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Historical Traumas in Post-War Hungary: Legacies and Representations of Genocide and Dictatorship

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Discursive (De)Constructions of the Depoliticized Private Sphere in *The Resolution* and *Balaton Retro*

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In this article I examine Gyula Gazdag and Judit Ember's documentary *The Resolution* [*A határozat*, 1972] and Gábor Zsigmond Papp's *Balaton Retro* [*Balaton retró*, 2007] as examples of the discursive production of paradoxes permeating the consolidated Kádár regime. I present the first film, portraying the character assassination of József Ferenczi (the executive manager of the Felcsút cooperative farm in the early 1970s) as a case study of state socialist technologies of power and strategies of constructing the narrative of the immoral and profiteering leader type, the corrupted servant of the community. This fabricated narrative is actually contested by members of the cooperative farm for whom Ferenczi is a symbol of the reform spirit and the promise of prosperity. I argue that the critical power of the film resides both in its meticulous dissection of the discursive and administrative methods used to create enemy images and its reluctance to present a local example of vilification as a general feature of the state socialist episteme. *The Resolution* presents the consolidated Kádár regime as an establishment torn between rigid ideological foundations and society's desire for a depoliticised market economy, suffering from the political pressure to remain true to the spirit of communism and the social pressure to allow a greater degree of economic liberalism.

In *Balaton Retro* the popular tourist destination, Lake Balaton, is constructed as a spatial metaphor of both the crisis of the authoritarian system and of Goulash Communism (the name given to the system in Hungary, which constituted a quiet deviation from orthodox doctrines of Marxism-Leninism). The popular notion of the lake as the Hungarian Riviera came into being at the intersection of eastern and western understandings of welfare: on the one hand, the welfare state providing workers cheap holiday opportunities through a network of state-run holiday apartments and camps for children, and on the other, individual welfare, the possessors of which (usually citizens of Western Europe) sought leisure in modern luxury hotels. The emergence of private houses available for well-salaried Hungarian customers was another sign of the many dualities and hybrid meanings uncovered by Papp's film as symptoms of the general state of the nation during the Kádár era. My analysis of the agency of the voiceover narration will reveal that *Balaton Retro* is not a manifestation of Ostalgie, but a critical meta-commentary on nostalgic memory. To conclude, I will describe retro as the commodification of a material past and nostalgia as a somewhat sinister legacy of state socialist identity politics.

Keywords: Kádár era, Goulash Communism, cinema, representations of communism, retro, post-communist nostalgia, documentaries

Introduction

Meditating on the nature of commemorations of the 1956 October events, Béla Pomogáts observed that the impassioned anniversary speeches, the lofty rhetoric, the lavish settings, and extravagant bouquets fail to address the moral heritage and teachings of the revolution: "The cult takes the form of heightened celebration, yet the ceremonies are almost exclusively governed by political interests…politics which, most of the time, is clearly party politics."[1] A decade later and in the wake of the 60th anniversary commemorations, this observation is still relevant; the quiet erosion of the revolutionary heritage and commitment to values such as solidarity, dignity, and national consensus continues. Pomogáts was only one of the many survivors, artists, and scholars who warned that the continued exploitation of the legacy to legitimize specific political ends seriously undermined the unique historical status of 1956 in cultural memory and turned it into a historical commodity put into the service of the political elite's power struggle. The same applies to the Kádár regime, the haunting legacy of which remains unprocessed and insufficiently interrogated. In his acceptance speech at the 2004 Frankfurt book fair for a literary peace prize, Péter Esterházy noted that the shared European duty to problematize national burdens and address the past with honesty is overshadowed by amnesia in Hungary (and in other Eastern European countries), where the open-endedness of the memory-work and the tiresome communal effort to overcome national traumas has discouraged people from undertaking such a task and undermined their willingness to take responsibility for the past.[2]

The corrupted political culture of today and the "war of memory" surrounding events of the recent past vastly contributed to the lack of communal support for any confrontation with historical traumas, but they also proved that the retrospective production and frequent reconsideration of the past is an essential feature of political regimes lacking legitimacy and popular support. As is the case elsewhere in the region, Hungarian scholars have felt both the increasing political pressure and the popular demand for a consumable historical narrative that would relieve people of the toil of having to work through the past. This demand would sound cynical had historiography been a purely objective, empirical, and positivist academic discourse. However, as Zsolt K. Horváth

1 Pomogáts, "1956 (eltékozolt) erkölcsi öröksége," 50. This and all further quotes from Hungarian sources are my translation.

2 Esterházy, "Frankfurti könyvvásár 2004 – Esterházy Péter béke díja." *Élet és Irodalom* 48, no. 42 (2004).

notes, the historical discipline is also "a social praxis and as such, the knowledge it generates—given the primal role connectivity of memory plays in processes of identity-formation—is intimately linked to power elites."[3] In some cases historiography was mobilized as an auxiliary force of mundane political aims, yet the majority of the scholarly community insisted on professional standards and accountability while exploring new research methods and integrating new areas of archival research.

Historians and the various critical narratives they have offered of the state socialist period could not be expected to serve as an adequate substitute for communal confrontation with the legacy of this period. However, the meticulous exploration of the characteristic features of this legacy have made historians increasingly reliant on the audiovisual medium. Réka Sárközy's monograph *Elbeszélt múltjaink: a magyar történelmi dokumentumfilm útja* [Our narrated pasts: The paths of Hungarian historical documentaries], for instance, offers a concise introduction to the generic development, politics, and poetics of historical documentaries, including a comprehensive analysis of films from the 1950s to the present. The chapters dedicated to documentaries of the 1980s,[4] which Sárközy describes as films of "a useable past which perceive the cinematic medium as an instrument with which to change the present,"[5] are the most relevant to my discussion here. As Sárközy asserts,

> addressing varied topics and allowing for multiple points of view, the documentaries hope to confront a society—which was a passive collaborator in state offences—with its past and invite people to examine their parts in this(…) the artistic, scientific, and political stake of these films was to reinterpret archives, cleanse them of political influences, and uncover an interpretation which allows the past to be used by progressive practices of the present.[6]

3 Horváth, "A valóság metapolitikája," 275.

4 These include Sándor Sára's *Chronicle* (1982), Judit Ember's *Pócspetri* (1983), *Right of Asylum* (1988), Gyula Gulyás' and János Gyula's *I was too at Isonzo* (1982) and *Without Breaking the Law* (1987), Lívia Gyarmathy's *Cohabitation* (1983), Gyarmathy's and Géza Böszörményi's *György Faludy, poet* (1988) and *The Story of a Secret Concentration Camp in Communist Hungary. Recsk 1950–1953* (1989), Gyula Gazdag's *The Banquet* (1979) and *Package Tour* (1984), and Pál Schiffer's and Bálint Magyar's *On the Danube* (1987).

5 Sárközy, *Elbeszélt múltjaink*, 154–55.

6 Ibid., 155.

As the above passage suggests, and as I have argued elsewhere,[7] filmmakers contested the corrupting mechanisms of amnesia and appealed to the therapeutic function of collective memory-work. Oral history became a discourse which both revealed the fabrications of official memory politics and supported the empowerment of collective identity through the shared task of coming to terms with the past. Post-socialist historians shared the conviction of documentary filmmakers that narratives of the recent history could raise awareness of the mechanics of power, stereotyping, stigmatization, and the formation of social hegemonies in the present. They believed historical research should catalyze public discussion and self-critical reexaminations of the past by deciphering paradoxes and the dark legacy of state socialism, which hindered the development of civic attitudes and created hypocritical imaginations of national identity. The political appeal of such critical dialogue often proved counterproductive among the general public, which demanded depoliticized narratives allowing for strong affective investments. Svetlana Boym's assertion concerning the post-Soviet situation offers an apt characterization of Hungarian developments:

> glasnost intellectuals themselves, with their sense of moral responsibility and passionate earnestness, have become a forgotten tribe and fallen out of fashion… The collective trauma of the past was hardly acknowledged; or if it was, everyone was seen as an innocent victim or a cog in the system only following orders. The campaign for recovery of memory gave way to a new longing for the imaginary ahistorical past, the age of stability and normalcy.[8]

Social memory sought relief in the past of the private sphere detached from "ambivalence, the complexity of history and the specificity of modern circumstances,"[9] the sphere Boym describes as the homeland of restorative nostalgia: "a return to the original stasis, to the prelapsarian moment."[10]

Nostalgia's invention of prelapsarian and authentic communism and the advent of the retro-industry also increased the demand for images of the quotidian aspects of "really existing socialism" and led to the visual commodification of the past. Whereas the historian always considers the constructive relationship

7 See Zsolt Győri. "Discourse, power and resistance in sociographic documentaries of the late Kádár-era," *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* 5, no. 2 (2014): 103–23.

8 Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 58.

9 Ibid. 43.

10 Ibid., 49.

between filmmaker and filmed reality and, in effect, presumes that "the (historical) document is not reality, but a linguistic representation that ascribes to it a specific value-structure and power status,"[11] retro memory does not necessarily make this distinction and promotes non-ideological identification with both the repackaged material heritage and previous social and cultural rites. As Elizabeth E. Guffey claims, "retro offers an interpretation of history that taps nostalgia and an undercurrent of ironic understanding. Steeped in satire and humor, retro's revivalist imagery has made its way into the mainstream, shaping how the recent past is presented."[12] As the newly emerging consumer society sought to fight its battle with forgetting in the realms of popular culture, the seriousness of memory was overtaken by the new fashion for amusing historical spectacle.

This article explores the discursive binary of the state-socialist legacy (which crystalizes in the critical-reflexive and the nostalgic-retro approaches) with reference to Gyula Gazdag's and Judit Ember's *The Resolution* and Gábor Zsigmond Papp's *Balaton Retro*. Relying on Maya Nadkarni's arguments concerning the makeup of post-socialist nostalgia, I contend that this memory genre is symptomatic of how citizens and social groups perceive the political sphere and the politicization of the public sphere. According to Nadkarni, retro nostalgia "challenged current regimes of value in post-socialism by finding worth in the cultural detritus of a past once reviled as inauthentic."[13] Thus, it sought to return to an apolitical quotidian world of innocence and stability "where the sharp divide between the private domestic sphere and the public world of political action was the very condition of political subjectivity."[14] Retreat from political activity as a way to maintain one's personal integrity became the norm and added to the collective sense of identity during the Kádár era. According to Nadkarni, this withdrawal from the public sphere, coupled with fantasies of consumer plentitude, Western wages, and Western lifestyles (constituents of an imaginary elsewhere that promised a return to normalcy), was a symptom of an infantilized citizenry and a society that gradually conformed to being treated as a group of children by a paternalistic-patronizing political elite. Infantilization was a political strategy, while the anti-political attitude citizens were encouraged to cultivate was less an authentic expression of resistance than it was the

11 Horváth, "A valóság metapolitikája," 283.

12 Guffey, *Retro*, 27.

13 Nadkarni, *Nostalgia*, 192.

14 Ibid.

premeditated space of neutralized resistance. The regime change, in this narrative, marked the moment of "a collective coming-of-age, in which the demise of paternal authority brought about a painful but necessary loss of innocence,"[15] while the historical emotion of nostalgia released in the wake of this identity crisis expressed the desire for the insular private realm. There was mounting disappointment in and disapproval of the new political elite, which was blamed for the emerging economic-moral instability, and with large segments of society embracing anti-politics as resistance, the post-socialist citizenry was recaptured by the infantile subject position of imaginary independence constructed during the previous era.

Gyula Gazdag's and Judit Ember's *The Resolution* (made in 1972, censored until 1984, and made available for general audiences only after 1989) is a vivid illustration of the overpoliticised and corrupt public sphere from which there is no retreat apart from illusionary detachment. Having been judged unsuitable for public release and thus doomed to oblivion, the film offers expressive evidence of its non-agreement with official notions of social purposiveness. In order to safeguard the corrupted public sphere, the censors had no choice but to ban the film, which, instead of celebrating the regime, debunked its methods of infantalizing citizens and groups. *The Resolution* shared the ethical mission of sociographic documentaries described by Horváth as the liberation of reality from rigid ideological discourse.[16] It achieved this aim through a method Ferenc Hammer characterises as follows: "[t]he political nature of exploring reality is brought to the surface by the objective gaze of the camera, which unveils the lies of the everyday routine and the oppressive apparatuses of interests."[17] The objective gaze of the camera as a promise to portray actual events and characters (Realism), observe characters and capture the normal, non-artificially dramatized tempo of life (situational filming), and use film as a methodologically solid description of the social sphere (Positivism) is expressive of the proactive attitude adopted by Gazdag and Ember in their film. The historical narrative presented in *The Resolution* bears witness to both history-from-below and the drama-of-lived-reality as it strives to capture how "reality 'performs' and reveals itself with its own resources and ordinary dynamics."[18] More importantly from the perspective of the present discussion, while presenting the battle of an

15 Ibid., 199.

16 Horváth, "A valóság metapolitikája," 282–83.

17 Hammer, "A megismerés szerkezetei," 265.

18 N.a., "Társadalmi folyamatok," 21.

agricultural cooperative president with demagogic bureaucrats who want to expel him publicly, the film reveals the paternalistic practices of forcing rigid political categories and narratives onto the private sphere. As historical meta-commentary, *The Resolution* documents how the Kádár regime, in its efforts to eradicate the private sphere and nationalize society, was driven not by the grandiose historical mission of communism, but by the pressure to conceal its own legitimacy crisis. I argue that the film renders legible these acts of concealment by capturing the private moments of the regime's bureaucrats and exposing their political fanaticism. As Ember noted, "filmmakers capable of seizing the human face and gestures in the very moment when they look and sound dishonest are filmmakers with a mission."[19] My analysis situates *The Resolution* in the context of existing historical research and treats it as an authentic account of how the consolidated Kádár regime sought to secure social support for its weakened ideological foundations and struggled with demons of its own.

Gábor Zsigmond Papp is a key Hungarian representative of the "freelance historian" who emerged "outside the mainstream of artistic and historical thought. This dynamic and ever-changing group of artists, architects, designers, and writers revisit the past not as scholars but as non-professional historians. Their memorialization of the recent past emerges not through traditional historical research but through the identification and acquisition of objects from the recent past, as well as the replication of its images and styles."[20] *Balaton Retro* recycles images, sounds, and didactic voiceover commentaries into a collage that transforms the geographical location of Hungary's largest holiday resort into the cultural space of popular imaginations and emotional and intellectual investments. Archival footage of Lake Balaton could have been easily used as a warehouse for restorative nostalgia, yet Papp, I contend, employs this footage as an assortment of documents of the imaginary anti-political subjectivity and childlike citizenry discussed by Nadkarni of a society willing to enjoy the dream projected by Goulash Communism. The parallels drawn in the film between Lake Balaton as the grand jewel of post-socialist nostalgia and the chief symbol of Goulash Communism allows me to further investigate the paradoxes of the private sphere as an illusionary site of detachment from politics. I conclude by proposing a direct link between the identity politics of retreat and the contemporary expansion of political populism.

19 Tarr, "Beszélgetés Ember Judittal," 73.

20 Guffey, *Retro*, 26.

In principle, this article investigates the failure to establish privacy as a position of authentic political resistance under state-socialism and analyses two films as exemplary narratives of this continuous failure, the legacy of which continues to haunt present-day political habitus in Hungary.

The Resolution: the (Failure of the) Discursive Construction of the Corrupt Farm President[21]

Beginning in the mid-1960s, the Kádár regime eased political control over various sectors of society and introduced a new model which, according to Tibor Valuch,

> was styled 'loosening and opening'–a gradual loosening from the fetters of dogmatically interpreted Marxist socialist ideology and from the country's isolation from the wider cultural and scientific world, and an opening up to new intellectual ideas and approaches, to the mass media and, later on, information technologies that were increasingly shaping everyday lives, to new trends in the arts, and to the new findings that scientific and scholarly work was throwing up.[22]

A key element of the regime's consolidation was the reforms introduced in the economic sector; the 1968 initiation of the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) had a significant impact on agricultural policies, most notably on cooperative farms: newly established auxiliary branches increased the volume of investment for non-farm products and better capacity utilization rates increased profitability and strengthened labor-intensive units. These pragmatic measures were initiated to increase productivity levels and reduce the country's reliance on the import of agricultural goods. However, as Zsuzsanna Varga points out, they led to serious conflicts between trade pressure groups represented in both national and local bodies of the party apparatus. The strongest of these pressure groups campaigned for industrial workers and, having successfully claimed their primary role in socialist industrialization, overcame the arguments of agricultural interest groups. Their victory set off a retaliatory offensive and a wave of show-trials against more than a thousand cooperative presidents,[23] legal procedures

21 An earlier version of this segment was published as part of a chapter in the Hungarian volume *Tér, hatalom és identitás.*

22 Valuch, "A Cultural and Social History of Hungary," 250–51.

23 Varga, "Miért bűn a sikeresség?" 600–02.

to which Árpád Pünkösti referred as early as 1985 as witch hunts.[24] Since "the single party system did not allow for the direct clash of interests,"[25] and because these conflicts were hard to resolve on economic grounds, representatives of the heavy industry interest group choose to fight the battle on ideological grounds. Varga's research is founded on records of central administration which make frequent references to social interests, the supremacy of state ownership over cooperative ownership, and ideological arguments proposed by heavy industry delegates who deemed higher wages for agricultural workers unacceptable and warned of the dangers of labor migration from the cities to the countryside.[26] Fears of intensifying social conflicts strengthened the anti-reform group led by Béla Biszku and urged the government to undermine the liberalization process initiated by the reform-communist wing of the party.

The correspondence between the termination of the NEM and the witch hunts targeting farm presidents serves as the historical context of the events depicted in *The Resolution*. The film refers to its historical period by (re) constructing the hermeneutical context in which the ideological fabrication of the immoral, egoistic, and criminal-minded president of the Felcsút New Life Cooperative Farm takes place. Focusing on the conceptual and discursive construction at work in the character assassination of József Ferenczi in a show trial, *The Resolution* is a meta-discursive document of the post-NEM years. Gazdag and Ember do not tell the story of how local party apparatchiks in collaboration with members of the cooperative farms manage to overthrow a corrupt leader. On the contrary, they document how cooperative democracy is violently curtailed and how attempts to replace Ferenczi fail as cooperative members stand beside their falsely accused president. The meta-discursive quality of the film is established by its makers' strategy of pointing out the inconsistencies between the discursive production of the public sphere and the corresponding politicization and denial of the private.

Two informal conversations recorded at the local party bureau frame the film. Although these dramatic reenactments of rare intimate moments cannot be regarded as "objective" documents, they are documents of the "authenticity" of privacy, and they aptly illustrate how the private sphere was politicized. With the introduction of bureaucratic types whose gestures and oratorical performances

24 Pünkösdi originally published his article in the 1985 August issue of the journal *Új Tükör*. It was republished as part of his monograph referenced here: Pünkösti, *Kiválasztottak*, 328.

25 Varga, "Miért bűn a sikeresség?," 602.

26 Ibid., 603–04.

are farcical, viewers are admitted into the formalities and rituals of decision-making, or, in this case, the mechanics of constructing images of the enemy. These scenes capture the mood in which political conspiracies take root and an ideologically partial and deceitful public sphere is discursively fabricated. "The decision is already made, our main concern is its implementation" (06:38–06:41) rings like the thesis statement of any show-trial. The implementation is problematic, since Ferenczi is willing to resign only if his personal reputation is not compromised and he will not have to face further consequences for offences he never committed. This is not an option for the local party representatives, who wish to condemn Ferenczi publicly for moral and financial damages. It is essential that the concept of the corrupt farm president combine criminal, immoral, and anti-social aspects, since these aspects amplify the threat he poses to the community and, furthermore, legitimize both the complex network of state institutions that safeguard socialist morality and the harsh methods used to discipline opportunistic enemies of the system. Gyula Estélyi, the leader of the conversation and chief secretary of the local party committee, clarifies what implementation means in this case: on the one hand, the conceptualization of the corrupt farm president and, on the other, arranging public meetings where this concept will be tested, disseminated, and approved by members of the cooperative. As a dramatic finale of the character assassination, the general assembly will grant public support for the practices of intimidation, and it will force Ferenczi to resign by taking a democratic vote.

As the film testifies, Estélyi and his associate functionaries are ready to enforce the decision and fight their battle on more than one front. They consider the possibility of general support for the president, and although the possible resistance of the coop members is referred to as a potential hindrance, they agree that a direct democratic mechanism must be ensured: "the party makes suggestions, makes an assessment, tries to help, but if people do not need this help, they have the right of veto, the right to a secret ballot, the right to raise a hand" (14:16–14:32). After this cynical and paternalist demonstration of his commitment to participatory democracy, he urges the comrades to act upon the people's communist consciousness and remind them of their responsibility to advance socialism. In other words, Estélyi wishes to solicit support for his claims not by making an appeal to the self-conscious proletarian, but by reminding people of the ideals they should follow in individual decisions and private conduct. This appeal to hypocritical behavior is a symptom of the public sphere's artificial authenticity, and it is expressive of an expectation according to

which ideologically correct thoughts, feelings, and attitudes must reign over the private sphere. In addition, certain strategies of intimidation are also proposed, as Estélyi requests that his comrades emphasize at future meetings the long-term negative consequences for cooperative members should they continue to support Ferenczi. In another cynical gesture, he contemplates how members will learn from their mistakes before they comprehend the benefits of cooperative democracy. Hence, the retaliatory-disciplinary logic is extended and the whole collective will suffer for its deviation from the ideologically correct path. The concept of the corrupt president is supplemented with the concept of the corrupted community, both of which have, according to the official discourse, violated the practice of peaceful socialist coexistence.

The main body of *The Resolution* covers the "implementation" phase of the decision, in other words, the practical application of the discriminative concept. At the board meeting of the farm, the head of the district bureau (the supervisory board of the cooperative) claims that Ferenczi has lost political support. He proposes his removal and requests all participants to toe the party line. To emphasize the legitimacy of this paternalist request, general charges are listed, including the employment of an ex-convict associated with prostitution, undermining the reputation of the village, wasting the assets of the cooperative, increasing the budget for entertainment costs, and the private use of the company car.[27] Apart from the indisputable proof of the first charge, all additional accusations are declared false by Ferenczi, whom we see for the first time in the film and whose emotionally upset yet logical speech gives an itemized reply to the complaints: the pimp, a certain Fischer, was hired by comrade Szűcs, one of his present accusers; during his presidency, the cooperative became more productive and provided higher living-standards for residents; entertainment costs are negligible in view of total operational costs; no illegal payment or car-use took place; and the local party bureau had fully supported him until its recent turnaround.[28] Ferenczi's methodical invalidation of the charges brought against

27 The interview-based research of Pünkösti revealed very similar charges and procedures against presidents all over Hungary. (Pünkösti, *Kiválasztottak*, 325–86.) Even employees of the supreme court of justice admitted that "every investigation they started could have revealed malpractices" and that governmental approval of the establishment of auxiliary branches at cooperatives inevitably turned them into depots of suspicious people (ibid., 329).

28 In a recent interview, Ferenczi offers the following recollection of the time in question: "The regional party executives were very satisfied with my methods of running the cooperative, although I did not maintain informal contacts or socialize with them. I did accept an invitation to a game of cards. They kept on bragging about the 'interests of workers,' and they drank all night in a vineyard. I did not have time

him and, furthermore, his passionate concluding insistence that, "I will not leave this farm blemished and blackened" (33:34–33:36) indicate that he is aware of both the witch hunt targeting his person and the provocative discursive strategies on which it is based. Other members of the executive board side with Ferenczi and question the moral grounds for the character assassination. They suggest that the president had always valued the interests of the community over his own. Sensing the failure to build a strong grassroots base in their anti-Ferenczi campaign, the strategists who craft the techniques of intimidation adopt more explicit meausures culminating in blackmail when the chief-accountant of the company announces that the lack of political support for the president may result in the withdrawal of a national bank credit worth 10 million forint. He also adds that this sum would have to be raised by members, an absurd claim which, nevertheless, indicates the desperate desire of the functionaries to continue with the discriminatory process.

In the next round of the discursive boxing match, at the general meeting of the local party organization, Ferenczi presents the annual accounts and leaves, allowing the party members to discuss the controversies surrounding his activities. The verbal responses of the party members are as revealing as the images lingering on the frustrated, angry, desperate faces of the participants. These facial gestures, which constitute intimate bodily reactions to the malicious attacks, demonstrate people's unwillingness to play the public roles they are expected to play and pretend to be ideal cadres. These are the faces of people irritated by the intrusion of politics into their private affairs, people who would rather be pragmatic than dogmatic. This attitude is affirmed by the research of Pünkösti, and more specifically the words of an ex-farm president, Semjén István: "[coop] members were able to evaluate the performance of the president in a more complex manner than paragraphs can ever hope to. Despite minor character flaws, most presidents possessed qualities that made them effective and suitable leaders. Applying laws to measure the worth of such people is like allowing a bull in a china shop."[29] Similar opinions are heard at the general meeting, emphasizing the president's good planning and management skills, his financial

for such things. I wanted to work. I also meet them at the local party headquarters to discuss company affairs, and they were always positive about the developments. The attacks started from one day to the next, proving that the order came 'from above' and was not the consequence of a local or personal conflict of interest." Szabó, "Körül voltam," 7.

29 Gyula's and János Gulyás' *Don't Pale* (Ne sápadj, 1983) reaches a very similar conclusion. See Pünkösti, *Kiválasztottak,* 326–27.

intelligence, and the importance of continuity. A speaker praises the auxiliary branches and their contribution to the national industry, and he points out how they decrease the number of commuters, reduce the migration of qualified labor from the countryside to industrial towns, and contribute to the development of rural Hungary. These arguments were listed by the agricultural pressure group led by Lajos Fehér; nevertheless, spoken by a simple laborer, these words reflect direct social experience and demand pragmatism and economic rationality instead of ideological populism and moral judgements. Another member of the audience touches upon an extremely sensitive topic when asking whether there would be any consequences for the local party bureau if the resolution to remove Ferenczi failed, that is, if the victimization procedure ended in public defeat. Instead of a proper answer, the main speaker gives the following instructions: "like it or not, the party resolution is binding for all party members, so everyone must implement the resolution proposed by the higher authorities" (01:00:16–01:00:28). Potential traitors are threatened with disciplinary action, which sounds like just another empty intimidating remark provided that votes are cast by secret ballot. Nevertheless, it is also a clear symptom of the aspiration to put private choice under ideological control.

The general assembly is the forum which grants social legitimacy for the concept of the corrupt president and ensures that the witch hunt commences with the support of the public. The vote, at the same time, is also about the social acceptance of party rituals that penetrate into their lives, that is, the degree to which they are ready to collaborate with the political leadership in acting out ideologically prescribed roles. With the rising stakes, the anti-Ferenczi rhetoric also reaches new heights and, on top of the already voiced criticism of the president, new accusations are made, like the negative press coverage of Felcsút in the national press and the allegations concerning the excessive salary of the president and occasional transactions involving family members. Bringing up the topic of financial profiteering seems a calculated move, and it reflects the high priority of income levels and material wealth in people's decisions. Hence, the accusers make a final attempt to present their case on ideological grounds and employ the dichotomy of self-interest and group-interest, while at the same time they appeal to more base human sentiments, like envy and resentment. Repeated references to the moral, financial, and legal consequences members will have to face should they reject the resolution give the impression that the vote is also about the future of the company and imply that cooperative democracy works best when group interests (the interest of the members) are subordinated

to ideological interests (the idea of egalitarianism). After the secret ballot has been cast and the votes have been counted, results show a majority for the pro-Ferenczi camp. The feeling of relief is interrupted by the head of the district council, an associate of the party bureaucrats, who announces that a 2/3 majority is required for the vote to be valid. After checking the relevant legal passages, he retracts this statement and the assembly is disbanded.

In the final section of the film, viewers watch the company of familiar functionaries discuss the lessons they have learned. They unanimously agree on the legitimacy of the initial concept and decision, but they point to serious mistakes in the methods of implementation and express regret for not having been able to prove Ferenczi's criminal nature, political defects, and unorthodox leadership techniques. Speculations are made as to whether they should have settled for disciplinary action instead of trying to remove him and agree on the need for closer cooperation among the separate bureaus, offices, and councils and for more temperate and patient agitprop activities. Criticism from party headquarters, summarized by Estélyi with the question, "[w]hy would you launch a resolution that you cannot guarantee will pass" (1:37:07–1:37:08), might suggest that the initiative was flawed from the outset and that it was a mistake to attack a popular president of a successful farm. This would actually explain why the film was banned: the authorities did not want to expose the public to depictions of events that should never have taken place. If this was the case, Gazdag and Ember's "offence" was being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I believe the opposite is true, however, not only in the sense that they were in the right place at the right time, but also because their film was as much a gain to the power elite as it was a blow.

Widespread lawsuits against cooperative presidents were initiated a year after *The Resolution* was made, and these legal procedures, according to the research of Varga, followed from the narrative of the corrupted president, which translated into "subordination of public interests to group interest."[30] The film also rendered legible the alliance formed in the years of economic liberalization between presidents and members, a group interest hard to penetrate and break by party officials. To prove the immoral nature of this alliance, authorities chose to vilify and criminalize the activities of presidents who supposedly acted in the service of farm members and made them willing accomplices in illegal activities. Varga presents numerous archival documents criticizing allegedly corrupted

30 Varga, "Miért bűn a sikeresség?" 611.

group interests, and the anti-Ferenczi alliance, as I pointed out, makes similar claims on several occasions. The film probably guided the political elite to the recognition that presenting members as collaborators in economic and moral wrongdoing would give authorities the necessary public authorization to launch legal and ideological attacks and set off nationwide show-trials. Having given the concept shape and sown the seeds of broad-based anti-agricultural sentiments in the public sphere, the central administration handed over the task of "tracking down" individual presidents to lower-level functionaries with reliable knowledge of local affairs.

In my view, *The Resolution* was not banned because it documented the failure of the anti-president discourse, since eventually the campaign against the president of the cooperative succeeded. At the end of the film, captions inform viewers about the removal of József Ferenczi by the coop members in 1973, which was followed by disciplinary measures against his person. I also believe the film provided valuable information for the power elite about the shortcomings of paternalist administrative methods and discriminatory practices on the one hand and the desire of farm workers for depoliticized company management and autonomy in financial and economic decisions on the other. In a more general sense, the authorities would have understood the citizen's increasing desire for individual opinion and the decoupling of the private sphere from politics. In addition to suggesting that the state-socialist regime was upheld by political and not social commitment, the film also showed how past practices of collectivizing private lives and subordinating them to politicized interests provoked people's anti-political reflexes.

In this context, the behavior of the local party apparatchiks is likewise revealing. Although these men should embody the committed cadre type with full devotion to an ideology, they seem to be more fascinated by the camera, and they willingly act out roles. At the end of the final discussion, they look into the camera smiling. Estélyi strikes the table, imitating the sound of a clapperboard, and says, "Well…that's all" (1:39:51). In the documentary feature films of the Balázs Béla Studio (BBS) and Társulás Stúdió the choice to cast amateur actors to play social types served the goal of authenticity. Including such scenes of self-performance in a documentary, in my understanding, serves the purpose of meta-commentary on public role playing as a survival method during the Kádár regime. These scenes propose that functionary identities are always performed and constructed through the acting out of idolized roles, ritualistic behavior types, and verbal clichés: politics becomes performance and performance legitimizes

and authenticates politics. In other words, maintaining the "authentic" image of the committed cadre is depicted as the greatest service to the regime, since the regime *is* what people perceive of it in the public sphere. Esse est percipi. *The Resolution* draws a portrait of a political system which has lost its revolutionary momentum—even cadres and political activists are performed roles—and concentrates most of its energies on maintaining appearances, on constructing the image of integrity. Gazdag and Ember do not theorize the reasons for this lost momentum, but the lack of social support for the discriminatory discourse presented in the film is symptomatic and, I believe, corresponds with the following assertion by Gábor Gyányi: "modern political dictatorships in their founding stage rely on popular movements, but when they eventually solidify (consolidate) into state power they require more than (just) the support of political fanatics."[31] Unless this transition from activist-based to broad-based support is achieved, a legitimacy crisis of the political elite is imminent.

The lessons of *The Resolution* are manifold: it identifies a communal will for a depoliticized public sphere and, furthermore, describes politics as a stage on which appearances are maintained through authentic performances. The performative qualities of politics might have provided the regime with the illusion of authority over citizens, but they were too weak to ensure full control over them. Recognizing its own limited options to democratize the public sphere, the administration strove to politicize the private by injecting into it the performative qualities of anti-politics and allowing the sphere of intimacy to perform itself as a site of detachment and relative liberty. As such, the power elite opened the fairground of illusionary authenticity to the masses and invited them to act out imaginations of privacy. The political benefits of infantilizing society while regaining control over people who could not be effectively fanaticized were not only merely symptomatic of Goulash Communism, rather, they defined it.

Balaton Retro: Goulash Communism Debunked

Gábor Zsigmond Papp's *Balaton Retro* (2007) uses exclusively archival footage which at the time it was made served the single aim of aggrandizing the achievements of the socialist welfare state. Like *Budapest Retro 1–2* (1998 and 2003), his previous ventures into retro-documentaries, *Balaton Retro* also depended on the Hungarian Film Archive for historical resources. Papp would

31 Gyáni, "Kollaboráció és a hatalom titka," 49.

both recycle and re-contextualize archival material, adding popular songs from the period as musical accompaniment and voiceover commentaries to the images. In his grandiose visual montage of Goulash Communism, images that once pretended to be apolitical, carrying softened and disguised overtones of ideological discourses (and then after the regime change becoming material signifiers of a sociocultural elsewhere), are presented as a self-debasing narrative of the Kádár regime. Papp also emphasized this feature of the film:

> [t]his is not a historical presentation of the Kádár regime, rather it reveals how the regime wanted people to see it. These are propaganda films that debunk themselves. One does not need to add anything, as they are absurd as they are. We never tried to mock anything with the voiceover commentaries, the humor of the films follow from the original footage.[32]

Apart from distinguishing history from retro-memory, Papp's reference to the humor of the archival footage suggests that already at the time of their making the recordings were perceived as half serious representations of Lake Balaton, either because they capture comic scenes of holiday makers or because of their pathetic efforts to present ideological narratives as reality. *Balaton Retro* also subverts the historical sensation of nostalgia, an emotionally saturated sensibility to an ideal but lost past and, likewise, revival(ism), a group strategy to rediscover and reconnect with a past thought to be lost as a result of a sociocultural fracture. Although the film will be enjoyed by viewers yearning for commercial mass produced nostalgia and will allow the younger generation socialized in consumer society to grasp the atmosphere of socialist popular culture, Papp does not attempt to mythologize the era or present the social landscape of the 1960s and 1970s as exemplary or authentic and, thus, worth rejuvenating. The retro-memory employed by the film is *not* a "rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress," *neither* does it wish to "obliterate history and turn it into private or collective mythology, to revisit time like space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time".[33] Rather, it is a self-conscious and ironic attitude to the narration of the past. The discursive strategy of *Balaton Retro* is closest to Guffey's definition of retro as an unsentimental memory genre: "half-ironic, half-longing, 'retro' considers the recent past with

32 Sipos, "Beszélgetés Papp Gábor Zsigmonddal," 46.

33 Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xv.

an unsentimental nostalgia. It is unconcerned with the sanctity of tradition or reinforcing social values; indeed, it often insinuates a form of subversion while sidestepping historical accuracy."[34]

Papp's film points beyond the post-socialist culture of nostalgia, and while it does not turn its back on the increasing demand for retro, it refuses to glorify or mythologize the past. I agree with Sárközy's assertion that Papp's retro-documentaries follow from the Western-European and American tradition of revisionist history: "propaganda films recently made available by archives are reinterpreted and radically re-contextualized. Thus, they allow us to reconsider our ideas and beliefs about reality."[35] I would add only that Papp's revisionism is most productive when linked to the aforementioned paradoxes of the popular demand for privacy under state socialism. *Balaton Retro*, I contend, reaches beyond the deceptive mask of Goulash Communism, and instead of depicting it as the golden age of egalitarianism, it explores Lake Balaton as the discursive production of the myth of a depoliticized private sphere. Papp investigates the "authenticity" of the lake as a place of retreat, less a geographical location than a spatial metaphor of the much sought-after detachment from a non-egalitarian public life. Although stylistically very different, I consider the film the twin-narrative of *The Resolution*, a perceptive reading of how consecutive generations continued to find comfort in the lake even after realizing that their initial yearning for equality, privacy, and liberty was compromised, neutralized, and dissatisfied. I propose that *Balaton Retro* debunks the "authenticity" of Lake Balaton, and more generally the false emotional, economic, and political imaginations about Goulash Communism in a discourse with five layers.

The first layer considers tourism-related infrastructure, mainly housing facilities of very different quality and price. People who were not eligible for cheap trade-union owned resort homes (so-called SZOT üdülő) could choose between different types of accommodation, including hotels, motels, apartment houses, and campsites. This layer of the discourse links the emergence of the socialist welfare state to the modernization of local infrastructure, as a result of which Lake Balaton, also known as the Hungarian Riviera in popular terminology, was transformed into an affordable holiday destination for ordinary people, mainly families. This latter aspect explains why Balaton became a spatial symbol of egalitarianism and a source of shared experience for generations of Hungarians.

34 Guffey, *Retro,* 10–11.

35 Sárközy, *Elbeszélt múltjaink*, 263–4.

Actually, its popularity soon exceeded its capacity, resulting in crowded beaches and overpriced catering services. As the planned economy could not provide proper or even basic services for all visitors, the authorities permitted the establishment of private enterprises to satisfy high demand. Lake Balaton, in this regard, exemplifies what economist János Kornai termed a shortage economy: a chronic Eastern European experience during the state socialist period.[36] The consequent emergence of lucrative private businesses (apartment houses, takeout restaurants, greengrocers) soon became a characteristic feature of Lake Balaton and transformed popular imaginations of the place from a symbol of egalitarianism to a symbol of ruthless profiteering.

Along with active laborers, the communist youth was a key social resource with which to build future support for the regime. Not surprisingly, youth culture was given increased attention by the political elite, as evidenced quite clearly by the concern shown by propaganda films for the attitudes of this age group. This is reflected in *Balaton Retro*, the second discursive layer of which introduces student camps and youth oriented subculture around the lake. The pioneer's camp at Zánka, referred to as a gift of the party to working class children and celebrated as another achievement of the welfare state, is presented in archival recordings as a place where the younger generations share the benefits of global communism and enjoy vacations in a multicultural environment. In Papp's re-contextualization, however, it seems more an example of ideological indoctrination, when the voiceover narrator reads part of a letter written, allegedly, by children for the anniversary of the Hiroshima attacks: "[w]e enter our forces into a coalition to fight against the threat of nuclear catastrophe and to terminate wars around the world" (00:23:04–00:23:14). The strange wording of these sentences, very different from children's language, points to the indoctrinating atmosphere of youth camps in the period, which hindered the development of critical, self-aware, and proactive social identities and laid the foundations of a politically infantile citizenry Another form of institutional recreation was organized by the Hungarian Young Communist League (KISZ) at camps around the lake, where teenagers would do (compulsory) voluntary work at agricultural farms or lend a hand at state-owned retailing units, such as supermarkets. Although this represented an ineffective form of labor, the film implies a calculated correspondence between the shortage economy and the rigid labor market which heavily relied on unpaid work. Moving on to the

36 See Kornai, *Economics of Shortage*.

generational experiences of young adults, the film presents visual and verbal documents of the moral panic over young people's attitudes. The discourse of vilification against subcultures presumed (for reasons unexplained) provocative and threatening to socialist morality is echoed by the voiceover commentary. Although this self-reflective imitation of the paternalist rhetoric becomes its own caricature, it exemplifies how vulnerable the space of liberty was, and it points to the eventual failure to find a refuge from everyday drudgery and non-egalitarian social relations

The next discursive layer of the film explores tourism and introduces Lake Balaton as an outpost of the West behind the Iron Curtain. Western tourists were allowed to spend holidays at Lake Balaton chiefly for economic reasons: to increase reserves of hard currency and thus facilitate commerce with Western companies. These considerations led to increased tourist interest in Lake Balaton, and this had an impact on the cultural image of the space. Either as sites of reunions for separated German families or as inexpensive yet well-equipped holiday resorts offering the best of Hungarian cuisine, Gypsy music, popular entertainment, and access to high art, the hotels and campsites popping up around the lake served as a space of connectivity. In addition to functioning as a contact zone between capitalist, consumer-oriented modernity and socialist modernity, which was proud of its revolutionary advancements in the field of social welfare, Lake Balaton also rendered legible the economic inequalities along the East-West divide. Unlike the international pioneer camp of Zánka, where a shared ideological background eliminated national differences and inequalities of wealth, spaces which were under less control, like streets and hotel parking lots, were sites of encounters of a different kind. As *Balaton Retro*'s archival footage shows, ordinary Hungarians would stare with amazement at signifiers of material wealth, like cars, trendy cloths, and accessories. Especially revealing are visual passages of young women throwing brief, enthusiastic glances at Western men, but the lack of access to premium leisure activities and spaces (like Hotel Marina) was a burden to most Hungarian holiday makers, and it added to their feelings of inferiority. The most vivid illustration of the imperfection of state-provided welfare is the scene entitled "A foreigner at Lake Balaton," a mock film-diary of a Hungarian expatriate returning to Balaton for a vacation. The protagonist of this episode, who speaks Hungarian with a heavy accent and resembles characters in vintage recordings, is József Magyar. He visits his homeland and is astonished to find a modern tourist industry on the lakeside. A cloudy day, however, disrupts his routine water-sport activities and forces him to

pursue other entertainment. He asks at the reception desk in his hotel whether it is possible to play roulette or billiards, but he is told that such dishonorable games are not available, and although they have a chess board, it has gone missing. Magyar decides to play tennis. After paying a hefty sum at the reception desk, he is told to pick up the key at the hospital, which he does with some reluctance, only to find that the tennis court is already taken. This comic parable is Papp's most explicit attempt to interpret Goulash Communism as welfare provided by a paternalist state (epitomized by the hotel receptionist) bound by ideological imperatives (concerning what is dishonorable and what is not) and characterized by shortsighted and chaotic planning (as the case of the key suggests).

