.[13] The legislation also reinforced the prewar image of Hungary in the West as the prison of ethnic and religious minorities and of Hungarians as “Eastern” and “barbarian” oppressors, who did not, and could not, share the humanist values of their allegedly more civilized and more European neighbors.

The Western powers did not like the new law; yet they did precious little to prevent its passing or change it subsequently. The interest of Britain and France in Hungary was mainly political, economic, and geopolitical. Britain considered Hungary as its (only) client state in East Central Europe; both Britain and France saw the counterrevolutionary government as a possible ally against the Soviet Union and as a bulwark against Bolshevism. They were concerned with law and order, the stability of the country and the region, and the willingness of the government in Budapest to sign and enforce the Treaty of Trianon. Minority and human rights thus remained a secondary problem. International Jewish organizations protested against the law; paradoxically, their efforts to rectify it were undermined by the resistance of the Hungarian Jewish leaders who—in their effort to deflect accusations of disloyalty to the country and liberal/left-wing sympathies—insisted that the law was an internal concern.[14]

In regard to its long-term impact, the numerus clausus legislation widened the emotional and cultural gap between Jews and non-Jews; it favored geographical and social segregation and increased discrimination and exclusion. The law reinforced ethnic and religious stereotypes and patterns of reaction and behavior. The legislation established violence as a legitimate means of lobbying and riots as an acceptable way of putting pressure on lawmakers. The law thus provided both the precedent and a model for future legislation. The same arguments and stereotypical images (Jews as potential traitors and Communists) that had served as the background to, and a motive behind, the numerus clausus legislation, were used to justify the deportation of provincial Jews in the spring of 1944. The numerus clausus was the first openly anti-minority legislation; the idea to extend it to ethnic Germans was frequently raised after 1935. The connection of the law to the expulsion of ethnic Germans after World War II was only indirect; yet without the precedent and the patterns of behavior set by the marginalization and genocide of the Jews, the deportation of ethnic Germans after the war would not have been possible.

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NOTES

1. See Mária M. Kovács, "The Hungarian *Numerus Clausus*: Ideology, Apology and History, 1919–1945," in *The Numerus Clausus in Hungary: Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. Victor Karady and Peter Tibor Nagy, (Budapest: CEU Press, 2012), 27–55.

2. Balázs Ablonczy, *Teleki Pál* [Pál Teleki] (Budapest: Osiris, 2005), 172–82, 402–10; Randolph H. Braham*, The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 140–91.

3. László Karsai, *Szálasi Ferenc: Politikai életrajz* [Ferenc Szálasi: a political biography] (Budapest: Balassi, 2016), 134–44; Rudolf Paksa, *Magyar nemzetiszocialisták: Az 1930-as évek új szélsőjobboldali mozgalma, pártjai, politikusai, sajtója* [Hungarian national socialists: the new extreme-right movement, its parties, politicians, and press in the 1930s] (Budapest: MTA BTK TTI – Osiris, 2013), 122–27; János Gyurgyák, *Magyar Fajvédők*: *Eszmetörténeti Tanulmány* [Hungarian defenders of the race: a study in intellectual history] (Budapest: Osiris, 2012).

4. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning and Recovery* (New York: Picador), 2001.

5. Béla Bodó, "Non-Aryan Students in Nazi Germany," *Yad Vashem Studies* 30 (2002): 189–229; Béla Bodó, "Foreign Students in Nazi Germany," *East European Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (2003): 19–50.

6. Lucian Nastasă, "Anti-Semitism at Universities in Romania (1919–1939)," in Karady and Nagy, *The Numerus Clausus in Hungary*, 219–43.

7. Gerard N. Burrow, *A History of Yale's School of Medicine: Passing Torches to Others* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 105–8.

8. Peter Tibor Nagy, "The First Anti-Jewish Law in Inter-War Europe," in Karady and Nagy, The *Numerus Clausus in Hungary*, 56–68.

9. Béla Bodó, *The White Terror: Antisemitic and Political Violence in Hungary, 1919–1921* (London: Routledge, 2019), 238–67.

10. Rudolf Paksa, "A numerus clausus és módositása," [The numerus clausus and its amendment], in *Gróf Bethlen István és kora* [Count István Bethlen and his times], ed. Zsejke Nagy (Budapest: Osiris, 2014), 137–57; Robert Kerepeszki, "'The Racial Defence in Practice': The Activity of the Turul Association at Hungarian Universities between the Two World Wars," in Karady and Nagy, *The Numerus Clausus in Hungary*, 136–50.

11. Robert Kerepeszki, *A Turul Szövetség, 1919–1945: Egyetemi ifjúsági és jobboldali radikalizmus a Horthy-korszakban* [The Turul Association, 1919–45: academic youth and right-wing radicalism in the Horthy era] (Máriabesnyő: Attraktor, 2012).

12. Csaba Fazekas, "Numerus Clausus Represents a Strong National Ideology: Bishop Ottokár Prohászka and the Closed Number Law in Hungary," in Karady and Nagy, The *Numerus Clausus in Hungary*, 165–75.

13. Rogers Brubaker, "Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism," *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 272–305.

14. Géza Komoróczy, *A zsidók története Magyarországon II: 1849-től a jelenkorig* [The history of the Jews in Hungary, vol. 2: from 1849 to the present] (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2012), 437–39.

FORUM

Jewish Quotas on a Continuum of Time and Space

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ABSTRACT | This essay positions the Hungarian numerus clausus law (1920) in the narrative framework of de-emancipation and in the transnational context of its time. The Jewish quota as a measure to reverse Jewish educational mobility and social integration was not unique to Hungary. Neither was the peregrination (student migration) of Jewish youth as a response. However, the role this migration and its community support mechanism played in Jewish life was particularly significant in Hungary.

KEYWORDS | antisemitism, higher education, migration, social mobility

In my view, Hungary's numerus clausus law of 1920, the antisemitic laws introduced after 1938, and the genocide of Hungarian Jewry are part of the same continuum. Guy Miron's narrative of the numerus clausus setting in motion a process of de-emancipation is a useful conceptual framework to interpret the history of Hungarian Jews in the interwar period.[1] With the numerus clausus, Hungarian legislation broke with the principle of equality of all citizens before the law, thereby reversing Jewish emancipation. At this point only Jews aspiring to higher education were concerned, but the university quota nevertheless established a precedent that emancipation was not a one-way street, and a minority could be deprived of emancipation—in short, de-emancipated.

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At the same time, I would like to make the case that this process of de-emancipation can be embedded in the broader narrative of Europe gradually turning against its Jewry since the emergence of modern, secular racial antisemitism (as opposed to religious anti-Judaism). Hence, I also insert the case of interwar Hungarian antisemitic politics into the interpretative framework provided by Götz Aly.[2] He argues that, already from the 1880s, Jewish emancipation had many enemies who saw the post-emancipation, upward social mobility of Jews as a "takeover" of the nation by an "alien" minority. Especially from World War I onward, antisemites succeeded in recruiting followers from all social classes because of the increasingly prevalent conviction that the improvement of living standards for the majority depended on depriving the Jewish minority of its rights and means.

One may add that this was especially true for the losers of World War I, such as territorially diminished Hungary, where after the signing of the Trianon Treaty over four hundred and twenty-six thousand refugees immigrated, including many formerly middle-class intellectuals from the territories the country had lost. This exacerbated competition for jobs and increased anxiety regarding the "overproduction of intelligentsia" by universities. The complex problem of intellectuals' unemployment was framed by antisemites as Jews "taking over." Such prejudiced framing provided the context for the legislation establishing the Jewish quota. In addition, the propaganda that accompanied the implementation of the numerus clausus law suggested that it was only the beginning of the expulsion of Jews from the intellectual professions they had allegedly "taken" at the expense of others.

Aly's interpretation is furthermore useful in understanding why twentieth-century Europe's first anti-Jewish law pertained to education. As he argues, the Shoah cannot be separated from the best achievements of its century: the social mobility undergirded by the extension of education. The conspicuous presence of Jews at universities and in the intelligentsia in Europe could be used to turn many people against the Jews only because the perspective of social advancement through education—and hence the competition for such opportunities—became at least conceivable for a growing group in society in the first half of the twentieth century.

Central and Eastern European universities were particular hotbeds of antisemitism from the dawn of modern racial antisemitism around 1880, although less so in the Hungarian part of the Habsburg Monarchy than in Vienna.[3] Nevertheless, by the end of World War I, radical right-wing

student movements grew very strong in Hungary, and education became a central enough issue to provide the basis for a larger-scale vision of de-emancipating Jews and the exclusion of even the most assimilated Jewish Hungarians from the Hungarian nation.

The presence of legislative antisemitic discrimination in Hungary—until 1938 only manifested in the Jewish quota at universities—led to society's discriminating against Jews as an ordinary, everyday phenomenon and thereby prompted people to increasingly exclude Jews from their communities. There is no question that the antisemitic laws introduced after 1938 had a stronger and more direct impact on the behavior of Hungarians during the Shoah than the numerus clausus of 1920. At the same time, these measures were in many ways closely related to the university quota introduced in 1920. The so-called First Anti-Jewish Law (Law XV of 1938)—I add "so-called" because I think it is actually the numerus clausus that should be called the First Anti-Jewish Law—stipulated that a maximum of 20 percent of liberal professional jobs could be filled by Jews; and beyond the measure, its very name—"law on the more efficient securing of the balance of social and economic life"[4]—followed the tone and logic of the numerus clausus law. Legislators once again disguised discrimination against a minority as affirmative action for the majority.