Kornai draws a similar picture: "[a] paternalist 'welfare state' covering the entire population was developed over several decades. Hungary can vie with the most developed Scandinavian countries in the range of codified entitlements to benefits and in the proportion of GDP laid out on social spending, whereas per capita production is only a small fraction of theirs."[37] At a later point, Kornai calls this redistributive system of welfare spending beyond the country's economic capacity "premature,"[38] and he contends that maintaining it "was most important to the government at any time to reassure people. The paternalist redistribution certainly has a soothing effect, compensating to a large extent for the reduction in and uncertainty about real wages earned legally in the market sector."[39] This characterization of the welfare state, the compensatory function of which often led to hasty and unreflective decisions, bears remarkable similarities with Papp's witty parable of the tourist industry, which appears to work well, but in fact is illogical and, ultimately, dysfunctional. In this insightful segment, *Balaton Retro* points to the central paradox permeating all discursive layers that ascribe meanings to the lake. Like Goulash Communism, the popular image of Lake Balaton is fractured by the discrepancies between the ideal of egalitarianism and a non-egalitarian reality, the promise of retreat from the corruptness of public life and the frustration over the same demoralizing social relations being reproduced locally.

The iconic business figures (popular heroes for some, profiteers for others) associated with the lake were also the products of a regime lost in its own doublethink. While the authorities, at first, allowed private resources to ease the soaring demand for accommodation and licensed building permits for

37 Kornai, "Goulash Communism," 944.

38 Ibid., 964.

39 Ibid., 965–66.

large family houses which everybody knew served in part as short-term rental properties, they later reprimanded owners for unlawful profiteering. This cat-and-mouse-game is recounted by Papp via an archival interview with a man who built a seven-bedroom house (with numbers hanging from the doorframes) with three bathrooms and two kitchens but claimed that it was for his family and the years he would spend in retirement. Because his narrative will be heard in the public sphere, the man adapts to the official language of egalitarianism presented, in this case literally, as the language of dishonesty. This is another example of the discursive production of privacy, an agency allowed to be formed in the act of being subordinated to and limited by the political rationale.

The same logic characterized Goulash Communism as a social system promising increased quality of life in a world with limited freedoms and consumer choice. The segment on sports around the lake offers an overview of the various forms of water and beach sports enjoyed by vacationers, noting that there were always shortages of the most popular equipment, such as air mattresses. According to the logic of the shortage economy, holiday makers were to blame, as they were demanding an unnecessary item. In the eyes of bureaucrats, the lake was there for swimming, rowing, and sailing, but not for sunbathing on mattresses. Another telling example of the short-sightedness, or in this case the sheer stupidity, of bureaucrats is when the local council advises fisherman to build their huts on the top of the hill because they make the lakeshore unattractive. Some water sports, like sailing and motor-boating, were regarded as too extravagant and damaging to social egalitarianism, so the owners were burdened with extra taxes and restrictions in the 1970s. The strict regulations on motorboat use offer a compelling case of how ideological and pragmatic considerations were seemingly reconciled. This episode of the film begins with a voiceover narration: "in 1978, authorities introduce a total ban on motorboats with the exception of those owners who agree to patrol the lake voluntarily in their free time" (01:01:45–01:02:00). Later, we see an archival interview with a policeman who lists professions, including doctors, professors, company directors, and engineers (people with high qualifications and an unquestionable sense of responsibility), as members of the voluntary water-police community. In the next shot, we hear a segment from an archival audio recording: "[n]owadays, many people criticize the quality of the Hungarian educational system. But can these critics show another country where voluntary policemen solve complicated mathematical formulas and carry out intricate surgical operations?" (01:02:44–01:03:00) The manner in which this information

is presented not only offers a sketch of the logic underlying regulations and practices, it also offers a symptomatic reading of the strategies adopted by the regime to appease conflicts arising from economic inequalities. Accordingly, influential and high-income representatives of the professional and industrial elite could maintain their privileges in return for voluntary services provided for the community. The fact that the authorities wished to disguise cosmopolitan hobbies as public service, that is, disguise rather than resolve social inequalities, suggests that despite endless tirades about commitment to egalitarianism, the regime actually operated through clientelism, in-group bias, and a system of favors.

The last discursive layer of the film presents the richness of cheap amusements offered for vacationers, including for instance a beauty pageant, a hairdresser competition, a fashion show, a water theatre, fairgrounds, open-air cinemas, concerts, and festivals, most of which drew large crowds eager for spectacle. These activities, though they suggested affluence and consumer freedom, actually encouraged people to partake in the infantile social rites provided by state-controlled popular culture. Even more openly than in the previous archival footage, young female bodies dressed in bikinis are highlighted, as if narratives of Lake Balaton could be best told from the perspective of a sexualized patriarchal regime. The gendered gaze, as a prevalent feature of the recordings, coupled with regular mention of the easy-going sexual disposition of visitors, draws a picture of Lake Balaton as the bordello of Goulash Communism, a space of tolerated exhibitionism, a spatial safety-valve for otherwise bigoted, puritanical, and self-restraining state-socialist public morals. Serving as a showroom of Hungary's evolving popular culture, municipalities around the lake were urged to promote cultural events with historical traditions. The Anna-ball in Tiszafüred and the grape harvest celebrations reinvented aristocratic and folk festive traditions for mass entertainment, adding socialist flavors to the events. Reinvention also brought about bureaucratization: a recording of the Anna-ball organizing committee shows easily recognizable party functionaries, like those of *The Resolution*, discussing details of a festival initiated in the Reform Era, a period of nineteenth-century Hungarian history that saw the awakening of national identity, modernization, and the spread of liberalism.

Conclusion

Balaton Retro evokes the material culture and social rituals of the Kádár era with an observant and elaborative memory which remains alert to the interplay of elements among the various narrative layers of Lake Balaton. Like Gazdag and Ember, Papp also recognizes the schizophrenic nature of the regime, which hopes to resolve its loss of popular support by adopting populist techniques with which to manipulate, neutralize, and infantilize the masses. The films discussed here arrive at the same conclusion as Gábor Halmai: "political legitimacy in Hungary depends on welfarist concessions to the population."[40] The economic rationale of these concessions was, in large part, unfounded and, as Kornai asserts, "did not derive from a forward-looking, long-term government program. It arose out of improvisation, through rivalry between distributive claims. First one group, stratum, or trade then another would demand more or at least struggle against curtailment of its existing rights."[41] It is impossible to run a system founded on improvisation of such a high degree without the collaboration of citizens, who willfully renounce their own interests for the benefit of others. This is, of course, an unrealistic scenario, and if pursued, it would further undermine the legitimacy of the administration and certainly lead to the spread of grassroots resistance and bottom-up populism. Another route, the one taken by the consolidated Kádár regime, was to disguise the improvised nature of policies aiming to raise living standards and pacify citizens' anti-authoritarian attitudes by allowing them the (illusion of the) political passivity of private life, even if this passivity was used to legitimize the regime and made people unwilling collaborators in their own subordination.

The chosen documentaries portray this control as a paternalistic, top-down model of populism and a partial return to the rhetoric of early communist regimes, which proposed to empower disenfranchised people. The claims made by the party functionaries to protect social interests from egotistic group interests in *The Resolution* evoke the populist slogans communist activists proclaimed during their rise to power. Documenting the return to these techniques of mobilization, Gazdag and Ember offer empirical proof of how populism, as Francisco Panizza notes, "becomes a tradition embedded in the party's myths, institutions and official discourse."[42] The populism Gazdag and Ember identify as a seminal

40 Halmai, "(Dis)possessed by the Spectre of Socialism," 115.

41 Kornai, "Goulash Communism," 966.

42 Panizza, "Introduction," 18.

strategy of the Kádár-regime also calls to mind Ernesto Laclau's proposition, according to which "a movement is not populist because in its politics or ideology it presents actual *contents* identifiable as populistic, but because it shows a particular *logic of articulation* of those contents – whatever those contents are" (emphasis in original).[43] The practice of mobilizing "the people" against imagined "others" was a feature of state-socialist administrative practices, and it revealed strategies of populism in two interrelated aspects. On the one hand, the discursive production of antagonisms (people vs. others, Us vs. Them) requires, as Laclau asserts, "floating signifiers"[44] that can take different concrete referents in different circumstances. As suggested above, the intimidation strategies used against Ferenczi involved the constant redefinition and specification of what "corrupt" (as a floating signifier) meant. The same applies to the "people" and the "will of the community." My analysis of *The Resolution* has sought to how the regime was struggling to construct the authentic meanings of these categories and in the process revealed its own inauthenticity and legitimacy crisis. Part of this was the unfounded identification of agricultural workers as belonging to the imaginary union of the people (the Us). In fact, the film bears witness to the formation of a bottom-up populist movement stemming from people's demand for privacy and their desire to retreat from a politicized public life.

This desire is connected to the second aspect of the populism which, according to Panizza, "both depoliticises and hyper-politicises social relations"[45] to increase support. De-politicization and the substitution of the "political discourse for the discourse of morals" [46] was a key aspect in the character assassination of Ferenczi and the appeals made to the workers' sense of ethical responsibility for social interests. The discursive production of Lake Balaton exemplifies how de-politicization may serve as a disguise for hyper-politicization. The archival footage featured in *Balaton retro* mobilized popular culture to prove that universal access to welfare benefits, leisure and sport activities, participation in festivals, and other common social rituals was falsely perceived as a form of resistance more authentic than open political confrontation. Papp recognizes the paradoxical nature of such authenticity, and he elucidates how propaganda was expected to convince people that the lake *was not* an artificial space of emancipation, *not* a patronized escape, and *not* the site of illusionary retreat when, in fact, *it was*.

43 Laclau, "Populism" 33.

44 Ibid., 43.

45 Panizza, "Introduction," 20.

46 Ibid., 22.

Identifying de-politicization as an effect and a form of camouflage of hyper-politicization allows Papp to describe welfarism as populist. Whenever people demanded more and the disguise was exposed, strategies of hyper-politicization would emerge either by posing bureaucratic limits on people's desires or by forcing them into hegemonic relations. Whenever the moral authority of the welfare state was questioned, like in encounters with more affluent Western lifestyles, propaganda returned to antagonizing dichotomies (Us vs. Them) or, as reports on pioneer camps testify, emphasized the unequal relationship between the people and their patron, the state.

One of my intentions in this article is to have drawn further critical attention to the consolidated Kádár regime as a case of political populism best understood through the widespread social desire to retreat into the private sphere and the private fantasies of an apolitical elsewhere. Present-day populism, as the politics of the disillusioned and nostalgic masses, is similar. It openly critiques the Establishment and continuity, and it petitions for new economic models, social dynamics, and cultural idols. It gains popularity by recognizing people's anti-political sentiments, allowing such imaginations to enter the realm of politics, and spearheading the outrage against a presumably corrupted elite. Emerging in Eastern Europe, it has recently swept through the West, eroding the status quo of modern democracy and bringing its institutions to their knees. More precisely, it emerged from the Eastern European experience of disillusionment shared by ever-extending segments of the population increasingly vulnerable to the neoliberal economic transformation. The rude awakening from global capitalism increased, as post-socialist nostalgia testifies, citizens' fascination with the previous regime and prevented them from recognizing that the switch to a market economy was only the catalyst and not the cause of their destitution, that, in fact, societies suffer from the legacy of the very unsustainable socioeconomic models they once passively helped to engineer.

If we accept the assertion that the Kádár regime's Goulash Communism failed because its weak economic performance, which was unable to support welfare policies and further the process of social liberalization, prompted desires too robust for its narrow ideological framework to hold back (in other words, it was unable to satisfy people's demands for more welfare), we can make further claims about the recent upsurge in political populism. First, it places people's expectations and desires above political rationality, but since these expectations are mostly unfounded and derive from the childish belief in the benefits of political inactivity, populism has to maintain society's dishonest relationship

with the past. Secondly, in its support for unreflective, restorative nostalgia and antagonism towards the self-critical reassessment of the state-socialist heritage, populism shelters people's right to cherish an otherwise false sense of reality. Not only does it accept this new license to dishonesty and promote the freedom of an infantile citizenry, it also obtains political legitimacy as its guardian. Hence, populism eventually translates the private ideology of passive resistance into political action, but only in order to use anti-political subjectivity for its own unpredictable and "authentic" ends.

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The Legacy of World War II and Belated Justice in the Hungarian Films of the Early Kádár Era

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In this article, we analyze the role of Hungarian films made in the 1960s in representing the traumatic legacy of World War II. With the solidification of the official narrative of the Holocaust in the mid-1960s, the Hungarian film industry also started to reflect on the tragedy of the Jews at the same time (which was not a terribly conspicuous part of the official narrative). The article focuses on six films as illustrations of the extent to which it was possible to reflect on the traumatic past in the early Kádár era, with particular emphasis on the legacy of the Holocaust. The films selected revolve around the question of individual responsibility, but they also depict psychological conflicts and portray the character's attempts to prompt collective remembering. We argue that despite the communists' claims of moral superiority, peace and reconciliation remains unattainable for the characters in the films because of the inability of the new social milieu to facilitate the process of coming to terms with past traumas.

Keywords: representations of the Holocaust, film and historical trauma, Hungarian films in the 1960s, Antal Páger, Holocaust and memory on film

In this article, we examine the role of Hungarian films made in the 1960s in representing the highly sensitive legacy of World War II. How did films try to provide answers to the question of survival, and how did they handle social amnesia? We argue that the films analyzed here concentrated mainly on individual morality in order to erode society's general denial of responsibility. The movies intended to achieve justice in a real or figurative way, through legal or moral means. Confrontation with the past was portrayed mostly through individual self-reflection, especially in the context of police investigations and trials. The films are remarkably lenient with low-ranking perpetrators and bystanders. The viewer can, no doubt, feel empathy for the defenseless victims, but one can also identify with the powerless bystander or even with some of the perpetrators who escape condemnation due to the regime's "pact of silence." The films suggest that the socialist system condemns the sinners but also gives them a chance to reintegrate into a new and better society. At the same time, the films remained unable to resolve the problems of isolated victims and—in some cases—lonely perpetrators. Wrestling with the legacy of the war is represented as a personal

exercise without the hope of reconciliation or redemption. We analyze five films as illustrations of the extent to which it was possible to address the traumatic past in the early Kádár era, with particular emphasis on the legacy of the persecution of the Jewish people.[1] The subject of Jewishness was tabooed in socialist society. One's origins could be Jewish, but socialization forced Jews to internalize aspects of their identities which were part of their Jewish heritage or at least to adhere to socialist norms. At the same time, the perpetrators and their representatives, whose way of thinking was left unchanged, remained marginalized, lonely individuals in socialist society.

Context: The Persecution of Jews in Public Discourses after the War

1945 was the most important caesura in the recent history of Hungary. The lost war and the devastation of the country demonstrated the improvidence and incompetence of the former regime, and the new authorities were faced with overwhelming challenges. The new political forces that emerged in Hungary in 1945 strove to disassociate themselves entirely from the Horthy period and its military defeat. This policy was expounded primarily and most forcefully by the Hungarian Communist Party (MKP). The party had been banned in the Horthy period, and its few hundred illegal members had been persecuted. But on two matters they were guided by political pragmatism rather than consistent principle. First, on Stalin's instructions, Miklós Horthy was never brought to court, as a verdict against him could have turned him into a national martyr. Second, there could be no blanket condemnation of the Arrow Cross party (which had had over 100,000 voters), which had also been persecuted in the Horthy period.[2] Since its membership was tiny in early 1945, the MKP hoped to win over former supporters of the extreme right-wing movement. Therefore, the policy was to issue dramatic condemnations of well-known Arrow Cross leaders and their views while at the same time turning a blind eye to "petty" rank-and-file members of the party who had committed no serious war crimes.

1 The movies in chronological order: *Pillar of Salt* (Sóbálvány), Dir. ZoltánVárkonyi, 1958; *Cold Days* (Hideg napok), Dir. András Kovács, 1966; *Late Season* (Utószezon) Dir. Zoltán Fábri, 1966; *Face to Face* (Szemtől szembe) Dir. Zoltán Várkonyi, 1970; *One Day More or Less* (Plusz-mínusz egy nap), Dir. Zoltán Fábri, 1972.

We wanted to see but *The Dead Return* (A holtak visszajárnak, Dir. KárolyWiedermann, 1968), did not find available copy at the Hungarian Film Institute. The creators of the crime story were inspired by the Hungarian Nazi law suits which dragged on into the 1960s.

2 Lénárt and Paksa, "Kisnyilasok a Belügyminisztérium aktáiban," 321–25.

The task of prosecuting Hungarians who had committed war crimes or crimes against humanity (in Communist terminology "crimes against the people") was a requirement outlined in Point 14 of the armistice agreement.[3] The institution of People's Tribunals was created by Act VI/1945. Local people's courts were set up in 24 cities, while the senior court, which also dealt with matters on a national level, was set up in Budapest. The People's Tribunals were initially intended to call to account the pre-1945 political elite and the officials who implemented their decisions, including members of the military who had played a decisive role in the war or who had committed "abuses" under wartime conditions.[4] However, from the outset, the Communist Party used these institutions as political weapons.[5] (The people's courts had all completed their activities by April 1, 1950. In fact, most of the trials were concluded by 1947.) Altogether, more than 40,000 cases were heard, and over 22,000 defendants were found guilty. Of these, 414 were condemned to death, and in 180 cases the sentence was carried out. Of the 22,000 people who received custodial sentences, 20,000 were imprisoned, and 2,000 were sentenced to forced labor.[6] With the dissolution of the People's Tribunals, the Communist regime considered the confrontation with the traumatic legacy of the past over. When in the 1960s the countries of the Soviet bloc launched various campaigns against former war criminals, the Hungarian authorities remained reluctant to follow suit, and they referred to the work of the courts as a comprehensive and successful attempt at addressing the crimes of the recent past.[7]

According to the hypothesis of a study on the operation of the People's Tribunals, almost half of the trials were related to atrocities against the Jews. The majority of the cases were murders committed by the former armed wing of the Arrow Cross party, mostly in Budapest.[8] However, the question of the persecution of the Jews was "tabooed" from the beginning, and "ordinary" Arrow Cross members received very lenient sentences. This produced a strange

3 Signed by Hungary and the Soviet Union in Moscow on 20 January 1945, and again in Act V/1945.

4 Curiously, the people's courts did not cite existing laws on political responsibility or earlier precedents. The idea of the international accountability of defeated countries declared responsible for the war arose after World War I, but was never applied. Yet in Hungary there had been legislation (Act I/1849, Act XXIII/1919) according to which revolutionary or war criminals could be called to account.

5 On the people's courts see Lukács, *A Magyar népbírósági jog*; Bernáth, *Justitia tudathasadása*; Szakács and Zinner, *A háború*; Pritz, *A Bárdossy-per*; Karsai, "The People's Courts," 137–51.

6 The data is found in Szakács and Zinner, *A háború*.

7 Minutes of the 30 March 1966 meeting of the Coordination Committee 3.

8 Barna and Pető, *A politikai igazságszolgáltatás*, 116–27.

psychological situation, according to István Bibó, in which persecuted Jews were utterly dissatisfied with the proceedings, whereas the rest of society saw them as a witch hunt.[9] Ultimately, the new communist government, from 1948 on, did not want to erase the past completely ("Of the past let us make a clean slate"). Rather, they wanted to utilize it for their own purposes. The legacy of so-called "Horthy-fascism" was onerous, but useful at the same time. It provided the regime with all kinds of "enemies," a tool which was indispensable for the emerging dictatorship.

One of these groups was the persecutors of Jewish people, the perpetrators of the Hungarian Holocaust. The regime's relationship with the Holocaust and the Jews was, in fact, quite complex and ambiguous. Many memoirs and diaries were published, and Jewish institutions were established, including schools, orphanages, scout organizations, and so on. The Zionist movement also grew stronger than ever.[10] The repression of civil life in the Eastern Bloc countries and the cold relationship between the newborn state of Israel and the USSR eventually led to the end of the short post-war "Jewish Renaissance." The Party leadership no longer wished to focus too much on the traumatic aspects of the past, and so they offered a "new deal" to the Jews: they guaranteed the repression of anti-Semitism in public discourse and offered a chance to rebuild careers for individuals of Jewish origins, but in exchange discussions about the meanings of Jewishness and Jewish identity were marginalized.[11] Some people did not comply with these simple rules during the period of state socialism, but they nonetheless used self-censorship in interviews, memoirs, and diaries. Due to the social and political circumstances, for a long time Jewish identity remained a sensitive topic that was difficult to discuss. Opportunities for public discussions about Jewishness were mostly provided by cases involving crimes that had been committed against political dissidents or people of Jewish origin (the Eichmann trial, the trial of Mihály Francia Kiss, trials against former members of the Arrow Cross Party, and the trials against gendarmes who had participated in atrocities in wartime Bačka).[12]

9 Bibó, "Zsidókérdés Magyarországon," 481–89.

10 See Frojimovics, *Szétszakadt történelem,* and Laczó, "Szemtanúk, memoárírók, monográfusok," 355–72.

11 In 1952–55 as part of the anti-Zionist political campaign in the Eastern Bloc, several Jewish leaders were sentenced to prison. Some of them did not survive the severe conditions and tortures to which they were afflicted while in the custody.

12 Mihály Francia Kiss was sentenced to death in 1948, but due to his escape, he was not executed until 1957. About his trial see Rév, "Ellenforradalom," 42–54.

According to many scholars, the most striking feature of tabooing Jewishness was that the word "Jewish" was replaced by other terms, such as communist.[13] Instead of acknowledging the suffering of the Jews, the stereotypical victim was portrayed in the context of an anti-fascist struggle and a struggle for universal human rights.[14] In common usage, "the Jews" referred to the "Persecuted," the "Sacrificial," the "Martyr People." Jewish identity as such was not spoken about in public. Rather, it was replaced by the concept of "Jewish ancestry." There is consensus among scholars that the memory of the Holocaust was for the first time manifested in cultural products in the 1960s, in particular in film and literature.[15] However, it was not until the 1980s that professionals—psychiatrists and psychologists—first confronted the traumas of the survivors' generation.[16] (The psychiatrists of the 1960–70s, for example the Júlia György school in Budapest, mainly focused on criminal or deviant behavior.) Despite the marginal nature of the memory of the Holocaust, references to issues related to the Hungarian Jewry as a community started to appear in the press in the late 1950s.[17] A news report on the possibility of compensation for those persecuted for political or "other" reasons was published in the Party newspaper in January 1956.[18] In the following year, the Party's Central Committee proposed the establishment of a National Advocacy Organization for Victims of Nazism. The Hungarian press also reported on the Eichmann trial (1961/62) and the large-scale "Auschwitz trial," which was held over the course of more than a year and a half, from December 1963 to August 1965.

The two trials significantly shaped the representation of the Holocaust in Hungarian films (for instance *Utószezon*, or "Late Season"), not to mention the

13 Erős, "A zsidó identitás," 53–58); Erős, Kovács, and Lévai, "Hogyan jöttem rá, hogy zsidó vagyok?" 129–44; Kovács and Vajda, *Mutatkozás: zsidó identitástörténetek*.

14 A typical example of one such character is István Szijjártó—played by György Pálos—in the immensely popular film *Tizedes meg a többiek* [The Corporal and the Others, 1965]. Szijjártó represents a Jewish Communist sympathizer who escapes from the labor service.

15 Surányi, *Minarik, Sonnenschein és a többiek*; Zombory, Lénárt, and Szász, "Elfeledett szembenézés," 245–56.

16 The history of the Hungarian Jewry, Jewish Hungarian identity, and Jewish Hungarian memory became the subject of social science and historical research only in the 1980s.

17 Israel's and West Germany's foreign policy and domestic criticism were recurrent topics in the Hungarian press. One of the subjects of interest was the restitution of the German–Hungarian relations.

18 The news was printed in the party's daily newspaper, though hardly in a prominent place. The code name merits notice. "Official Summons: All Hungarian citizens who earlier had permanent residence status in Germany and who, for political, racial, ore religious reasons, suffered persecution can make claims for compensation. The General Banking and Trust Company provides detailed information. Budapest. V. Dorottya utca 7. (Telephone: 186-505)." *Népszabadság,* January 7, 1956, 4.

entire American film industry. During the Eichmann trial, United Artists started promoting Stanley Kramer's film, *Judgement at Nuremberg*. The film was based on actual events (the so-called Judges' Trial of 1947, or, by its official name, the United States of America vs. Josef Altstötter, et al.), and, like Hungarian films of the 1960s, it revolved around the question of collective versus individual responsibility: who were the main culprits in the crimes against humanity committed by the Nazis: the entire German nation or certain representatives of the state? As in some of the films analyzed in this article, perpetrators in the *Judgement at Nuremberg* who are capable of self-reflection awaken a degree of sympathy in the audience. One of the judges, Dr. Ernst Janning, who served as Minister of Justice before the war, is portrayed as a self-critical person who sincerely realizes his sins. The theme of absolution-through-confession seems to have resonated well with the audience: the actor who played the judge was Maximillien Schell, and his performance earned him an Oscar award for the best lead actor.[19]

We draw a distinction in this article between remembrance and commemoration. Remembrance can be seen as a passive act, whereas commemoration implies a more proactive attitude towards the collection of memories.[20] According to Pierre Nora, the official results of processing the past—history textbooks—became gradually more available to people with various social backgrounds in the second half of the twentieth century.[21] Moreover, the emergence of nationwide commemorations during public holidays enlarged the group of people who could be considered (and were encouraged to consider themselves) the "beneficial owners" of the past. Therefore, acts of remembrance, which had been practiced locally and by narrow social groups, gradually became part of official activities of collecting memories. The "beneficial owners" of the past were seen by the state as being equal in status, so their memories became equally significant in memory politics. In the Hungarian context, Jewish remembrance slowly became part of formalized commemoration practices which depicted antifascist behavior, intellectual dissent, and even symbols of Jewishness, such as the tallith in the film *Oldás és kötés* (Cantata, 1963). The gradual inclusion of Jewish characters and Jewish themes in cinematic depictions of the past is demonstrated by the appearance of Jewish characters in the feature film

19 Kárpáti, "Ilyenek voltunk."

20 Cf. Andrews, "Poppies, Tommies and Remembrance," 104–12.

21 Nora, "L'histoire au péril de la politique." 54.

Két pisztolylövés (Two Gunshots, 1977–79) and the popular television series, *Kémeri* (1984/85).[22]

Alongside the films and newspaper articles that addressed the legacy of war crimes, historical books that reflected on the traumatic past were published as well. The most well-known examples include *Darutollasok – Szegedtől a királyi várig* ("Soldiers with crane's feathers – From Szeged to the royal palace") and *A berchtesgadeni sasfészektől a berlini bunkerig: fejezetek a második világháború történetéből* (From the Eagle's Nest of Berchtesgaden to the Berlin bunker: Chapters from the history of World War II), one authored and one coauthored by Elek Karsai.[23] These books articulated the official interpretation of the causes of World War II, and they both portrayed Jews either as active anti-fascist oppositionists or as naïve victims whose deaths represented the shameful chapters of the recent past. In 1966, a book was published about SS Standartenführer Kurt Becher's life and activities in Hungary, which included reflections on post-war judicial procedures.[24] Beginning in 1965, several historical books were translated from German about the Eichmann case, the Auschwitz trial, and other famous cases.[25] Moreover, further steps were made toward expanding historical research on the topic.[26] One of the most successful books that addressed the topic from a historical perspective was published at the beginning of the 1970s. The memoir of a former Soviet spy, Sándor Radó, entitled *Dóra jelenti* (Dóra reports) became a huge success in Hungary, and it was turned into a film in 1977. Although the characters in the book and the film come from different social backgrounds, Jewish origin was portrayed emphatically as an identity of on its own. However, it was mostly associated with Soviet spies or Communist-Nazi double agents.

The growing frequency of representations of the traumatic legacy of the war in Hungary was closely linked to the emergence of the thaw in Khrushchev's Soviet Union. In the more relaxed cultural atmosphere, Soviet feature films started to reflect on the memory of the Holocaust in subtle, indirect ways. However, Jewishness was not explored in detail, and it was most often portrayed in connection with the theme of anti-fascism and the

22 *Két pisztolylövés* portrays a war criminal who pretends to be a Jewish survivor, and in *Kémeri* the protagonist is an attorney in the interwar period with a Jewish background.

23 Karsai and Pintér, *Darutollasok*; Karsai, *A berchtesgadeni sasfészektől.*

24 Lévai, *A fekete SS "fehér bárónya."*

25 The Kossuth Publishing House edited a book in a very similar format entitled *The Trial against Arrow Cross Party Unit in Zugló in 1967*. The writers, József Sólyom and László Szabó (a police officer and a journalist), emphasized the brutality of the accused without reflecting on the social context.

26 Lackó, *Nyilasok, nemzetiszocialisták*; Karsai and Benoschofsky, *Vádirat a nácizmus ellen*.

stereotype of the stalwart, committed communist. Two of the most significant films dealing with the topic during the thaw (1956–68) were *Soldaty* (Soldiers, 1956) and *Khronika pikiruiushchego bombardirovshchika* (Chronicle of the Dive Bomber, 1968). In *Soldaty*, the main character, Farber plays an insecure (Jewish) intellectual who comes across as a weak, feminine figure, in comparison with his tall and strong Soviet comrades. Nevertheless, the fate of Farber could be interpreted as a metaphor for Soviet society and Jewish suffering during the war. In *Khronika pikiruiushchego bombardirovshchika* the lead character, Venia Gurevich is a violinist who becomes a bomber pilot during the war. The traumatic past is evoked through his relationship with his beloved grandfather, who represents the painful legacy of the Holocaust.[27]

Despite the growing number of historical assessments and cinematic portrayals, the most important field in which aspects of Jewishness and trauma were represented was literature. Literary works provided often subtle yet very powerful depictions of wartime suffering and the theme of Jewishness. Of the many literary depictions of the topic, two German dramas deserve particular mention.[28] The plays were translated into Hungarian in the mid-1960s, and later they were performed on stage. Rolf Hochhut's play (*Der Stellvertreter*) has provoked intense debates in West Germany. Through the figure of the helpless Pope Pius XII, it pilloried the weakness and the moral compromises of the Vatican and other bystanders, who let the Italian (converted) Jews be deported. One of the main characters, Doctor (Mengele) was an otherworldly, demonic figure,[29] which in Mary Fulbrook's view confirmed the dominant view regarding the responsibility of the Germans in the Holocaust; i.e. that "a small group of criminals' and villains ruling in Germany could be blamed for everything."[30] According to Fulbrook, this symbolism was far from the "banality of evil" thesis advocated by Hannah Arendt, and it absolved the average German citizen of responsibility. Such statements, however, need to be qualified. In Hochhut's detailed analysis, not only vicious, insane figures, but also ordinary people observed the horrors with total indifference. Similar characters also featured in Hungarian films later. "Ordinary citizens" and indifferent bystanders depicted

27 Gershenson, "The Holocaust on Soviet Screens," 110–16.

28 For instance Keszi, *Elysium*, which was adapted to film by Erika Szántó in 1986; Várkonyi, *Kenyér és kereszt,* 232–43; and a documentary novel inspired by the trial against former Arrow Cross members: Várkonyi, *A tanú*.

29 Dr. Josef Mengele was the most frequently mentioned figure among the criminals of war by Hungarian Holocaust survivors. See Vági, "Az orvos tragédiája," 9–10.

30 Fulbrook, *German National Identity,* 71–72.

in these films and literary works continued with their work and their lives after the war without remorse.

The second play, Peter Weiss's drama *The Investigation* (Die Ermittlung) dealt with the Auschwitz trial. The dispassionate narrative style and the diverse cast offered an accurate representation of the "perpetrator" in West German society. The play also provoked a debate about the legacy of the Holocaust in Hungary. The first Hungarian reports on the drama appeared in connection with a campaign to promote German left-wing writers in November 1965.[31] Two years later, during the trial of former Arrow Cross Party members, Péter Molnár Gál, the critic who wrote for the party newspaper (*Népszabadság*), raised the question in connection with the premiere of the drama in the National Theatre: "Is it necessary, over and over again, who knows how many times, to give an artistic form to the horrors?" Referring to the Arrow Cross trial against Vilmos Kröszl and 18 of his accomplices that took place in Zugló between 19 January and 19 April 1969, he gave the following answer:[32]

> An era has ended, but not yet come to completion. It is not resolved, it remained open, like a modern play, and after the 'swastika curtain' fell it continued to live disturbingly in the peace that followed. Today, when the National Theatre presents Peter Weiss's oratorio *The Investigation*, a similar trial takes place here in Budapest with broken victims and arrogant killers. This strange coincidence is a memento: this glowing evocation is not actually history, it is not the gymnastics of a literatura that has run out of adequate topics, but rather is living actuality.[33]

It is interesting that Molnár Gál stresses the topical and incomplete nature of past traumas, arguing that the "Terror" (i.e the Holocaust) should rather be forgotten. Although his motivations remain unclear, he might have been alluding to the series of contemporary Hungarian films—all based on literary works—that were released at roughly the same time, films which all revolved around a similar them: the legacy of the traumatic past and the incompleteness of reconciliation.

31 The drama was staged at the same time in East and West Berlin (19 October 1965), followed by a number of European premiers.

32 Lénárt, "Tömeggyilkosok civilben," 208–67.

33 Péter Molnár Gál, "A vizsgálat: Peter Weiss drámája a Nemzeti Színházban," *Népszabadság*, February 5, 1967.

Trauma, Violence, and the Memories of Perpetrators

In 1964, Tibor Cseres published *Hideg napok* ("Cold Days"), a novel about the 1942 Novi Sad massacre. Two years later, András Kovács made a film adaptation by the same title. Both met with favorable international reactions and drew attention to the violent raid in Southern Hungary (Bačka).[34] The writer's approach was not one-sided. His focus was not on the perpetrators, but on the complex process of coming to terms with the past, which eventually made the characters realize that they had become complicit in mass murder as cogs in a machine. By focusing on individual responsibility, the book and the film tried to examine how the carefully planned anti-partisan "cleanup operation" escalated into a bloody reprisal against the civilian population. The crimes were clear: innocent people died or suffered physical and psychological injuries which cast a shadow over their entire lives. The question of the liability of the perpetrators was much more problematic. The context in which perpetrators contemplate their experiences in the film is a prison cell in 1945. The characters are all former soldiers who participated in the Novi Sad massacre. They are trying to explain to one another and themselves the details of the events and their own behavior and/or alleged powerlessness. The trial and the impending severe punishments are omnipresent in the prison, but the detainees still make an attempt to soothe their consciences, emphasizing the role of chance in the events. "They are no better than us," one of them says, "they only have better luck." In the solitude of the cell they try to give a relatively honest account of their motivations and their responsibility in the escalation of violence. Cseres' choice of topic was criticized and praised at the same time, which demonstrates the controversial nature of the theme of war crimes in Hungary at the time. Instead of evoking the trauma of the victims, he narrated the events from the perspective of the perpetrators. His approach was, thus, groundbreaking at the time. The novel offered a useful prism through which Hungarian society could confront the Bačka massacre and the criminality of war.

The public discourses on wartime violence, which were partly fueled by literary works (including *Cold Days*), also led to the organization of actual trials against former policemen and soldiers of the Horthy regime. Critical and journalistic responses to *Cold Days* framed the debate on the issue of mass

34 Cseres, *Hideg napok*. The novel and movie focused on the Novi Sad raid, which is why many people think that the massacre was limited to that town.

murders in the context of a socialist public space.[35] Moreover, cooperation with the Yugoslav authorities in addressing the atrocities facilitated a prolonged, relatively open debate about the murders committed by both sides.[36] Genuine attempts were made to come to terms with the past through legal means: trials against representatives of the pre-war regime were carried out between 1967 and 1973, and they resulted in lengthy sentences for almost 20 people. Two additional investigations were initiated against two Arrow Cross armored units. While the trials in 1967 met with significant media attention, five years later the events seemed to have lost a great deal of their importance. The past was considered over, so the punishments that were meted out for the crimes were less severe.[37] The context for confronting the past was no longer the courtroom, but scholarship. Wartime mass murders were no longer off-limits for Hungarian historical research, and this shift led to a gradual growth in the number of analytical publications on the dark chapters of the war.[38]

There are some conspicuous similarities between *Cold Days* and Zoltán Várkonyi's film *Szemtől szembe* ("Face to Face," 1970). The basic situation is very similar. In both films, former comrades meet and share their memories with each other, although in the first case this happens under pressure, in a prison cell before a trial, while in the second, the soldiers reunite at a formal ceremony dedicated to two martyrs 25 years after the tragic events have taken place. In both cases, the choices and responsibilities of the individual come under scrutiny. In the first film, the stakes are much higher, whereas in the second, the recovery of individual self-esteem and respect for others take center stage. There is no threat or menace, the past is over. The former soldiers are merely looking for purification and empathy from their comrades. This is why the director of the local school decides to go to the event, of which he was informed in the news. However, his arrival provokes antagonism rather than empathy. First, he is blamed by everyone for the senseless death of 63 brothers-in-arms and the same number of Soviet soldiers in the war. Although the former captain, Sajbán, was ready to surrender to the advancing Soviet troops towards the end of the war, he failed to order a ceasefire. Moreover, the soldiers in the rifle unit could have liberated a concentration camp in a nearby village if they had been willing

35 György István, "A kormányzóúr megmásítja," *Népszabadság*, November 23, 1969, 4.

36 Pál E. Fehér, "Könyvekről. Cseres Tibor: Bizonytalan század," *Népszabadság*, October 3, 1968, 7.

37 Lénárt, "A megtalált ellenség," 355–95.

38 Buzási, *Az újvidéki "razzia"*; Sajti, *Délvidék 1941–1944*; idem, *Impériumváltások, revízió és kisebbség*; Pihurik, "Magyarok és szerbek a Délvidéken," 83–102.

to take some risks. However, it gradually becomes apparent that not only the captain, but all of the other people had their own interests and responsibilities, which prevented them from mounting resistance against the retreating German troops. Everybody is guilty. The film does a good job showing the different careers of the "ordinary soldiers" after the war.[39] The captain became a school principal, one of the officers became a physician, another one a journalist, and the corporal who sympathized with the communists arrives at the ceremony as deputy minister. But some of the soldiers remained farmers or waiters, and the only soldier who had actually shot a German officer barely survived the Soviet attack and stayed in his village as a poor cemetery keeper. He was the only who did something and tried to protect the members of the Jewish labor unit. In the end, he escaped deportation, though not because of the attempt he made to help the Jews. Although he is the one character who would deserve absolution in the film, he remains an outcast: he lives in absolute solitude in the same village, far away from friends, and he is given no social or political recognition.

Despite their responsibility in the unfolding of the tragic events in their locality, none of the soldiers was taken to court, and only one of them was actually reported to the police: "A dirty fellow dumped on me badly, but I had a good honest Jewish man who pulled me out." This character is dull and simple-minded, but also brutally honest: he says only what he thinks.[40] "In my village not a single Jew remained, even if I wanted to, I could not be angry with anyone." Justice is not served by legal means, and the soldiers are not condemned morally by their victims either. Although two former labor service conscripts are invited to the 25th anniversary reunion (which would have been highly unlikely in real life), they feel uncomfortable, and they are upset by the attitude of the former soldiers.

The motive of the memory of the unknown soldiers who died for the "enemy"—i.e. for the wartime regime in Hungary—appears very similarly in *Face to Face* and in Zoltán Fábri's *Plusz-mínusz egy nap* ("One Day, More or Less," 1972). Here, the deputy minister asks if the memorial to the forgotten heroes, the Martyrs' Tomb, is in good condition. The tormented, traumatized caretaker responds: "Yes, but are you not curious about the others? Here are all 63. I looked after them just out of friendship. Not a lot is spent on them."

39 Rainer M., "Önéletrajzi reprezentáció," 192–205.

40 The same actor, Ádám Szirtes, plays a very similar role in the movies *Cold Days* and *Face to Face*, see below.

The minute by minute reconstruction of the last day of the events in the film eventually allows the soldiers to recognize one another's feelings and motivations during a tense situation. They are unable to find a decisive point in time when things went wrong, because the pivotal moment was different for each member of the unit. The captain's wife asks cynically after the meeting if it made any sense at all, but the question remains unanswered. The husband drives on quietly, and we can see a new town under construction, which can be interpreted as a symbol of the construction of a new country. The act of remembering in the film does not result in coming to terms with the traumas of the past, and it appears to be meaningless. Remembering is portrayed as a burden for the participants in the traumatic events, a legacy that the future is unable to reconcile with the present. Although there is a multiplicity of interpretations of the past, participants are unable to relate to or process its legacy. They either condemn or praise past events. There are no shades of nuance. The conclusion of the films also suggests that attempts at remembering and reconstructing the past do not necessarily result in the processing of traumas, even if the survivors push the need to remember.

Trauma and Responsibility in Zoltán Fábri's Films

The films by Zoltán Fábri analyzed in this section involve a similar need and compulsion: the need to remember sin and the search for a remedy. This is why the motive of a court trial can be found in all of them. Like Várkonyi and Kovács, Fábri also addressed the issue of individual and collective responsibility in his films. In his film adaptation of György Rónay's 1963 novel *Esti gyors* (Evening Express) in 1967, to which he gave the aforementioned title *Utószezon*, the protagonist commits suicide because of a crisis of conscience.[41] In this film, "old-timers" play the main roles. A group of elderly people—a former high court judge, a pharmacist, a general, a teacher and a trader—live their stagnant and harmless lives—as if in a bubble—in a small, quiet town. They are connected to the present only through the daily news. Otherwise they exchange ironic comments about the little time they have left in the world: it is

41 The film version of the first Hungarian musical (*Egy szerelem három éjszakája*, or "Three Nights of a Love," 1961), which was based on the tragic fate of the great Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti (a Catholic who was defined by Hungary's Jewish laws as Jewish, put in a forced labor unit during the war, and killed in the last months of the fighting by the Hungarian militiamen, who regarded the internees in the units as political prisoners rather than fellow countrymen), was presented to audiences the same year.

merely "Late Season." One joke, however, goes horribly wrong: the protagonist gets confused about a phone call (allegedly from the "police") and about press reports of the Eichmann trial, and he decides to request a court judgement in his own case. Twenty years earlier, he confided in a former classmate, who, as the local police officer in 1944, had accused the owner of the pharmacy and his wife of being Jews. The couple was deported and the main character, Kerekes, never saw them again. His remorse appears deserved. Kerekes demands to be either acquitted or condemned, and he does not seem to care which. He is committed to learning the truth and easing his guilty conscience. However, his desperate attempt to come to terms with the traumatic past fails. The judicial institutions and his friends have no idea whatsoever how to handle the situation. Only one person in the group—the Auschwitz survivor—is willing to condemn him at an exhausting staged "trial," but even he withdraws his judgement the following day, after having sobered up. Unable to find reconciliation and absolution, Kerekes makes an unsuccessful attempt to kill himself. In the last scenes of the movie he is shown sitting in desperate solitude in the midst of a joyful crowd in the old gentlemen's club.

The film is unique in the sense that it represents the trauma of the Holocaust in a direct manner: while being chased by old men, Kerekes takes shelter in a cinema where he sees the news about the Eichmann trial and a shocking documentary about the death camps.[42] In one of Kerekes' nightmares, he appears naked in a gas chamber—which resembles phone booths with transparent walls—and dies with the rest of the people in the chamber after the taps are opened. Partly because of the gas chamber scence, *Late Season* was not received well, unlike Fábri's previous films. Some critics considered it a total failure and criticized the movie both from a literary and an aesthetic point of view. The complexities of the film will not be analyzed here due to spatial limitations. Only one aspect will be discussed: the controversial casting.

According to Péter György, the movie would have been a decent—albeit not a very successful—attempt at portraying the traumatic past, had the former "Arrow Cross" sympathizer Antal Páger and the "Jewish" Lajos Básti not played the most important characters. The casting, in his opinion, discredited the attempt to confront the past through the film. By choosing these particular

42 It is a pseudo news report, excerpts of Alain Resnais' *Night and Fog* (1955) were inserted into the pictures taken in the courtroom during Eichmann's trial. These shots were not screened in Hungary before Fábri's film. Zombory, Lénárt, and Szász, "Elfeledett szembenézés," 250.

actors, he claims, Fábri made the question of social conscience unimportant and venial.

> And there was the political-aesthetic lesson, the outstanding artistry of Páger and Básti, which could have been admired by the members of the audience, although they were aware who had played which role in real life. If a Jew can play a former chief police inspector, who after serving his sentence could live quite a calm and excellent life [...], then everything is fine, you do not have to take anything too seriously, then maybe this Eichmann case is not such a serious matter either.[43]

However, György's conclusion is somewhat premature. His verdict was made hastily, before he had considered other interpretations; it was perhaps influenced by his general opinion of the memory politics of the era. One might raise the following question concerning his interpretation: to what extent was the reception of the film actually influenced by the personal background of the leading actor? If the audience did indeed interpret the film in the context of Páger's personal life (a possibility which is discussed in the next section of this article), this would suggest that the director had given the actor a chance to the penance. Does this interpretation hold if one takes into consideration the fact that the role of the former police captain was played by Lajos Básti, a man of Jewish origins? György analyzes *Late Season* in the context of other cinematic works of the time, while reflecting on the regime's "devastating identity politics," which furthered (largely by ignoring) complicity. He claims that although the regime allowed the creation of films addressing the traumatic aspects of the past, the casting could also be perceived as a cynical attempt to belittle the significance of such events. If this was the case, do we need to take into account other actors' lives when analyzing the films of the Kádár era? If yes, which actors should be considered, and who should be left out? Despite the flaws in György's argument, it is plausible that the choice of actors shaped perceptions and interpretations of the traumatic past. A more balanced interpretation of the film, however, would refrain from overemphasizing this connection. Zoltán Fábry's creative autonomy stands beyond all doubt and, as far as Páger is concerned, as a renowned artist, he could have refused the part if he had wanted to do.[44] If the moral dilemmas and impotence of the protagonist

43 Péter, *Apám helyett*, 264

44 Zombory, Lénárt, and Szász, "Elfeledett szembenézés," 254.

did, indeed, touch him deeply because of his own personal life history, then one might pose the question: could his involvement in the film be regarded as a sort of "confession"? He was morally culpable and complicit in the crimes (although on a much smaller scale than many others), and this may well have made him feel unceasing remorse. Whatever the motivations Páger had when accepting the part, the sources indicate that the choice of actors was most likely the result of conscious planning, in which the actors' professionalism played the decisive role. Moreover, Fábri had worked with Páger before in *Vízivárosi nyár* ("Hard Summer," 1964) and *Húsz* óra ("Twenty hours," 1965).

The Páger Affair

Irrespective of Fábri's motivations behind casting Páger for the role, the actor's return to Hungary and his subsequent career epitomizes the politics of memory in the early Kádár era. The most controversial episodes in Páger's life, like the legacy of the traumatic past, were not discussed openly at the time. As in the case of the fictional characters in the films already discussed, his past was not reconciled with his present, it was merely swept under the carpet. When after many years of background negotiations, Páger eventually returned to Hungary in the autumn of 1956, he was not required to make any public show of atonement. His former villa was even given back to him, and he was able to continue his acting career. Páger's return to film exemplified the ambivalence of the way Hungarian society confronted with the past at the time. The Politburo did not want to deal with the actor's past, and it did not want others to deal with it either. It allowed Páger to perform on stage and on the screen, and it perceived him as a "cultural product." Nobody was supposed to remember or reflect upon Páger's rise to prominence and his spectacular career before 1945.[45] However, the regime's efforts to bury the darkest chapters of his past were not always successful. In the early autumn of 1956, artists and civilians protested both publicly and in anonymous letters against his return. The outbreak of the revolution six weeks later and the consolidation of the Kádár regime in 1957 made the indignation provoked by Páger's return completely insignificant. Nonetheless, his past continued to cast shadows on his life and career, despite his growing popularity and artistic successes.

45 Historical Archives of the State Security Services (ÁBTL) K-587. T "Pacsirta" [Lark] dossier 192.

As archival records demonstrate, the chapters of Páger's former life were never actually forgotten, but they were not discussed publicly either.[46] Although he never became a member of the Arrow Cross party, he had had good relationship with representatives of the "extreme-right actors' group" (László Szilassy, Zita Szeleczky, and others). He had been a member of the Arrow Cross cultural propaganda institution, the "House of Culture," and he had often played prominent roles in Arrow Cross events, together with Szeleczki. He had been on friendly terms with the former director of the Hungarian National Theatre, Ferenc Kiss, who later was sentenced for war crimes. Due to his relationship with Kiss, Páger most likely had conflicts with prohibited leftist (Communist) or Jewish actors and directors, such as Tamás Major (Director of the National Theater between 1945 and 1962), Lajos Básti (leading actor of the National Theater after the war), and Zoltán Várkonyi (director of dozens of movies and rector of the Budapest Film Academy between 1972 and 1979). By luring Páger back to Hungary, both the Ministry of Interior and the Party leadership hoped to weaken the "fascist emigration" and strengthen Hungary's reputation by exploiting the propaganda value provided by the return of a first rate actor.[47] Doubts about Páger's conversion seem to have been well founded. In a surprisingly frank letter to his childhood friend, which was actually addressed to the Secret Service, he openly expressed his anti-Semitic views. He claimed that while he was never a communist, he had always helped the poor, the "barefoot," and that he was forced to leave the country in spite of the fact that he had been adored by his audience.

> What would have happened to me if I had stayed at home and had fallen into the hands of the baited Jews? Maybe they were my only enemies. And so they remained. They've put on me the 'hump,' it is because of them that I do not take a single step to the stage and to making movies, because they are the powerful ones; whatever they want to happen will happen.[48]

The former editor of the weekly *Hétfői Hírlap* recalled in his memoirs that after Páger's repatriation daily papers at first did not dare comment on the

46 ABTL M-17376/1. The dossier of agent codename "Cyrano." ÁBTL M-18658. "Jenei" dossier. ABTL M-30841. "Pesti Péter" dossier,

47 ABTL K-587/T d. 24.

48 Páger's letter to his friend, December 28, 1955–January 3, 1956. ABTL K-587-t "Pacsirta" ill. "Pécsi" d. 1-8/105 pages.

event, and they only published the official news agency communiqué.[49] The press, however, soon picked up the theme: "A great sensation was created. It turned out that in that political atmosphere a one-line piece of news could be at least as sensational as a bold political article."[50] The newspaper *Népszava*, for example, openly criticized press reports that followed the official line too closely. The author acknowledged the importance of granting forgiveness to Páger: "It is correct and democratic that our government unobtrusively permitted the repatriation of a famous actor who before our liberation committed serious crimes against our nation with his anti-democratic behavior."[51] Yet, while he agreed that the new state was stable enough to allow for such gestures, he also highlighted that such a move could send out ambivalent signals: "the people who have been punished in Hungary could also expect to be boosted." In a concluding remark the article suggested toning down the festive atmosphere provoked by Páger's return in the media. While blatant criticism of the party's policies could seem surprising, it should be noted that such discussions took place only a few months before the revolution of 1956. Due to the activities of the Petőfi Circle[52] and the resignation of the Stalinist party leader Mátyás Rákosi, the party's grip over the press loosened. The unusually critical reactions, which were directed partly against Páger and partly against the Party leaders, had a common theme: the actor was welcome in Hungary as long as he worked hard, was modest, and his acting benefitted the domestic audience. The lessons of the "Páger-fever" were summarized by one detective two weeks after Páger's arrival:

> On the one hand, the Páger-case is evidence of the fact that the protagonists of the events of 1944 or its masterminds are still unfavorably received by wide circles of society, and not only by the Jews. On the other hand, it demonstrates that in wide circles of society a strong aversion has developed to people who have emigrated to the West, […] to those who lived well while we suffered at home, starved, and rebuilt the country. If they want to come back, let them come, but they should remain silent, and they should not dream of playing a leading role in this country.[53]

49 Czímer, "Páger Antal hazatérése," 18.

50 Ibid., 18.

51 *Népszava,* September 4, 1956.

52 The Petőfi Circle was a debate forum for young communists in 1956.

53 ABTL K-587/T dossier, 166.

Since Páger was willing to play by the rules, his anti-Semitism was not mentioned and he was not stigmatized for his wartime political views. This strategy bore fruit, and at the end of September, he wrote to his family with a tone of relief: "This week I had a lot of Jewish visitors. Among others, yesterday, Lajos Basthi [sic!] came to see me. He generously offered me his services. From all this I see that the government has done something to stop the attacks."[54]

The short biography of Páger by Molnár Gál, entitled *A Páger-ügy* ("The Páger Affair, 1988) and published two years after the actor's death, addresses his political engagement in the 1940s and his apparently successful but controversial reintegration into the socialist system.[55] However, Molnár Gál argues that despite Páger's successful artistic career, he was not entirely accepted by Hungarian society. Like the fictional characters in the films of the early Kádár era, Páger never truly confronted his past in public, so he was never granted total absolution. According to Molnár Gál, a good opportunity for the admission of his mistakes came in 1967 at the Venice Biennale, when *Late Season* was enrolled for the film festival. However, the opportunity was missed. The film provoked public indignation in Venice, mostly because Israel criticized the director for offering the protagonist's role to Páger. Fábri tried to defend his actor by saying that "he had cleared himself to the satisfaction of the authorities," but to no avail. *Variety* magazine, for example, labelled the film the "Hungarian Jud Süss."[56] It claimed that the inclusion of the film in the festival was a scandal, and it criticized the Kádár regime, characterizing it as cynical for having allowed Páger to play a leading role. Despite its controversial reception, the film was awarded the Golden Lion for Páger's performance. Molnár Gál argues convincingly that the award should be considered an act of "cultural diplomacy reparation" on behalf of the organizers.[57] At the same time, the film's problematic reception—scandal versus award—symbolizes Páger's unfinished integration into postwar society and encapsulates the failures of the attempts to come to terms with the legacy of the Holocaust in contemporary Europe.

The timing of the screening adds another layer of complexity to the interpretation of the film. *Late Season* was screened in February 1967, just a

54 ABTL K-587/T dossier, 199.

55 Molnár Gál, *A Páger-ügy*.

56 Curtis, "Israel Incensed," 172.

57 The film won the Cineforum 67 prize "for the humane and lively language in which grotesque elements do not neutralize the high principles and for the confession about individual responsibility and the statement against violence and intolerance." "Több kitüntetést kapott az Utószezon Velencében," *Magyar Nemzet*, September 9, 1967.

few weeks after the beginning of a trial against a group of war criminals in Hungary. While there is no evidence for a direct link between the two events, the timing was probably not coincidental. The topic of the persecution of the Jews was addressed in public discourse and cultural products with growing frequency in the second half of the 1960s. As the films analyzed earlier demonstrate, personal responsibility, accountability, and legal cases were prominent themes in cultural representations of the traumatic past at the time, and sometimes these representations referred to or were even inspired by actual trials against former Nazi collaborators.

Absolution through Confession: Pillar of Salt

Although criticisms of Fábri's casting decisions were not totally unfounded, *Late Season* was not the first film in which the "Arrow Cross" Páger appeared in a similarly controversial role. *Sóbálvány* ("Pillar of Salt," 1958), a rather didactic and duly forgotten film directed by Zoltán Várkonyi, also featured the actor, who plays a character who makes questionable moral choices in wartime Hungary. The protagonist of the film is a doctor, who, during the siege of Budapest in 1945 continues to operate on wounded people in a poorly equipped hospital. He admits a persecuted stranger to the ward, but fails to intervene when the Nazis arrest the suspicious man, who is killed during a failed escape attempt. After the war, the doctor is reported for having failed to rescue the man who was supposedly a communist. The film focuses on remorse and follows the development of the protagonist's character. The plot culminates in the doctor's confession before the court, resulting in complete moral purification, and thus, an overture to a new life. In one of the most fascinating scenes in the film, the doctor is required to reenact the escape and impersonate the Nazi soldier who was present at the time. When confronted with the consequences of his moral choices, the doctor realizes that had he shown even a small degree of empathy, he could have saved the man pursued by the Nazis, but his own indifference sealed the man's fate.

Despite the doctor's acknowledgement of his own culpability in the tragic events, he initially remains reluctant to take the blame. As a young Communist functionary put it, "You see, you are just like that! Taking *some*, but not all of the responsibility." However, he assumes full responsibility in the end, but not all of the characters in the film are capable of doing so. Halfway through the film, the well-meaning but conceited, alcoholic hospital director offers

a fatalistic explanation of his own indifferent attitude: "Hungary has been a country of anonymous denunciations for centuries. […] They want to snuff you out, they have already taken care of me. They place their own men everywhere. Now, it's your turn." He continues: "Do you want your truth from 'them' [the Communists]? […] To get through! The question is who manages to survive?" The doctor, who comes from a middle-class background, also realizes that the aim of the new political system is to get rid of him. The desperate physician eventually understands that if he fails to muster the courage to face his own demons and tackle the legacy of the traumatic past, he will fall. However, the new regime did not intend to eliminate the adherents of the old order. Its goal was to make them admit their past mistakes and, in doing so, consolidate the social base of the new state. Or to put it in simpler terms: to convert fascists into anti-fascists. The idea that the confession of past mistakes could lead to absolution and integration into the new society is expressed in a less significant scene, in which the new communist hospital director tells the doctor who is ready to convert that "the memories differ, but our future is the same."

The Impossibility of Reconciliation: One Day, More or Less

Plusz-mínusz egy nap ("One Day, More or Less," 1973), which was based on a short story by Ádám Bodor by the same title, differs from the rest of the films analyzed in this article, as it portrays a more thorough and desperate—yet, tragically unsuccessful—attempt by a perpetrator to come to terms with his own shameful past. The main character has actually served a long prison sentence for his crimes, but he still decides to return to the scene of his violent deeds, where as a sergeant he killed some of the local villagers and had their houses burnt down during the war. No matter how many years (25!) he has spent in prison and in forced labor camps, he is committed to reconciling with the locals. Upon his release, the former soldier, Baradla, feels empty and disinterested, and he even escapes to the penal compound once. The guards on duty eventually become his companions, and they read out the unopened letters which had been written to him many years before. However, it is only when his former comrade in the penalty battalion, Simon Obrád, is mentioned that he starts paying attention and decides to visit his friend—who during the days of the uprising of 1956 sent him a letter. It is clear from the outset that the obsessive, nervous wreck will be unable to start a normal, civilian life. He has lost his interest in the mundane aspects of life: he even remains disinterested when the lively Obrád offers him his own girlfriend.

Everything irritates and annoys the gloomy, aloof, introverted former war criminal. There is only one thing he is interested in: meeting the villagers. He returns with his comrade to the village looking for survivors, but the little village cemetery only has graves dedicated to 'our martyrs': people who were killed in October 1944. He tries to find the graves of his fallen comrades who fought for Horthy: "And ours?" he asks, "I cannot find them." "[Their graves are] unmarked; as is fitting for the heroic dead." They eventually recognize the innkeeper, who wants to remember neither them nor the events. He feels extremely uncomfortable and embarrassed, and he is clearly afraid of the two visitors. When the increasingly drunk strangers propose a "re-trial," everyone, including the innkeeper, rejects the idea and denies remembering anything. Despite the foul-mouthed pleas of Baradla—"Here is an encounter, we need to talk about something. We have common memories, we must understand one another"—the villagers walk out of the "meeting." Only one man, the son of one of the victims, appears in the pub, but he attacks the visitors with a hammer and then attacks the policeman who suddenly shows up. (The young man is finally restrained by the others.) Although as the relative of a victim he could take the moral high ground, he has to face serious legal consequences because of attempted homicide of public officials: "Miska, why? – Because I'm in a good mood, little git! As if you had not stayed for an hour in front of the window!" and then he spits in the policeman's eyes. After the travelers are warned by the police to leave the pub, they go to the house where they were quartered during the war and meet the descendants of their former hosts. The owners and their tipsy company—the postman, the priest, and the head of the farmers' cooperative—do not want to believe what happened 25 years earlier. The priest offers to help, but in vain. When he suggests that "I'll look for this fire in the church archives," Obrád rejects the offer: "It is not worth mentioning, Reverend, only what remains in memory in true, am I right? [...] As if it never happened."

Despite his desperate efforts to find reconciliation, Baradla finds no relief, and his attempts to engage with the traumatic chapters of his past fail completely. He is willing to forgive the villagers for having killed six of his soldiers, but nobody wants to talk to him, nobody wants to remember, as if they were indifferent to the violent events of the past. Written, archival records of the fire do not help him either, and he eventually disappears from the scene. The viewer is under the impression that he is going to kill himself, but he vents his frustration on Obrád instead, eventually killing him. The fates of the two friends and their fellow soldiers are completely intertwined in the film: they hold on to each

other through thick and thin, despite the presence of both good and evil, loyalty and betrayal in their relationship. The impossibility of attaining reconciliation, however, gradually destroys the bond between the main characters. Normalcy is impossible to achieve without coming to terms with the traumatic past. When Baradla kills his friend and burns his body, the outskirts of the village burst into flames again, as they did 25 years earlier. As we learn at the end of the film, the traumatic past was not actually forgotten by the victims, irrespective of their claims throughout the film. A leisurely morning chat between police officers reveals that the villagers remembered the events very well, and they considered the former sergeant a sadist.

Conclusions

The films analyzed in this article all deal with psychological conflicts, attempts to search for moral truth, and the desperate endeavor to provoke collective remembering. It is by no means accidental that films representing moral reconciliation were produced in a period that was famous for sensational war crime trials. Out of twenty films dealing with topics such as the persecution of Jews and communists before 1945, forced collectivization, the expropriation of private property, the victims of Communist party purges after 1945, and so on, ten were produced in the 1960s, four in the following decade, and the remaining six in the 1980s, when it become possible to talk about subjects which earlier had been taboo.[58] A common theme in all of these movies was the impossibility of reconciling the present with the crimes of the past. The victims of the past are mostly portrayed as a burden for the future. Victims are represented as pitiful human beings, whose gloomy souls spoil their social surroundings. Their moral conflicts provoke confusion and incomprehension, and their moral superiority triggers irritation and repugnance.

These films tested the aesthetic as well as the discursive boundaries of the early Kádár period. The sensitive topics they addressed were generally avoided in public discourse at the time. They portrayed the difficult and controversial aspects of "historical justice," and they offered artistic examinations of social conscience with regards to the traumatic events of World War II. Therefore, they testify to the gradual revival of individual and collective remembering in Hungarian society at the time, and to the public articulation of new forms of

58 Bezsenyi and Lénárt, "'Itt maguknál öröm lehet'," 126–29.

memory. By offering complex and multi-layered representations of the legacies of the traumatic past, they revealed various aspects of the truth to which the audience could relate and with which people could identify. Unlike schematic, official representations, most of the films analyzed in this article transgressed binary representations of the historical legacy that portrayed the process of coming to terms with the past as a struggle between the forces of the "bad" past and the "good" future. Although crimes were usually (but not exclusively) attributed to the bygone era, the films also offered subtle criticisms of the new regime and its tendency to remain emotionally reticence and trivialize or conceal sensitive issues. The legitimacy of the system's myths of origins was questioned in the "late justice" films, as the protagonists' individual fates and personal tragedies were shown in the context of the traumatic turning points of recent Hungarian history (World War II and the Holocaust). Despite the new regime's claims to moral superiority, peace and reconciliation remains unattainable for the characters in the films, as their social environments remain incapable of facilitating healing. The drama that takes place on an individual level seems absurd and grotesque in a society that is characterized by general indifference towards and disinterest in the traumatic legacy of the past.

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Erasing, Rewriting, and Propaganda in the Hungarian Sports Films of the 1950s*

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In the years following World War II, the radical structural transformation of Hungarian society and the establishment of the communist dictatorship affected the functioning of sports as a social subsystem. At the time, the Hungarian public still remembered the sporting successes of the Horthy era (the Berlin Olympics, the 1938 FIFA World Cup) from the previous decade. Thus, the Sovietization of sports as a social subsystem had two intertwining goals in Hungary: in addition to creating a new institutional framework for sports, the regime also had to ensure good results, which were regarded as a matter of prestige. Like the daily press, the schematic film productions of the era were also characterized by the ideological utilization of sports. A typical example of the schematic style was *Civil a pályán* [Try and Win, 1951] by Márton Keleti, which used classical comedy elements to bring together the world of the factory and the world of the soccer field. Keleti's film was intended to popularize a centralized mass sports movement of Soviet origins called "Ready to work and fight" and to communicate the party's message to professional sportsmen who were considering emigration. The two versions of *Csodacsatár* [The Football Star, 1956 and 1957], also by Keleti, reveal a lot about the changes that the role of sports in state propaganda and political image construction underwent after the loss to West Germany in the 1954 FIFA World Cup Final and then after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. My paper seeks to interpret these films within the context of the era's political and sports history.

Keywords: films and Communism, sports and Communism, football, soccer, Ferenc Puskás, the Golden Team

Introduction

Péter Esterházy, who played an active role in forming the literary memory of the communist dictatorship in Hungary, suggests in one of his texts which was published in a symbolic moment (Christmas 1989) that the relationship between the social-political climate of an age and its sports achievements cannot be understood as the product of a simple causal connection:

> The relationships between society and soccer are nevertheless enigmatic. A lot of books have been published in Hungary in the last few years which draw parallels

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> between the anomalies in soccer and society, and rightfully so. Why would soccer be good if the setting is corrupt, if sports cannot function cleanly, because this function is always tainted with extraneous considerations, that is, political aspects. Yes. Still, the greatest Hungarian team of all time, which was a team formed of players who retained their individuality, a team which had not only spirit and elegance, but power, which brought reforms to the whole soccer scene of the age, this team was born under a total dictatorship.[1]

Today, when the memory of the Hungarian national team, the "Golden Team," which was active in the first half of the 1950s, is retained in the names of stadiums, public statues, tombs in Saint Stephen's Basilica in Budapest, documentaries and movies, monographs and research essays, Esterházy's lines do not seem unusual. Yet in the year of the regime change in Hungary, Esterházy's approach was not at all self-evident, even if the late Kádár system, in a gesture of opening to the West, invited Ferenc Puskás home, and thus rehabilitated the name of the national team's captain, who earlier had been regarded as a traitor by the regime. However, the Hungarian sports daily newspaper never reported on how Puskás went onto the field and scored goals in the old timers' match celebrating his return in 1981 in People's Stadium (People's Stadium or "Népstadion," which was opened in August 1953, was renamed Puskás Ferenc Stadium in 2002 and today is under demolition to make room for a more modern stadium). This highlights the politics of silence around his figure. The contrapuntal narrative of Esterházy's text in 1989 foreshadowed a phenomenon still observable today, namely that the memory of the 1950s in post-transition Hungarian society is mostly negative, with one notable exception: sports. Memories of the regime and of sports have not only grown separate from each other, but they have come to constitute two opposing poles: in the negative memory of the Rákosi regime, sports (especially soccer) is the only constituent that conjures up positive associations. Today, only works related to the history of sports remind us that the "Golden Team" was at least in part an instrument of the Rákosi regime, which sought to profit from the team's victories and prowess on the field in order to legitimize the regime's hold on political power. The fact that it was part of the regime's political image has faded in people's memories of the national team. In the "imagination" of a significant part of Hungarian society, the players, and especially Ferenc Puskás, the team's captain, remain distinctive folk heroes who

1 Esterházy, "A káprázat országa," 121.

managed to keep their personal autonomy while exploiting—not submitting to—the opportunities offered by the system.

Through an analysis of the film *Try and Win* [Civil a pályán], my essay examines how Hungarian movie culture in the first half of the 1950s retuned the meanings associated with sports. Subsequently, I will focus on the film *The Football Star* [A Csodacsatár][2] to demonstrate how this tradition was discontinued after the revolution of 1956.

The Film of Nationalized Sports: Try and Win

The Recent History of Sports Institutions

The structure of Hungarian society changed radically following World War II, and the establishment of the Communist dictatorship did not leave the subsystem of sports untouched. The last significant national competitions preceding the war brought major successes for Hungarian athletes. In the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Hungary came in third in the number of medals won behind the host, Germany, and the United States. In the soccer championship in France in 1938, the Hungarian national team made it to the finals. These successes of the Horthy era were remembered by the public a decade later. The Sovietization of sports required the establishment of a new institutional framework for organized physical training that would ensure that Hungarian athletes could continue to secure important achievements, which would mean prestige and hence a degree of legitimacy for the political system.

Change in the institutional framework of Hungarian competitive sports had started long before the Communists took power. The rise of state intervention in the late 1930s reshaped the image of sports, which until then had been largely a grassroots, civic movement since the turn of the century. In the last decade of the Horthy regime, politics was increasingly involved in competitive sports events. Between 1939 and 1944, the Jewish Laws were applied to sports organizations, and Jews were banned from participating in Hungarian sports. First, Jews were prohibited from leading sports organizations and associations. Later, teams with Jewish owners were abolished. In 1942, Jews were prohibited from playing sports, and after the German occupation, they could not even attend sports events as spectators. State intervention also affected workers' sports associations. For

2 I use the English title for this film given by the Hungarian National Digital Archive and Film Institute (i.e. *The Football Star* instead of "The Soccer Star").

example, "Vasas," or the "iron" sports club, which was founded in 1911 by the Hungarian Union of Iron Workers as the "Vas- és Fémmunkások Sport Clubja," [Sports Club of Iron and Metal Workers] was compelled to change its name and its colors in 1944. State intervention also changed the economic foundations of sports: professionalism, which was introduced into Hungarian soccer in 1926, was eliminated on 1 January 1945.[3]

After the end of the war, Hungarian sports revived quickly, which was due in part to the fact that the competing political parties were striving to gain influence over the management of various clubs and the new sports institutions. The Independent Smallholders Party, the Social Democrats, and the Communists were especially active in this respect. The influence of politics on sports did not disappear after the fall of the Horthy regime. Professionalism was not reintroduced, and the athletes all had "civilian" jobs. The players of the Újpest TE soccer team, which was supported by the Independent Smallholders Party and which won 3 championships between 1945 and 1947, included industrial workers, officials, and various kinds of entrepreneurs (tradesmen, caterers).[4]

Mass Sports and Competitive Sports Tailored to the Soviet Model

When director Márton Keleti started making the film *Try and Win*[5] in 1951, the Sovietization of Hungarian competitive sports had already been completed.[6] Cinematic support for this process was not an important item on the filmmakers' political agenda. Rather, they were focused on making a movie that would help popularize the mass sports movement that had been imported from the Soviet Union. The finished work bridged the gap between the spheres of the workplace and competitive sports, and it presented an image of nationalized sports which conformed to the official sports politics of the times. It also contained concrete

3 Szegedi, *Az első aranykor*, 437–72.

4 Dénes et al., *A magyar labdarúgás története*, vol. 3, 25.

5 The Hungarian National Digital Archive and Film Institute offers the following plot summary in English: "Pista Rácz, bearer of the title 'outstanding workman' is opposed to all forms of sport, and is especially antagonized by Jóska Teleki, a first-class sportsman, who seems to be a drawback for Rácz's brigade in terms of worker productivity. In order to please Marika Teleki, however, Pista takes on the role of sports official, and becomes an enthusiastic representative of those that are involved in the development of the sports movement. A reactionary coachman wants to involve Jóska in a plot to sabotage work, and he tries to persuade him to defect to the West. With a last minute decision Jóska restores the reputation of his football team. In the end, Pista and Marika become happy lovers." Hungarian Filmography, "*Try and Win*."

6 Based on the number of tickets sold, this film has become the most popular sports film in Hungary.

messages for sportsmen who could not imagine their future prospects in the newly Sovietized sports system.

In order to understand the term "civilian" in the original Hungarian title, one must know the lyrics to the title song of the movie.[7] The song draws a parallel between (Stakhanovite) labor competition in the sphere of production (industry and agriculture) and competitive sports. The plot of the film unpacks these parallels in more detail. The teams of workers are aspiring to secure victory in the Stakhanovite movement and on the sports field. However, competition is not the objective; it is merely a tool with which to strengthen the community and ensure social integration. Mass sports are portrayed in the film as a vehicle which helps people to become better workers.

Hungarian society became familiar with the slogan "Ready to Work, Ready to Fight" ("Munkára, harcra kész" or MHK in Hungarian) in 1949, when companies (factories, kolkhozes, enterprises) were compelled to organize mass sports activities based on the Soviet model. The program introduced in 1931 by the Komsomol in the Soviet Union played a central role in Soviet athletic culture, which attempted to increase workers' production output (the modernization of production required a new worker's body) and their military skills, hygienic awareness, and ideological commitment.[8] The program was not set up to train athletes in certain sports, but rather to improve the overall physical condition of the population. The guiding principle was mass involvement, and the concrete goals were broken down by age groups. The socio-political function of sports was to channel the energies of new generations growing up in an urbanized environment into the praxis of healthy pastimes.[9]

Centrally organized physical education and pre-military training and a system which joined physical training with the workplace existed in Hungary under the Horthy regime, too. In 1921, Statute LIII on physical education created the basis for the "levente" associations (a paramilitary youth organization), and it obliged factories and enterprises with more than 1,000 workers to create the necessary infrastructure for their employees' physical education. Similarly, the primary aim of the program taken from the Soviet Union at the end of the

7 "Come on, sports-mate, run to the finish line! / Go forward, be strong! / We are competing in the factories, / on the fields, and in the grass of the pitches! / Flags are flying, song is flowing / be happy and be daring! / Up with the chin, sports-mate, be / ready to work and fight! / Summer is here, the pitches are waiting for the young! There is a struggle coming, tally-ho! / Overcome every obstacle!"

8 Howell, "The USSR," 138–42.

9 Riordan, *Sport, Politics, and Communism*, 71–72.

1940s was "to engage the masses of workers and peasants who had never done sports before. The movement was extended to schools, offices, and the armed forces. The MHK-movement was expected to discover sports talents as well."[10] Trade unions were given the task of leading the initiative, but this did not always go smoothly. The promotion campaign was introduced with Socialist Realist posters, and it culminated in Márton Keleti's film (the film features one of these posters), but the movie also reflects on the various difficulties encountered by the MHK-movement in the campaign in 1950.[11]

The scene following the title and the title song is dramaturgically unexpected, as it stages a soccer match being played in front of crowded stands. A radio broadcast is covering the event, and the stake is to take two points in the championship.[12] These circumstances indicate that the game is a first division soccer match, not some mass sports event. The credits inform the viewer that the soccer team Red Truck is playing against the "Dózsa team." This refers to a typical phenomenon of Sovietization: institutional transformations were always accompanied by the rhetorical act of naming/renaming. (It is a peculiar connection between right and left wing sports politics that in 1944, Vasas, a club which was associated with the left wing, was compelled to use the name "Kinizsi," whereas in 1951, this name was given to Ferencváros, which was regarded as a team with right-wing sympathies and fans. The name is a reference to Pál Kinizsi, a general who served under Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus. Kinizsi constituted a suitable heroic figure of Hungarian history for the communist regime in part because he allegedly had been the simple son of a miller.) The Újpest Athletic Association was founded in 1885. It was funded by local, mostly Jewish factory owners during the interwar period, and the athletes were quite successful. The club was brought under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1950, and the reference to the district disappeared from the name: the team became Budapest Dózsa. (In the countries of the Eastern Bloc, the police teams usually featured the word "Dinamo" in their names, so the similarity of the initials also motivated the naming.) Thus, in the movie the actual players of a newly renamed ministry team ("Dózsa") act as the members of a

10 Földes, Kun and Kutasi, *A magyar testnevelés és sport története*, 346. Among the characters of *Try and Win* the young factory worker Lakatos is a fine example of a talent discovered by the MHK.

11 Ibid., 347.

12 The basis of the script was the short story of György Szepesi, Gyula Gulyás, and István Csillag. The first two became well-known sport reporters beginning at the end of the 1940s. They comment on the match on the radio, and they also make appearances in the film.

fictional factory team (Red Truck). In the opening scene they are playing a final with a trade union team, the Óbuda Vasas. The film thus reflects the ambition to sever the traditional social roots of major sports clubs by placing them under the lead of trade unions and ministries (they were nationalized).[13] This social program is in unison with the characterizations in the film. Specifically, we know nothing of the socio-cultural backgrounds of the characters. They all appear uniformly similar; the only features that make them unique are their flaws, which are not traced back to social factors and which, in the case of the protagonists, are easily overcome. Nobody in the film seems to be a "civilian": neither the first division soccer players nor the workers stumbling on the athletic field have any kind of private, civilian lives that are unrelated to the workplace. The spaces of private life are almost completely missing. There is only one short scene that takes place in a flat, among family members, but one of the family members is just about to leave for work. The background is usually a factory or the sports pitch belonging to the factory. The characters have no free time: they go to the pitch to play sports, to play on the factory team, or to support their team. The vacation at Lake Balaton is no exception. It is also organized by the factory, so it is no surprise that the female protagonist (Marika Teleki) appears in the sports uniform of the Silk Factory of Újpest. Even though *Try and Win* stages the first steps in the romance between Teleki and Pista Rácz, the lovers only meet as private individuals once, and even then they are not alone. Moreover, when they talk about their feelings, they never forget that they represent a workplace community. Keeping distance from the community is represented in the film in an explicitly negative light. It is linked to conspiracy and (high) treason: when the forward of the Red Truck team, Jóska Teleki, is not with the team, he is conspiring with the enemy, and his absence from work hinders the Stakhanovite work of the group.

Even the very few leftist clubs that functioned successfully during the Horthy regime could not avoid the restructuring that came with Sovietization. In the first half of the twentieth century, organizations that promoted "cultured" and "meaningful" pastimes became more and more significant in Hungarian workers' culture. Of these organizations, the Workers' Physical Training Association (MTE) was the most prestigious. It was founded in 1906 and had among its members sportsmen who participated in Olympic Games and won medals in World and European Championships. Ferenc Pataki, who won a gold medal at

13 Frenkl and Kertész, "A magyar sportirányítás 1945 után," 65–67.

the 1948 London Olympics, was a member of this association, and he played himself in the film. He supervised the sports festival in which the Budapest Red Meteor, the Honvéd, and the Építők teams performed gymnastic exercises. MTE was merged into Meteor in 1950, while Honvéd and Építők were new sports associations modeled on Soviet examples. Honvéd was overtaken by the army, while Építők represented the trade union of construction industry workers. In addition to Pataki, five other athletes are mentioned:[14] Ferenc Várkői, Ágnes Keleti, Tamás Homonnai, Olga Gyarmati, and László Papp. Several factors, in addition to the prominence of these individuals as accomplished athletes whose names were familiar to the pubic, contributed to their selection as characters in the film. For instance, they all did outdoor sports that could easily be filmed: gymnastics, athletics and boxing. But one aspect stands out: all six of them were successful after World War II. Their achievements mentioned in the film were related to the 1948 Olympic Games, so their characters did not evoke the sports successes of the Horthy regime.[15]

The changed institutional framework of sports is highlighted by the sentence at the end of the title: "The sports scenes in this film were made with the direction and help of OTSB." OTSB stood for the National Physical Education and Sports Committee, which was founded at the beginning of 1951. It became the most important organization in Hungarian sports. The success of

14 The scene evokes the genre of news broadcasts with its choreography, quick cuts, and the commentary of two sports reporters.

15 Even though "the official sports governance condemned everything that happened before the liberation" (Zsolt, *Sportpáholy*, 69), the professional work that was carried out in the period was slightly more complex than that. The knowledge gained before the war was not thrown out the window, but was used within the frameworks of the institutions imported from the Soviet Union. This practice could be seen in the trainer Gusztáv Sebes's strategic-tactical approach. Sebes was both the captain of the Golden Team and a sports leader who fulfilled a crucial role in the adoption of the communist sport models. Many of the sports in which Hungary was successful were very much a part of Hungarian society between the two World Wars, so in order to ensure that the country could remain competitive internationally in fencing, for instance (between 1924 and 1964, all of the people who won individual Olympic medals in men's sabre were Hungarian) the regime allowed children of military officers and people from upper middle class backgrounds to pursue a career in competitive sports. Under the Rákosi regime, the curriculum vitae of the captain of the Hungarian fencing team, Dr. Béla Bay, began with the following description of his family background: "My father was a judge, landowner, one of my grandfathers was a hussar officer, landowner, the other was a lawyer and landowner, and even I got my income from the land I owned" (quoted by Zsolt, *Sportpáholy*, 92–93). Tibor Berczelly, Aladár Gerevich, Pál Kovács, and László Rajcsányi were members of the victorious Hungarian fencing team both in Berlin (1936) and Helsinki (1952). The other two members of the 1936 team could not compete in the Finnish capital. Endre Kabos died during the war, while Imre Rajczy settled in Argentina in 1945.

the film helped the new committee earn legitimacy. We cannot be sure exactly why (perhaps in exchange for support) the protagonist of the film, Rácz, who becomes a successful mass sports functionary at the end of the film, performs the same job in the truck factory as Gyula Hegyi. Hegyi earned his living during the 1920s in the Renault factory as an iron turner. He became one of the most influential leaders in Hungarian sports after 1945 until his death in 1978, and he was acting president of the OTSB when the film was made. The armed forces also had a significant role in Sovietized sports. In addition to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Defense and the ÁVH (State Protection Authority) served as an institutional basis for competitive sports, and between 1948 and 1953 Minister of Defense Mihály Farkas had considerable influence over sports life, too. The prominent role of the military in sports explains why Feri Dunai, who went from being an iron worker to becoming a captain and who was played by János Görbe in the film (who wears a uniform throughout the film) is the most knowledgeable when it comes to how workers' sports lives should be organized. His character closely follows the example of the "father" figure familiar from Soviet Socialist Realist (literary and cinematic) narratives:[16] as the representative of the communist party he is the only character in *Try and Win* who has a thorough knowledge of the vision of an ideal society, thus only he can be an advisor and mentor to the symbolic "son" (Rácz).[17] His first appearance in the movie follows the example of the leading technique of the age: he gives an uplifting speech in front of portraits of Lenin, Stalin, and Rákosi. He does not need to refer to his superiors, the representational context does that for him, and the viewer does not doubt for a single moment that what he says is right and needs to be accepted without question.[18] The dialogues between Dunai and Rácz constitute a kind of reconciliation and merging of the two spheres of sports and the military, which were equally important for the communist party. The world champion Dunai argues for the importance of sports successes in promoting a positive image of the country, but he warns Rácz that his mistakes in the footrace do not make him a good soldier. This harmonizes with the vision of the communist party: "the leaders of the country emphasized the importance

16 Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 167–76.