Hungary was unique in interwar Europe because only here did popular initiatives to limit Jewish access to universities meet with state policy—and for this the country acquired a certain notoriety. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the popularity and realization of an anti-Jewish quota was not unique to Hungary at all. As increasingly discussed in the scholarship, the exclusion of Jews from universities was not even limited to Europe, since it also occurred in North America's private universities (with the explicit exclusion of African Americans continuing as commonly accepted policy even after World War II).[5] The reason Hungarian legislators endorsed this idea when their counterparts abroad did not had to do with international power relations. Hungary, a loser of World War I, was not interested in complying with the minority protection system of the League of Nations since it originated in the peace treaty system that put an end to "Greater Hungary." In 1928, however, Hungary's need for a loan from the League of Nations required an amendment of the much-criticized numerus clausus law—a manipulative and phony modification, as Mária M. Kovács has demonstrated in detail.[6]

Meanwhile, Poland and Romania had an interest in complying with the norms of the League of Nations—hence these states did not legislate a quota system to limit Jewish access to universities. Nevertheless, they did little to prevent the practice of unofficial yet very effective anti-Jewish quotas, which were accompanied by the grave humiliation of Jewish students, along with segregation to ghetto benches and beatings on campuses.[7] Yet the fact that antisemitic practices were also prevalent in other countries should not be used to downplay the significance of Hungary's legislated antisemitism. The legislative enforcement of a Jewish quota represented an important achievement for antisemites internationally. It served both as a precedent to refer to and as an inspiration for suggestions for similar quotas in Austria and Czechoslovakia; although there, politicians in the late 1920s intervened against such student and faculty initiatives.[8]

Up until 1938, Austria and Czechoslovakia remained target countries for the exodus of Jewish youth not only from Hungary but from Poland and Romania as well. This was by no means a new phenomenon: westward Jewish student migration was as old and transnational as limitations on Jewish access to education, going back to the 1880s. Antisemites may have started to reverse Jewish social integration and advancement by preventing their access to higher education, but Jews continued to use education to achieve the goals to which they aspired. Although the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was established in 1925 also with the idea to respond to the problem of Jewish youth's inability to enroll in their native countries' universities, in the interwar years most East Central European Jews still preferred to enroll at the universities of Central and Western Europe, rather than go to Palestine.

As I argued in my dissertation, due to this flight to other countries, thousands of "numerus clausus exiles"—as Hungarian Jewish students attending universities abroad were called—achieved social mobility through education.[9] Even if the numerus clausus was successful in quantitative terms, reducing the proportion of Jewish high school graduates who entered higher education (even when we include those enrolled in universities abroad),[10] it was less so than had been intended. The reason lies in Hungarian Jewry's quick reaction and their establishment of a financial, practical, and moral support mechanism for the numerus clausus exiles.

A number of Jewish communities across the country set up student-aid committees to help Jewish youth to study abroad, raising funds from institutions as well as individuals, from wealthy philanthropists to people with

modest means. Besides publishing heartbreaking reports on the students' misery abroad, the committees organized charity events, such as concerts, theater performances, and tea parties. Their activities were coordinated by the Central Jewish Student Aid Committee in Budapest, which worked within the Pest Jewish community, collecting contributions from all Jewish communities in Hungary and distributing the funds among the student colonies abroad. Émigré students could request financial support through the representative of the committee (who was usually also a student) in the given university town. In this way the whole Hungarian Jewish community infrastructure was mobilized to organize support for migrant students. By the time of the great economic crisis of 1929, 1450 numerus clausus exiles had graduated abroad with support from the Central Jewish Student Aid Committee.[11] This organization continued to support around 500 students each year (while another approximately 350 Hungarian Jews per year studied abroad without their aid).

The Central Aid Committee, however, was not merely a charitable organization. Its subsequent presidents emphasized that Hungarian Jewry had to send as many youngsters to study abroad as possible, so that the numerus clausus would not jeopardize the continuing supply of Hungarian Jewish intelligentsia. The committee therefore facilitated peregrination with multiple means: it gathered and distributed information about universities and living conditions in various countries and connected prospective migrant students with those already abroad. Thus, beyond the quantitative result, communal support had a qualitative impact: it became the base for a new Hungarian Jewish "community of fate"—solidarity and mutual help based on a shared destiny. Thus, students' emigration and the support for it provided resources to rebuild Hungarian Jewish identity heavily shaken by the double shock of Trianon and the numerus clausus. It is this reaction of an attacked minority that I consider the most instructive and universal legacy of the story of Hungary's numerus clausus legislation.

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Thomas Mann and Hungarian Intellectuals: The Rewards of Shared Visions

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ABSTRACT | This is a study of the rewards of shared visions at the highest level of culture. In part as a result of six visits to Budapest, Thomas Mann, arguably the greatest writer of the last century, established friendly and productive relations with many of Hungary's cultural luminaries, chief among them György (Georg) Lukács, Károly (Karl) Kerényi, and Dezső Kosztolányi. From the literary critic, authority on mythology and religion, and poet-novelist, respectively, he obtained insights that, by his own account, contributed to the advancement of his work and a deepening of his self-understanding; from Mann's writings and from personal, especially epistolary, contacts, the Hungarians drew scholarly and creative inspirations that opened new paths for their work. Without being fully conscious of it, they and Mann wrote an important chapter in the intellectual history of twentieth-century Europe.

KEYWORDS | Thomas Mann, Georg Lukács, Karl Kerényi, Dezső Kosztolányi, cultural exchange

"I am convinced," said Thomas Mann's son Golo, "that my father had a very strong tie to Hungary, his strongest tie to any East European country after Austria."[1] On the six occasions that Mann visited Budapest to give public readings of his work, he formed friendships with many of Hungary's cultural luminaries, the most significant of whom were the literary critic György Lukács, the authority on mythology and religion Károly Kerényi, and the poet-novelist Dezső Kosztolányi. From them he gained insights that served to advance his work and increase his self-understanding. From Mann, in turn, the Hungarians drew scholarly and creative inspirations that opened new paths for their work. Together they demonstrated the rewards

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of high cultural exchanges between national traditions and, in the process, wrote an important chapter in the intellectual history of modern Europe.

"There is," Mann wrote in *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* [Reflections of a nonpolitical man] (1918), "a beautiful, profound book by the young Hungarian essayist, Georg von Lukácz [sic], entitled *Die Seele und die Formen* [The soul and the forms]. In it there is a study of Theodor Storm that is, at the same time, an investigation of the relationship between '*Bürgerlichkeit* and *l'art pour l'art*'—an investigation that to me, as I read it years ago, seemed to be the best that had ever been said on this paradoxical subject, and that I feel I have a special right to cite, since the author was perhaps thinking of me—and at one place expressly so."[2] Mann saw himself in the Hungarian's portrait of the German writer (1817–88). Could, Lukács asked, a burgherly way of life and art for art's sake coexist in the same person? His answer was yes; they did in Theodor Storm. His world was "the world of German aesthetes. Among the many groups of aesthetes of the last [nineteenth] century, this was the genuine, truly German variety, the German *l'art pour l'art*." For Storm, craftsmanship was the characteristic feature of aestheticism; his aim was to attain "consciousness of honest and skillful work, consciousness that he had done everything in his power to achieve creative perfection."[3]

Although Mann himself was born into a wealthy patrician family, he always referred to himself as a *Bürger*—an identity he preferred to a *bourgeois*. His father was the owner of a grain firm in Lübeck, and he was intended for a career in business. From the first, however, he was drawn to the arts, much as was his mother, who was born in Brazil; she played the piano well and was said to have had a lovely voice. When her husband died in 1891, she gathered her young children and moved to Munich. Thomas followed in 1894, took up residence in the artists' quarter of Schwabing, and, like his older brother Heinrich, set out on a literary career.

Did that make him an aesthete, someone who had broken completely with the world of his father? That was the question Mann posed in *Tonio Kröger,* a novella he published in 1903.[4] Tonio's name provides a provisional answer: he experiences himself as both artist and *Bürger.* The former, however, is the stronger identity, and as a result he feels himself set apart from nice, regular people such as Hans Hansen and Ingeborg Holm, both of whom he loves. He moves to Munich and establishes a reputation as a writer. In the Bavarian city, he meets Lisabeta Ivanovna, a Russian-born artist who

tells him that he is a *Bürger* manqué; Tonio himself believes that the artist is too often a Bohemian who lacks any sense of duty or morality. In the knowledge that he cannot be other than a writer, he clings all the more to his burgherly roots. Writing for him would be a disciplined craft informed by an artist's (controlled) sensibility. And so it would be for Thomas Mann.

György (Georg) Lukács was the scion of a *haute bourgeois* family. His father, József Lőwinger, had worked his way up from entry-level bank employee to director of the Hungarian General Credit Bank; for his service to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy he was ennobled as József Szegedi Lukács, the magyarized name he adopted in 1890. Son György had no more intention than Mann of entering the world of business or finance; he wanted to pursue his literary and philosophic interests. "I was still at school," he wrote late in life, "when Mann's writing made its first big impact on me. The *Tonio Kröger* problem was a major influence in determining the main lines of my own early work."[5] He had not yet met Irma Seidler, who was to become his Ingeborg Holm, but he could already write of "eternal, irreconcilable adversaries; they who were intended for each other, the man and the woman, art and life."[6]

For the young Lukács, man was the creative figure, the artist who had a work to perform. Woman, on the other hand, represented the kind of spontaneous, unreflective life that man as artist could never share. Not long after his first encounter with Irma in December 1907 he began to view her as a symbol of "life," just as he saw himself as a symbol of "work," and in the year that followed he became ever more convinced that it was not given to him to *live*, in the ordinary sense of the word, any more than it was to Tonio Kröger. Recognizing this, Irma wrote him a painful letter in which she asked for her freedom. In the spring of 1911, Lukács wrote to tell her that she had inspired the Hungarian version of *Die Seele und die Formen* and asked that she permit him to dedicate the German edition to her. When the book appeared, however, the dedication read: "Dem Andenken Irma Seidlers" [In memory of Irma Seidler], for on May 18 Irma jumped to her death from one of the bridges that span the Danube between Buda and Pest.

As Lukács recalled years later, the "spiritual closeness" he had originally felt for Mann ended with the coming of the Great War, which he opposed while Mann rallied to Germany's cause. The gap between the two men widened further when, in December 1918, Lukács joined the Hungarian Communist Party, and served the postwar Soviet Republic first as cultural tsar

and then as political commissar for one of the Republic's army divisions engaged in battle with Romanians advancing into Hungary. In the latter capacity, and in agreement with the division commander, he ordered the execution of eight soldiers who had taken flight from the enemy. Primarily for that reason, Lukács fled to Austria when the Republic collapsed on August 1, 1919. There his life depended upon Austrian willingness to grant him political asylum, and Mann, along with several other writers, signed a public appeal on his behalf.