17 The metaphorical family is united at the end thanks to the cuts: Pista Rácz's running performance in the pitch is commended by the proud Dunai, who is sitting in the stands, after which Rácz's mother claims: "This is my son." Rácz's mother appears in several scenes of the film, yet his biological father is never represented.

18 Rainer M. and Kresalek, "A magyar társadalom a filmen."

of physical education and sports from a military perspective," and they tried to use "the propaganda power of sports successes in an international and domestic context."[19] Dunai also stands beside Rácz when the protagonist is enlightened and decides that he will revise his view on the social usefulness of sports and subsequently becomes the proponent of mass sports. Rácz's conformist turn of heart also involves rational and emotional moments: the sports celebration at Balaton evokes certain scenes in Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympics*, which recorded the aesthetics of the moving body with such paradigmatic power. Keleti went beyond this in a certain sense: Riefenstahl photographed the naked body without any erotic appeal, emphasizing its embeddedness in nature, while *Try and Win* stages Marika Teleki walking among her fellow sportsmen and sportwomen as the object of Rácz's desire. While the scene with all the red flags and the MHK marching song can be interpreted primarily through the codes of military processions, it also gives way to a touch of the erotic. The silk factory worker Marika Teleki is a lot more than a woman whose attention needs to be won by the protagonist. She embodies the ideal member of the MHK-movement, who is not a world class athlete, but is skilled in many sports (running, sailing, and volleyball). The film portrays a sports system where the boundaries of competitive sports and mass sports are blurred. The sports celebration at Balaton unites the two spheres, as evidenced by the greeting spoken on the loudspeaker: "We cordially greet […] our Olympic, European, and college world champions, the MHK-sportsmen of the factories and the workers sitting in the stands". The MHK-exercises are led by Ferenc Pataki, and Marika is marching among Olympic champions.

Changes in the Official Image of the Sportsman

The communist turn in Hungary also meant that the status of the competitive sportsmen needed to be "addressed." While in Hungary the status of the professional athlete existed since 1926 at least in soccer, the Soviet Union did not allow athletes to compete as professionals. Soviet sports politics was critical of the British model of elitist amateurism on the one hand, i.e. the tradition according to which aristocratic gentlemen needed no revenues from sports. This was why the Soviet Union did not take part in the Olympic movement until the middle of the century. On the other hand, the Soviet Union also criticized the profit-oriented, businesslike environment in which soccer had come to flourish in England since 1885. In the 1930s, a semi-amateur system was introduced in the

19 Sipos, "Sport és politika 1949–1954," 16.

Soviet Union. The sportsmen had workplaces (they could be factory or kolkhoz workers, employees, Red Army soldiers, or even university students), and they received remuneration for playing sports. However, sports organizations and clubs were not business enterprises.[20] This system did not change much after World War II, when the politicians in the Soviet Union decided to turn the country into a sports superpower which would compete at the most prestigious international events. (The Soviet Union first entered the Summer Olympics in 1952 and the Winter Olympics in 1956). A similar semi-amateur system evolved in Hungary before 1926, but the communists decided to abandon this model and replace it with the Soviet one. *Try and Win* promoted the system of centrally organized physical education among non-sporting social groups. At the same time, it fleshed out the new image of the competitive sportsmen: these sportsmen were civilians on the field, and they had civilian workplaces. The soccer players of the Red Truck club, which competes in the premier league, were factory workers themselves. Pista Rácz is nominated to serve as the factory's sports representative by none other than the soccer player played by Géza Henni, the first division goalkeeper who was moved from the Ferencváros team to Dózsa.[21] The replacement of the sports representative in the film was also indicative of how the communist party invaded the management of the clubs in 1948/49. The portrayal of this process in the film is essentially the exact opposite of what had actually happened: the new representatives arrive not to enforce political power, but to respond to the requests of the sports sphere. The film's first conflict is resolved by Rácz's enlightenment, but the second conflict owes much to the fact that in the world on the screen there was a sport in which the harmony between competitive and mass sports is not total: soccer. It would be an exaggeration to claim that the makers of the film tried to stage this as a systemic problem, but the choice of soccer could not have been accidental.

Soccer in the Cross-Hairs

The prominent role of soccer in the film could be explained in many ways: beginning at the turn of the century, soccer was the most popular sport, and it attracted the largest numbers of spectators. Professionalism and a business-mentality emerged most prominently in this sport: players and coaches were well-paid, they received remuneration for playing matches abroad, and players

20 Edelman, *Serious Fun*, 4–6.

21 Ferenc "Bamba" Deák, who shared a similar fate, also appears in the movie. Dénes, Hegyi, and Lakat, *Az otthon zöld füvén,* 158.

were bought and sold. Towards the end of the 1930s, the radical right wing started to consider soccer a Jewish business, so they tried to sabotage it in various ways. Still, the heritage of this system was tangible after the war, as most of the players and trainers had been socialized in it. However, official professionalism was never introduced again. The deep structural changes that occurred after the communist takeover affected this sport the most: teams were renamed and their identities were altered arbitrarily (e.g. changes in team colors). The destruction and the building of teams was met with considerable antipathy by the public, especially among Ferencváros fans, who were considered "enemies" of the system. The international connections and the professional networks that had been developed in the interwar years were also destroyed after 1945. As Szegedi has observed, "before 1945, more than five hundred Hungarian soccer players and trainers played for and worked on European teams, and they used their knowledge and experience to develop these national teams (many of them are now dominating the pitches!)."[22] Many players emigrated to the West after the war: several members of the national team that won the silver medal in 1938 left the country before 1948, including Gyula Zsengellér and Dr. György Sárosi. After the Western border had been closed, the players could only leave Hungary illegally. László Kubala, for example, was successfully smuggled out of the country in 1949 (he later became a legendary player for FC Barcelona), but the same year the ÁVH thwarted the defection of 20 other players (including the goalkeeper of the national team, Gyula Grosics).

This sketch of the historical background helps us understand why the world of soccer was the ideal backdrop against which the image of the enemy working for the capitalist West with the aim of subverting the Communist system could be staged. The tragic actuality and the menacing message of the movie also need to be highlighted. Márton Keleti's team started shooting the film on 28 June 1951, three weeks after Sándor Szűcs, the defender of Újpest, who played for the national team on 19 occasions, was executed. Together with his girlfriend, the singer Erzsi Kovács, Szűcs tried to emigrate to the West in order to escape political harassment, but the ÁVH lured them into a trap. It was believed that he had an offer from Italy. It tells a lot about the nature of the Rákosi regime that Ferenc Szusza, a former teammate of Szűcs, played the part of a player in *Try and Win* who was also invited to Italy. Szűcs actually sent Szusza a message from death row asking his friend to try to convince the authorities to grant him

22 Szegedi, "A magyar futball európai expanziója," 3.

a reprieve. While Szusza tried to help, he could do nothing to change the verdict. Márton Keleti's film, by evoking the fate Sándor Szűcs in the scene in which the organizers of defection are arrested, sent a clear message to all sportsmen highlighting the dangers of embarking down the forbidden path.

The Heterogeneity of Cinematic Tradition

In addition to references to real events, *Try and Win* was also linked to the cinematic traditions of the time. It is quite telling about the situation of cinema in Hungary that it was the 46-year old Márton Keleti, who began his career under the Horthy regime, who directed a film which was a propagandistic portrayal of the change of elites implemented by the communist takeover. Pista Rácz is the prime example of the kind of social mobility, which was triggered by workplace achievements and loyalty to the system, rather than expertise, the significance of which was diminished.[23] However, the fact that after 1949 Keleti changed his techniques of representation, as well as the ideological characteristics of his movies, did not mean that he discarded traditional frames of representation.[24] *Try and Win* employs the clichés of production and sabotage films in its representations of the two protagonists (Rácz and Jóska Teleki), but it combines these techniques with features adopted from romantic comedies and operettas. Both the director of and the actors in *Try and Win* who had become famous under the Horthy regime (Kálmán Latabár, Gyula Gózon) were familiar with these genres, and the scriptwriters (István Békeffi, Károly Nóti) were also representatives of the interwar tradition of Hungarian film comedies. Latabár reenacted the stock characters he had played before the war: he played the loud-mouthed but clumsy figure in *Love of Sports* (1936). In this amalgam of Socialist Realist and pre-war genres, the traces of the past are not erased, but they represent a world completely different from the one before. One can even spot how the unintentional effect of Rácz's infantile naivety (portrayed by actor Imre Soós, who only recites dry and lifeless sentences) is juxtaposed with Latabár's more natural figure (Karikás), who, although he is cartoonish, has a more subtle understanding of interpersonal relationships.[25] The songs certainly

23 Rainer M. and Kresalek, "A magyar társadalom a filmen."

24 Reviewers were quick to criticize the film because of this: "The plot of the film evokes the trivial and banal situations found in bourgeois comedy." Ervin Gyertyán, "*Civil a pályán*: Színes magyar sportfilm," *Népszava*, January 12, 1952.

25 It is telling that a reviewer from another daily criticized the performance of actors who did not use the conventions of Social Realism to portray their characters. Kisjó, "Magyar színes sportfilm," 4.

contributed to the popularity of the film, yet they end up being metafictional mechanisms that emphasize the inauthenticity of the representational strategies and the fictional quality of the story. In the middle of the film, there is a scene in which Karikás and three of his colleagues want to entertain the other factory workers, but the act goes awry. The workers laugh at the four singers, who stand in front of the MHK-emblem and slogan, and as the excessive laughter does not fit the ridiculousness of the situation, the MHK, which tries to make sportsmen out of workers, itself becomes the object of laughter. These kinds of scenes unintentionally subverted the overtly propagandistic content of the film.

The use of features of romantic comedies in the film mellowed the Manichean, bipolar world of the Socialist Realist sabotage-movies: we do not see two antagonistic groups (good vs evil) described in similar detail and in a mirror-like fashion.[26] The juxtaposition of MHK and competitive sports is only applied in the case of one character, the manager of the Red Truck soccer team. However, Bogdán, who hopes to profit from the center forward's illegal Western contract, is not the enemy of MHK. He is a "retrograde" representative of the business mentality of professional soccer that the post-1948 nationalization and centralization meant to erase. The communist party also eliminated the financial foundations of this mentality by sacking the bourgeois sponsors who financially supported the previous system. The agent who cooperates with Bogdán utters the key sentence in the film: "Sports is no longer business in this country." This utterance is all the more significant as this is the only verbal reference to the fact that there had been an earlier period of sports history before the one that we see on screen: the film otherwise makes no mention of or reference to Hungarian sports traditions before 1948. Although the film's generic structure and the performances of some of the actors emphatically evoke the heritage of cinematic traditions of the Horthy regime, there are hardly any references to the pre-war period. The filmmakers made sure that this intention found expression in a spatial sense as well. It comes as no surprise that the most important architectural project of the Rákosi regime, People's Stadium, was also used in the film, and the narrative emphasizes the novelty and monumentality of the building, which as noted earlier was only completed in 1953. Apart from the factory and the pitch attached to it, the film shows only the working class residential districts and the Socialist Realist architecture of the buildings of these districts or the historic city center of Budapest, which is occupied by athletes

26 Varga, "Fent és lent," 56–65.

wearing red stars on their jerseys, pioneers waving their ties or holding portraits of Stalin, Lenin, and Rákosi, and policemen wearing Soviet-style uniforms. Another sign of the appropriation of space is the fact that during the holiday at Lake Balaton factory workers also compete in sailing, which was traditionally regarded as an aristocratic and bourgeois pastime.

Retouched Soccer History: The Football Star

One Title, Two Films

The recipe for *Try and Win* (a Socialist Realist narrative, the application of techniques of representation suiting the spirit of the age, the use of a new generation of actors together with actors who had been popular before World War II, and the recycling of cinematic traditions inherited from an earlier period) was used again in subsequent films by Keleti.[27] In addition to works depicting ideologically informed representations of the world, Keleti also shot historical movies in this period. One of these films, *Up with the Head*, has a special significance in historical memory, as it was the first feature film in Hungary that took the history of the persecution of Jews as its theme. The theme of sports gained particular emphasis again in 1956, when Keleti started shooting *The Football Star*. The public response to this film was peculiarly affected by history. While his previous film on soccer represented the world of club soccer in Hungary, *The Football Star* addressed the fame of the Hungarian national team specifically. The film's theme was based on a real life event, which indicates the international renown of the team and gives some sense of the media environment of the age. In 1954, the Hungarian press reported that a certain László Veréb had impersonated József Zakariás, a midfielder on the Hungarian national team, in order to secure a contract with Olympique Lille, but one match had been enough to expose him.[28] In order to appreciate the historical context of the film, it is worth noting that the image of the national team changed significantly between 1954 and 1956 as a result of the loss in the World Cup final in 1954, after which the reputation of the team started to deteriorate. In fact, when Keleti was shooting the film (between June 18 and August 27, 1956), the "Golden Team" was on the verge of breaking up. Gusztáv Sebes, who put together the team and coached the players on 69 occasions between 1949 and 1956, had had

27 The most typical examples of this are *Young at Heart*, in which the Soós–Latabár duo appears again, and *Penny*, the protagonists of which are workers who battle the saboteurs. Both films were made in 1953.
28 "Hogyan lett a kacsából – Veréb?," *Új Szó*, August 5, 1954.

his last match with them on June 9, 1956. When the new coach, Márton Bukovi, managed the team for the first time on 15 July, only four of the players who had participated in the legendary match against England in 1953 entered the pitch. In all likelihood, Keleti had intended to uphold the team's fame,[29] but the film failed to achieve this goal. The premiere was supposed to be held on November 8, 1956, but it was cancelled due to the outbreak of the revolution a few days before. The film lay in a box for some time, and a handful of scenes were re-shot with new actors in 1957. (Ferenc Puskás was replaced by Nándor Hidegkuti, for example.) While some scenes were retained, the sound was altered, clips showing the game were changed, and the photographs were retouched. The new version of the film was eventually screened in cinemas in September 1957. Hungarian television channels broadcast the original version only after 1989.[30] Subsequent DVD editions first featured the original film, but since 2016, both versions have been available.

A Parodic Use of One's Heritage

The Football Star[31] can be regarded as an exemplary case in historical memory not only because of the differences between the two versions, but also because one can recognize references to events, figures and discourses of both interwar and postwar Hungary in both iterations. The fact that *The Football Star* entered into a dialogue with *Try and Win* is obvious from the juxtaposition of the two opening sequences. The opening scene of *Try and Win* features commentaries about a Hungarian championship match, whereas in the opening scene of *The Soccer Star* the national teams of two imagined countries (Footballia [Futbólia] and Kickania [Rugánia]) are playing against each other, when one of the Footballia fans exclaims sarcastically, "Civilians on the field!" Keleti invited real sports commentators to act in *Try and Win* in 1951, while the broadcaster role here is performed by an actor. This decision is symptomatic of a different approach:

29 Dénes, Hegyi, and Lakat, *Az otthon zöld füvén,* 150–51.

30 The 1994 monograph on the Hungarian film industry between 1954 and 1956 does not refer to the re-shoot and inaccurately claims that the film's original version featured Hidegkuti. Szilágyi, *Életjel,* 522.

31 The Hungarian National Digital Archive and Film Institute offers the following plot summary in English: "Cabinet crisis threatens Footballia, due to a series of lost matches. The prime minister gives admiral Duca the task to bring the football star of the Hungarian team presently playing in Switzerland to Footballia. In Switzerland Duca mistakes one of two Hungarian fraudsters (Jóska) to be the star and he 'buys' him. Footballia prepares for the decisive match against Rugánia, everyone puts their fate into Jóska. Before the match Duca finds out the trick, and he prepares to get hold of power. During the match total confusion reigns, but Jóska and his mate are able to escape." Hungarian Filmography, *The Football Star.*

the openly propagandistic work used real life persons (known journalists and sportsmen) to reinforce the authenticity of the represented world and to affirm the world outside the film. The latter film, however, created a critical distance from the world to which the cinematic narrative refers.[32] *The Football Star* focuses on how soccer becomes intertwined with politics. The commander of the naval fleet of Footballia, Admiral Alfredo Duca, is preparing a military coup, and, at the same time, he tries to increase his popularity among the masses. He uses soccer to achieve this goal: on the pretext of the supporters' demonstrations following the defeat of the team, he takes control over soccer, and with the help of a Hungarian "soccer star" he tries to make the national team successful again using every media channel to let people know that these successes came about only because of him. Whereas in *Try and Win* the upper echelons of politics only appear implicitly (for example through the pictures of Rákosi), *The Football Star*'s story explicitly portrays a conflict between the leaders of an imagined country. The radio commentator of the match in the opening sequence of the film introduces the politicians in the presidential box in the following manner: "The great figures of our country […] are exhorting our team to play with all their might." Even though the Latin-sounding names, the top hats, and the monocles of the politicians conjure up images from the distant past, the introduction of Duca's character as "a friend and patron of soccer and the commander of our glorious fleet" encourages a satiric-allegorical interpretation and evokes references to the Minister of Defense of the Rákosi era, Mihály Farkas. The way in which the film stages the rise and fall of Duca can also be compared to Farkas's career, who belonged to the inner circle of the Rákosi regime. Farkas's decline started in 1953, when he temporarily lost all his positions. He regained some of them due to Soviet pressure, but in the summer of 1956, when the shooting began on the film, he was already a fallen politician: he had been expelled from the Communist party, he lost his rank in the military, and he was eventually arrested in October. When the retouched version of *The Football Star* was presented in cinemas in 1957, he was already in jail, like Duca at the end of the film. This partly explains why the early Kádár regime decided to release the film in 1957. The political system intended to consolidate its power by eliminating the legacy of Stalinism in Hungary. János Kádár also played an active role in removing Farkas from his positions in 1956. The fact that from Farkas's perspective the summer of

32 In addition to *The Football Star*, other Hungarian films of 1956 had a satirical tone, e. g. *Tale on the 12 Points (Mese a 12 találatról)* and *The Empire Gone with a Sneeze (Az eltüsszentett birodalom)*.

1956 was nothing like 1951 is also reflected in the relationship between Márton Keleti's two sports films. *Try and Win* also featured the character of Feri Dunai, a character who resembled Mihály Farkas and represented the role played by the military in sports. However, while Dunai, the representative of the party, appeared as a symbolic father-figure, Duca, whose name alliterates with Dunai, is an explicitly negative character. His character bears resemblances not only with the communist Minister of Defense, but also with the memory of Miklós Horthy in at least three aspects: 1. Admiral Duca at the top of his career is promoted to a rear admiral;[33] 2. as the leader of the army he tries to gain political power; 3. he has a tattoo on his forearm.[34] The amalgamation of the memories of Farkas and Horthy in a single character constituted a gesture which would have been unimaginable before 1956 in Hungarian cinema.

There are further examples of symbols that were promoted in Keleti's film in 1951 but were parodied half a decade later. While in *The Football Star* the poems, songs, portraits, workers' choirs, and school compositions (which imitate the ode-like tone and dubious quality of such "works of art" created under the dictatorship) greeting the fake soccer player and the admiral have a comic effect, *Try and Win* presents the MHK marching song and the portraits of Lenin, Stalin, and Rákosi on the walls of the community room of the iron factory as indispensable components of the social reality of the time. In addition, *The Football Star* presents the career which is based not on knowledge but on loyalty to the system satirically. At Footballia's government meeting, Admiral Duca presents his new program for soccer, but it eventually end in failure due to a lack of knowledge and experience:

> *Duca*: Gentlemen! First of all: Coach Rodrigo will be thrown out. We will appoint Captain Venturo, my adjutant, as the state trainer.
> *Venturo*: But Admiral! I am no professional.
> *Duca*: Reliability is the key this time.
> *Venturo*: Then I will do it.

As part of the media campaign to popularize the film, the film's scriptwriter admitted the following in the spring of 1956:

33 This is nonsense from a military perspective, because the rank of rear admiral is a lower rank than the one he had previously held.

34 Whereas Horthy's tattoo was a detailed depiction of a dragon, Duca's is only a primitive anchor.

> [I should have written] a satire, yes, but who would have been the target? The confidence-man, who tries something but later gets exposed. This would be the easier solution. But is he the 'real enemy,' the most ridiculous? The people who fall for his trick are more amusing, those who are so blinded and deafened by an anti-communist zeal and soccer ardor that they themselves demand and even 'produce' such swindlers?

Beyond any doubt, Footballia, with its skyscrapers, elegant hotels, lavish saloons, roofed stands, and sports marketing, seemed a distant land to Hungarian society at the time. The fact that the supporters' devotion to the players can suddenly turn into anger and culminate in violence was quite familiar in Hungary, especially in light of the protests in Budapest following the world cup finals in 1954. After Footballia's defeat, the angry supporters even throw their seat cushions at the boxes of politicians, at which Duca comments: "This is a rebellion, this is chaos, this is a revolution!" It is needless to emphasize how differently these words must have sounded in 1957 than at the time of their recording in the summer of 1956. The film's concluding scene allows us to infer why a reference to revolution could remain in the second version of the movie. After the defeat against Cornerland, Duca's coup attempt also fails miserably. The frustrated fans invade the pitch, the two leaders of the fans on their way home want to get revenge on the "soccer star," but the radio reporter—freshly out of jail—persuades them not to, because Duca is already in custody. After the rebellion, chaos, and revolution at the end of the film, order is restored, and the people responsible for the scandal are locked up in jail. The national team plays another match one week later, and the supporters wholeheartedly cheer for them again.

Rewritten Media Texts: Radio, Film, Photograph

A comparison of the two versions of *The Football Star* sheds light on why the film constituted a significant mnemopolitical document of 1956 and the following years. The fact that the two title sequences are the same entails many things. The year of production remains 1956 in the second version, thus the creators wanted to erase the temporal distance, the re-editing, and re-shooting. The act of retouching needs to conceal itself. The retouched work is only functional if it steps into the place of the original in a manner that hides the act altogether. The re-dating created the impression that the film was created before the revolution: only those who were well versed in sports could have known that Hidegkuti

was actually touring with his team (MTK) in Western Europe in November and December 1956, so he could not have been available for the shooting. This created the impression that dissident soccer players never featured in the film when it was shot in 1956, as if they had not been part of the Hungarian national team at all. In fact, the opposite was true: József Bozsik, Ferenc Puskás, and Sándor Kocsis played the most matches with the team in 1956. Hidegkuti's name and fame become all the more important in the scene that differs radically in the two different versions of the film. On the plane trip from Footballia to Switzerland, Admiral Duca and his adjutant, the newly appointed trainer Captain Venturo, are listening to a radio broadcast. The scene appears in both versions, and the images of the first 25 seconds are identical, but the voice-over was changed: the radio commentary is different (though we hear the voice of the same reporter), as is the dialogue between the two men. According to the voice-over, it is the last minutes of the 39th Hungarian–Swiss soccer match that is heard on the radio.[35] The commentator mentions the names of two players: Puska and Kocsi. These names clearly refer to the two forward players of the Hungarian team, Puskás and Kocsis. Admiral Duca exclaims, "Hear that? Puska! This is our guy." In the second version of the film the context of the radio broadcast is the same, but the players mentioned are Bozsik and Hidegkuti. The lips of the actor playing Admiral Duca say Puska here, too, but the voice says, "Hear that? Hidegkuti! This is our guy."

To understand the background of the name change, we need to go back to November 1, 1956. Budapest Honvéd, the team of the Ministry of Defense, left Hungary to train in Western Europe for the matches against Athletic Bilbao. Between the two games, they played other international matches, and after the team dropped out from the European Cup, the players did not return to Hungary. Political and sports leaders asked the former captain of the team, Gusztáv Sebes, to visit the players in the Belgian capital[36] and persuade them to come home. Honvéd chose a South American tour in January instead, from which they only returned to Vienna in February 1957. The team also split. Most of the players returned to Hungary, but Ferenc Puskás, Sándor Kocsis, and Zoltán Czibor decided to stay abroad. When *The Football Star* was screened in cinemas,

35 The Hungarian team played three matches against Switzerland between 1952 and 1955, and the last of these took place in Lausanne, just like in the movie, but this was "only" the 27th time the two teams faced each other, and the Hungarian team won with a score of 5 to 4 (not 5 to 2).

36 The UEFA moved the second match against Athletic Bilbao to December 20 in Brussels due to the situation in Hungary.

Puskás had been accused of high treason, while Czibor, partly because of the role he played in the revolution of 1956, had good reason not to return home.[37] The Hungarian press launched a campaign against Puskás: he was accused of acting as the head of a smuggling network and was considered ungrateful to his country.[38] The second version of the film mentions the name of József Bozsik, who joined the South American tour, but returned home when it ended. Hidegkuti also had a chance to remain abroad during the MTK's tour, but he decided to return home. They became crucial members of the new national team in 1957, and they played key roles in helping the team qualify for the world cup in 1958 in Sweden.[39]

The 25-second segment analyzed above is followed by images of a match to "verify" the words of the radio commentator. The original version of *The Football Star* uses a scene from the Hungary–East Germany game on June 20, 1954 in Basel, which was won by the Hungarian team with a final score of 8 to 3. Availability could have been the reason for this choice: the creators of the movie might have had difficulties obtaining the relevant archive footage. In any case, the German-language advertisements in the stadium suited the setting for the Switzerland–Hungary match, even though Lausanne is in a Francophone region, and not in a German-speaking one. The montage shows Grosics, who is playing goalie, kicking the ball out of the goal, Bozsik doing a crossover, Kocsis dribbling, and Puskás scoring a goal after an assist from Hidegkuti. (This was the second goal of the game, scored in the 17th minute.) The inserted footage showed Bozsik and Hidegkuti, too, but they were not mentioned, only "Puska" and "Kocsi."

How does the 1957 version portray the same scene? It also features a montage about the most famous victory of the "Golden Team," the victory over London with a final score of 6 to 3. At the beginning, the initial moments of the match are shown: after the kick-off, Bozsik crosses the ball to László Budai, who passes the ball to Kocsis. The following sequence shows a play involving Bozsik, Zakariás, Bozsik, and Hidegkuti, but Hidegkuti does not score the goal from a distance like he did in Wembley. Instead, there is a cut that is almost impossible to notice, and the scene jumps ahead in time and shows his goal that was disqualified because of an off-sides call. Two goals from the Hungary–England game were

37 Majtényi, "Czibor, Bozsik, Puskás," 229.

38 Szöllősi, *Puskás,* 104–05.

39 In the World Cup in 1958, only Grosics was redrafted from the "classic" setup of the Golden Team that played in London in 1953.

thus merged into one. There must have been technical reasons for the creators of the film not to have used Hidegkuti's goal scored in the first minute of the match. (At least, I cannot come up with any other plausible explanation.) Images of the off-sides goal could not have been used extensively, because the goal was preceded by a play between Puskás and Hidegkuti. The players in the two different footages in the two versions of the film are mostly the same—in both cases, the "Golden Team" was on the pitch—but the commentary is different, as only "Buda," Bozsik, and Hidegkuti are mentioned by name.

In the subsequent scenes two Hungarian immigrant fraudsters (Jóska and Brúnó) and the freshly appointed soccer officials of Footballia (Admiral Duca and Captain Venturo) meet in the hotel where the Hungarian national team is staying. The scene in which Jóska and Brúnó are trying to sell low-quality fountain pens to the soccer players is a reference to the connections members of the "Golden Team" had with émigré tradesmen, and it also highlights the way Hungarian authorities overlooked cases of smuggling which supplemented the "civilian" wages of the players. Although Duca and Venturo have explicit political intentions and their aim is to reinforce Footballia's national team with the Hungarian forward, their proposal might also remind us of the extremely generous contracts Western European clubs offered players on the Golden Team. In the original version of *The Football Star*, Jóska and Brúnó are recommending fountain pens to Puska and Kocsi, but the two stars reply wittily:

> *Puska*: The pens are garbage.
> *Kocsi*: The deal is not that urgent.

The 1957 version of the film included a revised version of the scene. Brúnó offers the pens to Hidegkuti, who repeats Kocsi's sentence. However, the scene remains slightly less effective than in the original film, due to Hidegkuti's moderate acting and the absence of extras behind the actors, who might have lent a cheerful atmosphere to the setting. In the original version, the members of the Hungarian team are shown drinking and chatting in the background.

It is worth noting at this point how Hidegkuti remembered the role he played in the film. Hidegkuti came from a social background that was not preferred by the regime. His name was originally spelled Hidegkuthy (the letters "h" and "y" in this name suggest an aristocratic background), but Gusztáv Sebes suggested he change the spelling in order to fit into the team. The young man, who came from a middle-class social milieu in Óbuda and whose mother was a factory

director while his father was a nobleman, came to be represented as the child of a distinguished workwoman. The proletarian version of the family story was presented in newsreels, and this narrative was still remembered well after the end of the Rákosi regime, partly because Hidegkuti's own autobiography—published in 1962—reinforced this image.[40] Jóska's image as a soccer star is similarly reinforced by a wholly fictitious feature film (!) after he arrives in Footballia. While Hidegkuti's autobiography does not mention *The Football Star*, he later claimed that "he was persuaded to appear in the movie when he was told that the filmmakers wanted to do the film with Puskás, but Puskás remained abroad. He was very surprised when he learned that these scenes had already been shot with Puskás."[41] One could question the plausibility of this explanation, but one thing is certain: Hidegkuti replaced Puskás in several scenes in the film, so he had an opportunity to verify the story he had heard from the makers of the film.

Who were the other team members who were shown in the scene in the hotel? The reporter of Gazette de Lausanne approaches Puska and asks him about the victory. Then, he takes a group photo for which the soccer players in the background also come forward. The camera does not show them for too long, so not all of them are recognizable, even when the film is scrutinized frame by frame (many of them stand behind others). Duca and Venturo later try to identify the legendary Puska with the help of a photograph with the names in close-up: Fenyő, Gula, Szibor, Buda, Puska, Kocsi, Bozsi, Lórád, Dalnok, Buza, Tilly, Kotál, Mátra. The slightly altered names refer to Máté Fenyvesi, Géza Gulyás, Zoltán Czibor, László Budai II, Ferenc Puskás, Sándor Kocsis, József Bozsik, Gyula Lóránt, Jenő Dalnoki, Jenő Buzánszky, Lajos Tichy, Antal Kotász, and Sándor Mátrai: the most prominent members of the national team.

In the 1956 version of the film, Puska's interview is shot with the four characters facing the camera in a line. As the actor performing Jóska left the country in 1956, he needed to be replaced in the new version. The character had to be near the location of the interview, even though the actor could not be used again. The creators solved this problem by making the characters stand in a circle, and Jóska has his back to the camera (thus, the audience does not see that a different actor is playing the part). His lines concerning the words of the soccer star are spoken by Brúnó and addressed to him ("You hear that Jóska? Good training, half a victory"). Hidegkuti thus took on the roles of Puskás and Kocsis, but since the

40 At dawn, the parents hurry from their modest home to the brick factory. Hidegkuti, *Óbudától Firenzéig,* 7–11.

41 Méray, "Egy történelmi tényről van szó," 18.

scene with the group photo was not altered, only shortened, he was not actually present in that sequence in the 1957 version of the movie. While the two-second-long scene is hardly noticeable, it is clear that in a physical sense the second version could not completely erase the "dissident" soccer players from the film: a frame by frame analysis shows that Jóska is accompanied by Zoltán Czibor and Ferenc Puskás, and Sándor Kocsis steps forward from behind the curtain.

The scene in which Duca and Venturo falsely identify the forward based on the photo in the daily newspaper had to be altered as well. (The conflict originates in the film when Puska and Jóska are mixed up, and Footballia's national team hires not the soccer star, but rather the clumsy "civilian.") The Admiral and his adjutant compare the names below the photo and the soccer players' faces and they mention the names of "Fenyő, Gula, Szibor, Buda, Puska." The newly shot version deleted the pictures of the three soccer players and thus condemned them to oblivion. The scene reused the original photo, but they cut Kocsi(s) from the left side of the image. Szibor's face also disappeared under an unknown man's visage, while Hidegkuti's portrait replaced Puskás's photo. The filmmakers also made sure that, of the names under the picture, only Fenyő, Gula, Bozsi, and Lórád remained legible for the audience, while the names Szibor and Puska were blurred.

After the selection of the "target," both films jump forward in time to the Hotel Continental again. The scene shows the elegantly dressed Hungarian soccer players strolling in the hotel corridors. The players are led by Czibor and Puskás, although we need to pause the film in order to recognize them. They are followed by a recognizable Buzánszky, Lóránt, Bozsik, and Budai, while Kocsis does not appear in this section of the film. The 12 second-long sequence was included in the 1957 version without any modifications. The subsequent scene, however, was reshot entirely. In the original film Puska is sitting at a table in front of an ornamented fireplace with Brúnó on his right and Jóska on his left. They are having a conversation:

> *Jóska*: Mr. Kocsi?
> *Brúnó*: I promised him a dozen [fountain pens] for today.
> *Puska*: A dozen?
> *Brúnó*: He's got a big family. They say you like to bring home presents.
> *Puska*: Well, a soccer player's fame does not last forever. One or two years, one or two matches, you have to live with it while it lasts.

The scene has a crucial role in the narrative because Jóska's and Brúnó's knowledge of the world of soccer—knowledge on which they rely after they

travel to Footballia—consists of what they learn in this dialogue and the Puska interview. On the other hand, Puska's arguments in favor of smuggling, euphemistically referred to as "buying presents," fit the film's aim to rehabilitate and rebuild the myth of the "Golden Team": it presents the practice of smuggling, but gives a reasonable explanation for it.

The 1957 version presents Brúnó and Hidegkuti in a similar situation. Jóska's "double" was not smuggled into this scene, so we hear a dialogue:

> *Brúnó*: I've brought the fountain pens, a dozen.
> *Hidegkuti*: A dozen?
> *Brúnó*: Yes. They say you like to bring home presents.
> *Hidegkuti*: Well, a soccer player's fame does not last forever. One or two years, one or two matches, you have to live with it while it lasts.

This particular scene from the second version of *The Football Star* furthered the attempt to erase the figures (and reputations) of Puskás and Kocsis from the world of cinematic fiction by replacing them with Hidegkuti.

Conclusion

The rivalry among communist leaders in Hungary and the rise and fall of Mihály Farkas in particular were inscribed into the representations in the original versions of *Try and Win* and *The Football Star* of the interplay of sports, ideology, and politics. The 1951 film attempted to portray the successes of Hungarian sports as the achievement of the new system, erasing all references to the accomplishments in sports under the Horthy regime. *The Football Star* depicted in a satirical, critical light the propagandistic use of sports and the ways in which sports contributed to the promotion of a system and its leaders. The almost complete elimination of the dissident soccer players from the 1957 version was the inevitable result of the mnemopolitics of the Kádár regime. Since these players were among the 200,000 Hungarian citizens who fled or chose not to remain in Hungary after the fall of the revolution of 1956, their memory had to erased as well. The erasure of the popular soccer players from cinematic representations of the recent past was part of the process of making the memory of 1956 taboo. The film's premiere in 1957 was not only about the past and its reinterpretation, it was also about the present and the future. The film was first screened in cinemas when life in Budapest had "returned to normalcy": entertainment venues opened again, the reorganized Hungarian

soccer cup was relaunched, the national team was rebuilt, and in September 1957 the team played twice in the People's Stadium in front of more than 90 thousand people. The film proved prophetic in the sense that its conclusion shows a world in which soccer is part of mass entertainment, and it is no longer used to pursue a direct political agenda. With the Kádár regime this new "world" came into existence. While the making of the second version of *The Football Star* implies the political intention of radically rewriting and partially erasing the memory of the most successful Hungarian team, the rehabilitation of Ferenc Puskás in the early 1980s and the 1982 documentary about the "Golden Team" attempted to revive memories of the former achievements by emphasizing their importance in soccer history instead of the political context. At this time, the separation of the memory of the Rákosi regime and Hungarian sports of the era began to take form in the public sphere, and the separation of the two remains very much a part of the popular imagination in Hungarian society today.

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Digital Trauma Processing in Social Media Groups: Transgenerational Holocaust Trauma on Facebook

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In recent years, more and more social media (Facebook) groups have been created dealing with memories of the Holocaust in Hungary. In this article, I analyze and compare two groups, "The Holocaust and My Family" and "The Descendants of the Victims and Survivors of the Holocaust" in the framework of my research project on the concept of digital trauma processing, entitled "Trauma Studies in the Digital Age: The Impact of Social Media on Trauma Processing in Life Narratives and Trauma Literature: the Case of Hungary." I show how the concept of trauma and trauma processing itself are changing in the digital age as a consequence of the element of sharing (in posts and comments in digital media) gains more importance and thus counteracts the element of silence, which was considered the most important element of trauma on several levels. How does digital sharing of memories of traumas help unblock previously blocked avenues to the past, and how does it contribute to the processing of collective historical traumas and consequently to the mobilization of memories, modernization, and the transformation of identities? I examine how the given characteristics of the different types of Facebook groups, public or closed, influence the ways in which people communicate about a collective historical trauma. I touch upon the issue of research ethics in connection with the handling of sensitive data in social media research. I examine the book *The Holocaust and My Family*, a collection of posts from the group, and analyze as a case study a post and the related comments, in which a descendant of a perpetrator comes out in the group.

Keywords: collective historical trauma, Holocaust, digital trauma studies, social media, Facebook groups, social media research ethics

"This is tough. It took my breath away.
The first Hungarian to apologise for
the crimes of his/her grandfather."
(Facebook group post, Commenter '7')

"This is not a website of tales. These are the dreadful stories of the dead."
(Facebook group post, Commenter '3')

How does the framework of a social media group influence the ways in which people communicate about a collective historical trauma? What is the impact

of digital and social media on trauma processing on the personal and on the collective and transgenerational level? Much as the ways of remembering changed because of the mediating presence of the digital environment, online communities such as blogs and social media groups have provided a radically novel context for both personal and collective trauma processing.[1] In this article, I analyze two Facebook groups which were established to commemorate the Holocaust on the micro level. I consider these groups as examples of the ways in which social media are contributing to changes in the concept of trauma in the digital age.

Following the emergence of the concept of digital memories, the perception of trauma changed within cultural trauma studies. The now classic but at the time pioneering works of cultural trauma studies were published in the 1990s, after Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was classified as a disease in 1980 by the American Psychiatric Association.[2] Research fell back on early twentieth-century concepts of hysteria and combat neurosis (Freud, Janet) and on recent neuro-biological studies that analyzed the state of the brain in the moments of trauma and over the long term in order to identify enduring effects (van der Kolk), although later some psychoanalytically oriented theories called into question the legitimacy of this kind of neuro-biological approach (Leys). In the first phase, cultural and historically oriented trauma studies examined testimonies collected for the growing Holocaust archives for research on collective memory. Notions and ideas such as "postmemory" (Marianne Hirsch[3]), "re-traumatization" (Jörn Rüsen[4]), and the possibility of transmitting trauma by reading (Felman, Laub)[5] induced a boom of trauma studies in the 2000s, prompting gender-oriented studies and interpretations of testimonies and life-writing. The field of (digital) memory studies has more recently become a site of increasing research, and, especially in Europe, this development coincided with a growing academic interest in the recent history of Eastern Europe. The volume *Save As… Digital Memories* launched digital memories as a new scholarly field that takes the influence of new media into account, particularly memory mediation and mobile forms of memory. The collection *Memory, Conflict and New Media: Web Wars in Post-Socialist*

1 Garde-Hansen, Hoskins, and Reading, *Save As… Digital Memories*; Neiger, Meyers, and Zandberg, *On Media Memory*.

2 American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.

3 Hirsch, "Surviving Images."

4 Rüsen, "Trauma and Mourning."

5 Felman and Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature*.

States further expanded the field by examining post-totalitarian digital memory practices, highlighting their differences from Western European approaches. The former tend to counteract official practices of "collective cultural forgetting" of the traumatic past in post-socialist states.[6]

In order to map the impact of the digital environment and digital media on understandings of trauma, I will examine the role of silence, one of the central concepts of cultural trauma studies. The three phases of recovery from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as generally defined in the psychological field since the 1990s are the following: 1. reconstituting the survivor's feeling of security; 2. reconstructing the trauma narrative; 3. reestablishing the relationships of the survivor and integrating him/her into the community.[7] Until recently, the second phase was of interest for literary and cultural trauma studies. In other words, these studies tended to focus on interpretations of texts produced during trauma processing and recovery and the investigation of (adequate) reading strategies. The digital era has brought the third phase into greater prominence in the public sphere, with the instant responses and, hence, dialogues made possible through social media. The practice of sharing traumatic experiences online (in blogs, social networking groups) and reacting to them (in comments and chats) eliminates the element of silence thought to be inherent in trauma on the one hand as its basic characteristic feature (meaning the victim is unable to speak about it) and on the other as a cause of secondary traumatization, when others do not or are not able to listen to the victim, and even on a third level as an official oppressive or tabooing practice (by a totalitarian regime). As silence has been considered a crucial element in most definitions of trauma, this change in focus has the potential to redefine trauma in connection with practices of sharing in digital media.

In contrast with the earlier conception of trauma as fixed in time and space, unspeakable, and beyond representation and mediation, trauma in the digital age is considered multiply configured and represented, multidimensional, diverse, and shared in the digital space (see Figure 1).[8]

This article was written as part of my larger research project entitled "Trauma Studies in the Digital Age: The Impact of Social Media on Trauma Processing in Life Narratives and Trauma Literature: The Case of Hungary." The project introduces, defines, and develops the new field of digital trauma studies, which

6 Rutten, "Why Digital Memory Wars."

7 Herman, *Trauma and Recovery.*

8 Arthur, "Trauma Online;" Idem, "Memory and Commemoration."

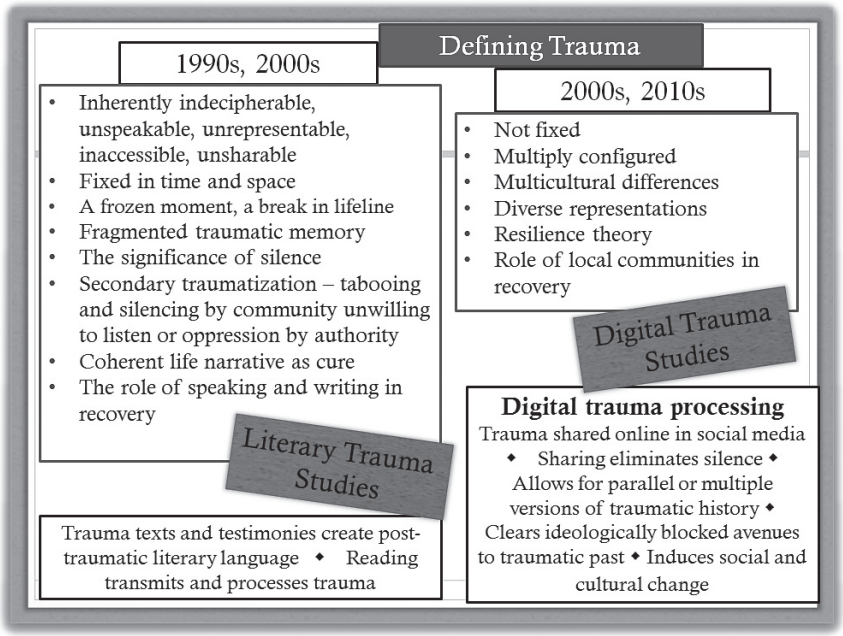

Figure 1. Definitions of Trauma 1990s–2010s

investigates the impact of social media on trauma processing, among other themes. One of the initial hypotheses of the research project is the concept of "frozen currents" or "blocked avenues," metaphors which refer to certain unresolved collective traumas, a series of events in the twentieth century (World War I and Trianon Peace Treaty, World War II and the Holocaust, the totalitarian dictatorship and the socialist regime and its fall) which hindered modernization in Hungary and Eastern Europe.[9] I argue that there are sociological forces that can be mobilized in order to further efforts to overcome traumatic retellings of the historical memory of the twentieth century.

As a consequence of the aforementioned change in the ways in which trauma is perceived in the digital age, digitally mediated trauma processing could be a way to "thaw" "frozen currents" or at least to allow the existence of parallel or multiple versions of traumatic history: official, rigid versions, determined by oppressive ideologies of the past and present, as opposed to other versions, created by communities, civil society, and artists. The latter versions are versatile, mobile, emotionally active, and capable of prompting responses that encourage and facilitate the processing of traumas. One still current example is the

9 Menyhért, "The Image of 'Maimed Hungary'."

now famous living monument on Budapest's Liberty Square, a collection of letters, photographs, books, personal effects which belonged to victims of the Holocaust in Hungary, and an array of other items. The monument is a poignant response to and quiet rebuke of a monument erected hastily by the state in 2014. The official monument is a statue of an eagle swooping down on a statue of the archangel Gabriel. The eagle represents Germany, and the archangel Gabriel represents Hungary. The implication of the official monument is that Hungary was an innocent victim of German occupation in March 1944, rather than a willing accomplice of Nazi Germany, both in the war effort against the Soviet Union and in the deportation of the Hungarian Jewry. I analyze the relationship between the state's "Monument to the Victims of the German Occupation" (this is the text at the base of a tympanum above the two statues) and the Living Memorial and the corresponding Facebook group created by protesting civilians in another paper.[10] Both studies aim to show that digital trauma processing could be a means to clear officially and ideologically blocked avenues to the traumatic past and induce social and cultural change.

Over the course of the past few years, more and more Facebook groups have been created as forums for the sharing of memories of the Holocaust in Hungary (and in other countries).[11] Characteristic examples include the groups named "The Holocaust and My Family," "The Roma Holocaust and My Family," "The Living Memorial," and "The Descendants of the Victims and Survivors of the Holocaust." Online support groups are powerful examples of the linking capacity of social media. The experiences I gained as a member of two such groups, "The Holocaust and My Family" and "The Descendants of the Victims and Survivors of the Holocaust," are very important for me. I joined the groups initially out of personal interest, but soon realized their importance in connection with my research, and I came to have a sense of the potential new insights that could be gained from observing these groups, so since then, I have been participating in the role of a "digital participant observer," i.e. as an anthropologist doing digital fieldwork.[12] By participating, I was able to read previously unshared family stories and see pictures of lost family members of people in the group and pictures of family documents, including false identity cards. I have seen how group members were able to connect with one another

10 Menyhért, "Stone vs Debris."

11 See for example: Facebook groups of 2G Second Generation Holocaust Survivors and Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors.

12 Markham, *Fieldwork in Social Media*.

by discovering connections to a shared past which had hitherto been unknown to them. They established links to the family members or acquaintances of the same victims. Connections were often built upon spaces and locations which had been shared by victims, such as ghettos, labor camps, the yellow star houses of Budapest (designated buildings in Budapest into which, in the summer of 1944, Jews of the city where compelled to move), the deportation journeys, and spaces within the concentration camps.

It was emotionally burdensome to watch people use ordinary measures to establish connections when in fact what had prompted them to do so was the deaths of many loved ones. It was equally moving to see that the establishment of contacts provided some comfort for them. Members felt supported in their shared search for links based on evocations of memories of those who "have not returned" (a phrase frequently used to refer to those who were deported to and perished in concentration camps). Communities have been established, communities which have become places to share, and which had not been able to emerge over the course of decades because of the silence surrounding the collective trauma on all three (aforementioned) levels and its manifold impact on several generations.

The two Facebook groups in question seem very similar at a first glance, especially because their memberships overlap. However, in spite of the fact that members discuss more or less the same themes and the intersections or parallels occur even on the individual narrative level, there are significant differences between the groups. I will describe the differences and similarities, and I will try to account for them in connection with the differing rules of their media platform: the different types of social media groups.

Facebook, the most visited social media site in the world with its 1.86 billion monthly active users (in the fourth quarter of 2016),[13] has provided the digital era with many concepts, practices, and functions that have not remained within the boundaries of a digital medium, but have had an influence on our non-digital lives. Liking, friending, and unfriending have gathered weight in the identity formation processes of digital/post-digital generations, as has the constant urge to share information about ourselves and gain approval as measured by the number of likes we have received.[14] The Facebook lifestyle expects members to post and share in order to have more catching material on their timelines,

13 Statista.com website.

14 van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity*.

with life stories organized in a linear way. This expectation often clashes with the needs for privacy protection, not least because sharing is also a marketing tool for Facebook. Companies and individuals with Facebook pages are willing to pay to get more likes and shares. Commercially or politically aimed sharing differs from sharing private information and sensitive data within a supportive Facebook group, yet both types of sharing are fundamentally digital in nature and constitute the two far ends of the sharing scale, with many variants within the world of social media.

Consequently, for any research on the role of sharing within social media groups in trauma processing it is interesting to consider the extent to which the Facebook framework can determine the nature of interaction within the groups. The main difference between the types of Facebook groups, due to their different privacy settings, is that in the case of public groups anyone can see what members post, whereas in the case of closed groups only members can see the posts and any other mention of the stories posted in the group.[15] The second difference is that anyone can join a public group or be added or invited by a member, whereas anyone can ask to join a closed group or to be added or invited by a member. In the case of both public and closed groups, anyone can see the group's name, its description, its tags, and the list of the members, and anyone can find it via search. (The third type of Facebook group is secret groups, which cannot be seen, noticed, or visited without an invitation from the admins. Membership, furthermore, requires an invitation from a member and the approval of an admin, and only current and former members can see the group's name, description, and tags or find it in search. Finally, only current members can see other members and read posts and stories about the group.)[16]

Thus public Facebook group members are aware of the fact that their posts might reach anyone. Closed Facebook group members allow only other group members to see what they post. With reference to the very new area of social media research ethics in a humanities context, posts posted in closed Facebook groups constitute sensitive data which need privacy protection, whereas posts in open Facebook groups belong more to the domain of copyright issues, thus different types of Facebook groups need different research approaches with regards to copyright and protection of personal data.[17] Consequently, in the

15 See Facebook's settings page.

16 According to privacy settings of Facebook as of December 10, 2016.

17 Ryan, Emerson, and Robertson, *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Digital Media.*

course of my research, I will cite posts that were posted in closed groups only anonymously and with the explicit and informed consent of the members.

The Facebook group called "The Holocaust and my Family" (https://www.facebook.com/groups/holokauszt.csaladom/) is a public group that has approximately 7,200 members (as of September 27, 2016). This group was founded by Mátyás Eörsi in 2014, the year which the Hungarian government made an official Holocaust memorial year. Disagreements, disputes, debates, and protests surrounded the government's controversial commemoration plans, especially the aforementioned Memorial to the Victims of the German Occupation, which was erected after prolonged protests secretly, as if in a night raid, on July 20, 2014.[18] Civilian protesters organized their responses through a Facebook group called "Living Memorial" [Eleven emlékmű], and this led to the founding of other groups, such as "The Holocaust and My Family." As is stated in the description of the latter group on Facebook, "'thanks to' the memory politics of the government, more and more stories have come to light recently, stories that had been kept in silence or secret within families, stories which should not be forgotten." Another predecessor of this group was the Facebook page of the Open Society Archives project entitled "Yellow Star Houses," which attracted 4,000 people in the first three days of its existence in 2014. 2,000 apartment buildings were marked with a yellow star in June 1944 in Budapest, and Jewish people were gathered and forced to make their residences in these buildings. Within the framework of the "Yellow Star Houses" project, around 1,600 of these buildings were marked with a yellow star sticker in 2014, and a map with background material was made available online.[19] People started to comment on the project's Facebook page, and then the Holocaust Facebook groups were set up.

The choice of the group type within Facebook's framework, i.e. that this group is a public one, had several implications. In the description of the group, the founding admin clearly states the reasons for their decision, which are connected to their long-term aims with respect to the legacy of the Holocaust in Hungary:

> This is going to be a public group. We have made this decision after long debates. Although we understand fears, we opted for the public group because one of our aims is to break with the culture of silence.

18 Braham, "Hungary: The Assault on the Historical Memory of the Holocaust."

19 Ivacs, "Digital Trauma Archives."

> Our parents and grandparents tried to hide their Jewishness, did not talk about their sufferings, and we could and still can see what this attitude had led to. We cannot accept that the descendants of victims keep their silence whereas the descendants of perpetrators are loud. That is why we will not change our minds about the public nature of this group. We understand those who are unwilling to participate because of this, and we are sorry. If they wish, they can have me post their stories anonymously.

The openness of the public group determines ways of communication within the group: the general atmosphere among members, their rules, and also the group's outputs that do not remain within the digital sphere. This group has clearly set rules of referencing and quoting which basically are the same as academic citation methods, in accordance with copyright law.

On April 22, 2015, admin Zsuzsa Hetényi posted the group's rules concerning the practice of citing posts, and she informed group members that she had previously consulted Artisjus, the Hungarian copyright agency/collecting society and asked for a legal recommendation concerning the practice of citing the group's posts. She indicated that Artisjus advised the group that the texts posted in a public Facebook group have a status similar to the legal and copyright status of a book. Copyright and authors' rights of posts and comments belong to their authors and to the admins (as editors). Consequently, one needs the consent of the authors in order to publish these materials partially or fully. However, short excerpts of the posts can be freely cited for research purposes with the appropriate reference method: with the name of the author of the post, the date it was posted, and the Facebook group, in this case Hetényi and Eörsi, eds., "The Holocaust and My Family."

The group reached out to the general non-digital public in several ways: they organized a Marathon reading in Central Theatre in Budapest on May 13, 2014, during which guests were able to enter anytime to listen to stories, light a candle, and remember, as well as a Remembrance Day on May 4, 2014 in Budapest's Rumbach Sebestyén street Synagogue, with readings based on the posts.

Saving the posts outside Facebook and archiving stories that had not been made public before or had been kept secret within families the members of which had not talked about their past and their Jewish roots became one of the most important goals of the group very early after its creation. On February 10, 2014, Kriszta Bíró posted the question, "SOMEONE is archiving what is going on here, aren't they?" It turned out that arrangements had already been made,

and several members, led by academic György C. Kálmán, had already started saving data from the posts into archives.[20]

A collection of selected posts and comments were published, together with essays analyzing the group and its impact on Holocaust memory in Hungary, in a book entitled *The Holocaust and My Family*.[21] The editors grouped selected posts in thematic blocks in nine chapters representing the most common topics. The chapters are "Survivors," "Second Generation," "Grandchildren," "Jews in Rural Hungary," "Jews in Budapest," "Women," "Mixed Families," "Gentiles," and "Rescuers." An introductory chapter, serving as a kind of motto, entitled "The 70th Anniversary – If Only Zuckerberg Knew," consists of a post followed by a long thread of comments. (In a somewhat paradoxical way, the last chapter actually endorses the narrative embodied by the Memorial to the Victims of the German Occupation on Liberty Square, as it suggests that the Holocaust in Hungary only started after the occupation of the country by the Wehrmacht in March 1944. It thus ignores the massacre of Kamianets-Podilskyi in August 1941 during which approximately 23,600 Jews were killed. While for the members of the Facebook group 2014 certainly marked the 70th anniversary of the Holocaust, it needs to be highlighted that anti-Semitic atrocities in Hungary had started before the German occupation of the country.)[22]

This thread is a characteristic example of the way in which digital media/social media allows for new ways of communication, and it calls attention to the impact Facebook can have on collective ways of processing trauma by establishing contacts and networks and furthering recognition. It is also significant that the thread begins with an anecdote which serves as a focal point for a whole web of interconnected ideas, associations, and memories. Vera Surányi posted an anecdote about a Jewish doctor, who, after having returned to his home town from Theresienstadt, is called to see a patient in his home. To the patient's anxious relatives he says, "Don't worry, he will recover, but the bed he is lying in is mine." Another member of the group, István Békés, recognized the doctor in the anecdote as his father. Békés' family members noticed the post and also commented on it. Then the discussion continued about "lost and found" pieces of furniture. Then, people who had lived in the same neighborhood as children exchanged posts about how these furniture-cases were connected to the silence about the Holocaust and the taboos on Jewish identities. András J. Surányi added

20 Kálmán, "A Holokauszt-csoport mint Facebook-esemény."

21 Fenyves and Szalay, *A Holokauszt és a családom*.

22 I would like to thank Thomas Cooper for this observation.

that while he did not know about his family being Jewish, he knew his friend's family was a Jewish family. They then mention a famous actor who also lived in the same neighborhood as a child. He was the son of a housekeeper family and has by now become a prominent theater director and a radical right-wing personality. This is how the topic, which had prompted comments which were not devoid of innuendo (housekeepers of big blocks of flats were in many instances connected to the Arrow Cross party in 1944 and/or were notorious for taking possession of belongings left behind by Jewish people when they were taken to the ghettos or the concentration camps), arrives at the issue of the 70th anniversary of the Holocaust and, in connection with that, the topic of the current political situation in Hungary. The thread ends with a post by Eszter Babarczy, who says "this is the most wonderful comment thread I have ever read, if only Zuckerberg knew." The whole thread is not published in the book, i.e. on Facebook it continues after Babarczy's comment. It can be looked up in the group (it was posted on March 20, 2014, and it has 136 comments). The associations and interconnections continue and develop new sub-threads, such as the topic of the varying extents to which members of different social classes were attached to furniture, and how it was easier for families who belonged to certain social classes, such as the intelligentsia, to leave their belongings behind and escape, "carrying" their main capital, i.e. their knowledge and experience, with them. A commenter named Balázs Láng has suggested that such comment threads form a new genre, the "comment-novel," similar to the epistolary novel; then literary works are mentioned which are in some way connected to the topic of returning from the camps; then writers who died in the Holocaust are remembered; then the topic of whether Jews can be recognized by their "Jewish" appearance, or whether a Jewish person can know if someone else is also Jewish because of some kind of subtle connection to a shared past. This post is a characteristic example of the associative-wandering-multi-focused manners of communication through comments in a social media group, with sharing as a key element in digital trauma processing (see Figure 1).

The group has been significantly less active since the publication of the book and the events connected to it (such as the Marathon reading): it seems that the group has reached its aim. In a certain sense, the activities and the achievements of this group are pointing outside the group, and towards the close of an era: the era of silence surrounding the Holocaust in Hungary, as it was expressed in the initial description of the group cited above. The "Holocaust and My Family" Facebook group works essentially from digital toward/back to(?) the non-digital,

linking achievements gained in the virtual space to reality. Katalin Fenyves, the editor of the book *The Holocaust and My Family*, characterized the book as an "imprint of collective memory," and a narrative of "the common history of a community."[23] This group talks about the past and links memories to the present in order to create a community in which it becomes possible to tell a story, and telling the story makes it possible to acknowledge and process the traumatic past within the Jewish community and raise awareness among the larger non-Jewish public.

One of the questions that can be asked is how people as members of an online community remember and evoke the memory of historical trauma, and how they remember the stories behind the trauma that might or might not have been passed on to them. According to Aleida Assmann, "remembering trauma evolves between the extremes of keeping the wound open on the one hand and looking for closure on the other."[24] She differentiates between four ways of "dealing with the traumatic past," among which "remembering in order to forget" describes best the Facebook group "The Holocaust and My Family": remembering in such cases is a "therapeutic tool to cleanse, to purge, to heal, to reconcile." Assmann links this practice to transitions from dictatorship to democracy in a South African context on a state level, stressing that the confrontation with traumatic history has the specific goal of "creat[ing] a shared moral consensus."[25] A similar goal of working through the legacy of silence is present in the Facebook group "The Holocaust and My Family." In this digital community, remembering is a tool with which to mobilize memories in order to build a host forum which makes it possible to share memories. The group aims to further the sharing of memories within the community and form a shared communal identity. The name of the group, which includes the word "family," is expressive of the intention to deal with the past on a family/community memory level. This is a gesture of inclusion via family history, accepting macro history via micro-history, in order to gain access to the micro-histories of others so as to interlink members and develop a network which can collectively approach a past which had been closed off from them by silence and tabooing. The result is a multi-perspective, multi-centered, shared story with common elements as nodal points which is easier to access and accept for the members of the community. This story offers the reassurance of understanding, which may help victims of

23 Ónody-Molnár, "A holokauszt és a családom."

24 Assmann, "From Collective Violence to a Common Future," 39–40.

25 Ibid., 37, 39, 40.

trauma find some closure to the painful past and further efforts to work through trauma. The decrease in the level of activity after the publication of the book of the stories collected from the posts confirms the hypothesis that the group was heading for a certain closure, and the outcome of this quest found form in a book which represents the community, overcomes transgenerational taboos, and addresses the public.

In the group, "The Descendants of the Victims and Survivors of the Holocaust" the main tendencies and the general atmosphere are different. It is a closed group with around 3,760 members (as of September 27, 2016). In this group, disagreements, debates, emotionally loaded posts, comments, and even outbursts are more common, and frequently the disagreements concern the group itself: its way of working and its rules, the position and role of members within the group, and the ways in which they interact. As opposed to the other group, this group does not have the clear-cut aim of framing, telling, and interlinking stories of families. It is more concerned with individual and transgenerational identity issues: the identity of the members as descendants of Holocaust victims and survivors, the problems raised by their legacies, and identity on the group level. While "The Holocaust and My Family" collects stories and shares them publicly, and thus deals with the past so as to free the present from its long-term negative impact by incorporating the stories as finalized by the multi-perspective narration, the "The Descendants of the Victims and Survivors of the Holocaust" focuses on the present as defined by the past and on the ways in which traumas have shaped present identities. According to the description of the group, it deals with: "everything about our mothers/fathers/grandparents in this topic, and the related individual or social second-generation and third-generation traumas, the ways in which they find form, and consequences."

This group does not provide rules for referencing and citing posts. As it is a closed group, keeping in mind the necessity of informed consent and the protection of privacy and sensitive data, I talked to one of the admins on the phone about my research aims, and we agreed that I would seek the consent of the group members to analyze and quote their posts and comments anonymously. I posted a request for consent, described my research, provided contact information, and promised to contact individually the members whose posts I intended to cite, but who would not have given their consent in a comment to my post. Many people indicated in their comments that they welcomed my research, and some of them asked to be informed as to which of their comments I would use.

When analyzing specific comments, I will refer to group members by numbers, and I will not give the dates of the posts in order to ensure the protection of sensitive data. I will refer to each commenter as "(s)he," "her/him," and "their" so as not to reveal their gender. The original posts were in Hungarian. All translations and paraphrases are mine. Some of the posts have since been deleted from the group. Raw data collected from the posts is archived according to the Data Management Plan of my research project. It can be shared upon request, after careful consideration of individual requests and only for research purposes.

With regards to reconnecting to the offline mode of relations, as opposed to the public readings organized by the other group, members of this group meet informally and focus on personal connections. On the level of the social media framework, the closed Facebook group is a good fit for this purpose, as well as for the main theme of the group, which seems to be sharing in connection with inclusion and exclusion and group identity. The theme is observable as a general ambivalence and in the oscillation between the need for secrecy and the need for publicity. It is also pertinent to the one specific—and not typical—story thread, the confession of the grandchild of a perpetrator, which I will analyze in detail.

The question of "who has a place in the group" was raised several times by Member 3. (S)he wished to have recommendations for new commenters, adding that everyone was welcome, but (s)he was somewhat mistrustful. Secondly, as the level of distrust grew, (s)he expressed discomfort over many members "disappearing," and (s)he asked new members to indicate in their posts why they had joined the group. As (s)he explained, "I wouldn't like some people being interested in our stories in order to read crime stories." It is interesting to note the use of the word "disappear" in this context: pointing, on the one hand, to unfamiliarity with the workings of an online group, where members come and go, are active or remain passive as they wish, and may well be "fakes," i.e. people who have been dishonest (possibly entirely so) in their profiles. On the other hand, the increasing anxiety in the posts derives from the traumatic memories of past persecutions which are being triggered by the insecurity felt at not being able to control who has access to members' painful and sensitive stories. Such anxieties were mentioned in the introductory description of the other group "The Holocaust and My Family," which opted to be public, regardless of these kinds of fears. It seems that even the framework of the closed group is problematic with respect to fears deriving from the long-term impact of past traumas. Consequently, when Commenter 3 posted for the third time about

the wish to identify members, the issue of the potential clash of the religious identity of posting members and silent onlookers came up, and, even though the remark is tinted with self-reflexive, self-doubting tones, the strong sense of feeling threatened connected to victim/survivor vs group identity based on religious differences is unmistakable: "Maybe I am a maniac, but I am asking yet again our Christian friends who joined us to explain why they are with us. We have revealed many things about ourselves, but don't know anything about those who are not survivors or descendants. I am interested!" As a reaction to this post, many members introduced themselves, but only a fraction of the whole membership. Some people were offended. They did not wish to be checked up on, as they felt that this kind of inquiry constituted an unwelcome inspection which a Jewish community against segregation and racism in particular should not practice. Thus, debates followed, with some people leaving the group and later returning, including the original poster.

The "us" and "them" dichotomy, which is part of universal identity formation processes, is also linked to the legacies of the traumatic past in Hungary. Group identities are often shaped by "chosen traumas" (Vamik Volkan) and the legacies of traumatic experiences in society.[26] The "us" and "them" dichotomy is internalized by Hungarian children as early as elementary school, and it is prevalent in everyday identity discourses, in which members of the out-group ("them") are often presented as unaccountable or unknown aliens or hostile and even vindictive strangers. The pervasiveness of this dichotomy is reflected in the tendency to rely on personal contacts through societal interactions, in order to remain within the boundaries of the in-group ("us"). The Facebook group discussed above represents these kinds of identification processes: the acceptance of new members—i. e. allowing them to become one of "us"'—is now being done via personal recommendations, according to a decision made by the group admins almost two years after the issue was first raised.

The theme of inclusion and exclusion was central to the instance when a grandchild of a perpetrator confessed in the group (Commenter 1). In fact, (s)he had done so in the other group, "The Holocaust and My Family," some months earlier, in a comment on somebody else's post about why people kept silent during the Holocaust and why they were silent later. (S)he said that (s) he felt guilty and responsible. The group accepted the confession calmly and

26 Bibó, "Eltorzult magyar alkat, zsákutcás magyar történelem;" Volkan, "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas."

offered encouragement. Commenter 1 mentioned that (s)he would understand if (s)he were to be excluded from the group, but others said that exclusion was not a solution, and they thanked him/her for his/her confession. In the group "The Descendants of the Victims and Survivors of the Holocaust" the same confession generated different, emotionally loaded reactions. The confession was the following:

> I am not the descendant of victims or survivors. I am the grandchild of a perpetrator: my grandfather took part in the deportation of Jews from Pécs. As an officer, he was supposed to bring food to the around 5,000 Jews huddled together in the Lakits barrack. He did not do so, he sold the food instead. Because of what he did, some of the people waiting in the barrack did not survive the transport: they starved to death. Among the victims there were four children. After the war he was not called to account, he lost his captaincy only due to his activities in 1956. He died of a stroke in 1967.
> His death was not peaceful: somebody shuffled a Bible to him and hid a plastic skeleton dummy in the pages. I remember only this, I was 8 years old at the time. My mother died when I was 37. That's when I got his letters. That's when I learned who my grandfather really was.
> Obviously I won't be able to ask for forgiveness for unforgiveable sins. I only would like the souls of murderers and victims to rest in peace until the Last Judgement. And if you now have me excluded from this group I will understand.

In an interesting remark added later as a comment to the original post, the poster mentions the group "The Holocaust and My Family" in the context of inclusion-exclusion. The person posting suggests that the person who posted the confession must have been "removed" from "The Holocaust and My Family." Later, however, in another comment, the poster confirms that the person who made the confession is still a member of "The Holocaust and My Family."

The confession of the original poster was followed by a long discussion consisting of hundreds of comments which touched on many dimensions of the long-term impact of the transgenerational Holocaust trauma. I will cite a few examples as part of this case study focusing on the themes of sharing the burden of the past, inclusion-exclusion, and group identity. (Phrases referring to the themes are underlined.)

Well, there is no forgiveness and no peace between murderers and victims in any way. I will not sign such a peace treaty at the expense of the victims, and I don't agree with it at all. I reject even the intention of mentioning innocent victims together with hangmen. Thus, if you want to get into this group with this intention then you are not in the right place. My victims will never reunite with the souls of hangmen, not even via the mediation of the holy spirit. (Commenter 2)

Hi! Gosh! I never would have thought that I would read such a text and that someone would dare [post it] and, moreover, to this group! For a minute I was dumb… I am also a grandchild, although my gran survived, but her little boy did not! He starved. It is difficult to speak, to write anything as a reply to your post, there isn't a single day when I don't think of that little boy, and those awful people who did that to my family. But, as we know, it is never too late, I wouldn't say that you have a place in our group, but the fact that someone has told this story is something. Everyone will be punished in their own way sooner or later, just like your grandfather before his death. (Commenter 5)

[The poster] is obviously not responsible for the sins of his/her grandfather. I appreciate that (s)he doesn't want to excuse and falsify the past! (Our present government is not responsible for the sins of the Horthy regime. So they should not falsify the past either…) [The poster] has this heavy bequest from his/her ancestors: the guilt that (s)he should not be feeling. We have a different inheritance: the inheritance of suffering and painful absence. And here we meet at this point, in this place, in virtual space. And the descendants can see the human being in the other from both sides. (What [The poster's] grandfather did not see, did not sense.) It is an unsettling, strange situation… (Commenter 6)

This is tough. It took my breath away. The first Hungarian to apologize for the crimes of his/her grandfather. (Commenter 7)

I am greeting the first Hungarian convert shakenly but with pleasure and with the respect that courage deserves. I am requesting her/him to stay, to endure patiently and without anger if (s)he is attacked here. There isn't anybody else whom those in deep pain could stone. We, who are able to do so, can be friends. (Commenter 8)

I understand this, but I state clearly that we are here only because of our own dead, not for others, and we do not wish to allow perpetrators to get close to them even in their death. (Commenter 2)

> If you exclude him/her, I will understand, but I will leave the group as well. Nobody is born to be a sinner. I shouldn't be explaining this to Jewish people. (Commenter 8)
>
> Perpetrators are victims as well, if someone doesn't understand this, they shouldn't engage in this subject. (Commenter 9)

The original poster offered the following response in a second post:

> I asked to join this group to learn about the wrongs suffered by the descendants of victims. Many say that I am not responsible for the deeds of my grandfather. I don't agree. (…) I carried this burden from 1996 till last year, that is, for 18 years. And I did not talk about it. (…) I am responsible, and my children are responsible, and my grandchildren will be, too. (….)(Commenter 1)

This thread of posts shows how online support groups predominantly work on resolving trauma on the secondary/tertiary level, i.e. trauma which originally was the consequence of the failure to recognize or acknowledge the sufferings of victims and survivors, including non-emphatic reactions of individuals at the time, as well as the silence and tabooing of the decades of the communist era. Historical trauma did not conclude in collective processing. Rather, it was pushed back to the individual level, with everyone carrying their own burden and passing it on as a legacy of post-traumatic symptoms, guilt, mourning, and loneliness to their offspring. But this unintentional bequeathal included not only the descendants of victims, but also the descendants of perpetrators, witnesses, and bystanders. As time passes, boundaries of identities become less clear-cut, resulting in the "trans-generational intersections of identities," which is a new term I have coined in my research referring to the processes of identity changes and identity intersections related to the roles traditionally listed in the so-called trauma grid.[27] Several studies—and also the thread of posts above—show that the descendants of perpetrators are also affected by traumatization.[28] In one of the comments in the above cited thread of posts a commenter draws attention to the digital sphere as a meeting place. In this case, the group takes one step further: they meet and integrate a descendant of a perpetrator into the "carrier group"[29] of the collective trauma.

27 Johnson and Lubin, *Principles and Techniques.*

28 Rosenthal, *The Holocaust in Three Generations;* Bar-On, "Holocaust Perpetrators and Their Children."

29 Giesen, *Triumph and Trauma.*

Sharing traumatic experiences online in a support group means that there are others "listening," i.e. the second and third stages of recovery (reconstruction of the trauma narrative, reintegration in a community)[30] can be reached at the same time. A study by Michaelle Indian Rachel and Grieve published in 2014 shows that "socially anxious individuals" prefer online support groups to face-to-face meetings.[31] One of the reasons for this, in addition to the opportunity to remain anonymous and the ability to withdraw anytime from contact without consequences, is that there is usually a large number of people "around," and thus in all (mathematical) likelihood posts will be met with at least some emphatic responses. Those unable to comment on or recognize the traumas of the other will remain silent, but this will not be noticeable online, thus their silence will not become un-recognition, and it will not constitute a wall of indifference or lead to secondary traumatization (although the lack of secondary traumatization might be considered illusory, as keeping silent might be a way of shirking the ethical call to respond and thus allowing the silent party to avoid either confronting or denying the trauma of the other). In an article about the transformation of Jewish identity in Hungary in relation to the "strategy of silence" over the Holocaust and Jewish roots and identity practiced by survivors and the remaining Jewish community in communist Hungary, the authors (Erős et al.) cite a respondent who remembers his father, a survivor, as "not existing inside." The respondent felt the burden of inherited trauma in the "inhibitions within internal family life." "In a certain sense," the respondent commented, "this made my family dead."[32] It is a common practice in online support groups, especially closed and secret Facebook groups, to call the group a "family" or a "hive" ("mamahives" are very common), and members often come to regard the group as an extended family. As we have seen in the examples of the Facebook groups discussed here, in a certain sense online group communication can function as a substitute for lost "internal" family life. The group "The Holocaust and My Family" enables its members to accept their family as/even though they are lost. By sharing their loss, they become members of a new, digital family of people who have suffered a loss, and this fact becomes part of their identity. The concept of family is reinterpreted in this process, so that in its new sense it can become the receptive environment for recognition of transgenerational intersections of identities,

30 Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*.

31 Indian and Grieve, "When Facebook is Easier than Face-to-face."

32 Erős, Vajda, and Kovács, "Intergenerational Responses," 319.

enabling dialogue among the descendants of the different groups affected by the trauma of the past.

One of the members in the group "The Descendants of the Victims and Survivors of the Holocaust" sent me a private message welcoming my research, in particular because she feels that she cannot process the trauma related to her Holocaust survivor grandparents, whom she did not even know. When she attempts to confront this trauma, she only becomes upset and cries over and over again, even though she is a member of several groups. Further research is needed to investigate whether the digital environment can offer solutions to such problems, and whether trauma processing in online support groups on the collective level can be directed back to the individual level.

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Past Traumas and Future Generations: Cultural Memory Transmission in Hungarian Sites of Memory

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Now that we have reached the mid-2010s, a new generation of Hungarian citizens has grown up; the first Hungarian adults to have absolutely no memory of the state socialist period. It is not only a matter of "reconciliation," "coming to terms with the past," or "confessing the past" that are at stake here, but also making the past relevant to people who were born too late to experience it. Due to their lack of information, this generation is extremely susceptible to the various, often contradictory interpretations of the past, and because of their age, they bear the specific characteristics of the so-called Gen Z, the digital natives. How is the communist legacy represented to them? What are the primary media of historical knowledge transmission about the Kádár era? What are its main claims, what kinds of narratives are being presented, and how do young people react to these narratives? How does narrating the communist past affect the national identity of the youth? These are the primary questions I seek to answer in this essay. In addition to all the hardships and horrors of the twentieth century (World War I and II, 1956), there is one more trauma that post-socialist Hungarian society needs to deal with: the cultural rupture of 1989/90, which burned all the bridges between past and future, rendering all at once the language of parents unintelligible to their children and changing the ways in which the traumas of the past were contextualized in Hungarian cultural memory. Based on this fundamental assumption, in this essay I compare the practices adopted by the two most prominent Hungarian communism-related memory projects: the House of Terror and Memento Park. I combine two methods—discourse analysis of the written materials found in the two museums and semi-structured interviews with teenagers—in order to provide a balanced, interdisciplinary approach to the topic.
The two museum spaces in question present very different segments of Hungarian cultural memory. More precisely, they reflect on different pasts. The interplay and interference of memories related to the early and the late periods of the Kádár era, which are on display in the two museums, along with the reaction of young people to these memories provide fertile grounds for an examination of collective memory practices related to both the "system change" and the preceding period. I conclude by considering the possible ways, good practices, and existing solutions to the transmission of the traumatic experiences of the recent and not so recent past to the next generation and by offering a framework in which traumatic and nostalgic approaches to the past do not contradict, but rather complement each other.

Keywords: politics of memory, memory of Communism in Hungary, transmission of cultural memory, monuments, museums, Szoborpark, House of Terror

Erased/Confessed/Conveyed

"The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there." This is the first sentence of L.P. Hartley's 1953 novel *The Go-Between.* And indeed, especially in post-socialist countries, there seems to be a major gap between the experiences of those who were born even a narrow generation earlier and people who are in their teens right now. The first children of the post-Cold War world, i.e. children who were born after the democratic transition in Hungary in 1989/90, are now in their mid or late 20s. As of 2016, they have had a chance to vote in the national elections at least twice. These young adults form a new generation of Hungarian citizens, having absolutely no firsthand memory of Hungary's state socialist period. And behind them, the next generation is already coming of age. These two, non-localized generations, Generation Y and Generation Z, that is, the Millennials and the Digital Natives, need to be educated about their country's recent past.

Péter György describes the abyss of understanding that has become unbridgeable after 1989:

> Talking about communism, socialism, which is hoped to be self-evident, that is, the linguistic attempt to evoke the past is both impossible and deceptive, because the cultural space in which that rhetoric was legitimate and exclusively homely is no longer available. […] For those who were born too late, the continent upon which these sentences were articulated is terra incognita.[1]

The transition of 1989/90 is perceived here as a rupture in the continuity of Hungarian culture, which burned all the bridges between past and future and which, all at once, rendered the language of parents unintelligible to their children and changed the ways in which the traumas of the past were contextualized in Hungarian cultural memory.

Therefore, what one can perceive here, parallel to the shift from the communicative memory of communism to institutionalized cultural memory, is an alteration in the ways in which the past is approached by professionals seeking to communicate it. Starting from the hope of the communist utopia

1 György, "Elveszett nyelv." If not marked otherwise, all of the quotes from Hungarian texts are my translation.

to "erase the past once and for all"[2] (which was in line with the communist pedagogical program and the vision of the new Soviet man), in 2002, a decade after the transition, the second Memorial Day for the Victims of Communism in Hungary (which coincided with the opening ceremony of the House of Terror museum) chose a completely different motto. Quoting Attila József's poem "A Dunánál" (By the Danube), the commemoration was organized under the phrase "A múltat be kell vallani" ("The past must be confessed"). Since then, fifteen years have passed, and now the annual ceremony runs under a very different motto: "Emlékezzünk, hogy emlékeztessünk" ("Remember in order to remind!"). In other words, there is a shift from the imperative that "the past must be confessed" to a new duty: "the past must be conveyed," and the reason for this is possibly our confrontation with a new generation the members of which cannot in fact remember anything of the earlier regime because they were born after its fall.

Hence, it is not only the matter of "reconciliation," "coming to terms with the past," or "confessing the past" that are at stake here, but also making the past relevant and meaningful to people who were born too late to experience it. Due to their lack of information, this generation is extremely susceptible to the various, often contradictory interpretations of the past, and because of their age, they have very different attitudes towards digital media than members of previous generations. How is the near past represented to them? What are the primary media of historical knowledge transmission about Hungary's state socialist period? What are its main claims, what kinds of narratives are being presented, and how do young people react to these narratives? These are the primary questions I seek to answer in this essay.

In order to explore how historical knowledge is conveyed in Hungary, in the following I compare the practices used by the two most prominent Hungarian communism-related memory projects: the House of Terror and Memento Park. These two institutions are exemplary cases because of their strategic position in terms of post-Kádárian memory practices. Alongside then, a number of other projects could have been included, such as the Iron Curtain Museum of Vashegy or the Pantheon of the Workers' Movement in the Kerepesi Cemetery. However, the House of Terror and Memento Park stand out because they have by far the largest audiences. Both sites are open to the public and adolescents

2 Echoing the Hungarian translation of the Internationale, "a múltat végképp eltörölni," which is a close translation of the French original: "*du passé faisons table rase.*"

are encouraged to visit them during school trips, so they can be regarded as the most central means of official practices of remembrance about Hungarian state socialism.

The purpose of the present paper is to look simultaneously at what the two memory projects have to offer, and how young visitors react to them. For this reason, along with analyses of the two sites of memory and the written and/or multimedia material distributed on the spot or available through their websites, I also conducted several semi-structured interviews with young visitors in order to explore the effects the two exhibitions had had on them (in short, to see whether or not the two museums are successful as memory and/or knowledge transmission projects). Altogether, I conducted 17 interviews between 2012 and 2016, 9 with teenage visitors to Statue Park (the first incarnation of what was to become Memento Park) and 8 with visitors to the House of Terror. The interviews were 10–15 minutes long, and they were generally performed one or two days after the trip to the museum. All of the interviewees were 13–14 years old at the time of the interview. Although such a sample is by no means representative of Hungarian youth as such, the answers given by these teenagers were often unexpected in many ways and may offer novel insights regarding the efficiency of the two institutions as memory projects.