By the time he signed the appeal, Mann had returned to *Der Zauberberg* [The magic mountain], the novel that he had set aside in order to write his *Betrachtungen*. He regularly, however, interrupted his work in order to make reading tours to foreign countries. One of the first stops on his schedule was Budapest, where he and his wife Katia arrived on January 11, 1922. They went directly to the Gellért Hill villa of József Lukács. "My father invited them," Lukács's sister Mici remembered, "so that they would not have to stay in a hotel. He also wanted to express his gratitude to Thomas Mann, who had been among the first to sign the appeal that Gyuri's [György's] German and Austrian friends addressed to the Austrian chancellor."[7]

Mann left Budapest on January 16 and arrived in Vienna, where he was to give another reading. While in the old imperial capital, he met Lukács, who, years later, recalled the encounter: "It so happened that we had a lively conversation in his hotel room, which lasted for about one and a half to two hours. In the main, we discussed the problematic situation of art, the mission and function of art, especially of the literary art, in that period. About the historico-philosophical particularities of that talk, I cannot say much anymore—understandably. But there is no doubt in my mind that that was the sole topic of our conversation. As to the political role that I had played during the events in Hungary in 1919—we did not really go into that . . . . We discussed mainly what the function of literature or art should be in our world at that time."[8]

"As long as he spoke," Mann recalled, "he was right," but afterward his only impression was that of an "almost uncanny abstraction."[9] Even as he attended to Lukács's perfervid discourse, however, Mann formed a physical and spiritual image of a personality. He observed and listened to the Hungarian for no more than an hour, but that, according to his wife, "was the remarkable thing about him: he got a complete picture of a person immediately."[10]

Not long after meeting Lukács, Mann revealed to a friend that Leo (or Leib) Naphta, a new character, had emerged in *Der Zauberberg*. A Jew, a Jesuit, and a communist, Naphta is a patient at the sanatorium where Hans Castorp, the novel's protagonist, is visiting his cousin. He is determined to challenge the authority that Lodovico Settembrini, a liberal humanist, exercises over Hans Castorp's "education," and to that end he engages the Italian in spirited debates. He pours contempt upon humanism's interminable chatter about progress, science, and democracy, and prophesies a great sacramental shedding of blood, after which the world will be purified. The executor of History's will would be the proletariat: "The proletariat has taken up the work of Gregory the Great; his holy zeal burns within it and it cannot withhold its hand from blood. Its task is terror—for the healing of the world and the achievement of the redemptive goal: a stateless and classless society."[11]

Lukács was the model for Naphta, although Mann always discouraged talk of the identification. Naphta, Mann wrote, was "small, thin, clean-shaven, and so piercing that one might describe him as corrosively ugly."[12] He undoubtedly regarded Lukács that way. More important, the young Lukács was also a proponent of terror. Shortly after joining the Hungarian Communist Party, he published an essay entitled "Taktika és etika" [Tactics and ethics] in which he explained why, after initial hesitations, he was prepared to sanction the resort to terror. He admitted that everyone who identified with the communist movement was responsible for every life sacrificed in the revolutionary struggle, but he contended that everyone who took sides with communism's opponents had to shoulder moral responsibility for lives lost because of imperialistic wars and class oppression. All were caught in the tragic dilemma of having to choose between the purposeful and ephemeral violence of the revolution and the meaningless violence of the old, corrupt world.[13]

Shortly before he died in June 1971, Lukács spoke to Judith Marcus about Naphta. "Look," he said to her, "I don't have the slightest doubt . . . that the Naphta-figure 'borrowed' certain features of mine. I must say, though, that Thomas Mann went about this business in a particularly gentle and cautious manner: he emphasized in Naphta's outer appearance the very things that were in direct opposition to my appearance. What I mean is that not even my greatest enemy would dare to say that I was an elegantly attired man."[14] He referred, however, to his post-conversion appearance; his pre-World

War I photographs show him to be well-turned-out. He wished, it is clear, to distance himself from Naphta, whom he described as "the spokesman of the reactionary, Fascist, anti-democratic *Weltanschauung*."[15]

Lukács's insistence that he was not Naphta failed to convince Károly (Karl) Kerényi, the Hungarian student of mythology and religion. Under a program designed to allow scholars an opportunity to spend a year abroad, Kerényi left wartime Hungary for Switzerland in 1943; because of its natural beauty, he chose to settle in the canton of Ticino. In 1947, he returned to Hungary to deliver a speech to the Academy of Sciences, but because the Communists were then in the process of consolidating their power, he did not linger, and in 1948 he was declared persona non grata by the Hungarian government—or to be more exact, by Lukács.

In what purported to be a review of the Hungarian edition of Kerényi's *Töchter der Sonne: Betrachtungen über griechische Gottheiten* [Daughters of the sun: reflections on Greek goddesses] (1944), Lukács wrote that "no one wants to suggest that Kerényi as a person is an adherent of Fascism, or even a political reactionary, but his writings point in the direction of the darkest forces of reaction, supporting as they do an extreme irrationalism with the distorted images of an arbitrary philology that has degenerated into a pseudo-science. For, regardless of one's intentions, the atmosphere of mythology has already once proven to be the atmosphere in which the ideological preparation for Fascism took place."[16]

Kerényi was particularly incensed because Lukács ignored what he had written in the preface to the second edition (1941) of his *Apollon:* "The present author . . . knows that understanding the essence of actual mythological figures is different from delivering freshly invented mythologies to gullible irrationalists and equally gullible rationalists."[17] In 1962, therefore, he took aim at Lukács in an essay entitled "Zauberberg-Figuren: Ein biographischer Versuch" [Characters in *The Magic Mountain*: a biographical essay]. Despite Mann's reluctance to say so publicly, Kerényi wrote, Lukács was "not far from Naphta or from the Communists, whose ruling idea, the content of whose frenzy, was the 'holy terror that the time required.'"[18] In Naphta, according to Kerényi, Mann had captured Lukács's essence.

Karl Kerényi was born in Temesvár, Hungary (now Timişoara, Romania). His father was a post office official of Swabian peasant descent.[19] His mother was an ethnic Hungarian and he chose to speak her language, though he eventually adopted German for his scholarly work, the better to

reach more readers. The region in which he came of age was one in which many languages were spoken (Hungarian, German, Romanian, Serbian, and Yiddish) and different religions professed (including several Christian traditions: Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, three Protestant denominations). It is not surprising, therefore, that he mastered several languages and developed an early interest in the history of religion. Because of fragile health, he was exempted from service during World War I and entered the University of Budapest as a student of classical philology. He also studied in Berlin with the renowned classical philologist and Nietzsche critic Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff before completing his doctorate in 1919.

In 1927, Kerényi published his habilitation thesis as *Die griechisch-orientalische Romanliteratur in religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung* [Greek-Oriental romance literature in the light of religious history].[20] Two years later he traveled to Greece and viewed at first hand the environs of the classical age—by his own account it was the turning point in his life. The European spirit, he became convinced, had begun to appreciate the Greek gods anew; the most important poet-novelist of that renewed discovery being Friedrich Hölderlin, prophet of "the return of the gods." As a result of his admiration for the German's work, Kerényi befriended as many writers as he did scholars.

It was almost inevitable, therefore, that Kerényi would take an interest in Mann's work-in-progress: *Joseph und seine Brüder* [Joseph and his brothers]. For the 1948 American edition of what was to become a tetralogy, Mann described the work as "my mythological novel"—and so it is.[21] Based upon the Genesis account of Jacob and Joseph, it weaves in, with consummate skill, figures and events from Egyptian and Babylonian mythology. "Deep is the well of the past," reads the first sentence of Mann's prelude to his masterly work. Delving into the pre-literate world of the past reveals to us archetypes, ancient stories of gods and heroes that may have a basis in fact but that are important because they unveil recurring themes and thus render time timeless—and in the process deepen our understanding of human existence.

"It is probably a rule," Mann explained in a lecture given in 1942, "that at a certain age one gradually loses the taste for everything that is merely individual and particular. . . . Instead the focus of interest shifts toward the typical, the eternally human, eternally recurrent, ageless, in short: the mythical. . . . For while the mythical represents an early and primitive form in the life of mankind, in that of the individual it is a late and ripe one."[22]

The S. Fischer Verlag published *Die Geschichten Jaakobs* [The stories of Jacob], the first volume of *Joseph und seine Brüder*, in October 1933.[23] In January of the following year, Mann received offprints of two scholarly articles from Kerényi, a newly appointed professor of classical philology and ancient history at the University of Pécs in southern Hungary. He forwarded a note of appreciation to the Hungarian within days; it marked the beginning of a correspondence that, with a single interruption (September 7, 1941 to December 21, 1944), ended only with Mann's death in 1955.

Encouraged by his initial exchange of letters with Mann, Kerényi wrote again to emphasize the importance of great literature, such as *Die Geschichten Jaakobs* and *Der Zauberberg*, to his scholarly studies—and he returned repeatedly to a discussion of mythology and the novel. In another letter to Mann, dated March 13, 1934, he wrote that "it appears that coming to terms with the mythic is the great, self-chosen task of the greatest novelists." In his response Mann thanked Kerényi for sending him a copy of *Die griechisch-orientalische Romanliteratur* and spoke of his "susceptibility to your rich intellectual gifts." He added that he welcomed the Hungarian's plan "to write an essay on the return of the modern novel to myth, this return being understood as a true *homecoming*."[24] He ended by saying that he had received his author's copies of *Der Junge Joseph* [Young Joseph] (1934),[25] the second volume of *Joseph und seine Brüder*, and was forwarding one.

In a letter to Mann of April 30, 1934, Kerényi wrote that he had finished reading *Der Junge Joseph* and could only say "what an average reader ignorant of mythology might say: 'I liked this volume even more than the first.' What a shame that one must still wait for the third!" He was particularly impressed, he told Mann, by the fact that the volume was "closely related to the Greek romance through its Hermetic standpoint between myth and human history."[26] In August, Mann wrote to explain that because of events in his homeland—actions of the Nazi regime—he would have to turn from fiction to an undertaking "as in the time of the *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen;* and the completion of my third volume will be put off to a more distant future."[27]

Mann does not seem to have written to Kerényi again until January 6, 1935, when he announced that he would be in Budapest on the 27th to deliver a lecture on Richard Wagner. He hoped then to have an opportunity to shake Kerényi's hand and to thank him "for much stimulation as well as for [his] sympathy for my [exiled] existence."[28] The Manns were met at

Budapest's East Station by Lajos Hatvany, the critic, literary historian, and Maecenas who was to be their host. At a reception Mann met Kerényi and others, including György Sárközi, translator of *Joseph und seine Brüder*;[29] Attila József, the brilliant if troubled poet; and Pál Ignotus, co-editor with József of *Szép Szó* (literally "beautiful word" but idiomatically "amicable argument"), a left-liberal journal of literature and politics.