After a brief review of the available literature, I explore the differences between various interpretations of the term "postmodern" in relation to the two museums, focusing on the mediality of the memory that they use and the coherent narrative that they seek to present. I then offer a discussion of Piotr Sztompka's take on cultural trauma in support of my contention that the actual "cultural trauma" that influences both museums is not the terror of the 1950s, but the sudden paradigm shift of 1989. I conclude by identifying a very visible discrepancy between the heritage and the legacy of communism in Hungary. Although the two terms are sometimes used synonymously, referring to the (material, philosophical, or other) remnants of the past, they may represent two very different aspects of the same "remnants." Heritage is understood here as a deliberately selected narrative of the past, while legacy is passed on involuntarily, usually as a set of semi-conscious actions and behavioral patterns. I conclude with the observation that while the transmission of a clearly defined heritage to subsequent generations should be the duty of any functional memory project, the legacy of the state socialist era makes it extremely difficult if not impossible for the past to be conveyed.

Memento Park and the House of Terror: A Review of the Secondary Literature

After 1989, there was growing public demand to make the "peaceful transition" of the system change visible, or rather invisible. The statues from the public spaces of Budapest were removed, and the unavoidable question about the further fate of these objects was also raised. The idea of simply destroying them was quickly dismissed, since this gesture would have contradicted the expectations that had been placed on the "new Hungarian democracy," so alternative solutions were needed. The decision was made to remove the statues from the city center and deposit them at a site offered by the 22nd District, where they were fit into the artistic vision of designer architect Ákos Eleőd, who sought to present them in a way that enabled cool observation of the past and many other memory strategies. This is the conception story of Statue Park. Eleőd writes about this issue in his 1991 tender:

> eventually, we would decide on the fate of artistic pieces based on political ideologies. At this point, the subtle dignity of art should present itself: to find and accept the responsibility, which, in this case, leads to a thin ethical path. [...] It is a joy to participate in the absence of book burning.[3]

Statue Park was opened in 1993, and later on, in 2006, the state owned but privately run project finally got the funding for major expansion. From that moment on, Statue Park was renamed *One Sentence on Tyranny* Park, being part of a larger project entitled Memento Park, hence the multiplicity of names.

The House of Terror, which was opened almost a decade after Statue Park, was based on very different considerations. The building at 60 Andrássy Road, in which the museum is housed, itself has a story to tell. First, it served as the Headquarters of the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party from 1940 to 1945. Then, from 1945 to 1956, it functioned as the center of the communist secret police services, the State Protection Department and the State Protection Authority. After it was purchased in 2000 by the Public Foundation for the Research of Central and East European History and Society, it was opened as the House of Terror Museum in February 2002, a few months before the elections, with the

3 *Memento Park* website.

alleged purpose of erecting "a monument to the memory of those held captive, tortured, and killed in this building."[4]

Consequently, although these two very unconventional museums are comparable because they are both related to the memory of communism in Hungary, they actually commemorate two very different segments of the past. While the House of Terror seeks to evoke the suffocating milieu of the 1940s and 1950s, Memento Park, while it certainly reflects on earlier decades, is a self-proclaimed memorial to the successful (i.e. non-violent) democratic transition of 1989/90.

Both museums have been subject to extensive academic engagement in the fields of history, sociology, cultural studies, and museology, not to mention the intellectual debates that sprang up concerning the opening ceremony of the House of Terror in the columns of the weekly *Élet és Irodalom* (debates which are revived from time to time). However, it is interesting to see that there are differences from the perspective of *who* writes about the two museum spaces. In the case of Memento Park, most reviewers are not Hungarian, and they often contrast the site with other, similar monuments, such as the Grutas Park in Lithuania,[5] the Berlin Wall, and the Casa Poporului of Bucharest.[6] Meanwhile, in the case of the House of Terror, the overwhelming majority of texts are written by Hungarians.

Regarding the latter case, critics of the House of Terror seem to have reached a broad consensus regarding the scientifically objectionable nature of the museum. One of the most frequent arguments made in order to support this claim (that the museum is objectionable on scholarly grounds) is that the House of Terror primarily targets emotions without presenting rational arguments along with the affective impact.[7] András Rényi, for instance,[8] argues that the House of Terror is less a historical and more a rhetorical achievement, proudly

4 *House of Terror* website. Although the English introduction to the website only mentions the need to "erect a fitting memorial to the victims and at the same time to present a picture of what life was like for Hungarians in those times," the Hungarian variant is more specific about "those times": "Forty-six years had to pass for 60 Andrássy Street, this neo-renaissance building, to resurrect truly. The authorities, who were defending the communist state at the cost of the sufferings and violent deaths of many, only left the palace in 1956."

5 Williams, "The Afterlife of Communist Statuary."

6 Light, "Gazing on Communism."

7 Ungváry, "A káosz háza."

8 Rényi, "A retorika terrorja."

admitting that it does not calmly observe history from a distance, but rather directly, dedicatedly, and passionately *creates* history.

Another recurrent issue in the reception of the House of Terror is the inauthentic or at least unclear nature of the exhibited objects.[9] Maybe the most exemplary one such object is the can of pickled cucumbers, which was later replaced with a bottle of vodka,[10] as noted by Péter Apor. "The original can of cucumbers," Apor argues, "represents an unusual epistemological position. Neither the original can nor the subsequent bottle makes any claim to any sort of historical authenticity: there is no visible intention to demonstrate that either of them might derive from the period of the past in question."[11] Aesthete Sándor Radnóti even concludes that the most important object presented in the House of Terror is the building at Andrássy Road 60 itself, as the collection is almost ridiculously modest.[12]

Partly based on these objections, some critiques argue (in my assessment persuasively) that the House of Terror is not even a legitimate museum. Rényi for instance offers a very sharp dividing line between the general definition of museums and the self-classification of the House of Terror: "It is common knowledge that so far the House of Terror has established no archival background, and it is more than questionable even for laypeople whether the museum's attempt at a coherent historical conception would stand up to even the most basic professional scrutiny."[13] James Mark also argues that there is a tendency in Central and Eastern Europe to use museums of communism as places of symbolic justice instead of as places of knowledge transmission, a process which usually takes place at very significant historical sites. "The 'cultural trial of Communism' took place at sites of terror where the political condemnation of Communism could be made historically credible: these locations allowed their founders to present themselves as uncovering powerful direct evidence of the former regime's violence and criminality, which could be linked to the ways in which the country as a whole had been victimized."[14]

In the case of Memento Park, the early pieces of relevant literature seem to share the perception of the park as an artistic work, emphasizing a civilized,

9 See for instance Frazon and K. Horváth, "A megsértett Magyarország" for an in-depth description of the issue.

10 At the time of my last visit in October 2016, the "original" cucumber jar was back in place.

11 Apor, "Rethinking History," 329.

12 Radnóti, "Mi a terror háza?."

13 Rényi, "A retorika terrorja."

14 Mark, "Criminalizing Communism?," 62.

"dignified" kind of remembering, in line with the creators' intentions. In her 1999 discussion of the site, Beverly James remarks that a number of post-communist features are relevant to an analysis of the park, including "a strong sense of national identity […] and a deep respect for the past."[15] A few pages later, she adds that the "commodification of heritage […] is not yet relevant to museums in Hungary, where […] the past is still treated with respect."[16]

A few years later, Maya Nadkarni first mapped out the immense discrepancy between the idea of a past "still treated with respect" and the marketing strategies used by the park, or, more specifically Ákos Réthly, the young entrepreneur who runs it. Nadkarni argues that Réthly's marketing plan to frame Statue Park as a site of communist kitsch was strongly based on Western expectations of socialism, its ideology, and its iconography, and the marketing did more to confirm than to contest these expectations. "Indeed," she contends, "Western reports of the park opening often played into these fantasies of monumental ignominy: describing the park's architecture as a humorous 'theme park' or 'Leninland,' or romantically locating the park on a 'bleak' or 'windy' hilltop."[17]

The literature on the two memory projects also evokes a number of issues that come up in relation to both museums. Here, I cover only a single feature: the idea of postmodernity at the two sites of memory. Postmodernity seems to have different implications and emphases when applied to different museums. Beverly James for instance argues that Statue Park Museum is postmodern in the sense that "its holdings […] had yet another layer of meaning slapped on them when they were uprooted from their familiar locations and repositioned in the fabricated terrain of an open-air park." Furthermore, it can be considered postmodern because "it juxtaposes pieces that embody seemingly incongruous versions of communism."[18] Parallel to that, Radnóti identifies the House of Terror as a "postmodern museum of torture," where the architect and the curator are free to create, and where the wealth of multimedia content is mixed with traditional museum forms, relativizing them."[19] In a similar fashion, Rényi condemns the "aestheticizing intemperance of the postmodern, which, in order to have a more powerful impact, transcends each and every sacred boundary and

15 James, "Fencing in the Past," 302.
16 Ibid., 304.
17 Nadkarni, "Making the Past," 203.
18 James, "Fencing in the Past," 294.
19 Radnóti, "Mi a Terror Háza?"

ignores the most fundamental differences between document and fiction, object and representation, fact and opinion.[20]

It is interesting to see how critics use the term "postmodern" differently for the two museums. In relation to Statue Park, it can be understood as a kind of inventive, novel, and inclusive attitude towards a difficult past, while for the House of Terror, postmodernity is but a formal solution to present a modernist national grand narrative of the equally problematic recent past. This distinction in meaning is vital if one seeks to understand how the two museums function as more or less successful memory projects. The differences between the two understandings of postmodernity can be mapped out by focusing on two central axes of the exhibitions. First, their mediality, and second, the narrative they create about the past. Although these two aspects are certainly linked, it is still expedient to separate them for analytical purposes.

The Materiality of Memory

The materiality of remembering in the two museums is closely related to how the two museums deviate from the idea of written, textual knowledge. In her 2009 essay "Texts, Traces, Trash: The Changing Media of Cultural Memory," Aleida Assmann outlines the trajectory of the written word in the realm of cultural memory, from the Renaissance up to the present day, identifying an important break in the monopoly of written knowledge, which she dates back to as early as the seventeenth century. She argues that while the privileged path to historical understanding was found in the texts of canonical male authors, "different routes of access to the past were opened by bypassing texts and tradition and concentrating on non-textual traces, such as ruins and relics, fragments and sherds, and songs and tales of a neglected oral tradition."[21] In short, what Assmann detects is the origin of mistrust in written language as the only reliable medium through which one can "speak with the dead" in the Greenblattian sense, that is, as the only plausible way to get meaningful information about the past.[22] Assmann later moves on to locate one more radical change with the appearance of new

20 Rényi, "A retorika terrorja."

21 Assmann, "Texts, Traces, Trash," 129.

22 Stephen Greenblatt begins his book *Shakespearean Negotiations* with the following sentence: "I began with the desire to speak with the dead," identifying the voice of the past in the textual residues it leaves behind, and the act of reading them: "It was true that I could hear only my own voice but my own voice was the voice of the dead, for the dead had contrived to leave textual traces of themselves, and those traces make themselves heard in the voices of the living." Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations,* 1.

media: "We might say that some contemporary writers, searching for authentic traces of the past in a mass media culture, are discovering these in trash. With the development of new technologies and channels of communication, writing is ceding its position as the foremost medium of communication and cultural transmission."[23] This second remark may have twofold consequences, not only for writers, but for more general practices of cultural memory as well. First, we need to admit that knowledge about the past is often incidental and is of an almost random nature, and the most valuable insights may be gained from things discarded, like statues that no one wishes to see in their original places anymore. Second, one also needs to see that the written word as the single most reliable medium of historical knowledge may (sadly) become obsolete; its hegemony is threatened by media, both old and new.

Instead of written media, cultural memory is transmitted through novel and not so novel ways involving tangible remembrance and multimedia devices and contents. In terms of memory projects and museum spaces, objects (remnants, replicas, and things of questionable origin) naturally acquire a key position. The importance of material artefacts as mnemonic devices enhancing individual remembering has been acknowledged since Antiquity. However, their role in establishing cultural memory has only recently been made an object of serious interrogation, and they have gained attention largely due to the contributions of museum studies.

In understanding how museum artefacts can contribute to establishing and maintaining cultural memory, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's take on "presence effects" and "meaning effects" might help. In his book *The Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey,* Gumbrecht distinguishes between "presence effects" and "meaning effects," the latter referring to interpretational practices as transcendental meaning attributions, usually associated with the traditionally hermeneutical practices of the humanities and social sciences. In contrast, "presence effects" are defined by the materiality of the object of study, that is, they refer to the ways in which the objects of aesthetic experience occupy a certain space within reality; they "exclusively appeal to the senses."[24] According to Gumbrecht, the metaphysical practice of interpretation should be altered considering that "we conceive of aesthetic experience as an oscillation (and sometimes as an interference) between 'presence effects' and 'meaning effects'."[25]

23 Ibid., 132.

24 Gumbrecht, *The Production of Presence,* xv.

25 Ibid., 2.

This oscillation is especially relevant in terms of museum experiences, where the materiality of the objects displayed and the interpretations attached to them rarely coincide.

To illustrate this point, let us look at two examples from Statue Park and the House of Terror: texts with very visible and significant materiality, the presence effects and meaning effects of which happen to confront each other, offering subversive interpretations.

From Tyranny to ETERNAL GLO

In Statue Park a general characteristic feature of the site is a very visible absence of written texts. Next to the works, one finds only the name of the sculptor, the title of the composition, the date of the erection of the work, and the statue's original place. This virtual absence of text emphasizes the ideal of the neutral preservation of works of art without contextual references. True, a visitor's guide can be purchased at the entrance, and the website offers a lot of information, but in general the visitors are left alone with the works and their very symbolic environment. The longest written text visitors encounter during their trip is Gyula Illyés's poem, *One Sentence on Tyranny*, which was borrowed as the name name for the park in 2006. As visitors attempt to enter the actual territory of the park, they find their way blocked by a large and rusty iron door, the main entrance to the park, with the poem inscribed on it, exclusively in Hungarian. This manner of presentation can be regarded as a mise-en-abyme of the interplay between presence effects and meaning effects, while parallel to that, it also highlights the fundamental ambiguity between traumatic and alternative approaches to the past, such as nostalgic or ironic.

The materiality and position of the text, along with the interpretational framework it provides for an understanding of Statue Park as a whole, also assigns new dimensions of meaning to the original poem: the mutuality produced by the common context obviously influences the strategies of reading as well. The self as it is presented in the poem not only associates tyranny with a set of activities and behavioral patterns, it also describes it as a universal omnipresent feeling that is always already there in the everyday routines of the people. "Dohányod zamatába,/ ruháid anyagába/ Beivódik, évődik /Velődig" (It penetrates into the flavor of your tobacco, the fabric of your clothes, to your marrow).[26] The

26 Although there at least two English translations of the poem, I felt it necessary to provide a more faithful, yet less artistic interpretation, since the exact meaning of the original poem is not transmitted in

poem's image of omnipresent tyranny and the collection of the prominent Socialist Realist works seem to be in dialogue, which underlines the concept that the statues can be regarded as means of oppression. From this perspective, certain lines of the poem might be exceptionally illuminating in nature, since the relationship between art and social milieu (which is one of the focal points of the poem) is obviously not something to be dismissed in the case of Statue Park. Throughout the poem, as "tyranny" is personified and condensed into an indefinite third-person singular, it also penetrates deeper and deeper, from individual relationships to the general perception of the world: "Mert szépnek csak azt véled/ mi egyszer már övé lett" (For you take as beautiful only the things that have already become his). The experience of the senses becomes legible exclusively through the filter of tyranny, and thus the possibilities of artistic reflection are also to be imagined within the framework of oppression.

However, the fact that the poem is displayed just in front of Statue Park provides an ironic position in reading the monuments. The lines "Mert ott áll/eleve sírodnál /ő mondja meg, ki voltál/ porod is neki szolgál" (For he stands there by your grave, he defines who you were, your ashes still serve him) illuminate, for instance, the fate of Socialist Realist statues: being closed into their own materiality, deprived of what they originally signified (i.e. the heroes and ideals of a past era), they become their own parodies. Illyés' text suggests that the oppressive power owns the soul and body of its subjects, and thus it is able to provide retrospective definitions of the people and objects serving them.

If one considers the mutual influence of site and poem, two crucial observations must be made. First, the verses are scribbled onto an enormous iron door, supposedly the main entrance to the park. Yet these doors remain closed *by design*, and one can only enter the museum through a tiny sideway. As Réthly explained during a guided tour, "you know that proverb that there is a side-door next to all large gates, which means that if you cannot do something in the official way, we should try to find some other solution." Thus, the museum offers "alternative," more inclusive approaches to remembrance of the past, while still preserving a more institutionalized, primary reading, according to which the past is presented as tyrannical: the main door that is always closed. Second, due to the corroding effects of the weather, certain parts of the text have become illegible, which could be understood as a dual game of inscribing

either of the English translations with which I am familiar, even if my rendering destroys the inherent presence effects, such as the rhythm and rhyme of the original poem.

and effacing meanings. On the one hand, there is a gesture of guiding the visitors' frame of understanding by the position of the text, while on the other, the owners of the museum let the rust eat away the letters, making it impossible to assign one single meaning to the park. The visitors have become unable to read the text, and they are once more on their own with the statues.

Similar material damage to written words can also be found in the House of Terror. As opposed to Memento Park, where most of the on-site information texts were absent, in the case of the House of Terror there is an abundance of written texts, which nonetheless results in a similar absence of information. Almost every room in the exhibition features a take-home information sheet, both in English and in Hungarian, and in absence of a guide, most visitors spend a great portion of their time huddled up in one of the dim corners of the exhibition rooms, reading the information materials (especially in the first few rooms). Furthermore, the walls often feature quotes (typically in Hungarian only), and sometimes, as in the *Resettlement and Deportation Room* and the *Justice Room*, entire walls are covered with replicas of old reports or indictments, rendering them illegible by their position, the dim lighting, or simply their sheer volume. Words extinguish one another, and they appear as visual noise or decorative fragments that bear no particular meaning.

The *Room of Soviet Advisors* offers a very fitting example of the dynamics of Gumbrechtian presence and meaning effects. At the time of my last visit to the House of Terror, there was an enormous marble memorial plaque leaning against a large wooden desk, broken in half, with the parts slightly slid behind each other. [27] The visible part of the text is as follows:

"ÖRÖK DICSŐS…RÖS HADSER…
AKIK A SZOVJETUN…AGYARORSZ…
ÉS FÜGGETLENS… VÍVOTT HARC"

I offer the following English translation of this: "ETERNAL GLO …ED ARM… THE SOVIET UN… NGARY… WAR FO… NDEPENDEN…" First, this plaque clearly demonstrates how the ideologies of communism and fascism alike created a pseudo-language that was perceived as intimidating and uncanny precisely because it was rooted in everyday uses of language, but was rendered incomprehensible by the ideological jargon. As Péter György puts it, "communists spoke and wrote in a language unknown to Hungarians, in

27 The House of Terror website features a photo on which the entire plate is behind another one, with the Soviet crest on it.

Hungarian. […] Words partly lost their meanings, partly gained new ones."[28] On the other hand, though, this marble plaque can also be regarded as an allegory for the approach to language and the written word as a source of historical knowledge adopted by the House of Terror. Words are everywhere in the House of Terror, yet they fall apart into sub-intelligible elements, giving the impression that something *beyond* linguistically understandable knowledge is being conveyed here. It is as if words lost their weight as soon as one enters the realms of terror.

In this sense, there is a fundamental similarity and an even deeper difference between Memento Park and the House of Terror. While both sites of memory exhibit an underlying mistrust of written knowledge (although the websites are both rich in detail text), their reaction to this scenario is entirely different. Memento Park, with the nearly complete lack of verbal interpretational crutches (apart from the rusty poem on the front gate), almost exclusively relies on the oral narration of the site, either by the guide or by older relatives, who tend to accompany young people to the site. One could argue that Statue Park offers a nostalgic pre-literacy medial condition, seeking to evoke the immediacy and intimacy of firsthand experience and even domestic oral history. In contrast, the House of Terror presents an entirely different scenario, which might be described as a post-literal media landscape. Here, the traditional role of written texts is taken over by both affective non-verbal elements, such as smell and lighting, and also by multimedia solutions, such as endless testimonies displayed on LCD-screens and the use of the most cutting-edge technology to support a specific vision of history.

Digital Natives in a Pre-literacy or Post-literacy Situation

The use of new media to emphasize certain interpretations of history is especially important when talking about knowledge transmission to members of younger generations. As members of Generation Z, the digital natives, teenage visitors have been socialized from an early age to use all kinds of multimedia and smart devices, and they are very open to technological innovation, for leisure activities and entertainment and also for learning and knowledge acquisition. Their reactions concerning the two museum spaces also underline how the abovementioned pre-verbal and post-verbal arrangements work. In the case of Memento Park, most of my respondents visited the park as part of a class excursion, with a guide. The young visitors all agreed that the presence of the

28 György, *Az ismeretlen nyelv*, 10–11.

guide brought the objects on exhibit closer to the audience. As one of the 14-year-olds I interviewed remarked, "Without the guide, no one would have cared about the statues." All of them mentioned that they had positive feelings about the tour; three out of seven said that it helped them better understand "what those symbols actually meant" or confessed that the way they analyzed a particular statue together with the guide made them change their preliminary neutral or negative opinions about the work in question. Furthermore, the guided tour also succeeded in adding a set of memorable anecdotes and humorous personal stories to the display of statues, such as the one about the Smurf marzipan figurines that were dried on the right arm of a bronze Lenin in the early 1990s. According to their accounts, the young visitors were especially keen on these otherwise digressive remarks of the guide. As one of them put it, "there are museums that are dead boring, and all you get is a schematic text that you would learn in history lessons anyway. But this guy told us about really special things. He made us involved." In this sense, according to the teenage visitors, the Memento Park guided tour managed to convey a kind of "insider," firsthand knowledge about the years of the democratic transition, offering a chance for a very private and personal kind of knowledge transmission. The very same magic of orality was also mentioned by my other two interviewees from Statue Park, a brother and a sister aged 13 and almost 15 at the time of their visit, which was a Sunday trip on which they had been taken by their parents. Although they said that their parents could recall the locations of only a few of the statues or reliefs, as the family was not from Budapest, they nonetheless told them interesting stories about their youth (the parents were in their early 40s).

As for the House of Terror, the generational position of my interviewees had a very visible impact on the ways in which they perceived the exhibition. Although none of them took part in a guided tour, they were invariably accompanied by older relatives who helped them understand what they were seeing. One of them, a boy of 13, offered the following reply to my warm-up question as to whether or not he had liked the exhibition: "It was interesting all right, but as a child, I didn't understand everything, unlike mum, so she had to explain things to me." When asked about the information sheets, all but one of the teens admitted that they had not collected, read, or even looked at them extensively. Five out of eight respondents praised the video displays of the exhibition, claiming that although they had no time to watch all of the videos, those that they did see were all interesting. Most of the teens highlighted the oral history account in the elevator as the most

impressive one, while others mentioned "the one at the cashier desk about forgiveness"[29] or the newsreels.

As most of the respondents were in the last two years of elementary school (7th or 8th grade), they had not had any history classes about the state socialist era.[30] When asked about their knowledge of state socialism in Hungary, many of them mentioned that although they do not generally watch films about "the era," they do have an impression of it from video games.[31] This medial embeddedness was even visible in their reaction to the exhibitions. At the time of my last 3 interviews in 2016, there was a temporary exhibition for the 60th anniversary of the 1956 revolution entitled *Egy akaraton* (One Nation, One Will), which featured six short, 5-6 minute-long films designed for virtual reality glasses. All three of the teenagers who had seen this show were fascinated by the 360° VR films, which were, according to my respondents, so intense that they somewhat dimmed the experience of the permanent exhibition. By the time of their visit, each of them had at least tried virtual reality glasses (one of the respondents even had one at home), and they even offered technical remarks on how the glasses in the House of Terror were different from the ones they had used previously. "That was a very good point. I really liked them all. They were interesting, and it was better to see them in 360 than from an ordinary video," one of them remarked. "And also, it was a lot better because it influenced your emotions more than looking at a whole bunch of writing. That was a great idea" another added. One could claim that teenagers are very, and perhaps dangerously, responsive to new digital media in memorial spaces, especially media that are relatively new even to them. The House of Terror presents itself as a conveyor of *zeitgeist*, so the primary content it seeks to transmit is an impression about the recent past, an artistic expression of the premise that "terror overshadowed daily life."[32] For this purpose, the use of digital media (especially virtual reality technologies) is perhaps the most fitting choice. The caveat concerning such techniques, especially for adolescents, is that *a certain version of the past* is presented as *the only valid past*, leaving no room either for criticism or for questions. What is seen on the screen not only becomes believable, but it turns into reality itself. Probably

29 An approximately 30 second-long piece, played in an infinite loop while visitors wait in line.

30 The history curriculum of the 7th grade ends with World War I.

31 One of my respondents mentioned *Call of Duty* and *Battlefield*, while another one named *Metro 2033* and *Red Faction*, neither of which is strictly about communist dictatorships. Other, similar video games, such as *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* or *Red Orchestra*, could also be mentioned.

32 This is the very last sentence of the information sheet for the *Everyday Life* room, which might as well be regarded as an underlying concept for the entire museum.

this is one reason why my interviewees seemed to be so a-critical with regards to the exhibition in the House of Terror, while they were considerably more reflective about their Statue Park experiences.[33]

In contrast, my respondents could not recall much objective knowledge that they had gained from their visit to the House of Terror. Six out of eight teenagers did not realize that the exhibition was about two kinds of dictatorships, although they had a good understanding of Hungary having been under two different forms of occupation during those times. Indeed, the House of Terror has frequently been criticized for the extremely unbalanced nature of the museum's displays. As one reads on the English version of the House of Terror website, "[h]aving survived two terror regimes, it was felt that the time had come for Hungary to erect a fitting memorial to the victims, and at the same time to present a picture of what life was like for Hungarians in those times."[34] In other words, the House of Terror allegedly describes the two kinds of terror Hungary suffered between 1944 and 1989: the Nazi occupation and the establishment of the communist regime. The House of Terror does not include the Anti-Jewish Laws of the interwar years in its representation of terror, when Germany had not yet invaded Hungary, or the massacre of an estimated 23,000 Jews in near Kamianets-Podilskyi in August 1941, including 16,000 people who had been deported to the newly annexed territory from Hungary, hence denying any complicity Hungary might have had in these parts of the Holocaust. Furthermore, strictly speaking, only 2 or 3 of the 19 exhibition rooms focus on the Nazi occupation and the Hungarian Arrow Cross party and none focus on the crimes and massacres committed under the Horthy regime. However, as Krisztián Ungváry underlines,[35] the imbalance is not merely a matter of space. Three rooms perhaps would have been enough to evoke the terror in which many Hungarians lived under Horthy and the Arrow Cross, but as Mark argues, the memory of Fascism is only evoked "where it had the capacity to demonize Communism."[36] In this, the museum succeeds, yet no body of references is actually given in support of this emotional affect.

33 In addition, their reluctance to say negative things might also be attributed to the fact that due to my position as a researcher, they regarded me as a representative authority (much like a teacher of some sort), and they sought to comply with what they thought I expected to hear. In future research, this observer's paradox could perhaps be overcome if I were to spend extensive time with the adolescents.

34 Terror Háza website.

35 Ungváry, "A káosz háza."

36 Mark, "Criminalizing Communism?" 77.

Instead of facts, the House of Terror offers associations, but when one lacks the relevant historical knowledge, as a 13-year-old visitor sometimes does, the exhibition will not fill in the gaps. Perhaps the most telling example is the *Internment* room in the basement, which features a miners' car and some rocks in the middle, next to an LCD-screen on which a formerly interned person is giving testimony. This room is right after the prison reconstruction, which is perceived by many as the most emotionally burdening part of the exhibition. One of my interviewees, whom I followed through the museum, demonstrated significant behavioral change at this point. Prior to this room, the teenage boy was very open, asked many questions, and inspected everything closely, especially the prison part, but here he just looked at the plate with the name of the room, briefly glanced at the miners' car, and walked away. As he later informed me, he did not fully understand the word *internment* in this context, and due to the absence of descriptive material, he could not establish a logical link between the car that fills the whole room and the idea of internment. Although the room does have a take-home information sheet, it is only from the website that one can find out that the bogie with the rocks is in fact an original artefact from the Recsk Internment Camp.

This brief episode illustrates why the House of Terror often fails as a site of knowledge transmission about communism. The illusion of a *zeitgeist* conjured in its entirety by simulacra objects and multimedia devices is not suitable for knowledge transmission on its own, and the supplementary means were, in this case, insufficient to sustain an adolescent's attention.

From Trauma to Laughter

Closely related to the materiality and mediality of remembering is the question of the various kinds of pasts that are presented to the visitors, especially younger visitors. Critics of the House of Terror condemn the exhibition for offering a one-sided interpretation of the past, which portrays Hungary as a hapless victim of evil foreign powers.[37] Péter György, for instance, contrasts the presence of victim-identifications with the absence of perpetrator memories, especially concerning the way in which the past is communicated to members of the younger generations: "We do not need the younger generations to feel personal

37 See for example Apor, "Rethinking History," Ungváry, "A káosz háza" or K. Horváth, "The Redistribution of the Memory of Socialism," Mark, "Criminalizing Communism," among others.

guilt for the acts committed by their predecessors. But we do need them to know what their predecessors did."[38]

This idea is supported by the narrative on the information sheets: it consistently portrays "terror" and its manifestations, such as internment, deportation, secret agency, etc., as something in which Hungarians took no part and which was imposed from the outside. This process of externalization also appears on the level of grammatical structures and word choices. A prevalent use of the passive voice is a characteristic feature of the information sheets, even in Hungarian, which is unusual. While there the sentences make no mention of the names of perpetrators, the victim is almost without exception Hungary or the Hungarian people, who are depicted as silent and inert bystanders in their own history. "Hungary was plunged into a hopeless economic situation," and then "the country became the theatre of war in the clash between the two Super Powers," and later on, in the *Changing Clothes* room, the brochure explains that "the video clip depicts how an entire society was forced to 'turn coat', i.e. switch allies."

The passive voice is but one example in the House of Terror of what Aleida Assmann calls "victim memory." Assmann coined the term[39] to differentiate it from "losers" inasmuch as the victim is a passive target of violence, and the term obviously implies a sense of power asymmetry, while the term "loser" still implies a sense of heroism or a sacrifice made for a cause.[40] According to Assmann, the most characteristic feature of this kind of memorial practice is to offer an unambiguous image of the past, in which no dissenting opinions are appreciated or even accepted, since the whole community is imagined as the victim of a power external to it. It is also important to refer to Assmann's comment in which she emphasizes that while in Western Europe such interpretations are being questioned and subverted, Eastern Europe is still bearing witness to the resurrection of national grand narratives emphasizing collective victimhood. With respect to the House of Terror, Zsolt K. Horváth claims that the institution is, in fact, an allegory of Hungary victimized by Communism.[41]

The House of Terror does not merely evoke a sense of collective victimhood, it also seeks to commemorate the collective traumatic experience that it links to

38 György, "A terror háza/A terror topográfiája." In the same work, he also dismisses Statue Park as a "Disneyland-ghetto of state socialist sculptures."

39 Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit,* 218.

40 Pabis, "A múlt hosszú árnyéka."

41 K. Horváth, "The Redistribution of the Memory of Socialism," 270.

foreign occupation. It focuses primarily on the "dark decades" of the 1940s and 1950s, but it also broadens the temporal spectrum of occupation significantly: from 1944 to 1989. As one reads on the website, "the Museum, while presenting the horrors in a tangible way, also intends to make people understand that the sacrifice for freedom was not in vain."[42] Such a quest could potentially allow for collective healing: the examination, understanding, and eventually the dissolution of the wounds Hungarian society has suffered (and inflicted on itself), but unfortunately the House of Terror goes down on a different path. As Miklós Takács argues, individual traumatic experiences can be identified by involuntary repetition and by their appearance next to the body and non-verbality, while the prerequisite of cultural traumas is their mediated nature. He concludes that if a traumatic experience is removed from the body and transferred into another medium, it ceases to be a psychic trauma and is considered healed.[43] The House of Terror here presents just the opposite method. By using new digital media and reconstructions, such as the infamous basement prison, it de-medializes the horrors that took place in the House, and re-inscribes them into the medium of the body. The moment the visitor enters the elevator, taking a painfully slow ride down to the basement, the information sheets go missing. Visitors are left alone in the corridor with the tiny, wet cells, and they are given no information or no interpretational guidelines. Many of my respondents claimed that they felt "claustrophobic" during their visit to the basement, and although one of them, a girl of 14, ironically remarked that "it was Disneyland," she also confessed a vague sense of sickness when listening to the testimony about executions in the elevator. This traumatic and potentially traumatizing approach does not allow for elaborate reflections on the space or the historical knowledge it might convey: where there are no words, there is no knowledge to speak of.

In Statue Park, the arrangement of "excluded" public statues enables a whole range of remembering practices, including a traumatic approach to the past. When asked about how the visitors interact with the statues on exhibit in the Park, Réthly spoke about a kind of respect for the past: "All the local visitors have a bit of an agent past, a bit of relocation, a sense of being unheeded... Everyone has a bit of pain. I wouldn't say that these feelings are brought to the surface here, but it gives a kind of basic restraint to their attitudes." Therefore, Hungarians would not find it funny to pose with the statues due to their "personal involvement," or

42 Terror Háza website.

43 Takács, "A kulturális trauma elmélete a bírálatok tükrében," 49–50.

rather the communicative memory that still conveys the underlying idea of the statues being means of an oppressive, dictatorial regime.

Strangely enough, there is a certain ambiguity in the answers provided by the student visitors on this matter. When asked about the idea of posing, all of them said that their teacher had had a number of ideas about different poses even before they arrived to the park, but they also noted that by themselves they would not have thought of these statues as objects next to which to pose. One of them even mentioned that "probably it might be more exciting for the Americans, because we learn about it, we know about it, but they... they did not live through it. For them it's fun to see... a big dictatorial man (sic!) and ha ha, let's pose with him. But for us, we can feel what it was like for the people back then, and it's less amusing to make fun of it." However, based on my personal experience following them along the park, they actually enjoyed climbing onto the statues, and they started posing the minute the guide turned his back on them.

And indeed, in part due to Eleőd's initial democratic intentions, the idea of laughter appears in many ways in the reception of the Park, ranging from mockery to irony. Furthermore, the intention of the park's creators seems to have been very much in line with the way in which Linda Hutcheon defines irony: "Irony rarely involves a simple decoding of a single inverted message; […] it is more often a semantically complex process of relating, differentiating, and combining said and unsaid meanings—and doing so with some evaluative edge."[44] The designer envisioned a multiplicity of interpretations based precisely on this permanent ambiguity of meanings: "I would like this park to be right in the middle: neither a park to honor Communism, nor a sarcastic park that provokes tempers, but a place where everyone can feel whatever they want… People can feel nostalgic, or have a good laugh, or mourn a personal tragedy connected with the period."[45]

Maya Nadkarni also identifies a kind of distanced, ironic nostalgia[46] in relation to the Park. She argues that "while countless Lenins proved the infuriating fact of Soviet occupation, it was perhaps even more pressing to remove [Ilya Afanasevich] Ostapenko, who called attention to the ways in which

44 Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge,* 85.

45 Quoted by Nadkarni, "Making the Past," 194.

46 To resolve the apparent contradiction in terms, cf. Hutcheon, "Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern": "Our contemporary culture is indeed nostalgic; some parts of it—postmodern parts—are aware of the risks and lures of nostalgia, and seek to expose those through irony," 206.

forty years of socialism had become cozy and familiar."[47] In this fashion, along with *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or coming to terms with the past, other kinds of remembering practices, such as irony or nostalgia, are also enabled by the park's layout.

"We don't really ask them, so they don't talk about it": Mapping Terra Incognita

Let us return to Péter György's comment on *terra incognita* and the unbridgeable abyss between past and present that seems to be an underlying universal trope of the post-socialist condition. The idea of terra incognita is closely related to what Piotr Sztompka calls "cultural trauma." Sztompka argues that sudden, unexpected, deep social change may lead to a very peculiar condition, cultural trauma, which occurs "when there is a break, displacement or disorganization in the orderly, taken-for-granted universe."[48] One of the fundamental consequences of cultural trauma, according to Sztompka, is a sense of "cultural disorientation," when "the socialized, internalized culture that they carry 'in their heads' or in their semi-automatic 'habits of the heart' clashes with the cultural environment in which they find themselves."[49] In line with Sztompka's definition, I argue that the actual cultural trauma that is reflected in *both* memory projects is not the hard dictatorship and the terrors of the 1940–50s, or even the retaliation after 1956, as recent memory politics seems to imply, but rather an event that happened much later, in 1989/90.

In the case of Statue Park, admittedly a monument for the transition itself, the narrative focus on the early 1990s is not that surprising. However, the primary cultural trauma on which the House of Terror reflects is also the "change of systems." The sudden paradigm shift of 1989 created the imperative to remember everything that had been suppressed for decades, yet the transition provided neither a natural shift from communicative to cultural memory to support suppressed memories nor the appropriate language to present these memories to a new generation.

47 Nadkarni, "Making the Past," 201. Ilya Afanasevich Ostapenko was a Soviet soldier who was killed during the Siege of Budapest. A statue of him by Jenő Kerényi was erected in 1951 at a major road intersection on the outskirts of Budapest. The statue was taken down in 1992.

48 Sztompka, "Cultural Trauma," 457.

49 Ibid., 454.

The consequences of cultural traumatization to contemporary museum practices display a sharp dividing line between the *heritage* and the *legacy* of communism in Hungary. Heritage may be understood as a selection of items, opinions, or perspectives that can be used by the present in order to create a coherent narrative of the past. This definition bears close resemblance to what Jan Assmann calls "hot memory."[50] This is the realm in which historical museums can feel most at home. Although the two sites discussed here theoretically reflect on two very different pasts, this is not self-explanatory at first sight. Yet they both present a narrative about the past, which, strangely enough, ends with the foundation of the museum: Statue Park or the House of Terror, respectively. However, in both cases, the language they use is not suitable for the transmission of historical knowledge to post-socialist generations, because it is rooted in the *legacy* of the late Kádár era (and not the hard dictatorship of the earlier decades): the involuntary remnants, the *doxa* of how people interacted with one another before 1989.

"If a disturbance occurs," writes Sztompka, "the symbols start to mean something other than they normally do; values become valueless or demand unrealizable goals; […] gestures and words signify something different from what they meant before; beliefs are refuted, faith undermined, trust breached; charisma collapses, idols fall."[51] And this is precisely what happened after the democratic transition. The web of comfortably allegoric, familiar language, the depth of omissions, hints at things or events already known, associative networks of words unspoken, all this was suddenly lost, as it was no longer necessary to learn or reproduce them. In the case of cultural trauma, the language *beyond* the language is the first to go after such a rupture in the tissue of culture, and this trap might have been overlooked by both memory projects discussed here. The deeply allegorical visual language and the very specific arrangements and combinations of objects they use (such as the infinite circles leading to a wall in Memento Park, allegedly symbolizing the communist project, or the various kitchen interiors in the Resistance room of the House of Terror, alluding to the practice of critics of the system gathering in one another's kitchens) remain unintelligible to the youth.

One of my interviewees, when I asked him whether he had heard anything about the past from his older relatives, gave the following answer: "Yes, sometimes

50 Assmann, *Cultural Memory,* 50.

51 Sztompka, "Cultural Trauma," 458.

I hear things. Mum's mother and father were, well, they were taken away [*elvitték őket*]. But we don't really ask, so they don't talk about it." This fragment gives a sobering illustration of the unbridgeable hermeneutical gap that lies between Hungarian teenagers and their parents generation and grandparents generation today, and this is by no means a regular "generation gap." I am convinced that my respondent had no idea what being "taken away," one of the most euphemistic expressions referring to non-localizable terrors of the recent past, might mean, which is why he never asked questions about it.

Although the legacy of the late Kádár era can be regarded as a burden for Hungarian museums that promote the transmission of historical knowledge, it is also a challenge to be met. The task of such memorial sites is not simply to initiate young people as full-fledged members of a memory community or convey some kind of objective knowledge about the past, but also to awaken their curiosity and make the past seem relevant to them. If they are successful in this, perhaps next time a child will ask his or her grandmother the obvious questions: Why? Where? When? By whom?

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The Documents of a Fresh Start in Life: Marriage Advertisements Published in the Israelite Newspaper Új Élet (New Life) Between 1945–1952

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Almost two-thirds of the Hungarian Jewry was killed in the Holocaust. The genocide seriously distorted the sex ratio and the generational composition of the surviving Jewish community. Most married individuals lost their spouses, and the extensive networks of relatives were also eliminated. The growing nu mber of weddings after the war was the first sign of the Jewish community's recovery from wartime traumas. This study examines how the Hungarian Jewry rose above the traumas and devastations of the war. It addresses this problem from the perspective of the matrimonial ads published in the Israelite newspaper *Új Élet* between 1946 and 1952. Marriage ads could be considered collective social practices that shed light on the "publicalization" of private life. Despite their rigid narrative structure, these documents also reveal the voices of the surviving community after the war. The article will address the most common themes in marriage ads, including exile, the foundation of Israel, wartime trauma, and the loss of a spouse.