In "Vissza az értelemhez" [Return to reason], the lead article in the inaugural issue, Ignotus recalled his meeting with Mann. It was clear to him that the great German writer had distanced himself from what he regarded as the reactionary ideas of his early years and adopted those of liberalism and democracy, understood in the socialist sense. These were the ideas that, with some reservations, he had put in the mouth of Settembrini. "When [Mann] was in Pest recently and I had an opportunity to speak with him," Ignotus wrote, "I asked him if he didn't think that in the last few years he had drawn closer to that character? 'Yes,' he replied thoughtfully, 'one finally attaches oneself to that which one sees as goodwill, decency, and discernment.'"[30]

In a June 4, 1935 letter to Mann, Kerényi wrote of "how gladly I remember your visit to Budapest. The youthful vigor of your nature, in particular, left an impression on me. Indeed, looking back I see that you belong to the classic writers of my own youth. And now I am astonished to note that in these days we may congratulate you on your sixtieth birthday. Allow me to do so again from the bottom of my heart."[31]

Mann returned to Budapest in the summer of 1936, when he read from *Joseph in Ägypten* (Joseph in Egypt), the soon-to-be-published third volume of *Joseph und seine Brüder*. Again he met with Kerényi, who, after reading the manuscript, wrote to express his wonderment. "For it is remarkable how much more you, who are not a specialist but only a 'linguist'—and on principle wish to have it no other way—are *really able* to say about Egyptian matters than the mere specialists!" In his response, Mann returned the compliment. "It is to be wondered at how, with each of your contributions, each problem selection, you are able to grasp something really interesting—at least to me, which indicates a certain pre-established friendship between our spheres."[32]

A month after he wrote that letter, on November 3, Dezső Kosztolányi died, and Mann quickly posted a letter of sympathy to his widow. "A pure and noble Hungarian writer has departed. His birthplace must preserve his

memory. In our brotherly hearts his memory will never die."[33] Kosztolányi was a—if not *the*—key figure in Mann's relationships with Hungarian writers. He was born March 29, 1885 in Szabadka (now Subotica, Serbia) and was ten when his grandfather, a veteran of Hungary's 1848–49 war of independence, died—an event that led to his life-long preoccupation with death: "I have always been interested in one thing only: death. Nothing else. . . . It is only since [I saw my dead grandfather] that I have been a poet, artist, and thinker. The vast difference between the living and the dead, the silence of death, brought home to me that I had to do something. I began to write poetry. 'If there were no death, there would be no art.' Perhaps that is why I am not understood in Hungary, where the 'great ones' are always politically minded. *My only subject, however small the object I succeed in grasping, is that I am dying.* I look with disdain at those writers who have other subjects: social problems, the relationship between men and women, the struggle between races, etc. It sickens my stomach when I think of their narrow-mindedness. What superficial work they do, poor things, and how proud they are of it."[34]

Kosztolányi began his studies of German and Hungarian at the University of Budapest before moving to Vienna to continue his education. Soon after his return to Budapest, however, he abandoned his studies for journalism; in 1906 he joined the staff of *Budapesti Napló*. He published his first volume of poetry in 1907 and, the following year, began to write for the distinguished literary review *Nyugat* [West], although he never shared that magazine's interest in social and political problems; he was, as he himself liked to say, a *homo aestheticus*. The literary articles, short stories, theater criticism, and translations that flowed from his pen soon brought him money and a stylish life.

Kosztolányi was declared unfit for military service during the Great War and worked as a clerk in the City Records Office. At war's end, Béla Kun, his colleague at *Budapesti Napló,* emerged as the leader of the Communists, who were then waiting in the wings for a Soviet Republic. Kosztolányi approached him in order to gain some idea of what the future might hold. Kun, however, displayed no interest in reviving the spirit of the old days. "And what will become of me, of the writers," Kosztolányi inquired. "We have no need of you in the proletarian state," Kun replied. "We don't need poetry. Soon you will study some trade. If you remain obstinate, we will execute you."[35]

Kosztolányi managed to survive Kun's few months in power, but he was deeply grieved by the punitive Treaty of Trianon inflicted upon Hungary by the victorious Allies, not least because his hometown of Szabadka was assigned to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Yugoslavia). Eager to return to literary work, he accepted a position at *Új Nemzedék* [New Generation], a conservative Catholic daily that brought him into disrepute with Budapest's left-leaning intelligentsia. In a letter to a friend, he wrote in his defense: "Dear friend, politics is not my line. I hate it from my heart."[36]

Kosztolányi reaffirmed this conviction in his first novel, *A véres költő* [The bloody poet] (1921): the novel serves as a cautionary tale, a warning to artists to maintain their distance from the world of politics. Nero, Roman emperor from AD 54 to 68, has but one desire—to be a great poet. Unfortunately for him, and for everyone else, he is without talent; in moments when he suspects that he is a laughable dilettante, he gives free rein to his murderous instincts. Because his tutor Seneca possesses an artistic talent far greater than his, Nero comes to hate him. Facing death by suicide, Seneca tells his wife that Nero "has never forgiven me, never, because I could not lie or pretend. He read my thoughts in my eyes, felt my scorn, and has yet to forgive me."[37]

Kosztolányi sent to Mann a German translation of his novel and received a reply on May 23, 1923: "Dear Mr. Kosztolányi, I was in Spain for almost five weeks and returned only yesterday. I am now reading your novel and will, as soon as possible, write a letter to you that you may use as a preface [to the German edition]."[38] Oskar Wöhrle Press published *Der blutige Dichter: Ein Nero-Roman* [The bloody poet: a novel of Nero] (1924) with Mann's promised preface.[39] In it, he identified Seneca as his favorite character—"a genuine sage, a truly great man of letters whose last hours moved me as few things in life and art."[40] He may have been thinking of what Kosztolányi had the condemned philosopher say to his wife: "I revealed to him [Nero] my nature, my true character, and he recognized that the poet . . . is the real spirit of evil. He lacks the restraint without which there can be no morality or life."[41]

Mann might have written that himself, and he came close to doing so in a piece entitled "Bruder Hitler" [Brother Hitler] that he published in the Paris-based *Das Neue Tage-Buch* in March 1939. The Nazi *Führer,* he wrote, was an artist-phenomenon and hence a brother—if a distasteful and shameful one. It was true, he continued, that he had been aware of certain artistic

tendencies when he wrote *Death in Venice,* but he had not noticed when they reached the sphere of politics—with what results he had now come to recognize. And yet he liked to think, indeed he was certain, that a future was coming "in which art uncontrolled by mind/spirit, art as black magic and brainless irresponsible instinct, will be as scorned as, in humanly weak times such as ours, they are admired."[42]

In any event, Mann concluded his preface to Kosztolányi's novel with words of high praise: "I am pleased, dear Mr. Kosztolányi, to be the first to be able to congratulate you on your beautiful work. It will add new honor to a Hungarian literature already distinguished by writers from [Sándor] Petőfi and [János] Arany to [Endre] Ady and Zsigmond Móricz. And it will bring your own name into still greater prominence among those who today best express the spiritual-cultural life of Europe."[43]

That was by no means the extent of the Mann–Kosztolányi correspondence. Toward the end of 1923 or the beginning of 1924, the German sent to the Hungarian a reply to a questionnaire concerning Hungarian nationality that was circulated by *Pesti Hírlap*. "Warm friendships," he wrote, "unite me with some of the best of your artists and writers. I cannot forget the time that . . . Béla Bartók played some of his compositions for me. Among modern essayists Georg von Lukács, a son of Budapest whom I met in Vienna, is for me the foremost. I clasp in spirit the hand of your admirable novelist Zsigmond Móricz and it gives me pleasure to recall that only recently I wrote a foreword to a Hungarian work that has since become a great success—the Nero novel of your Dezső Kosztolányi."[44] *Pesti Hírlap* published Mann's letter—without the mention of Lukács—in its February 17, 1924 issue.

In an almost worshipful letter to Mann—"my master"—dated January 18, 1925, Kosztolányi wrote that he could not put *Der Zauberberg* down and finished reading it in three days. "You have in this novel vanquished the problem [of death]. You have opened the door to the atrium of death, you have shown us illness in its deepest essence." We know that death was Kosztolányi's ruling theme, and he was almost certainly thinking primarily of "Schnee" [Snow], the most important chapter in the novel. Out for a day of skiing, Hans Castorp is caught in a snowstorm and takes shelter. While waiting for the storm to let up, he falls asleep and has a dream turned terrifying nightmare that reveals to him that, deep down, men are driven by dark instincts—death, lust, and immoralities of every kind.

Mann had in mind the Freudian id. In "Freud und die Zukunft" [Freud and the future], a speech he delivered in Vienna in 1936, he cited words from an essay by the founder of psychoanalysis: "The domain of the id is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality; the little that we know of it we have learned through the study of dreams and of the formation of neurotic symptoms."[45] But as Hans Castorp—and Mann—admonishes himself: "I will hold death faithfully in my heart, but I will always remember that if faithfulness to death and what is past governs our thoughts and conduct it will only lead to wickedness, lust, and hatred of mankind. *For the sake of goodness and love man must grant death no dominion over his thoughts*."[46]

By the time he wrote to Mann, Kosztolányi had published *Pacsirta* [Lark] (1924), a psychologically brilliant and shattering novel. The story takes place during a single week in 1899, in Sárszeg, a town modeled on Szabadka. A retired county archivist and his wife have a daughter whom they call "Lark" because, as a child, she liked to sing. But that was then. She is now thirty-five and so ugly and devoid of charm that no man will court her. Slowly we see that her parents have given up everything that made their lives worth living in order to watch over her—and to submit to her imperious will. *She* decides how they all must live. At her insistence the father even gives up his cigars and drinking; all that the future held for certain "was that he would soon die."[47]

Signs of death are, in fact, everywhere in Sárszeg. The church bells ring constantly: "At morning Mass, at vespers, at funerals—so many funerals. There were three coffin-makers on Széchenyi Street, one after the other, and two tombstone enterprises. Any visitor who heard the deafening bells and saw those funeral concerns might think that people did not live in Sárszeg—they only died there."[48] When Lark leaves for a one-week visit to an uncle and aunt, her father dreams that she has been murdered; a Freudian wish-fulfillment, as Kosztolányi makes clear. The parents begin to live again and father, his tongue loosened by drink, blurts out the truth to his wife: "We don't love her. We hate her. We detest her."[49] Despite her parents' not-so-secret hopes, Lark arrives home safely, and all of them return to a living death.

Two years later, in 1926, Kosztolányi published *Édes Anna* [Anna Édes], another, and final, novel. It is the story of a conscientious maid who, for reasons she herself cannot explain, takes up a kitchen knife and murders both of her employers. It is possible that her act was the result of Freudian

repression—of cruel treatment and sexual exploitation. After a family nephew takes advantage of her, "she waited for him, for something. Perhaps a kind word or a smile or at least some request. He said nothing."[50] He forces her to have an abortion.