Keywords: marriage ads, the Hungarian Jewry after 1945, Jewish marriage patterns, Új Élet, postwar community rebuilding

> Dear Nora, Dear Erzsébet, Dear Lili, Dear Zsuzsa, Dear Sára, Dear Seréna, Dear Ágnes, Dear Giza, Dear Baba, Dear Katalin, Dear Judit, Dear Gabriella...
>
> You are probably used to strangers chatting you up when you speak Hungarian, for better reason than they are Hungarian too. We men can be so bad-mannered. For example, I addressed you by your first name on the pretext that we grew up in the same town. I don't know whether you already know me from Debrecen. Until my homeland ordered me to 'volunteer' for forced labour, I worked for the Independent newspaper, and my father owned a bookshop in Gambrinus Court. Judging by your name and age, I have a feeling that I might know you. Did you by any chance ever live in Gambrinus Court?
> Excuse me for writing in pencil, but I'm confined to bed for a few days on doctor's orders, and we're not allowed to use ink in bed.[1]

1 Gárdos, *Fever at Dawn,* 14.

This brief quote is from the novel of the writer and film director Péter Gárdos: *Fever at Dawn* (*Hajnali láz*, translated into English by Elizabeth Szász). The novel is based on correspondence between Gárdos' mother and father, which Gárdos only learned of after his father had passed away. Both of his parents were Holocaust survivors liberated from Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and taken by the Red Cross to Sweden for care. After a couple of weeks, Miklós Gárdos (the author's father) decided to start corresponding with women who were recovering from the traumas of the war in Sweden and originally might have come from his hometown, Debrecen. He hoped both to learn of the fates of his family members and to find someone with whom he might fall in love. He sent the same letter to 117 addresses across Sweden. Ágnes, Péter Gárdos' mother, lived at one of them, and she wrote back. From then on (September 1945), they corresponded intensely until February 1946. They fell in love and were married in March 1946, while they were still in Sweden. The letters were buried and were not read again until after Miklós Gárdos died. His widow Ágnes, after having kept the letter hidden from her son for 52 years, decided to hand over the two packs of correspondence to Péter, who after the first reading immediately decided to use them in some way in his art. Finally, the novel, which included original passages from the correspondence, was published in 2007 in Hungarian then in 2010 in English translation (a movie was also made based on the story in 2015). The novel essentially follows the true story of the couple. Only parts of the narrative and the names of the characters were modified slightly. *Fever at Dawn* aptly represents a possible path for survivors of historical trauma. It illustrates that after the war and genocide, the search for new love and marriage could serve as a tool with which to work through the traumatic events of the recent past and begin a new life.

In Hungary, in addition to the demographic catastrophe caused by the Holocaust, the sex ratio and generational composition of the Jewish community also became seriously distorted. The vast majority of married couples was affected by the loss of a wife or husband. The structure of Jewish families also changed drastically with the elimination of the extensive networks of relatives. One of the first signs of recuperation was the growing number of weddings held immediately after the end of the war. In 1946–1948, the proportion of marriages among the Jewish population compared to the marriage in the non-Jewish Hungarian community was much higher than the proportion of Jews was to the non-Jewish population. This was not a unique phenomenon in Europe. In Bavaria, for example, in the relocation camps (the Displaced Person or DP Camps) from the middle of 1946 the proportion of marriages per 1,000 persons became exceptionally high

among Jews (27.4 percent) compared to the proportion of marriages among members of the region's non-Jewish population (2.8 percent).[2]

Examining the reconstruction of Jewish communities after the war, in his book *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany* Michael Brenner highlights the roles played by rabbis in the process:

> The rabbis' first task after the Liberation was to bury the dead and provide emotional consolation for the sick and the weak. Another difficult rabbinical activity was issuing *heterim* (permission to marry) for those whose spouse was missing and who wanted to remarry. Weddings were one of the joyous experiences in camp life and were hardly rare events. Most of the survivors were young men and women between the ages of twenty and forty who could only dream of having their own families while they were in the concentration camps. Soon after the war ended, many couples formed to build a future together.[3]

This article examines how the Hungarian Jewry rose above the traumas of the war. It addresses this problem from the perspective of the matrimonial ads published in the Israelite newspaper *Új Élet* between 1946 and 1952.[4] Due to their dual private and public nature, the advertisements serve as a basis for a discussion or analysis of personal intentions and self-representation strategies in such narratives. How was the genre used to convey information about historical trauma in a public space? How was trauma expressed within such a rigid textual framework, in which length and structure was predefined? What were the recurring phrases that were used to conjure or refer to the traumatic experiences of the war?

Marriage ads could be considered collective social practices that shed light on the "publicalization" of private life. They had a fixed narrative structure that provided the framework for conventional and even ritualized forms of

2 Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope,* 133.

3 Brenner, *After the Holocaust,* 26, see also Čapková, *Czech, Germans, Jews.*

4 On the history of personal ads, see: Cocks, *Classified: The Secret History*. *Új Élet* was the central newspaper of the newly formed National Office of Hungarian Israelites (Magyar Izraeliták Országos Irodája), so it can be reasonably assumed that the people who were placing their advertisements in the paper were specifically searching for a "Jewish" (in the broad cultural, religious and historical meaning of the term) spouse. Based on the ads, it is not clear who considered themselves part of the Hungarian Jewry. Only a small number of the ads made mention of the practice of religion by using the following expressions: Sabbatarian, religious, Orthodox. The distribution of the number of advertisements by years was the following: 1946: 977, 1947: 1,340, 1948: 836, 1949: 379, 1950:336, 1951: 235, 1952: 13.

self-representation, even if the identity of the advertiser was often concealed. Nonetheless, the monotony of the ads notwithstanding, the voices of the surviving community can be heard. These voices reflected on the experiences of exile and the foundation of Israel, or they touched on the traumatic experiences and the loss of family members, including husbands and wives. In contrast to the different Jewish and non-Jewish matrimonial ads that were published in daily newspapers or to the ads in Jewish newspapers printed before and during the war, the ads in all the newspapers examined in this article contain references to the wartime persecution of the Jewry.

Methodology

This article concentrates on a group of sources which has not yet been made the subject of scholarly interest. Since it would be speculative to draw far-reaching conclusions on the basis of a single type of source, I will also discuss the historical background for the marriage ads, and I will also offer insights gleaned from other sources. At the same time, I aim to examine marriage ads in the context of marriage statistics, demographic data, and ecclesiastic legal documents in order to highlight the *differentia specifica* of such documents.

I should note, I have made only partial comparisons to the matrimonial advertisements published in other daily papers (*Szabad Nép*, *Magyar Nemzet*, *Szabad Szó*, *Magyar Zsidók Lapja)*. In 1945–52,[5] 4,103 advertisements were published, and this high number is only partly altered by the fact that certain ads may have been published in consecutive issues of *Új Élet*. As it would have been impossible to analyze all the related marriage ads, I discuss only a sample of 50 marriage ads which were selected randomly. Although I extended the research to a significantly larger corpus, I only used this sample for the purposes of statistical analysis. The way information was structured and presented in the ads depended on the personality of the advertiser, the set layout, and the fee charged per character for the ads (a special fee was charged for the use of bold or larger fonts). Marriage ads were examined according to the following criteria: age, sex, social status (occupation, job), financial situation (e.g. small business, plant etc.), housing situation (was the person a property owner or

5 An average of 15-20 advertisements was published in each publication, but this number increased to approx. 35-40 in the volume of 1948. This latter fact meant that the last page of the 10-page *Új Élet* was completely devoted to marriage ads, while the second to last page was partly covered by such ads (i.e. 15-20 percent of the entire newspaper).

renter), religion (primarily whether or not someone belonged to the Orthodox community), and attributes used for self-description (pretty, intelligent, good-natured). With regard to personal attributes, in the newspaper the advertiser usually highlighted the features he or she hoped to find in a potential partner. As could be expected, most of the ads did not incorporate all the criteria listed above. The data obtained in the course of the research was used to address the following questions: what was the average age of the advertisers? What was the sex ratio of the advertisers? What was the social background of the advertisers? What type of partner was in highest "demand"?

Új Élet

> We are proclaiming 'New Life' on the sepulchral mound of much of the Hungarian Jewry–above its destroyed and mortified ruins. This is a clear sign of the desire to live, the encouraging miracle of healing wounds, the ceaseless heartbeat in the thousand-year-old history of the Jews, which will triumphantly work its way through the wreckage of mass destruction.[6]

Új Élet (New Life) was published by the National Office of Hungarian Israelites (MIOI), and its title clearly indicated the desire of the Hungarian Jewry to rebuild the community after the traumatic experience of the Holocaust. It was the first and central newspaper of the organization, and it first went to press on November 13, 1945.[7] Its circulation started a bit later than that of the other weekly prints, and it remained the only nationwide weekly newspaper of the MIOI. It was published from the outset as the journal of the National Office of the Hungarian Israelites and the official and declared "forum" for the Hungarian Jewry. After the political transition, *Új Élet* remained the official weekly of the Jewish community, but it lost its once privileged status.

In the beginning, the chief publishing editor of the newspaper was the journalist Rezső Roóz (1879–1963), and a five-member editorial board oversaw the editing process.[8] The newspaper played a crucial role in the post-1945 life of

6 *Új Élet*, November 13, 1945, 1.

7 Most of the Hungarian newspapers and journals gained the permission for publication from the Allied Commission during the spring and the summer of 1945. See Botos, "Mit tudott a magyar közvélemény."

8 The members of the the editorial boards were: Béla Dénes, Ferenc Hevesi, Ernő Munkácsi, Szigfried Róth, and Samu Szemere. The composition of the board was the same as the earlier board of the denomination. Ernő Munkácsi was the secretary of the Central Jewish Council, which operated during World War II.

the remaining Hungarian Jewish community. In an extremely precarious and dim period, when information on victims and survivors was scarce, *Új Élet* became a primary source of news.[9] The newspaper published the lists, compiled by the World Jewish Congress, JOINT, DEGOB,[10] and the Red Cross, of the names of those who survived the deportation and the labor services. It also published news, regulations, and laws that affected the Hungarian Jewry. The issues of financial reparations and responsibility for the Holocaust or the policies of the government were constantly on its agenda. With its articles, editorials, and commentaries, *Új Élet* also shaped the discourse on the Hungarian Jewry and the Holocaust. Beyond practical information published in order to provide assistance for survivors, the newspaper also helped catalyze the process of confronting and working through the tragic events of the Holocaust: the newspaper regularly published short stories, poems, and personal memories. Ernő Munkácsi started a column entitled "How did it happen?" in which official documents produced at the time of the deportations were published, along with reflections on the importance of these documents. With its weekly circulation, personal and commercial ads, reports on the situation of the Jewry in rural settlements or cities other than Budapest, and coverage of Palestine (and from 1948 onwards on Israel), the newspaper offered a sense of continuity and a normal rhythm of life for the Jewish community after the traumatic experiences of the Holocaust. The shattered and tormented Hungarian Jewry could feel that through the newspaper they remained connected to the larger, even "supranational" community of Jews.

Géza Szilágyi (1878–1956), a writer and publicist who was active between the two World Wars, regularly published articles and occasionally whole series on the situation of Jewish women after the war, wartime traumas, and everyday hardships (e.g. dating) in response to the letters he received from female readers.[11] In these articles, the intention to marry was exclusively represented as a "female desire," as is amply illustrated by the series of articles published under the title "Chorus of Female Desire," in which Szilágyi shared with his readers the difficulties of bereaved women looking for a new partner in life:

> Women, open-hearted and honest women write these letters, who survived the most devastating plague internally in Hungary, or those

9 Csorba, "Izraelita felekezeti élet Magyarországon."

10 National Committee for the Provision of Care for Deported Persons (Deportáltakat Gondozó Országos Bizottság). Horváth, "A magyarországi zsidó Deportáltakat".

11 Havasréti, "Vitustánc."

> returning from stark and remote extermination camps [...] women who were left alone in desert like solitude: young girls who not only lost their families, but also their protective and supporting homes; young women, whose fiancés were taken to their graves by an infernal worldwide hurricane; women in bloom, who were robbed of their husbands, and in many cases their children too, by demonic powers; matronly mothers still up for an active life.

Each one of these women writing letters wished to marry or remarry, and they were searching for a suitable man, with whom they could share their lives:

> Quite understandably, they assume they will find and hope to find their special men primarily among those who are companions in their distress in every aspect, who were also squeezed together in suffocating ghettoes, abducted in wagons to be killed in gas chambers, or doomed to be wasted on forced labor dictated by executioners, and who in the end survived and returned through some unfathomable miracle of mercy, but are just as bereaved, as they never saw their female partners again, partners from whom these men were taken by flogs to be led to their fateful suffering.[12]

In addition to texts written in various other genres (editorial, fiction column etc.), notices in which people were looking for family members or relatives were frequently published in *Új Élet*. From January 1946, an increasing number of marriage ads was published among the commercial advertisements and other notices. By the first half of 1946 (March), the structure of the periodical and the order of the texts began to follow a set (hierarchical) pattern, pushing the matrimonial ads to the last page (or occasionally the penultimate page, if there was not enough space).

Remarriage and Religious Law after 1945

After the "closing" of the Talmud, all of the ritual, practical, and theoretical issues that emerged within the Jewish community and were not regulated by the Talmud were settled by the rabbis.[13] The answers and recommendations of the

12 Szilágyi, "Vágyak női kórusa," 15.

13 The effects of technological development on the everyday lives of the communities were among the typical problems that were resolved by the rabbis.

rabbis were considered guidelines based on the religious laws (*halacha*).[14] Due to the so-called reception law, which had been ratified in 1895, civic mixed marriages were legal in Hungary. The institution of civic registration significantly reduced the administrative role of the rabbis.[15] In the same year, the National Rabbi Association (Országos Rabbi Egyesület, ORE) was formed, primarily because of the changes in the issuing of birth-certificates. In addition, the association had many other responsibilities, including the provision of advocacy for the rabbis. It also became the highest forum for discussion of religious laws, and it tried to improve relations between the rabbis and the congregation. According to an ORE-decree issued in 1936, the right to decide in the first instance on the matter of religious laws belonged to the local rabbi, but the congregation could appeal to the National Rabbinic Association.[16]

ORE resumed its operation on February 26, 1945, two weeks after the liberation of Budapest.[17] Its first chairman was Zsigmond Groszmann. Its main goal was to reorganize the religious life of the Hungarian Jewish community. The most pressing issues after the war were the high rate of people abandoning the Jewish religion and the clarification of the legal stance of war widows (*agunah*s).

Based on official statistics, there were 21,833 cases of apostasy between 1920 and 1942.[18] According to a binding statement issued by ORE in 1946, individuals who had not fulfilled the formal requirements of the apostasy and who declared their Jewishness in their official documents after 1945 remained members of the congregation. Those who had abandoned the Jewish faith or obtained fake documents had to meet the criteria of religious re-engagement (*Tvila* and *Kabala*). Marriages which had been contracted before the 1941 Anti-Jewish law (without the civil registry) were considered authentic by the interim, but the congregation also required a posterior civil registry certification as well. Dealing with the problem of *agunahs* was a serious religious issue for the rabbinate. Certificates confirming women's status as widows and the deaths of husbands were issued by the military, but the interpretation of these documents also depended on *sulchan aruch*.[19] In many cases, death during the war could not

14 Toronyi, "Halachikus problémák a neológiában."

15 Stein, *A zsidók anyakönyvei és konskripciói.*

16 Rabbisági szabályzat, 1936. Magyar Zsidó Múzeum és Levéltár (MZSML), II-A-5, ORE iratai, 1936.

17 The Soviet army captured Buda on January 18, 1945 and Pest on February 13.

18 Katona, "A zsidó megújhodásért."

19 The Sulchan Aruch is the universal corpus juris of the Jews which was compiled by Josef ben Efraim Karo (1488–1575).

be proven by witnesses or by any official institutions.[20] As the leader of the ORE, dr. Ernő Roth explained,

> World War II and the killing of Jews during the war resulted in a completely different situation: there are many women who don't know anything about the whereabouts of their husbands, and most of these women are young; they must endure alone the hardships of life without the support of children or relatives.[21]

The list of Holocaust victims is not complete even today. From May 1945 onwards, committees visited the former camps to collect data concerning the survivors. The guidelines and prohibitions established in the Talmud for uncertain deaths could not be applied in these cases. The wives of those who could not be found were considered widows by the committees. Roth reached the following conclusion:

> due to the results of this horrible war, husbands who have not yet shown up are probably dead. […] Is it appropriate to discourage a lot of religious and virtuous women from remarrying with if one considers this improbability? I believe that we can give only a negative answer to this question.[22]

ORE feared that a rigid insistence on observance of religious laws from these widows would push them towards civic marriages instead of religious ones, so they tried to lighten the religious regulations. With regard to the institution of *chalicha* (i.e. levirate), the rabbis were of the same view. According to the laws of the Torah, the brother-in-law was obliged to marry the widow after the death of her husband. ORE tried to disregard such regulations, thereby allowing widows who wanted to follow religious ordinances and have families and children to remarry.

20 Róth, "Az Aguna kérdéséhez."

21 Ibid., 16.

22 Ibid., 18.

The Demographic Situation of the Hungarian Jewry after the Holocaust

The period between 1945 and 1948 is called the *coalition period* or the *years of transition* in Hungarian historiography.[23] After the defeat in the war, the political, social, and economic structures of Hungary were in ruins. According to the World Jewish Congress' calculations, approximately 569,700 Hungarian Jews (69 percent of the Hungarian Jewry in the state of 1944) died in concentration camps or as a result of various atrocities in the forced labor service or during deportation. Thus, the rebuilding of the country began in the midst of post-war traumas, upheavals, and uncertainties. The numbers of "remaining Jews"[24] in the territory of post-war Hungary were the following: there were approximately 190,000 Jewish people in the country, of which 119,000 resided in Budapest. The human casualties according to territorial breakdown were the following: Of the Jewish denizens of Budapest, 47 percent were killed in the war. Of those living in the rest of the country, 78 percent perished.[25] War and genocide also changed the sex ratio and the generational composition of the Jewish community significantly. In Budapest, women outnumbered men, while in the rest of the country more Jewish men survived the Holocaust than Jewish women. In Budapest, there were 1,577 women for every 1,000 men, while in the rest of the country there were 915 women for every 1,000 men.[26] As for the age distribution, the proportion of the population in reproductive age (people between 20 and 40 years of age) distorted the statistics further both in Budapest (1,784 to 1,000) and in the rest of the country (860 to 1,000).[27] Moreover, according to the estimations of Eugene Duschinsky, 70 percent of the women who had been married and 65 percent of the men who had been married had become widows and widowers.[28] In addition to these demographic effects, the Holocaust also had a major impact on the structure of Jewish families: the strong networks of relatives simply vanished. These networks had had a considerable influence on the practice of endogamy, which had been characteristic of the marriage habits of the Jewish community before the war. Statistics show that 41 percent of the total number of marriages between cousins were contracted by Jews.[29]

23 Standeisky, "Tétova újraértelmezések."
24 Komoróczy, *1849-től a napjainkig*, 881–85.
25 Braham, *A népirtás politikája*.
26 Ibid.
27 Karády, *Túlélők és újrakezdők*.
28 Duschinsky, "Hungary."
29 Szél, *Budapesti házasságok*, 199.

Demographic changes heavily influenced the mating and marriage patterns of the community members. The rising number of mixed-marriages in the age group between 20 and 60 was an inevitable consequence of these demographic traumas. The disproportionalities and the distortions of the post-war Jewish community (with regard to the population pyramid, different mortality rates in Budapest and the rest of the country, etc.) were connected to the differences by territory in the wartime deportations, forced labor services, and other atrocities. The Jewry of Budapest, for example, was less exposed to deportations than the communities in the countryside, in part because regent Miklós Horthy stopped the deportations on July 7, 1944.

Jewish Marriages after 1945

According to the data from Budapest collected by sociologist Viktor Karády,[30] the proportion of Jewish marriages compared to non-Jewish marriages was much higher than the proportion of Jews in Hungarian society at the time.[31] Karády came up with the following estimates with regard to the number of Jewish weddings:[32]

Year	Jewish marriages	Other religions
1941–43	1,459	11,325
1945	1,742	10,333
1946	2,734	10,141
1947	2,221	
1948	1,894	
1949	1,544	
1950	804 (estimated)	

Table 1. Marriages in Budapest.

There are no data for 1944, but probably the number of Jewish marriages was the lowest if compared with other years. Such marriages could be interpreted as group-specific phenomenon, since there is no indication of a similar tendency among non-Jewish men after the end of World War II. The high number of

30 Due to internal migration and the declining Jewish community, Budapest gained a demographic predominance compared with the rest of the country.

31 Karády, *Túlélők és újrakezdők,* 72.

32 Ibid., 83.

non-Jewish men fleeing the Soviet army and the growing number of prisoners of war may explain this discrepancy.

Karády attributes the rising number of Jewish marriages to the fact that after the war the Hungarian Jewry "compensated" for the marriages that had been postponed because of the war and the deportations. Apart from this compensatory attitude, the growing tendency to remarry among the widows of the Holocaust was an important factor which contributed to the rise in marriage rates. This article is based on a textual analysis of marriage ads, and it complements Karády's argument, according to which, due to the strengthening of a minority identity among the Hungarian Jews, the community was able to generate solidarity and strengthen a sense of bonding among its members. László Csorba also reflected on the link between group identity and the issue of marriage and childbearing among Hungarian Jews:

> The successful ambition to rejuvenate the family was a sign that the Hungarian Jewry was gradually regaining its physical and mental health, and it was a clear sign of the communal desire to live and to establish personal security. As early as 1946, the proportion of Jewish remarriages was twice the proportional number of Jewish residents in Budapest, and the rate of childbearing, which was facilitated by in kind and financial assistance and cost-free benefits (and encouraged by the official propaganda), almost tripled compared to the rate the previous year […] their efforts, which were also supported by the "dating services," were especially effective among the Jews in the parts of the country outside of Budapest.[33]

Marriage Advertisements

> Marriage
> I am searching for my relative living abroad,
> having an unchallengeable background,
> an exceptional, *religious* youngish dame
> recognized for her beauty and coming from the higher circles.
> With highest discretion.
> Please send your detailed letter to motto *"Nagypartie."*
> (December 27, 1945)[34]

33 Csorba, "Izraelita felekezeti élet."

34 I have striven in my translations to maintain the cited marriage ads in their original form and style by preserving their respective layouts, segmentation, and emphasis.

Matrimonial ads could be interpreted as a manifestation of the "marriage market," in which the exchange of goods is replaced by people trying to "sell" themselves. This ambition strongly shaped the narratives in the ads, and it influenced the keywords that individual advertisers chose when referring to their own social and financial status (properties). The person posting the advertisement was supposed to clarify who he/she was and what kind of partner he/she was looking for in a concise manner.[35] These advertisements offer a sketch of the kind of person who would have been considered an eligible partner ("jó partie") at the time, in other words, who would have had a "premium value" in the marriage market. The anonymity of the ads, the conventional self-descriptions, and the use of mottoes helped the advertiser conceal his/her identity. The matrimonial ads examined in this article contain three basic types of information. The first type is the age of the advertiser and the age of the desired partner. The second type indicates the financial and social status (divorced, widowed, unmarried) of the advertiser, his/her tangible assets (apartment, villa, car, rented property), and whether he/she had a job or not. The last type was included in the motto, and it could be a simple word or a brief statement ("America," or "I wish to start a new life," for example). In the sample examined in this article, there was only one motto that resurfaced several times: "Sufficient means of subsistence." Mottoes could also contain additional references to the advertiser ("Brunette Woman," "Music Fan," "I own a small business and an apartment"), or they could include indications of preferences regarding the other party ("Up to 65," "Marriage into the family"). In most cases, however, mottoes simply implied the desire to build a happy and stable life with a new partner ("Happy Life," "Optimism," "Sufficient means of subsistence"). Personal information with regard to religion, family (number of children), and events from the recent past was not normally included in the ads.

A discussion of marriage advertisements in *Új Élet*, needs to be complemented with a brief reflection on similar advertisements found in non-denominational newspapers (*Szabad Nép*, *Szabad Szó*, *Magyar Nemzet*) at the time, and in the predecessor of *Új Élet, Magyar Zsidók Lapja* (Hungarian Jews' Journal), before and during the war. In the case of *Magyar Zsidók Lapja*, I examined the issues published between 1939 and 1944. As for the most popular advertising forms and typical phrases, the ads posted before and after the war did not reflect

35 "A wife and mother for the children, a companion, 'a travelling partner' an associate/business partner?"

any significant differences. For example, the colloquial salutation used to address a young woman, or dame (úrileány, úrinő), continued to be used until as late as 1951. Another example for the survival of pre-war linguistic traditions and manners of speech is the regular mention of a woman's "dowry," which in most cases simply referred to a certain sum of money. It seems that certain patterns of self-representation were not radically altered by the war or the traumatic experience of the Holocaust. However, one does notice some changes. After the war, and especially in *Új Élet*, the ads became more detailed and assumed the characteristics of a (simple) narrative. In addition, more personal information with regard to the identity of the advertisers was included in post-war ads.

> Young lady wishes to find a fair husband
> with good financial situation
> from 45 to 53 years of age
> please reply to the publisher under the motto 8 thousand in cash.
> Agents excluded.[36]

In addition to *Új Élet*, other dailies, such as *Szabad Nép* (until 1950), *Magyar Nemzet* (until 1951), and *Szabad Szó* (until 1949) also published matrimonial advertisements. In the first two papers, Jewish advertisers ("Isr.," "Israelite") also frequently posted advertisements. *Szabad Szó* was the only one in which Jewish advertisers did not place their ads, as it was used in particular by Christian (Roman Catholic) farmers, agricultural workers, and craftsmen. Like *Új Élet*, *Szabad Nép* and *Magyar Nemzet* also published ads containing implicit references to the Holocaust ("widow of a person taken for labor service," "deported"). However, one can also identify differences, especially regarding the issue of emigration to Israel, which was not mentioned at all. In addition, in the dailies read nationwide non-Jewish advertisers did not make any references to wartime traumas or personal losses.

The advertisements published in *Szabad Nép* after 1948 reflected the increasing politicization of private and public life in the wake of the Communist takeover. However, it is not clear whether the salutation conventions—i.e. the use of the term 'comrade'—were a requirement of the newspaper or simply a linguistic indication of one's commitment to the party. It is worth noting, however, that this type of salutation was used exclusively in the columns of *Szabad Nép*.

36 *Magyar Zsidók Lapja*, January 11, 1940.

Due to my other engagements
I seek my partner in life, an intellectual
Isr. comrade, by this method
a 29-year old, pretty "Female Teacher."[37]

Marriage Advertisements in Új Élet

In the overall corpus of documents, marriage ads that contained information about wartime deportation, experiences in concentration camps, or the loss of family members or a spouse were rare. This was not necessarily because the subject was taboo; there may well have been other reasons. Among the members of the surviving Jewish community, the various atrocities and stories of deportation were well known. Thus, the fact that the advertisers did not describe the traumas they had endured in detail does not necessarily mean that they wanted to avoid mentioning their past, although this may also have been a deliberate strategy. Since the Holocaust affected the entire community, no explicit references were needed to evoke the horrors of the past. The desire to remarry already implied experience with wartime trauma and the desire to move on and start a new life. However, the linguistic conventions used in marriage advertisements to a certain extent enabled a discrete and anonymous method of self-representation, and they were also suitable for conveying confidential or sensitive information with regards to the recent past. Although the act of publicly expressing the wish to remarry could be interpreted as a form of dealing with the traumatic past, the decision to start searching for a new spouse must have been incredibly difficult from a psychological point of view. To create a new, intimate relationship with someone after having suffered through the traumatic experiences of the Holocaust and after the having lost a partner or an entire family must have been a very hard choice to make. Therefore, marriage after the Holocaust and the desire to share the difficulties of the present (and the past) with a new person could be regarded as one of the most significant post-war rituals of coming to terms with the past. Marriage in this specific social and historical context was a ritual way of dealing with wartime trauma, a ritual which did not necessarily involve much (public) discussion of the actual traumatic events.

The majority of advertisers resided in Hungary, although occasionally family members in Hungary sought the help of relatives abroad (primarily

37 *Szabad Nép*, May 19, 1948, 16.

in Israel and the USA) in their search for a spouse. There were also cases in which advertisements were posted directly from Israel without an intermediary. In addition, advertisements were not always placed by individuals who wished to get married, but by mediators or "guarantors" representing the person in question. It was mostly women who sought the assistance of these people. In these cases, the advertisement was posted by a family member (father, brother, or a female friend) or a close relative on behalf of the woman looking for a husband. According to traditional social practices with regards to marriage, the father or brother was responsible for searching for a husband for a Jewish woman. The male members of the family were also supposed to guarantee the reputation of the woman in question. As the quote below shows, male relatives were occasionally involved in the search for husbands for middle-aged widows, as well.

> I wish to marry off
> my pretty young female relative,
> who earns her living as a lingerie seamstress,
> who owns an apartment, to a recognized
> craftsman or merchant up to the age of 48-55.
> Please reply to the publisher under the motto "Domesticated 100" [38]

Marriage advertisements were also posted by marriage brokers (*shadchan*), who advertised their services in various newspapers (*Magyar Nemzet*, *Új Élet*). Traditionally, *shadchans* played an important role arranging marriages among religious Jews (Orthodox, Hasidic, but even for assimilated families) and in helping find a suitable husband or wife.[39] Considering the demographic situation in Hungary after the war, the services of *shadchans* were more readily accepted by the general public.

> Marriages are brokered
> discreetly and efficiently by:
> MRS. GOLD Alsóerdősor Street,
> former Ground Floor No. 2
> Visiting hours: 10:00am–12:00pm
> and 2:00pm–6:00pm. Telephone: 223-480[40]

38 *Új Élet*, January 22, 1948.

39 Koerner, *Family, Religious, and Social Life.*

40 *Új Élet*, June 27, 1946.

Who posted marriage advertisements after the war, when, and why, and what were the main themes addressed by the advertisers? After the Holocaust, the first people to return to Hungary were the men who had been conscripted into the forced labor service.[41] The sample of ads selected for statistical analysis contained altogether 50 advertisers, including 30 women and 20 men (thus a female majority of 20 percent), with the average age of 42, although only 30 of the advertisers disclosed their ages. The great majority of the advertisers were from Budapest. Only 12 of them indicated that they were from the "countryside" (i.e. the rest of the country). Interestingly enough, a significant number of advertisers was seeking to marry for the first time. Although obviously they had not lost a spouse during the Holocaust, they most likely had lost relatives or nuclear family members. Another category of the advertisers was the widows/widowers. There are 12 people in the sample—2 men and 10 women—who noted that they were widowers or widows. The dates when these advertisements were posted indicate the time when the person in question felt ready to close the traumatic chapters of the past and move on.

An important phenomenon in the postwar Jewish community was emigration to Israel (*alija*). Even before the wave of immigration after the war, many people had already left for Israel, either during the war or between 1930 and 1941. Approximately 5,870 people left the country between 1930 and 1941.[42] With the proclamation of the state of Israel in May 1948, *alija*—conducted illegally in previous years—became legal. However, the Communist leadership never supported *alija* openly. Passports were issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the applicants could only obtain travel documents if they were able to verify that they had performed military or labor service. The leaders of the Jewish community were also ambivalent about this issue, despite the fact that they were generally expected to support the process. In December 1948, the national assembly adopted legislation on citizenship that imposed strict sanctions for illegal border crossing, and this included illegal *alija*. If someone was caught while attempting to cross the border illegally, he/she could be sentenced to confiscation of property and could even be deprived of his/her citizenship.

Based on official Israeli statistics, the country admitted 13,631 people from Hungary between May 1948 and the end of 1951.[43] This left its imprint on the marriage ads published in *Új Élet*. A growing percentage of the advertisements

41 Braham, *A népirtás politikája.*

42 Stark, "Vándormozgalom a vészkorszak után."

43 Komoróczy, *1849-től a napjainkig,* 975.

began to focus on immigration. In addition, numerous ads were published in which people living abroad—in America or Australia—looked for wives (husbands) from among people in the Jewish community in Hungary. This shows that the growing Jewish diaspora remained committed to the practice of endogamy, and marriages were arranged with people who had similar cultural, linguistic, and historic backgrounds. There were also advertisers who searched for a partner before emigrating in order to be able to leave the country and start a new life elsewhere with someone from the same socio-cultural background. In 1948, *Új Élet* switched to an anti-Zionist tone, complying with the official policy of the Communist regime. However, the newspaper could still publish ads posted by Israeli advertisers inviting people to emigrate, as the example below demonstrates:

> 27-year old young man returning from captivity,
> having lost his beloved ones
> wishes to find his partner,
> possibly a serious girl, 18-22 years old young lady
> with modern thinking,
> also returning from deportation. Please enclose photograph,
> if possible. Please reply to the publisher
> under the motto *"We start a new life in Erec"*[44]

As indicated above, it was not general practice to make references to the Holocaust in the advertisements.[45] The most frequently used phrases that indicated a traumatic experience were: "musz" (person taken for labor service) (6) and "deported," or "deported person is preferred" (2). Both expressions functioned as umbrella terms referring to a wide range of traumatic experiences that were familiar among people in the Jewish community but were rarely discussed in public. Interestingly, although most of the advertisers were from Budapest, the ghetto was not referenced in any of the ads. In addition to the expressions above, there were other phrases that implied some experience with the Holocaust. These expressions included "recently returned," or "completely bereaved without any living relative." The words and phrases used by Holocaust survivors in marriage ads were strikingly different from the terminology used

44 *Új Élet,* November 18, 1948.

45 It is worth noting that after the reopening of the ad's section in *Új Élet* (1957), the "traces" of the shared trauma entirely disappeared. This suggests that only between 1946 and 1952 could the traumatic experiences be integrated into the narrative canons of the matrimonial ads.

at the time. It should be noted that the terms concentration camp, lager, death camp, and ghetto were not mentioned at all in the ads, although they were often referred to in post-war colloquial language. The second advertisement listed below is an exception to the rule:

> I wish to follow the example of my two siblings
> who found their happiness in the countryside,[46]
> I am 48 years old, the widow of a person taken for labor service,
> as well as a domesticated wife and a business woman,
> I wish to get married, and I would not mind living in the countryside.
> Please send your reply up to 55 years of age.
> Please reply to the publisher under the motto "Modest." [47]

> Pretty, middle-aged woman recently returned from Auschwitz,
> a primary lessor of an apartment, wishes to get married to an independent craftsman or merchant aged between 55–69,
> and would not mind living in the countryside.
> Please reply to the Propaganda publisher under the motto "I was left completely alone,"
> Teréz Avenue 50.[48]

Another typical feature of the advertisements posted during the time period under examination here was that the advertisers were looking not only for a future spouse, but also for a future associate/business partner. These ads were posted by "small entrepreneurs," most often owners of small or mid-size industrial plants.[49] It should be highlighted that the key expressions associated

46 I.e. somewhere in Hungary other than Budapest.

47 *Új Élet*, January 1, 1948.

48 *Új Élet,* February 19, 1948.

49 Before I discuss the summarized statistics based on the occupations and activities mentioned in the ads, I wish briefly to clarify some of the difficulties I encountered when making these statistics. I defined altogether three occupational categories based on the selected sample. By definition, this meant that certain occupations and social circles were left out, e.g. skilled workers or "craftsmen." In addition, in many cases only vague references were made to someone's financial status, without specific definitions (terms like "well-off," "in a good financial situation" (4) or "in employment" were used). In one instance, the advertiser used the term "worker," which (knowing the contemporary political language) was a reference to one's adaptation to the new political regime or the emerging political identity. In a total of five cases, the advertisers indicated their actual financial situation ("HUF 7,000"). Based on the selected sample, most advertisers were involved in trade ("merchant") (8), followed by business owners (3), an industrial plant owner (1), a landowner (1), and a farmer (1). The last two people may very well have been involved in essentially the same kind of work.

with this type of marriage ad ("would marry into" or "invited to marry into" a family) continued to figure in similar ads even after the post-1948 era, until 1951.

> Middle-aged shoemaker with industrial authorization
> is INVITED TO MARRY INTO
> the family of a widow having a
> prospering business and a spectacular apartment.
> Mrs. Márton Weisz (widow)
> VI. Szondi Street 38"[50]

There were also ads in which the advertisers were specifically looking for a religious or Orthodox spouse. In some cases, Orthodoxy was only referred to with a Hebrew expression.

> A diligent, religious young woman wishes to get married.
> I would be a faithful and understanding wife for an around 40-year old
> serious, religious man, under the motto
> "Bász Talmudchachem"[51]

Conclusion

As I have noted, in 1946–48 the proportion of Jewish marriages compared to non-Jewish ones was much higher than the proportion of Jews in the Hungarian population. This indicates that in the shattered post-war Jewish community marriage functioned as one of the tools with which to attempt to work through and move beyond the traumatic past and start a new life. Instead of public discussions about the details of the genocide, the traditional social institution of marriage was supposed to bring about (ritual) closure and signal the beginning of a new life. Although in several cases, marriage ads contained explicit references to the Holocaust, the shared trauma was only the specificity of Jewish ads in comparison with non-Jewish texts. Yet, coming to terms with the traumatic past did not happen in complete "silence."[52] Subtle references to wartime experiences implied whether one had been affected by wartime traumas or not. No further details were needed in a community that had been devastated by genocidal violence. However, matrimonial ads do reveal some information

50 *Új Élet,* January 17, 1946.

51 *Új Élet,* January 24, 1946.

52 Cesarani and Sundquist, *After the Holocaust.*

about the consignors—the majority of the consignors were secular Jews—and about the forms the narratives took. While there was no significant change in the cultural tradition of posting marriage ads in the time period covered in this article (the institution of *shadchan* continued to exist, for example), the narratives evoked the shared traumatic experiences of the recent past, as well as the post-war existential dilemmas of the remaining Jewish community (the *Alijah*, for example). Matrimonial advertisements also show that survival and the need to start a new life was a powerful motivation that led to some public—albeit very subtle—discussion or disclosure of the unspeakable sufferings which had determined the fate of the entire community.

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FEATURED REVIEW

The Routledge History of East Central Europe since 1700. Edited by Irina Livezeanu and Árpád von Klimó. Abingdon–New York: Routledge, 2017. 522 pp.

The Routledge History of East Central Europe since 1700 is a multi-authored textbook which introduces the state-of-the-art in the multifaceted historiography of modern East Central Europe without aiming to impose a single coherent perspective. The volume conceives of East Central Europe in rather broad and flexible terms: in the editors' own words, East Central Europe lacks fixed boundaries, but it contains both "Central Europe" and "Southeastern Europe" (p.8). The volume consists of a brief introduction and ten long chapters, eight of which are thematic and cover the modern era since approximately 1700. The remaining two chapters are essentially chronological and somewhat narrower, focusing on the period of communism and its legacy and the post-89 years and ambiguous process of Europeanization, respectively.

The altogether twenty-one contributors cover mainstream topics in the political, socioeconomic and cultural history of East Central Europe, while also devoting significant attention to several newer scholarly subjects, such as gender, territoriality, migration, and commemorations. The book begins with an exploration of the momentous territorial changes in East Central Europe in modern times and the overarching shifts among its various "regimes of territoriality." Drawing on Charles S. Maier in particular, the insightful overview penned by James Koranyi and Bernhard Struck plead for a conceptualization of the 1860s and the 1960s as the two key caesuras in the reorganization of political space. In their interpretation, the 1860s meant a shift from imperial rule over multiethnic spaces to attempts to "right-size" the nation through new infrastructures and territorial control. The 1960s brought the beginnings of a still ongoing global opening, in which territoriality no longer appears to be at the forefront of politics.

Koranyi and Struck combine an interest in high-level and local-level politics to provide a crisp narrative of how, by the nineteenth century, the epicenter of geopolitical struggles had shifted from the northern part of the region to the south, and how the map of the region was settled. They perceive stark continuities in the defining ideas, territorial ambitions, and homogenization projects which were characteristic of the region from the 1860s until the post-World War II

period, while also fully acknowledging the novelty of imposing well-policed borders after World War I. While the two authors do not question that Nazi and Soviet policies fundamentally reshaped East Central European societies, they view these imperial projects as a drastic acceleration of preexisting trends, rather than as ruptures. They subsequently note that the practice of redrawing ethnic boundaries and spaces seems to have largely petered out by the 1960s, sourly adding that this has to do with the fact that the brutal process of "right-sizing the nation" had basically been completed by then. Koranyi and Struck could have devoted more attention to the varied conceptualizations of the region across time (beyond the period to which they aptly refer as the rise of Eastern Europe), their narrative nonetheless remains a theoretically informed and richly detailed overview which amounts to a seminal contribution to the volume.