Kosztolányi often exchanged ideas with Sándor Ferenczi, one of Freud's disciples and the leader of the Hungarian psychoanalytic movement—and he told his wife that Freud was the greatest genius of the era. Not long before his death, however, he prepared a statement concerning the influence of psychoanalysis on literature. "We have it to thank for many valuable recognitions. But at most it could influence only the surface of my work because literary creation can draw from unconscious depths of spiritual life that psychoanalysis cannot reach."[51] In the novel, Dr. Miklós Moviszter speaks for Kosztolányi. The employers, he says, "behaved coldly toward her. They showed her no affection. They treated her heartlessly and viciously, not like a human being."[52]

In the summer of 1939, three years after Kosztolányi's death, Mann wrote to Kerényi to say that "a kind of joint undertaking on a philosophy of myth has emerged between us—in which in every particular, if not in all essentials, I am naturally the learner and winner."[53] Because of the war, their correspondence broke off for three years, though both had found safe havens: Kerényi, as we have seen, in Switzerland, and Mann in Princeton and then Pacific Palisades, a suburb of Los Angeles.

Almost as soon as Hitler had come to power, Lukács, however, had left Germany for the USSR, and soon found himself in one of the circles of the Soviet hell. On June 29, 1941, agents of the NKVD arrested and charged him with espionage. After a series of harrowing interrogations, he was able, with the aid of fellow Hungarian Communists, to gain his release—in time to be evacuated to Kazan and from there to Tashkent, where he managed to write, without having access to sources, *Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden?* [How has Germany become the center of reactionary ideology?]. He blamed Schopenhauer and, to a far lesser extent, Nietzsche, and noted with regret their "prolonged influence" on Mann.[54] In the most important section of the book, however, he pointed out that a number of well-known intellectuals had, as a result of their experience in the antifascist struggle, begun to adopt a critical attitude toward the famous philosophers—Mann being the most important.[55]

Mann celebrated his seventieth birthday on June 6, 1945, and in honor of the occasion, Lukács penned an essay entitled "Auf der Suche nach dem Bürger" [In search of the *Bürger*]. Since the Great War and the foundation of the Weimar Republic, Mann, according to Lukács, had been searching for the spirit of democracy in the mind of the German *Bürger*, and hence in his own mind. Initially under the influence of Schopenhauer's reactionary philosophy, he turned sharply against reaction in the early 1920s and lent his support to the Republic. Without parting company with *Bürgertum*, he searched for democratic potentialities in Germany's history. One could see this in *Der Zauberberg*, where he distanced himself from Naphta.[56] (Lukács was still refusing to recognize himself in that unforgettable character.)

Lukács, as we know, was right to point out that Mann sympathized with Settembrini, but he admitted that the debates between Naphta and Settembrini ended in a draw (elsewhere he conceded that Naphta won). The reason for that, he argued, could be found in Mann's *Mario und der Zauberer* [Mario and the magician],[57] where the "gentleman from Rome" refuses to obey the magician's command to dance, only to succumb after a brief resistance. As Mann pointed out, *not willing* did not leave enough room for active freedom. "The defenselessness of those German *Bürgers* who did not want Hitler but who obeyed him for over a decade without demur has never been better described," Lukács wrote in praise.[58]

Lukács's essay pleased Mann. "It was," he wrote, "a sociological-psychological presentation of my being and work that, at least in such a grand manner, I had never before received; hence my most sincere gratitude. I was equally grateful because, as a critic, he viewed my work not only from a 'historical' perspective, but in its relation to the German future." He regretted only that Lukács had avoided any mention of *Joseph und seine Brüder*. "It seems to have been a matter of totalitarian conformity and discretion: *Joseph* is 'myth,' and hence escape and counterrevolution. It is a pity."[59] In a subsequent essay, Lukács *did* write of *Joseph, der Ernährer* [Joseph the provider],[60] the fourth volume of the tetralogy, if only to praise Joseph as a revolutionary dictator, someone, he hoped readers would understand, like Stalin.

Lukács celebrated his seventieth birthday in 1955, and was honored by a Festschrift to which Mann contributed. He wished to say, he wrote, that he had high esteem for the Hungarian's work, "with which I first came into contact through his early essay collection, *Die Seele und die Formen,* a

work of extraordinary aesthetic sensitivity. I have since followed his critical undertaking with due attention and respect and very much to my own advantage. What particularly aroused my sympathy is the sense of continuity and tradition that underlies all his work and to which it largely owes its existence. For, obviously by preference, his analysis is devoted to the older body of our literary heritage with which he is as familiar as a most conservative historian and which he endeavors to relate to the new world of his convictions; while doing so, he intends to awaken the interest of this new world for the knowledge and understanding of that cultural heritage."[61]

Late in 1954, the year before he died, Mann wrote to Kerényi to say that, after *Joseph* was published, he thought that they would go their separate ways, but despite "all the differences in mode of expression, our spheres continue to meet, and what to me (and probably to you as well) may seem strange, a closeness and parallelism of interests and intellectual direction prevail—a phenomenon of committed friendship, to which, for all its being odd, we are willing to acquiesce with pleasure."[62] As these late tributes indicate, Mann and the Hungarians were aware of the debts they owed to one another and had begun to recognize that together they had written a fresh chapter in the intellectual history of twentieth-century Europe.

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NOTES

Editor's note: Lee Congdon has had a long association with our journal. His first article, "Polányi and the Treason of the Intellectuals," was published in the fall 1975 issue. Author of articles and book reviews in *HSR* over five decades, Congdon also served as an editorial adviser from 1976 to 1982.

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BOOK REVIEWS

János Bak (†) and Géza Pálffy. *Crown and Coronation in Hungary 1000–1916 A. D.*

Budapest: Research Center for the Humanities, Institute of History; Hungarian National Museum, 2020. 263 pages. Includes DVD: *A Szent Korona és koronázási kincseinek nyomában* [On the trail of the holy crown and coronation insignia of Hungary]. Documentary film. ISBN 978-9-6341-6219-3.

Not many historiographical monographs cover more than 900 years of history. This book, written and edited by the late János Bak—who taught at various institutions of higher learning in Germany and the United States, and, in the last decades of his life, at the Central European University—and by Géza Pálffy from the Institute of History (formerly of the National Academy of Sciences), gives an overview of the long, complex, and fascinating history of how Hungarian kings and queens were crowned. Coronations were complicated state and church rituals that were essential for the legitimacy and authority of the rulers, and therefore often contested. The anointing of the king since the eleventh century firmly established the Hungarian state and nation among the peoples of Western, Catholic civilization.

This is also a history that is told not only by documents, but, almost more importantly, by artifacts—the coronation insignia, of which the crown is only the most known—and, finally, by paintings and drawings, which represented the ceremony or the ruler in his or her sacral vestments and surrounded by all the signs and objects which showed his or her royal rank. The book, and the excellent one-hour documentary on the included DVD, also constitute documentation of one of the most ambitious and successful research projects in Hungarian history: the research group "Lendület"

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[Momentum], founded in 2012. Many fascinating new or missing documents and artifacts have been found in the context of this endeavor.

The monograph starts with an overview of how the person of the ruler was selected (11–46). It took centuries until the principle of primogeniture was recognized by the House of Habsburg in the sixteenth century, although this was still contested afterward, as the revolution of 1848/49, with its attempt to dethrone the Austrian Emperor, showed. This had to do, especially after the end of the dynasty established by the first King Saint Stephen (r. 1001–38), with the powerful position of Hungarian aristocratic families, who very often neutralized each other, leading to a significant number of foreign families on the throne. These included the House of Anjou in the fourteenth century (after short periods of Bohemian and Bavarian kings) and the Jagiellonian Dynasty in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (until the catastrophe of 1526). The chronic instability of the kingdom also explains why there were five different coronation sites: Esztergom (Saint Stephen, 1001); Székesfehérvár (1038–1539); Pozsony/Pressburg (now Bratislava, Slovakia) (almost 20 coronations between 1563–1830); Sopron (1625, 1681); and, finally, Buda (1830, 1867, 1916).

The two longer middle parts of the book reconstruct the "coronations through nine centuries" (47–130) and describe "signs of power and their fate" (131–226). A short summary and a very useful chronology of coronations and the "travels of the crown" follow (227–37). Finally, a select bibliography and an index of personal names rounds off this excellent short book. While the theory of the Holy Crown of Saint Stephen has been debated for centuries, the writing of the history of the coronation and the insignia of the Hungarian kingdom has finally begun.

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doi: 10.5325/hungarianstud.48.1.0125

Paul Miller and Claire Morelon, eds. *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918.*

New York: Berghahn, 2019. 366 pages. ISBN 978-1-7892-0022-5.

Embers of Empire arrives as a timely salvo in the ongoing historiographical cannonade to knock down the edifice of "1918"—that barrier year of

dichotomous befores-and-afters in European history. Acknowledging that recent decades of revisionist scholarship have given the late Habsburg Monarchy a cleaner bill of health than was long assumed, the editors pose this as their central question: If indeed the empire was not simply doomed to fall by nationalism's hand, did its "structures and the *habitus* linked to them last even beyond the collapse of the *ancien régime* in 1918" (2)? This is not in itself an original question, but the volume's twelve chapters represent a novel set of approaches to find a more durable answer. Most laudably, they are committed to a search for *concrete* imperial legacies, reflected in fresh evidence. They set aside literature and intellectual history, in which a handful of writers have played an outsized role in setting and sustaining the "Habsburg myth," for a view of how things played out on the ground, across multiple regions of the former empire (3).

The book is divided into four thematic clusters, each of which has a distinctive and cohesive feeling uncommon in collections such as this one. Part I examines the empire-to-nation-state transition from a series of high-detail zoom factors, all of which put the lie to any notion of a smooth, uniform process. In the opening chapter, Gábor Egry casts around Slovakia/Upper Hungary and Transylvania, taking soundings at the local level. He exposes the confused, adverse conditions in which municipal authorities, compelled to act in lieu of a coherent central state, often worked from pre-1918 patterns rather than revolutionary ones, or even cooperated across ethnic lines, despite antagonistic nationalizing pressures emanating from Prague or Bucharest. Clare Morelon's installment focuses solely on Prague, where, she demonstrates, the lingering material effects of the war not only muddled the formal revolution but indeed corroded its legitimacy in the streets, where militant workers rallied around Hussite symbols, Masaryk became a kind of ersatz Kaiser figure, veterans appointed themselves police, and any hint of authoritarianism was slammed as "Austrian."

The third chapter takes a biographical turn. Here, Iryna Vushko follows the career of the Polish politician Leon Biliński, from his time in the Reichsrat and turns in the imperial cabinet to his improbable postwar success. Despite the liability of his *kaisertreu* aura, Biliński proved indispensable to the young Polish republic: his ministerial résumé made him, alone, experienced enough to carry the Finance portfolio. The chapter from Marta Filipová takes on an entirely different kind of subject—the international exhibition—as a marker of continuity and change. Comparing the representation of Czechs and Slovaks at prewar exhibitions (such as the Jubilee

Exhibition of 1891 in Prague) to those after (e.g., Brno's Exhibition of Contemporary Culture in 1928), Filipová finds that the post-1918 shows placed greater emphasis on innovation and modernism—but that, in their treatment of Slovaks, Germans, and Masaryk (again, as pseudo-Kaiser), they shared many "formal and ideological" tendencies with their Habsburg-era predecessors (108).

Part II concentrates on the Habsburg military: what the numerous successor forces inherited from it—or didn't—and the divergent fate of those who served in it, above all the officer corps. Richard Bassett's chapter proffers an engrossing and learned, but ultimately impressionistic, ramble from one post-imperial country to the next, pointing out where the legacy of the *k. u. k.* army, "spiritually, mentally, and practically ill-adapted to the modern era," can be observed after 1918 and where the new armies showed themselves to be so palpably different (122). The next chapter, from Irina Marin, sketches out a preliminary prosopography of the Romanian officer elite, first as it formed under the Habsburg monarchy, then as it joined its Old Kingdom counterpart after the war. Marin posits that the merger was a complicated one, as the men who began their careers as loyal servants of a supranational dynasty had to transmogrify themselves into unhyphenated Romanians at the expense of their previous standing as members of a unique social caste. John Paul Newman investigates the congruent—and more foreboding—trajectory of former *k. u. k.* officers in Croatia who eventually joined the Ustaša. Newman locates one kernel of the movement in the pro-Habsburg, anti-Serb Frankists, who, after 1918, cast the war as a Croatian defeat and the creation of Yugoslavia as the moment Belgrade clapped a yoke on the nation, not the act of "liberation and unification" heralded in the dominant narrative.

The essays in Part III test the persistence of three "imperial pillars": the Catholic Church, the aristocracy, and the Habsburg dynasty itself. Michael Carter-Sinclair's contribution tracks the Austrian clergy's opinion of the republic, based on pastoral letters and other public expressions. What emerges is a church at least nominally receptive to the regime change—and to democracy per se—through the mid-1920s, especially while the electoral power of the Christian Socials held Red Vienna in check. However, Carter-Sinclair finds that following the burning of the Palace of Justice, the suppression of the Social Democrats, and the formation of the Ständestaat,

clerics abandoned even superficial tolerance of democracy to openly embrace authoritarianism. Konstantinos Raptis then surveys the post-1918 destinies of the members of house Harrach, one of the central noble families under the monarchy, with some cameos from Schwarzenbergs, Fürstenbergs, and others. Despite the abolition of their titles, their lowered political and social standing (no more court, no more *Hofballs*), and reduced income (higher taxes, limited land reform), the Harrachs and families like them continued to lead lordly lifestyles; it was the *next* war that proved really fatal. History was not as kind to Emperor Karl I, however, whose death is the subject of the chapter by Christopher Brennan. Trawling the Austrian press for reflections on the exiled monarch's ragged end in 1922, Brennan concludes that he was "everything to everyone," depending on ideological position—"sinner" to socialists and pan-Germans, "saint" to Catholics and loyalists, and "cipher" to the dismissive—yet claimed by none as a relevant symbol for the future (247).

The volume ventures, at last, into the realm of memory in Part IV. Christoph Mick profiles the creation of Vienna's two major public memorials to World War I: the one in the Central Cemetery, commissioned in 1924, and the better-known *Heldendenkmal* (Heroes' Monument) on the edge of the *Heldenplatz*, completed in 1934. As Mick makes clear, neither succeeded as a unifying space of Austrian national remembrance. The former, explicitly pacifist product of the socialist city council, failed to "unite the nation through suffering" (265); the latter, erected by the Austro-fascist state, conceptually ran aground on the twin shoals of explaining the war's ultimate purpose and of connecting the current regime to the old. Finally, in an appreciably ironic twist, Paul Miller delivers the last installment by surveying the place of Franz Ferdinand in Austrian memory. Spanning from the war itself to the present day, Miller's investigation uncovers an archduke whose legacy has been "bound more to the afterlife of the assassination than to [his] actual life" (290). To the extent anyone remembered him after his death, it was perhaps most consistently—albeit problematically—as the war's "first victim" (305). Capping off the volume, Pieter Judson extends a brief but pithy afterword, in which he offers the preceding essays as evidence for the strength of Habsburg continuities and for understanding the ruptures "not simply . . . in terms of nationhood and national revolutions" (322).

For scholars working in the field of late- and especially post-Habsburg history, this book will serve as a sort of conference in capsule and indeed

a model specimen thereof: the kind of gathering that inspires new ways of framing a familiar topic and, best of all, gives a dozen deeply researched demonstrations of how to put that framework to good use. It is a book the field has sorely needed, and can now claim. There is, however, one major desideratum: a greater presence of Hungary and Hungarians. While neither are totally missing—as reflected in the chapters by Egry, Bassett, and Marin—it is a pity not to have at least one further case study challenging the absoluteness of 1918 (to say nothing of 1920!) as a caesura in Hungarian historiography. This absence, plus the fact that the editors do not address it, is evidence that the Leithanian divide remains strong—to the profit of historians on neither side. Work remains to be done to prevent Hungarian history from falling into academic isolation; hopefully, this volume can point to ways of keeping it, as it were, in the neighborhood conversation.

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Jonathan Wilson. *The Names Heard Long Ago: How the Golden Age of Hungarian Soccer Shaped the Modern Game.*

New York: Bold Type Books, 2019. 400 pages. ISBN 978-1-5685-8784-4.

A well-known British sports journalist and author of several books on the history of British, Catalan, and Latin American soccer, Jonathan Wilson sets out in this book to discuss the mid-twentieth-century history of Hungarian soccer. Wilson's thesis is straightforward. He argues that the long streak of victories, culminating in the Wembley defeat of the English national team and the silver medal at the 1954 World Championship in Switzerland, that the legendary *Aranycsapat* [Golden squad] achieved between 1950–54 represented not the isolated peak of Hungarians' achievements in football (soccer) but the glorious coda to a thirty-year period when Hungarian players and coaches reinvented what they had learned from the English, to reexport their know-how to the rest of the world. An important corollary of this argument is that the Hungarian football diaspora—spreading out from Hungary during the 1920s to play for or coach various major soccer teams during the subsequent decades in Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia,

Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico—planted the seeds of a new kind of football system everywhere it went, which reshaped and turned especially Italian, Brazilian, and Argentinian football into what they became after the 1950s.

The so-called Danubian system that Hungarians exported was based on a creative reimagining of the English football that was transplanted to Hungary in the late 1880s. The new sport soon took root in Budapest and a few other cities. By 1901 there was a national league, and both the emerging Budapest football clubs and the Hungarian national side started winning games against their neighboring Austrian counterparts. According to Wilson, the Budapest *grunds* (the small empty plots between the buildings of bourgeoning Budapest) that youngsters used to play street football with a homemade ball were the settings where many talents of pre-war Hungarian football emerged. Once picked up by teams like Budapesti Torna Club [Budapest Athletic Club] (BTC), Ferencvárosi Torna Club [Ferencváros Athletic Club] (FTC), and Magyar Testgyakorlók Köre [Circle of Hungarian Fitness Activists] (MTK), they benefitted in later years from the coaching skills of English football professionals working in Budapest like John Tait Robertson and Jimmy Hogan, who prior to and during World War I taught the intricacies of the game to many of them. It was, however, only after the war, during the early 1920s that a specifically Hungarian style of playing emerged within the confines of clubs like Ferencváros and, especially, MTK. The latter was a veritable laboratory whose football products would soon be exported to the world at large.

Wilson also muses at the beginning of the book on the role that the Budapest coffeehouses had in the emergence of the Danubian football system. He describes how Hungarian football aficionados sat around tables in these places, studiously discussing games and jotting down ideas about football strategy and teams' setups, which was a practice that distinguished them from British football fans, who celebrated or mourned in pubs next to pints of beer. This more intellectual mindset about the game, which emerged in Budapest, propelled the careers of many former Hungarian players who chose later to become football coaches.

Working with both secondary and primary sources in multiple languages, Wilson was able to assemble a very rich source base to prove his points. He elucidates in telling detail, for instance, the long-term formative influence that József (Csibi) Braun, Imre Schlosser, Kálmán Konrád, Dori Kürschner,

István Tóth (Potya), Géza Kertész (Lajhár), Márton Bukovi, Béla Guttmann, Ernő Erbstein, Imre Hirschl, György Orth, Alfréd Schaffer (Spéci), and Árpád Weisz (all former MTK, Ferencváros, or Újpest FC players) had on teams that they coached in Germany, Italy, Brazil, and Argentina. For instance, after playing for MTK between 1904–13, Dori Kürschner took over the club's coaching position in 1919 from Jimmy Hogan. This allowed him, after the team's first-place finish in the Hungarian league and a spectacular 7–1 away win over Bayern Munich, to advance to a well-paid job as coach at Stuttgarter Kickers. After winning the Württemberg championship with the latter, he moved on to coach FC Nürnberg and then Bayern Munich. In 1923 he moved to Switzerland, where he coached FC Nordstern Basel and was employed as Switzerland's national coach for the 1924 Olympics in Paris. After a few stints with teams back in Germany, Kürschner became the long-term coach of Grasshoppers Zurich. During the mid-1930s, however, he moved to Brazil, where, according to Wilson, as coach of Flamengo and Botafogo he revolutionized Brazilian football by acquainting it with the W-M system, consisting of a 3–2–2–3 team set-up, with "four midfielders who form a square" (155). His compatriot, Imre Hirschl, who was at the time active as a coach in Argentina, had a similar role in the development of Argentinian football.

The author's narrative strategy from the middle to the last chapters of the book is to follow the life stories of more than a dozen Hungarian coaches, from their early successes as players and coaches at home to their engagements abroad and notable successes as managers of foreign football teams. While doing this, Wilson is embedding the stories that he tells about them in a historical context shaped by different regime changes in Hungary, the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany, World War II, and the Holocaust, as well as the postwar spread of communism to Eastern Europe, developments that were all extremely impactful on their life trajectories, since many of them were of Jewish origin or participated in the anti-fascist resistance. Thus, after more than a decade playing for and coaching various Italian teams, including Internazionale Milano and Bologna, Árpád Weisz had to leave Bologna in 1938 because of the antisemitic laws implemented in Italy and found refuge in the Netherlands. It was there that, after the occupation of the country by Nazi Germany, he lost his job with a smaller Dutch football team and was later arrested and in 1942 sent to Auschwitz, where he died two years later. Other Hungarian coaches like the former

Ferencváros players István Tóth and Géza Kertész, who also managed several Italian teams during the 1930s, spent the war years back at home in Hungary. By the time of the Arrow Cross's takeover in the fall of 1944, they were active participants in an underground resistance network, which led to their arrest and execution by the Gestapo during the siege of Budapest in the courtyard of the Buda Castle.

Unlike Weisz, Tóth, and Kertész, other Hungarian coaches like Bukovi, Guttmann, Erbstein, and Schaffer, who had also been active in Yugoslavia, Italy, and Germany during the interwar period, survived the war and the Holocaust. Schaffer, who was not Jewish and since the mid-1920s had coached Slavia Prague, FC Nürnberg, and AS Roma, had gone in 1944 to live in Munich, briefly coaching Bayern Munich, and died in mysterious circumstances on a train in August 1945. Erbstein, who had worked with many Italian teams, including Torino, in the 1930s and survived the war while working in a labor detachment and then hiding in Budapest, was able to return in 1946 to Italy and retake his former job with Torino. There he further honed the system that had enabled MTK to win several Hungarian league championships in the early 1920s, which resulted in Torino winning the Italian league. However, Erbstein's time as coach of Torino ended dramatically two years later when on return from a tournament in Portugal, he and his football team perished tragically at Superga, near Torino, in an air crash caused by bad weather.

By contrast, Erbstein's wartime hiding mate in Budapest, Béla Guttmann, went on to have a career that no other Hungarian coach was able to achieve during the postwar period. During the 1950s and 1960s, he successively coached teams such as AC Milan in Italy, São Paulo in Brazil, and Benfica Lisbon in Portugal. With the latter he won two European Cup finals, inscribing his name on the list of twentieth century's most legendary European coaches. Although due to the defeat of the 1956 Hungarian revolution many members of the *Aranycsapat* defected abroad, with Ferenc Puskás also later coaching teams in Spain and Greece, it was the influence of the interwar generation of Hungarian footballers that was the most lasting on the evolution of world's football.

What stands out overall in this narrative studded with professional successes, life tragedies, and international achievements is Wilson's ability to tell gripping stories about the great players and coaches of interwar Hungarian football to a non-specialist anglophone audience, unaware of

a number of Hungarian books and articles in sports journals that have been published since the 1960s on their lives and international careers. In addition, he relies on the interwar Hungarian sports press, memoirs published by some of the book's characters, and oral histories conducted with their descendants, including information taken from a few English-language books dealing with the topic, to weave a chronologically organized narrative of the global influence of Hungarian football. Although, for the trained eye of the historian, the text reveals a number of minor errors in the description of the broader historical context of the time, Wilson does an excellent job in retelling long forgotten, and often dramatic, stories of Hungarian football professionals' lives and achievements for a contemporary audience unaware of the interwar and immediate postwar antecedents of today's game.

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Maya Nadkarni. *Remains of Socialism: Memory and the Futures of the Past in Postsocialist Hungary.*

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In 1990, public opinion regarding Hungary's economic and political future varied among each of its citizens, but the general outlook was positive. Many Hungarians believed a new sociopolitical system, capitalism, would propel them from a socialist past into a present in which bananas, Levi's jeans, and opportunity were well within reach. However, as the 1990s marched into the first decade of the 2000s and the challenges of system change became readily apparent, many Hungarians found themselves dismayed and struggling to adapt, and some even began to long for Kádárism's stagnant stability, for the old "happy barracks" where life had restrictions but was relatively easygoing. Today, some Hungarian citizens are increasingly disillusioned by the workings of the European Union and the democratic systems it promotes and wonder how accession ever seemed so appealing before 2004, when Hungary entered the EU. Maya Nadkarni works to explain these wide-ranging feelings of distrust of and insecurity within European and domestic politics among Hungarian citizens in her work *Remains of*

Socialism while also exploring the ever-evolving mechanisms of memory in the postsocialist state.

Incorporating years of fieldwork and experience ranging over more than two decades, Nadkarni's book situates Hungary's distinctive political history in postsocialist space as she documents the ways memory and ideologies shift through time. She posits that "remains" are "both physical objects and cultural remainders" (5), which encompass a "logic that seeks to master the challenges of the present by locating them in a pathologized past" (185). Specifically, she investigates the material and other remains of Kádárism (the system of state socialist rule under János Kádár following the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, lasting until 1988) and the new ideologies that citizens, intellectuals, media outlets, cinematographers, and political actors, among others, have created in dialogue with these remains. She begins by following the displacing of Communist statues and monuments throughout Budapest after 1989 with the creation of a *szoborpark* [statue park] on the outskirts of the city.

Because the state socialist regime fell peacefully in Hungary, the cityscape was not violently altered. Instead, lifeways of the past regime were transformed and removed, if more slowly, by a budding Hungarian elite, inspired and animated by mythologies of a capitalist "West." Rejecting the forms and functions of the socialist system seemed a necessary step toward an economically integrated, prosperous future. Therefore, transforming the cityscape was a way to mark the advent of a new era where time no longer stood still, as director Péter Gothár had suggested it did in his 1982 film *Megáll az idő* [Time stands still], but where markets were allowed to alter public space, a process understood by many Hungarians as normality. Attempting to shift toward this mythology of Western normality, those who commissioned the statue park believed that by physically moving certain relics from public space, citizens would no longer be forced to confront the ideologies they represented but could, instead, either choose to confront them or not.

However, Nadkarni illustrates that ideologies are not housed in objects themselves, that material Soviet symbols carry more with them then their commissioners intended. For example, a prominent part of the pre-1989 cityscape, the towering statue of Ilya Afanasyevich Ostapenko, a Soviet hero, indexed Soviet ideology for some, but for others indexed trips away from the city, as Ostapenko's stony likeness stood on a major

road out of Budapest, waving to weekenders who left for Lake Balaton (36). Moving cultural landmarks by political decree entextualized fused cultural values as representative of a past era and foreign ideology and ultimately denied decades of Hungarian sociocultural practices any semblance of modernity by denying them a place in the present nation-state of Hungary.

In the 1990s, memories of the 1980s were rhetorically turned to detritus, and political actors sought opportunity to fill the figurative hole in Hungary's national narrative. Building upon works by Susan Gal and Katherine Verdery, Nadkarni often highlights the fact that the ideology of Kádárism discouraged citizen participation in politics, drawing a false but seemingly stark line between categories of public and private. Likely because social worlds cannot be removed as material objects can be, the Fidesz party (acronym for Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége [Federation of Young Democrats]), by then having appended "Hungarian Civic Party" to its name, made turning socialist subjects to citizens part of its ongoing campaign strategy before and during its stint in power from 1998–2002. As Hungary's revolution in 1989 was a famously "silent" one, Fidesz worked to write a new narrative and conjured memories of 1956 when for twelve days Hungarians violently revolted against Soviet leadership. In other words, Fidesz created a nationalist discourse that aimed to leave out decades of socialist rule and Hungarian lifeways. However, the new narrative of the 1956 revolution failed to inspire renewed vigor in citizens and instead served to highlight the inherent contradiction and ambiguity in individuals, relegating their recent past to alterity. Many saw the hopes of the 1956 revolution unfulfilled as it had led to decades lived under socialism, decades that could not simply fade from view without consequence or recourse. Nadkarni posits that these feelings of contradiction, sparked by its own rhetoric, contributed greatly to Fidesz's election loss in 2002.

While political actors spoke ill of Kádárism in the early 2000s, material nostalgia swept the public. Remains were monetarized and sold, valuable not necessarily for their material function or taste, as in the case of *Bambi* soda, but rather because marketing soda as nostalgic felt innocent of politics. In cursing the socialist system, political actors and citizens had robbed themselves of a cultural heritage, and these seemingly non-political items offered guiltless revival. Nostalgia for certain food and drink was

representative of "the refusal of politics" (99), despite the fact that "retreat from public participation into the private realm of action was the condition of political subjectivity under late socialism" (92). Nostalgia also stood in contrast to Fidesz's rewriting of history as expressed in the creation of Budapest's House of Terror: a "museum" that encourages fantasies of national victimhood and casts totalitarian villains leering over the Hungarian state as agentive, rather than encouraging citizens to realize the state's own agency in sordid past political actions and systems. As Nadkarni points out, the refusal of chronological order in its exhibits is a crucial tactic in this ideological reorganization. In promoting such discourse and in harnessing the "indexical authority" of the building in which it exists, where secret police once regularly tortured citizens, Fidesz cast a past era as a clear and present danger, an enemy that must be continually fought (129).

The early 2000s also brought certain legal changes that allowed for the viewing of previously confidential records. As a result, respected, revered public figures and their family members were gradually named as former *besúgók* [informers] and sometimes as agents. Some of these old informers were still in power, like the Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy (in office 2002–04), whose affair did not encourage nostalgia writ large. Among intellectuals, a discussion raged as to the ownership of the past amid continuous sordid revelations concerning the private lives of public individuals and of a secretly-recorded 2006 speech by Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány (2004–09) in which he admitted to continually lying to Hungarian citizens. Nadkarni believes that amid the subsequent protests a traumatized discourse emerged, nursing worry that there was no longer a social normality to aspire to, leaving Hungarians to mourn the loss of a future that never was, and sowing even more distrust and discord (171–81). Today, the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán, and his Fidesz party still sow the seeds of public distrust and discontent via their continual creation of remains, destructive specters of the past that overemphasize and entextualize history as they turn select public actors, objects, and lifeways into foreign public enemies.

Overall, Nadkarni's book exhibits a deep understanding of the post-1989 socioeconomic period in Hungary and the effect it had on its citizens' formation of budding political ideologies. It is packed with detailed analysis that comprises an impressive study of the shifting ideologies of memory and paints a bleak view of the future of Hungarian democracy. However, although the work is undoubtedly contemporary, it is already dated by

its own standards, as most of the data was collected in and even before 2006. Because the author is so efficient at displaying how quickly discourse changes ideologies and collective memory, one cannot help but wonder how much the ideologies of remains have changed since 2006, especially in a post-2010 world where Fidesz has had such prominent control over the majority of the state's media. That said, she makes quite a few minor arguments worthy of more scholarly investigation. For instance, she notes in early chapters that many citizens felt rather content living under Kádárism and that this broad-ranging complacency with a socialist system was more of a threat to the emerging capitalist system than anything else (33). She does not fully explore this wide-ranging contentedness. Is this because she did not encounter its discourse? And if this is the case, where does the evidence of complacency exist? In addition, she often mentions the importance of recognizing complexity and contradiction in memory studies, along with evidence that "personal experience" (66) among her interlocutors drives their creations of meaning, but never fully explores these astute observations. Still, Nadkarni's book is an essential read for anyone interested in the anthropology of memory or twenty-first-century Hungary. It brings much to the table for discussion.

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Heino Nyyssönen. *A demokrácia lebontása Magyarországon* [The dismantling of democracy in Hungary].

Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2019. 198 pages. ISBN 978-9-6333-8436-7.

Most scholarly accounts of the "System of National Cooperation" built since 2010 in Hungary by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán tend to focus on three partially overlapping levels: legal, economic, and geopolitical. Through the fast-track approval of a new Constitutional Charter, imposed by a two-thirds parliamentary majority in 2011 without the consent of the political opposition, the Orbán government has started to implement a legal appropriation responsible, according to critics, for the emptying of the rule of law or, according to a less radical interpretation, for the transformation of the rule of law into the "rule by law" typical of authoritarian constitutional regimes.

Several years ago, Ágnes Bátory described post-2010 Hungary as a "gray area suspended between liberal democracy and full authoritarianism," while Béla Greskovits described the painful stations of Hungarian "democratic backsliding" compared to other Central European states. Others theorized the adoption for Hungary of a "guided-democracy" political framework á la Putin's Russia. Following the self-definition provided by Orbán himself in 2014, scholars of the populist phenomenon analyzed the transformation of the country into a "laboratory of illiberal democracy." András Bozóki and Daniel Hegedüs have defined Orbán's system as a "hybrid" subject, suspended between democracy and full-fledged authoritarianism and at least partly mitigated in its radicalization drive by external factors, such as EU and NATO membership. The conservative doyen of Hungarian political scientists, András Körösényi, who previously defined the Orbán government as a "regime" inextricably tied to the figure of the founding leader and therefore incapable of evolving into a "system," in his latest book takes up Weberian sociology to describe Orbán's system as a "plebiscitary leader democracy," a regime whose authoritarian elements are produced by an endogenous push to harness the mechanisms of modern mass democracy. After much reluctance, the conservative Körösényi has finally adhered to the anti-exceptional thesis, according to which Hungarian "plebiscitary" democracy based on the undisputed authority of the leader fits into a transnational tendency of manipulation of democratic mechanisms. Hungary then becomes a laboratory for global trends such as the extreme personalization of policy, the emergence of populist governance models ("pragmatic populism"), and the vanishing of the liberal-democratic order in the age of "post-truth."

Heino Nyyssönen's book is part of the more general scholarly attempt to measure the emergence, the internal mechanisms, and the future perspectives of Viktor Orbán's Hungary against Western democratic standards. The author is a professor of political science at the University of Turku and has been acquainted with Hungarian affairs since the mid-1980s, when he first visited the country on the eve of the transition from one-party system to Western-type liberal democracy. Although recollections, emotions, and personal feelings can be spotted throughout the two-hundred-page book, Nyyssönen's ambition is to provide a scholarly account of Hungary's democratic backsliding under Orbán by contributing an external (Finnish), albeit empathic, perspective to the global debate over why and how apparently consolidated democracies die.

The book is divided into six large thematic chapters, covering the evolution of the Hungarian political system from 2010 onward (chapter 1), the politics of memory and the political instrumentalization of history (chapter 2, by far the best one), foreign and regional policy (chapter 3), economic life and the institutionalized corruption (chapter 4), the media system and the use of state propaganda (chapter 5), and the future perspectives of the Orbán system after the 2018 general elections (chapter 6, the author's closing remarks). To build up his argument, Nyyssönen utilizes extensive bibliographic research. Although archival evidence from the last thirty years still remains largely inaccessible, the book relies on a wide range of published sources: parliamentary minutes, newspapers and periodicals, and Hungarian and international secondary literature. However, what the reader gets is neither a comprehensive historical account based on systematic research, for Nyyssönen chooses not to follow a chronological order of events, nor a political-science analysis of how the system actually works. Unfortunately, no background conversations or formally recorded interviews have been used, and press coverage is restricted to print editions: quite a tight self-limitation in a country where print media have been experiencing a fast and early decline to the benefit of online outlets. The book is rather a fuzzy combination of historical- and political-theory approaches, which makes it pleasantly legible but generates serious shortcomings.

Nyyssönen's book is about power (13–16)—or rather about the systematic abuse of power perpetrated by the political system of Prime Minister Orbán in the name of the nation. This long-term backsliding has placed Hungary into the unenviable position of being the first member of the European Union to be downgraded by Freedom House to "partly free" and "semi-consolidated democracy" status. Although the book is not a biography of Viktor Orbán, the author identifies the main source of the phenomenon in Orbán's Machiavellian personality: he is a cleverly maverick adept of *Machtpolitik* who has taken advantage of the structural and contingent shortcomings of post-1989 Hungarian democracy to get rid of it and build up his own power system. The author makes extensive use of the global literature of democratic backsliding and neo-authoritarian regimes, but often underestimates and misinterprets the recent history of Hungary. The most striking example is the political, social, and democratic crisis of confidence following the September–October 2006 events. It is described (36–37) as solely the consequence of the nationalist riots sparked by the

far right and secretly supported by Orbán's Fidesz party. Here the author seems to follow the reductive narrative of the Hungarian liberal left on the long-lasting crisis of the postcommunist Hungarian democracy.

Nyyssönen puts the blame on one political side and its main actors, failing to explain the worsening economic situation since 2003–04, compared to the rest of the region. Nor does he acknowledge the harsh fiscal consolidation implemented by Hungarian Socialist Party Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány after winning the 2006 elections on an entirely different set of promises. The left-liberal parliamentary majority between 2002 and 2010 was no mere bystander or innocent witness to the decline of the Hungarian political culture. As the governing force for almost a decade, it bears serious and concrete responsibility in propelling the events that led to the subsequent unmaking of postcommunist democracy. Critical literature on the economic and social policies of the pre-2010 decade is scanted here; he ignores relevant contributions from authors like József Böröcz, Zoltán Pogátsa, Péter Róna, and Gábor Scheiring, while his exposition of the manifold reasons for the rise of the far-right party Jobbik would have benefitted from the use of new field research (such as that by Dániel Róna).

Other major inaccuracies occur in the chapter covering foreign and regional policy. I was surprised to read that Prime Minister József Antall's famous remark about being spiritually responsible for "15 million Hungarians" triggered territorial revisionism and nationalism all around the region (102). Whatever our opinion of Antall's performance might be, one must admit on the basis of archival evidence that in his capacity as a statesman Antall never made any attempts at border revision. This is even more remarkable as radical conservative circles within his own party had tried to push him to take advantage of the dissolution of multiethnic states bordering Hungary to regain Ukrainian Subcarpathia or parts of Serbian Vojvodina. This and several other interpretative errors could have been avoided by using international and domestic literature on kin-state policies. There is a huge expertise on this topic gathered around Attila Z. Papp, Nándor Bárdi, and the staff of the Institute for Minority Studies, formerly placed under the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Unfortunately, these international-level contributions have been overlooked, to the detriment of the quality of the analysis on key issues like policy vis-á-vis neighboring countries or the relation to global capitalism and Western investors.

The closing remarks are among the most interesting of the book. Although Nyyssönen does not identify himself with this radical standpoint, he quotes Hungarian-born sociologist Frank Füredi and his fierce criticism of "postcolonial" EU conditionality on Eastern European states (169). Unsurprisingly, this theoretically crafted EU-critical perspective was taken up by young right-wing intellectuals and Fidesz ideologists like Márton Békés and Áron Czopf to legitimize the intellectual rebellion against the paradigm of "Europeanization" imposed on EU peripheries. A few lines below, the author echoes the complaint made by Polish historian Jan Zielonka that triumphant liberals after 1989 did not bother to defend their own democratic achievements and thus condemned themselves to fell victim to the cultural "counterrevolution" of globally spreading illiberalism. And according to Nyyssönen (170–71), the case of Hungary bears analyzing because of its prescience, both in 1989 and in 2010, setting general trends from the internal periphery of the European continent. This could be a good starting point for a comparative discussion of postcommunist trajectories in Central and Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, the analysis of the Hungarian deviation from the democratic path remains anchored to the barely hidden patronizing attitude of a Finnish scholar explaining to his Hungarian fellows what democracy should look like. Nyyssönen's book depicts the discursive struggle between the nationalist, narrow-minded "Hungarian Europe" of Viktor Orbán and the irenic "European Hungary" that shall sooner or later replace it. This is beautiful rhetorical artifice indeed, but it does not hold the strong explanatory capacity we might expect from a book claiming to tell us how democracy could have been destroyed from within and with significant mass consent.

Stefano Bottoni, University of Florence, Italy
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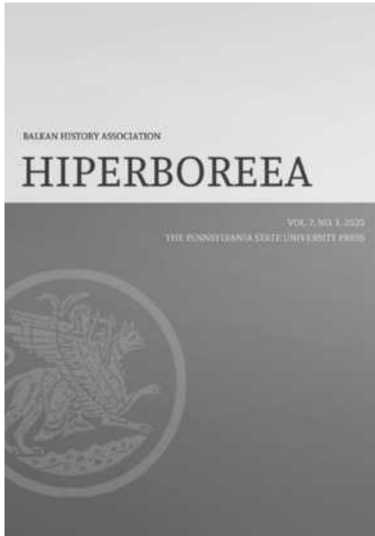

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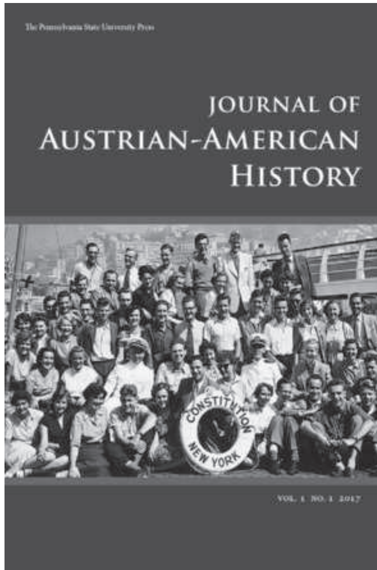

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