While recurrently drawing on the cases of Hungary and, to a lesser extent, Bulgaria for examples, Krassimira Daskalova and Susan Zimmermann's chapter on women's and gender history similarly belongs among the highlights of the volume. Viewing gender as a primary way of signifying power relations which intersects with questions of class, religion, and the nation, the two authors emphasize that East Central European gender history has tended to be marginalized within both gender history and studies on East Central Europe. Their ambition is therefore to reveal several fruitful ways in which a gender-conscious history of this multifaceted region could help further reinterpretations of dominant paradigms in both of these larger fields.

Their clearly structured and nuanced chapter examines primarily the history of women's lives, status, and experience to highlight historically changing gender norms and social practices in six major realms: education; work and social politics; law and citizenship; empire, nation, ethnicity; gendered scripts of sexualities and intimate relationships; and women's activism and movements. Particularly noteworthy are Daskalova and Zimmermann's depictions of the mixed blessings for women brought by the introduction of the modern legal system and, later, the socialist state. They show, for instance, that contrary to mainstream (and gender-biased) narratives on the rise of modern equality, the nineteenth century made the legal differences between men and women more pronounced. The authors subsequently show how, during the period of state socialism, formal equality was combined with persistent practices of gender difference. They argue that, on the one hand, socialist regimes did more than West European states to abolish the legal subordination of women, and state socialist education policies in particular greatly improved the latter's social

standing and opportunities. On the other hand, the enormous and forceful mobilization of women into the world of paid labor produced largely segregated and stratified labor markets, while the gendered division of care-taking remained widely ignored. In addition to the fact that it is complex and balanced, another key strength of the chapter is that it highlights several possibilities for further research. Daskalova and Zimmermann plead in particular for the need for more entangled histories across macro-regions, which would simultaneously recognize and explore the major effects material scarcity had on East Central Europe.

The single chapter of the volume devoted entirely to cultural history focuses on the creation of literary cultures, broadly conceived. In other words, it aims to connect the production of cultural representations to social and political currents. Irina Livezeanu, Thomas Ort, and Alex Drace-Francis trace various movements, networks, and schools of thought, while highlighting the often underestimated connections among intellectuals within the region. The three coauthors assert that under communism, literary and cultural life achieved unique social and political relevance. They argue that this was the culmination of earlier trends, the origins of which can be traced all the way back to the absolutist experiments of the eighteenth century and the various attempts to rethink the relationship between government and the citizenry since then.

The three coauthors show early on that, contrary to the assertions typically found in national narratives, language-building and print development went hand in hand with projects to consolidate imperial rule and standardize public education. They subsequently sketch how, at the time of the rise of modernism, the cultural life of East Central Europe still remained less differentiated and more holistic than some of the "major cultures" further west. As Livezeanu, Ort, and Drace-Francis perceptively explain, the interwar period brought more militant and ideologically-driven intellectual and artistic agendas and, therefore, sharper polarization, but also much more of nationalization. Moreover, the coauthors focus on the wartime cultural transformation that facilitated the postwar revolutions. Their treatment of the postwar period strikes a balance between the tragic cases of individual intellectuals and the unprecedented availability and accessibility of high culture. Its erudite *longue durée* explorations and emphasis on the postwar relevance of literary culture make this one of the paramount contributions to a volume in which cultural history is rarely given detailed attention and several chapters arguably treat the postwar period a bit hastily.

Patrice M. Dabrowski and Stefan Troebst, for instance, trace the uses and abuses of history from the eighteenth century to 1989. They offer numerous

valuable insights, especially into the rather hesitant Ottoman and the rather drastic post-Ottoman politics of history. While their perspective is broad and the number of cases analyzed impressive, Dabrowski and Troebst slightly underplay the communist experience in order to buttress their claim that the long nineteenth century, the interwar period, and World War II were all of greater relevance in determining the new-old patterns of remembrance since 1989.

Similarly, Ulf Brunnbauer and Paul Hanebrink are interested in the successes and failures of a broad variety of political visions and ideologies, but they cover only visions and ideologies of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. They offer an excellent brief survey of major trends in political-ideological thinking on a regional scale, covering the liberals, the left, the agrarians, and the right in an equally balanced manner (even if, understandably for such a short narrative, the depth of coverage cannot match that found in the new *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*). However, Brunnbauer and Hanebrink end rather abruptly with the communist takeover, leaving the reader somewhat perplexed about what they refer to as the stubborn persistence of certain key political ideas, despite the massive subsequent transformations.

The chapter entitled "Communism and Its Legacy" provides ample compensation for these choices. In this chapter, Malgorzata Fidelis and Irina Gigova explore four themes, namely state-building and nation-building, social relations, East-West interactions, and the decline and fall of communism. Viewing the departure from the limiting totalitarian framework of omnipresent state control and the new interest in everyday life as welcome developments in scholarship, the authors are interested primarily in new scholarship that complements or directly challenges previous scholarly and popular understandings of the epoch and its impact. Highlighting that the study of communism remains very much a work in progress, Fidelis and Gigova provide brief overviews of several of the most fruitful avenues for new research. These avenues include the continuities across 1945, which may help contextualize and explain the rise of Stalinism; state-society negotiations under communist regimes; new forms of leisure and consumption; the experiences of and meanings attached to socialist spaces; East–West entanglements; and, last but not least, how East Central Europeans imagined the West during the Cold War. This is a perceptive, up-to-date overview of English-language publications, even if the exclusive focus

on the latter and the neglect of studies on the Soviet Union constitute notable self-imposed limitations.

Joel Brady and Edin Hajdarpasic's chapter on religion and ethnicity examines how the legitimating power of religion, ethnic solidarities, and nationalism interacted across different periods and regimes in East Central Europe. Approaching recent discussions of ethno-religious fusion and the ascendance of secularism in a rather critical manner, the authors develop an intriguing anti-teleological narrative with a marked focus on the Ottoman and post-Ottoman history of Southeastern Europe. Their main aim seems to be to challenge the rather popular *millet*-to-nation narrative. Brady and Hajdarpasic explain first that historians who emphasize the *millet* concept tend to overstate the systematic aspects of religious differentiation in Ottoman societies. Brady and Hajdarpasic continue by underlining that Muslim–Christian confessional distinctions, ambiguities, and antagonisms may have already been profoundly transformed by the violence of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but that the toppling of Ottoman structures also produced deep divisions and exacerbated older ones within Orthodox Christianity. At the same time, several attempts were made even in later times to bridge the Christian–Muslim divide (most notably, the successful Albanian one and the much less successful South Slavic one). These are all valuable insights, which add up to a convincing reinterpretation of the relationship between religion and ethnicity in modern Southeast Europe. The chapter is both sketchier concerning the countries further north and rather brief and somewhat unspecific with regards to what it calls the "complex alignment of conservative, nationalist, and fascist forces with Christian religious organizations" in the first half of the twentieth century (p.198) and what it introduces as the complex relationship "between socialist states, religious institutions, and nationalist currents during the Cold War" (p.200).

Bogdan Murgescu and Jacek Kochanowicz´s chapter on the economic history of the region poses an implicit challenge to most of the other chapters in this volume and to much of what qualifies as mainstream today, more generally. Eager to suggest sharp dichotomies, Murgescu and Kochanowicz assert that the economic underdevelopment of East Central Europe compared to the West (its persistent backwardness, as they insist) has been all too real. In their sobering though fairly old-fashioned overview of economic development, Murgescu and Kochanowicz assert that the project of catching up with the Western core has been centrally important in modern times, but has remained basically unaccomplished, despite what the authors present as the continuous and unidirectional import of

ideas, institutions, investment, and innovation from the West. Without analyzing entanglements with the Western core in a more complex fashion, they explain that East Central European history has been characterized by overly sharp discontinuities, so that, some fluctuations notwithstanding, wealth, knowledge, expertise, and practices could not be sufficiently accumulated.

Reinhard Heinisch's political science contribution on party politics and the European Union is arguably even more at odds with the agenda and general tenor of the rest of the volume. Whereas the rise of "Europragmatism" traced by Heinisch may indeed be viewed as a seminal process of recent years, the author's somewhat homogenizing perspective on a highly diverse region and his strong reliance on simple survey results make this a less than fully satisfying addition. In my assessment, less or more would both have yielded better results; the process of Europeanization might well have merited more attention on the *longue durée* too, and the history of the post-89 transition period could already have been discussed in a more encompassing fashion. Last but not least, the chapter on demography and population movements explores demographic and economic pressures, as well as the increasing roles of the state and violence in population movements. Theodora Dragostinova and David Gerlach focus on key developments in migration history, such as the shift from imperial mixing to national "unmixing," from routine and seasonal to sustained and long-distance migration, and from the Cold War-era restrictions to the most recent patterns.

In sum, *The Routledge History of East Central Europe since 1700* strikes an admirable balance not only between the many diverse areas it covers, but (partly through the strategic pairings of authors) also between the two, traditionally separately treated macro-regions it studies under the label "East Central Europe." At the same time, the volume devotes limited sustained attention to more peripheral regions, including the recently much discussed borderlands. More crucially for a textbook of this kind, the volume achieves a fine balance between historical facts and narrative, on the one hand, and historiographical analysis and reflection, on the other. The themes chosen are large, important, and diverse enough that, with the single and only partial exception of the post-89 chapter, no individual choice appears questionable. Although the coverage is thus fairly representative, the emphasis which is put on some issues and questions in the volume (along with the failure to place emphasis on some other issues and questions) may nonetheless be viewed more critically. Despite the remarks on the key importance of social and cultural history made in the introduction, the volume contains no summary of social transformations and, as noted above,

only one of the chapters focuses on cultural history. Other major themes, such as the transformation of state institutions and the recently much discussed roles of wars and violence, are recurrently hinted at rather than substantially discussed. Last but not least, most of the chapters make limited attempts to contextualize East Central European trends in broader continental or global frameworks. Even so, the volume manages to convey and reflect on several of the dominant historiographic trends and key research findings in the English-language scholarship of recent decades, and it presents a rich, thoughtful, and accessible new history of a highly complex region over three centuries.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Central Europe in the High Middle Ages: Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, c. 900–c. 1300. By Nora Berend, Przemysław Urbańczyk, and Przemysław Wiszewski. (Cambridge Medieval Textbooks.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 550 pp.

This book introduces the history of Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries. The first chapter, written by Nora Berend, provides a detailed discussion of what is understood by the phrase "Central Europe," and how this concept can be applied to the history of the Middle Ages. Passing in review the complex historiography of this term and related terms, including the studies of Oskar Halecki and Jenő Szűcs, who both strongly advocated for the importance of this region in the history of Europe as a whole, and countless others, who outlined the specific features of this historical region, Berend concludes that there are many equally valid and legitimate ways of describing this part of the European continent. However, she notes that the concept of such a region did not exist in the Middle Ages, nor did the three polities form a unity. She nonetheless argues that Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary did share common features in their early development. Berend insists that she and her co-authors do not intend to essentialize the region by describing its unique features, and they are wary of entering the debate about whether or not the region belongs to the West or the East; instead, they are "attempting to evacuate value-judgments inherent in proving that these countries belonged to Western civilization," and they are not "trying to isolate the region through the use of this term (i.e. Central Europe) from 'the East'" (p.38). Taking an innovative approach, the authors want to explore in a systematic manner the similarities and differences between the three polities, but not with the intention of defining indicators of a fundamental difference with the rest of Europe.

The book is organized into thematic chapters that follow a chronological framework; each chapter is divided into sections which treat the three principalities side by side, providing an opportunity for comparisons and pointing out similarities and differences. Berend wrote the sections on Hungary; Przemysław Urbańczyk and Przemysław Wiszewski, an archaeologist and a historian respectively, were commonly responsible for the sections on Poland and Bohemia. A chapter describes the state of research regarding Slavic and Hungarian migrations and the connections between early Slavs and the Avar

Empire. The subsequent one describes the formation of the three polities and the role of Christianization in this process. The focus then shifts to political developments, social and economic processes, and Church history in the formative period of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The last chapter deals with the "new developments" of the thirteenth century, including social transformations, the impact of the Mongol invasion, urbanization, and cultural changes. Altogether, the book alternates between narrative sections which outline the political framework and thematic chapters which describe cultural and social processes.

The result is a lot more than a mere introduction to the history of this region. Paying attention to details and providing an up-to-date overview of recent research, the book explains often complex subjects in an approachable manner. The bibliography favors publications in western European languages, but it is not limited to them, and thus it provides Anglophone readers with references to easily accessible publications, while acknowledging scholarship which only a smaller subset of the intended readership will be able to consult. This is a very fortunate and balanced approach. Although few (too few) scholars outside of Central Europe might read Polish, Czech, or Hungarian, even fewer (if any) read all three of these languages. Thus, this book, while intended primarily for students or instructors not familiar with the region, will certainly also be useful to many who study one of these three polities, but are less familiar with the other two; it will facilitate access to this historiography for a younger generation of scholars and hopefully inspire some to learn these languages.

The book, however, is much more than a survey of research. The combination of the expertise of Berend, Urbańczyk, and Wiszewski allows for systematic comparisons of medieval Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary with a depth of coverage that is unusual. The systematic parallel presentation of developments in the three polities for each aspect discussed allows the reader to see similarities and differences, which are usually summarized at the beginning or end of each section. For instance, the parallel discussion illustrates that in Poland and Hungary, Christianization and the consolidation of central power were interrupted by pagan rebellions, but this did not take place in Bohemia, where such processes had begun earlier. The relationships between the three polities and Byzantium and the Holy Roman Empire were shaped differently: Bohemia was integrated into the latter, while the rulers of Poland and Hungary were involved in varying alliances and were seeking to strike a balance of power with other polities. Similar problems of succession and the role of seniority were

dealt with in varying circumstances, but led everywhere in some degree to forms of territorial subdivisions.

If this were not enough, the book also provides an original revision of prevalent ideas and even misconceptions about Central Europe. For example, some readers might find it surprising that no chapter is devoted specifically to "German colonization" (or whatever other terms of phrases might be used), but that a chapter on social changes deals with the integration of immigrants and the appearance of a "multi-ethnic society" (p.465, for Poland). One could argue that this is just a new way of describing the same phenomenon, or that it provides an entirely new perspective, free from the ballast of past ideologies and more relatable to readers of the twenty-first century. Few, however, would deny that there is a lot in this book to stimulate reflection and discussion on a fundamental period of the history of this part of the continent, whatever term one prefers to use to refer to it.

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Deserting Villages – Emerging Market Towns: Settlement Dynamics and Land Management in the Great Hungarian Plain: 1300–1700. By Edit Sárosi. (Archaeolingua. Series minor, 39.) Budapest: Archaeolingua, 2016. 320 pp.

It is a commonplace that there are "two Hungarys," one to the west of the Danube and one to the east. Transdanubia is an area with hundreds of small villages, sloping vineyards, hills, a dense network of rivers, and relatively extensive woodlands, while the lowland that falls to the east of the Danube has a rather sparse settlement network, mostly mid-sized towns, and the land between them is dotted by only a few scattered houses. There are hardly any significant rivers between the Danube and the Tisza, and the extent of the woodlands is low compared to the western part of the country or the Northern Hungarian Mountains. This landscape, the so called *puszta*, the "cultural desert," became an integral part of Hungarian identity. The book by Edit Sárosi discusses the process during which this landscape came to existence.

As indicated by the title of the book, the goal of the inquiry is to discuss long-term changes in the settlement network and land management strategies in the Danube–Tisza Interfluve area, which covers more or less the central third of present-day Hungary. Sárosi not only provides an overview of the development and the transformation of the settlement network of the region, she also discusses in detail the center of the interfluves area, specifically the town of Kecskemét, and she puts the development of the town and the surrounding villages in the context of the environmental and economic changes of the region. As stated in the introduction, the book aims not only to discuss the specific context of the changes which took place in the settlement network of the region, but also to give a methodological tool for further research into historical landscapes (including human landscapes).

The book consists of eight chapters, including the conclusions. The first presents the main research problem and gives a brief but useful overview of the available sources (documentary evidence, maps, toponyms, and archaeological records). For some reason, the environmental archaeological data was omitted, which however does not mean that Sárosi did not use findings from this discipline.

The second chapter provides a general image of the landscape of the Danube–Tisza Interfluve. The landscape as explained by Sárosi has changed significantly over the course of the last millennia. The process during which the "cultural desert" came into existence can certainly be connected to human

activity. It is rather unclear, however, when this landscape became dominant. According to Sárosi, from the foundation of the Hungarian state (around the year 1000) and the intensification of arable farming, the forest steppe started to shrink and gave way to the *puszta*, a process which was very much accelerated by forest clearance in the Ottoman period. Although there is no question that by the early eighteenth century the region lacked woodlands, as nicely described by contemporaries such as Matthias Bel (whom Sárosi quotes), the extent to which the woodlands were victims of the Ottoman occupation is rather unclear.

The third chapter is dedicated to the study of the network of villages in the surroundings of Kecskemét. This is a critically important issue, since until now it has been rather unclear when the relatively dense network of villages in the period between the tenth and the thirteenth century were deserted and when the lands belonging to these villages became properties owned or leased by the inhabitants of Kecskemét. The author carefully presents the major waves of settlement abandonment based on the written sources and the archaeological data, and she analyzes how the present settlement network was formed. She convincingly argues that the networks of isolated farmsteads between the towns in the region are only partly products of the Ottoman-period economy. The formation of farmsteads the people of which lived off of gardening in the proximity of market towns can be associated with the Ottoman period, but in the case of farmsteads at the sites of former villages, there is no persuasive evidence of any such continuity. This is perhaps one of the most important lessons of the book, and Sárosi devotes more attention to it in chapter seven.

The next chapter is dedicated to the perishing villages themselves. The book provides a detailed morphological analysis and a description of the elements of the villagescape in the late medieval period. Chapter five, however, turns to the discussion of the centers, namely the market towns, as a special type of town, of which Kecskemét is certainly a perfect example. The introduction of this chapter may be a bit longer than necessary, but the second half of the chapter offers a well-written discussion of the role of the town in the urban network of the early modern Great Hungarian Plain. There are references to the other major market towns in the region, such as Cegléd and to some extent Nagykőrös, but more detailed comparisons with these settlements may have been yielded more insights.

Chapter six is dedicated to the topographic development of Kecskemét, of which Sárosi is without a doubt the most important authority. She provides the reader with a very precise analysis of the topographical development and the

features of the townscape. The lack of Franciscan friaries in the region up to the eighteenth century, which is a phenomenon peculiar to the area (and mentioned by the author in this chapter), would certainly be worth a detailed study.

As already mentioned, the seventh chapter is probably the most important section of the book, since to some extent it wraps up the preceding chapters. It very clearly demonstrates that agriculture and its major restructuring in the late medieval period and, moreover, in the sixteenth century fostered the development of Kecskemét as a town. Chapter eight summarizes the main findings of the book, which are broken into two categories; settlement patterns, and land-management and settlement morphology.

The book is rich in visual supporting materials, most of which are not simply included but are used and referred to by the author, which makes the book reader-friendly. There are a few terminological inconsistencies, the most important of which is the Great Hungarian Plain, which in most cases is referred to as the Great Plain by Sárosi, and this may be a bit confusing for the international readership. The bibliography is exhaustive, the only possible oversight being the recently published works of Kyra Lyublyanovics on Cuman farming in the Great Hungarian Plain.

Despite these minor shortcomings, the book is unquestionably a major contribution to the settlement history of the Danube–Tisza Interfluve area, but in fact it is much more than that. It is a book which truly integrates different research perspectives and traditions, using English landscape archaeology as a reference point, but also integrating archaeology, landscape history, environmental history, and settlement history. Thus, it offers a path that hopefully many similar monographs will follow.

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Das Reich als Netzwerk der Fürsten: Politische Strukturen unter dem Doppelkönigtum Friedrichs II. und Heinrichs (VII.) 1225–1235. By Robert Gramsch. (Mittelalter-Forschungen 40.) Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2013. 456 pp.

The original goal of this book by Staufer Prize-winning historian Robert Gramsch was to offer a new look at the history of the German interregnum (1254–73), though both the beginning date of this period and the precise definition of the term itself proved complex, since the interregnum in fact meant a permanent dual kingdom, the prototype of which had already existed in the period between 1225 and 1235. Gramsch focuses in his inquiry on the period in which Frederick II and Henry VII shared power (he considers this the precursor to the interregnum). In his assessment, the renunciation of the crown by Henry VII in 1235, which given the manner in which it took place and the collaboration of the imperial princes seemed to be the high point of the reign of Frederick II and the Hohenstaufen dynasty, in fact was the beginning of the end. However, the emperor had brought down a legally elected king who had wielded power, and this dramatically undermined the institution of the kingdom itself, creating a dangerous precedent (pp.55–56). Since the followers of Heinrich Raspe (1246–47), the later rival king, earlier had been supporters of Henry VII and, according to the earlier secondary literature, Henry's imprudent politics had played a serious role in the weakening of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, Gramsch focuses in his inquiry on Henry himself and his reign.

Perhaps the most distinctive and innovative feature of Gramsch's book lies in the methodology he has chosen, specifically the sociological study of networks. He strives to uncover the positive, negative, and neutral ties between the Church and secular princes of the Empire and the relationships between its most important towns. This tendency to place local actors in the foreground of inquiries into historical events is not uncommon in the German scholarship on the Middle Ages. However, this method has only been used effectively in studies on the period of Henry the Lion. Gramsch, however, departs down this road, but he offers considerably more, for he has two essential goals: first, he seeks to demonstrate the usefulness of research on networks in the scholarship on the Middle Ages and, second, he offers a reinterpretation of the reign of Henry VII on the basis of information and networks of relationships brought to the surface with this methodology.

The first chapters deal with network research itself, familiar only in recent decades in German scholarship, but quite well-established among Anglo-Saxon historians. The style of this section is entirely comprehensible even to a lay-reader, if perhaps at times a bit dry. This methodology makes it possible for the historian to offer a reconstruction of interrelationships which, because the sources were either scattered or only tangential, earlier had been largely ignored. Thus, it becomes possible to offer a more complex picture. The network models that are thus brought into the foreground are not rigid snapshots, since both the networks and the actors within them influence one another, and the complex new interrelationships that emerge constitute an excellent foundation for historical analysis (though the dynamic processes and individual shifts in values cannot be brought into the discussion).

By examining the politically relevant acts which took place between 1225 and 1273, Gramsch creates his own database, on which his study rests. Of the 153 actors in this database, he focuses on 68 who, because of their influence and their involvement in the various conflicts, are particularly important to his model of the ties between the imperial princes. The book includes 22 color tables, which show year by year the relationships of the individual federative groupings to one another, relationships which were determined by ties of blood and marriage, hostile or friendly acts, the so-called series dignitatum in charters, and the presence of the Hoftag (a kind of informal imperial diet).

The larger section of the book presents the conflicts that arose in the course of Henry VII's reign, conflicts which played key roles in the development and transformation of the imperial network. In the course of this discussion, Gramsch places in a new light several questions which have been regarded essentially as answered in the secondary literature. Just to mention but a few, the goal of the assassination of Engelbert, archbishop of Cologne, on 7 November 1225, for instance, was not actually to kill, but rather to kidnap him. It was motivated not by envy of the territorial power of the neighboring princes, but rather by the confrontation on several fronts between Herman II, lord of Lippe and his allies on the one hand and Cologne on the other (pp.140–57). Gramsch offers a similar reinterpretation of the persecution of heretics by Konrad von Marburg in 1231–32, which have become infamous for their brutality and which can be tied to the landgrave of Thuringia's offensives against Cologne and Mainz (pp.290–300).

Gramsch's examination of the Empire's networks also casts light on two fundamental reasons for the break between the emperor and his son, reasons

which have been largely ignored in the secondary literature. The first was Henry's marriage, or to be more precise, the decision of the emperor to make Margaret of the House of Babenberg the queen consort of Germany instead of Agnes of Bohemia. The Austrian secondary literature offers no explanation for this decision, but Gramsch suggests that it was perhaps influenced by the machinations of Louis IV, landgrave of Thuringia, and Leopold VI, duke of Austria (pp.104–05). The other neuralgic point was the relationship with the House of Wittelsbach, which was essentially the only serious subject of political discord between father and son. While Frederick II began to pursue demonstrably anti-Bavarian politics in 1225 (p.220)—and the appointment of Louis I as imperial regent in no way contradicts this—with the exception of a short intermezzo in 1229, Henry VII remained pro-Bavarian until 1233.

Though the book focuses on the networks and political turns within the Holy Roman Empire, in the case of some of the events the narrative also touches on the Kingdom of Hungary, though the theories it presents concerning the rule of Andrew II of Hungary are easy to be refuted. The most interesting of these concerns an (alleged) agreement which was reached at the same time as the Graz agreement. Gramsch suggests that, according to this other agreement, Andrew II withdrew his support for his niece, Agnes of Bohemia, and in exchange, Leopold VI withdrew his support for the Order of the Teutonic Knights, which the Hungarian king longed to see driven out. Indeed, Andrew even prevailed on the pope to do the same, as allegedly proven by the passage of the bull which begins "Intellecto iam dudum," according to which the severed crownlands lying in the territory of Prince Béla could be retaken. Since Prince Béla only came to the fore in Transylvanian politics in 1226 the authorization could not have applied to the estates of the Order in Burzenland. Moreover, in the course of the Austrian–Bohemian–Hungarian conflict of 1233 (which is given considerable emphasis), according to contemporary sources there were two (not one) Hungarian military campaigns, and the notion of an allegedly anti-royalist conspiracy of the Hungarian magnates of 1235 (mentioned in Gramsch's narrative) cannot be considered plausible, given the testimony of the chronicler Master Roger.

These debatable theories, however, in no way detract from the significance of this monograph as a serious contribution to historical scholarship, for Gramsch offers a fundamentally new and persuasive picture of Henry VII: he emerges as a ruler who knew how to handle the imperial princes, sensed shifts in the networks of relationships, was capable of taking action, and was gifted with

political foresight. Thus, his fall was not a consequence of his personality or his political clumsiness, or even bad luck. Rather, Frederick II, having recognized the unviability of the system of a dual kingdom (which he had created), made use of the unusually balanced internal network of relationships in the Empire and deprived him of power. Because of the influence of the imperial propaganda, Henry was seen by his contemporaries and the historians of later centuries as the rebellious son, even though he only "slipped into" revolt (pp.345–52).

Gramsch's book persuasively demonstrates that research on networks of relationships does indeed have an important place in the (German) scholarship on the Middle Ages, and the book itself will occupy an important place in the libraries of historians interested in the Hohenstaufen period.

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Ritual and Symbolic Communication in Medieval Hungary under the Árpád Dynasty. By Dušan Zupka. (East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, 39.) Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2016. 224 pp.

The introductory part of the book contains a short description of the sources, in which Zupka states that the main source of the book will be the fourteenth-century Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle. Zupka then gives a short historiographical introduction to the Slovak and Hungarian secondary literature. The first chapter of the book gives an overview of the terminology and the general historiography of the rituals, focusing mainly on the German and English scholarship while the second deals with the rituals of power and the royal symbols. This latter chapter contains analyses of the different types of coronations, the *laudes regiae* (royal acclamation), *cingulum militiae* (the girding by sword), and court festivities. Chapter 3 focuses on the rituals of reconciliation, which reference to several examples. The fourth chapter focuses on the solemn royal entries (*adventus regis*) in medieval Hungary and in particular the ritual acts that were performed in Dalmatia. Following the discussion of the royal entries, the fifth chapter focuses on the greeting rituals among royalties. The final, sixth chapter is a conclusion which highlights the roles of rituals, offers some discussion of the ways in which these rituals may have been acquired as well as how they continued to evolve in the late Middle Ages.

Zupka has made a significant contribution to the literature with this book, since it is the first comprehensive work that deals with the royal rituals in Hungary in the Árpádian period in such detail and subtlety. He draws attention to the rituals and the symbolic communication used by the Hungarian kings, and he puts every chapter and topic of the book in a larger European context and interprets the results of his analyses in light of the roles played by the rituals in medieval society. The chapters start with a general introduction based on European history. Zupka then presents the Hungarian cases, and each chapter ends with a short conclusion. The work is well-structured and clearly arranged, and the construction of chapters helps the reader put the Hungarian cases in the European context.

Zupka has examined a topic which, until now, has been neglected in the secondary literature, and this deserves recognition, but I nonetheless must make a few critical observations which highlight the main problems with the methodology and the findings of his study. First, while the author gives a detailed summary of the English and German secondary literature and makes broad

uses of Slovak historiography, some crucial Hungarian works, such as Ágnes Kurcz's research on chivalry and girding by sword and András Vizkelety's work on the wedding-ceremony of Prince Béla, are conspicuously absent from his discussion. Moreover, while Zupka deals with several Dalmatian and Croatian cases, such as the royal entries into Dalmatian towns, royal acclamations, royal oaths, etc., he completely neglects the Croatian historiography, for example the works of Mladen Ančić on the image and rituals of the Hungarian kings or Ana Marinković's research on King Coloman's royal chapel in Zadar, which helps further an understanding of early Hungarian royal symbolic ceremonies and artifacts in Dalmatia.

The other major problem is that the whole book, which deals primarily with the eleventh and twelfth centuries, is based on a single narrative source, the fourteenth-century Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle. The author mentions in the introduction that the dating and the credibility of this source is highly debated, and he also indicates that Hungarian and non-Hungarian historians have reached a fairly widespread consensus that the eleventh-century and twelfth-century parts of the chronicle are based on an older text and are reliable. The author accepts that some parts of the source are probably unreliable for the examined period, and others may be reliable, and then for the rest of the book essentially sets aside the question of source criticism. In my opinion, if an inquiry is based as exclusively as Zupka's book on one later narrative text, the historian is obliged to examine the credibility of the texts critically, not treating them as if their authors were eyewitnesses to the events. The fact that the earlier parts of the Chronicle are based on an older text and the events described in it are probably factually reliable does not necessarily mean that the descriptions of the rituals are accurate and credible and not simply embellishments crafted by a chronicler which reflect the original author's aims, but not the actual events. The other problem with Zupka's use of sources is that he made little use of legal sources. For example, throughout the first half of the twelfth century, the kings of Hungary took oaths when they visited Dalmatian cities, and these oaths were later put in written form that came down to us. However, when Zupka examines these oaths, he uses only the thirteenth-century chronicle of Thomas of Split, instead the contemporary charters from Trogir or Zadar. Some overlooked charters preserved the composition of the royal entourages during the royal entries in Dalmatia, and others provide information about gift-giving rituals which had an important place in maintaining the relationship between the

coastal cities and the Hungarian royal court, both in ecclesiastical and secular contexts.

As a minor critical note, sometimes it seems that Zupka aims to show similarities between Hungarian and European rituals, and he fails to emphasize the uniqueness and distinctiveness of some acts which were customary in Hungary. For example, he does not appear to realize that the structure of the Hungarian royal visits in Dalmatia had changed by the end of the twelfth century, and the royal oaths were no longer part of the ceremonies. He also fails to deal with the rituals of the dukes of Slavonia in the thirteenth century, who had rituals similar to the rituals of the kings. The dukes of Slavonia, who were the royal governors of the territory and often the crown princes of Hungary, made solemn ducal entries in Dalmatian towns (for instance, Duke Andrew in 1200 and Duke Coloman in 1226). Their visits to their territory were marked by shows of great pomp, and they probably had symbolic first visits too, along with gift-giving rituals. They also had their own entourages, which resembled the king's company in many respects.

As a second smaller critical note, it should be mentioned that Zupka uses toponyms inconsistently: the cities and places that are in present-day Slovakia are mentioned in their Slovak version in the case of Bratislava and Nitra. When a city is outside the border of modern Slovakia or is not in Hungary, Zupka sometimes mentions the cities by their Hungarian names and sometimes indicates also the city's official name today, but sometimes he mentions only the modern, non-Hungarian toponym (e.g. pp.43, 58, 63). I also do not understand the distinction he draws between Hungarian and "Magyar" history (p.191).

In conclusion, Zupka has produced a well-structured supplementary monograph which highlights several issues which have either been forgotten or simply neglected in the secondary literature on Hungarian and Central European history. Zupka exhaustively knows and uses the international secondary literature on the rituals and acts of symbolic communication in Hungary of the Árpádian period, and he successfully puts the Hungarian cases in a wider European context. However, the use of sources, the complete lack of source criticism, the failure to take into consideration the Croatian secondary literature, and the failure to address the uniqueness of certain Hungarian rituals leaves unanswered questions for the reader and throws into question the reliability of the author's findings.

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Székesfehérvár története az Árpád-korban [The history of Székesfehérvár in the Árpádian period]. By Attila Zsoldos, Gábor Thoroczkay, and Gergely Kiss. Székesfehérvár: Városi Levéltár és Kutatóintézet, 2016. 365 pp.

In November 1490, after having captured the town of Székesfehérvár as part of the campaign he had launched in order to acquire the Hungarian crown, the king of the Romans, Maximilian I recounted the events of the conflict in a pronouncement that was highly propagandistic in nature. In his account, he referred to the town as the capital and strongest town of Hungary ("la principalle et plusforte ville dungrie"). Without throwing into question the merits and might of Maximilian's military, as it so happens, in the late Middle Ages Székesfehérvár was not considered the capital of Hungary, the ruler's claim notwithstanding. Indeed, it was not even considered a particularly well-fortified settlement. The town was significant at the time first and foremost because it was the site of coronations. Thus, as was by then established Hungarian tradition, a ruler was only regarded as legitimate if he had been crowned in the basilica in Székesfehérvár, the royal church which had been founded by the first Hungarian king, Saint Stephen of Hungary, and which was under the direct authority of the Apostolic See. The prestige of the town rested not simply on the role it played during the reign of Saint Stephen, but also on the acts of his descendants and successors, who added to its fame. Thus, it is hardly surprising that the town enjoyed the most prominence under the rulers of the Árpádian dynasty, i.e. in the period between 1000 and 1301. Hungarian scholarship has something of an outstanding debt, in that it has failed to devote sufficient attention to the history of the town during the Árpádian period. Attempts have been made over the course of the past few centuries to offer a narrative of the history of the town in the Middle Ages, i.e. from the earliest times until the Ottoman occupation in 1543. These forays, however, do not bear comparison with the current undertaking of Attila Zsoldos and his co-authors, neither from the perspective of their methodologies nor from the perspective of their use of sources. *Fejér vármegye története* [The history of Fejér County], a several-volume narrative written by János Károly at the end of the nineteenth century, focuses on Fejér County. Only the second volume is dedicated to the county seat, Székesfehérvár. Károly's narrative thus focuses on the history of a region, in which the history of the town is only a little more than a chapter. Gyula Lauschmann's *Székesfehérvár története* [The history of Székesfehérvár], which was written in the first half of the twentieth century,

focuses exclusively on Székesfehérvár, but in the narrative of the history of this town, which obviously stretches over the better part of a millennium, only a small section is devoted to the Árpádian period. The work of Attila Zsoldos, who is an internationally renowned scholar of the Árpádian period, situates the history of the town under the Árpádian dynasty in the larger political history of the age. Zsoldos adopts a methodology, in his study of the first three centuries of the town's history, which breaks with the accepted approaches to urban history in Hungary. Only two of the five chapters are devoted to a chronological presentation of the events which influenced the development of the settlement and which can be reconstructed on the basis of the available written sources. Zsoldos narrates these events like a chronicler presenting the history of the town. He divides his linear account of the history of the town, which relies strictly on written sources, into two parts. The pivotal moment comes in 1241 with the Mongol invasion, which constituted an important turn in the development of Székesfehérvár. As a consequence of the Mongol invasion, which swept aside almost everything in its path, the privileges which had been enjoyed by the people from Western Europe who had settled in the suburbs ("suburbium") and moved to the walled town ("castrum"), first and foremost Walloons (the so-called Latins) became privileges of the entire town. The two narrative parts of the book are found between four chapters which focus on specific questions in the history of the town in the Árpádian period. In these chapters, Zsoldos sheds the garb of chronicler and dons instead the robes of the researcher, examining in each a question that was decisive from the perspective of the development of the town. In the first chapter ("The Beginning"), he attempts to identify the geographical, economic, and historical factors which played a role in the decision to found a town on a site at which there had been no earlier settlements in Antiquity. Zsoldos places considerable emphasis on the fact that, at the time of the Hungarian Conquest, the area around what would later become the town was part of the tribal occupation territories of the Árpáds. In connection with this, the question of the origins of the name of the town, which literally means "white castle" and which was used very early on, comes up. Zsoldos takes time in this chapter to refute myths concerning the town, for instance the notion that Grand Prince Géza, Saint Stephen's father, was buried in Fehérvár. Zsoldos also explains in this chapter the essential (in his assessment) difference between the center of castellany, which came to constitute the inner town of the medieval town, and the center of principality, a term which is more generally known. The third chapter ("The Capital") examines the ways in which

contemporaries considered Székesfehérvár the capital in the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. Unquestionably the most important factor from this perspective was the fact that the town was the holy center of the Árpáds, since it was home to the Basilica of the Virgin Mary and the Provostry, both of which had been founded by the first Hungarian Christian king. Two younger scholars, Gábor Thoroczkay and Gergely Kiss, present the history of the royal basilica, its privileges, and its estates. The town was important in the Árpádian period not simply as a religious center, but also as the site of coronations and royal burials. Furthermore, some important institutions functioned from the outset in Székesfehérvár, and this added to the role of the town as a seat. These institutions included the royal assizes of Fehérvár sometime around 15 August, which were first held in the twelfth century. At the royal assizes it was the ruler himself who adjudicated on the matters of his subjects. While the king saw to his responsibilities in the administration of justice, inevitably events of national significance arose which created opportunities for the passage of new laws, which the ruler did with the cooperation of his prelates and notabilities. Thus, Székesfehérvár also served as the site of the "congregatio generalis", a form of assembly which was the precursor to the later national assemblies. As the "loca credibilia", the cathedral chapter in Székesfehérvár continued to enjoy national jurisdiction, which makes it even more likely that the royal archive was also held in the cathedral chapter. In contrast with the third part, the fourth, entitled "The Town of the Bourgeoisie," examines not what the town was able to give to the kingdom, but what it was able to give its own denizens, first and foremost the settlers from Western Europe, who must have been present, alongside the center of castellany, as of the middle of the eleventh century. It is worth asking how the privileges of the Latins became the privileges of an entire community, in particular since this later served as a kind of legal precedent in other towns of the Hungarian kingdom. The more interesting question in the scholarship, however, is not which rights and privileges the people who came to and lived in the town were able to obtain and assert in the course of time, but rather whether or not the contents of the original charter, which did not survive, can be determined on the basis of the privileges that were later confirmed or strengthened. Zsoldos carefully examines whether the denizens of the town who lived either in its suburbs or in various parts of the inner town actually were under the jurisdiction of the town or rather were under the authority of the chapter or in some cases some other Church institution. The privileges which gave economic advantages to people involved in commerce and crafts were an

important subset of the privileges of the town burghers, as were the privileges which applied to the properties they acquired with the wealth they had obtained. The last chapter of the book, the title of which is not terribly informative ("Fehérvár at the End of the Árpádian period"), presents the topography of the town in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. Zsoldos moves from the "castrum", that is the center of the settlement in the direction of the suburbs, which means that he moves from the parts of the town about which we have the most information and sources to areas on which we have almost no information at all. He redraws the map of the town in the Middle Ages, since he persuasively shows that the suburb given the name *Nova villa* was connected to the town not from the south (as has been contended in the secondary literature). Rather, it joined the area of the earliest "Budai suburb" from the south. Zsoldos takes into consideration the religious, administrative, and economic institutions and public spaces of the settlement, and on the basis of the number of office-holders and the order in which the various suburbs figure in the documents issued by the town in the late Middle Ages, he establishes a hierarchy among the various parts of the settlement. This part of the inquiry unquestionably goes beyond the history of the town in the Árpádian period. Zsoldos, Thoroczkay and Kiss have placed the genre of the urban history monograph on new foundations. Moving from national political events, the defining social changes of the period, the general historical trends and tendencies of the Árpádian period, and the general sources on which historical inquiries have relied, they arrive at the distinctive features of the town of Fehérvár itself. The chronologically arranged history of events and the interpretive sections of the narrative are complemented with relatively substantial summaries in German and English, which follow the structures of the chapters and subchapters. The book, which is indeed impressive as a work of fine scholarship, also contains an array of arresting visual materials, and familiar illustrations are presented to the reader in images of very high quality.

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Das Wiener Stadtzeichnerbuch 1678–1685: Ein Bettlerverzeichnis aus einer frühneuzeitlichen Stadt. By Sarah Pichlkastner. (Quelleneditionen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 12.) Vienna: Böhlau, 2014. 417 pp.

Contemporary social and political problems and questions almost always raise questions concerning history, and historians, when dealing with the problems of the present, strive to respond appropriately, searching in the past for answers to the problems societies face today. This is particularly true of questions and issues connected to social and economic history. The question of social welfare, the fate of the poor, and people living on the border of poverty has been one of the more prominent of these issues for a long time now. Clearly, this question is made even more pressing by the crisis of the welfare state, which has emerged as the states of Western Europe have found themselves increasingly unable to sustain the social network that was developed and financed in the decades following World War II and the state's role in the provision of social welfare has diminished.

Sarah Pichlkastner agrees that there are important links between historical scholarship and the social problems we face today. In her introduction, she insists on the relevance of this question by examining the measures taken in the European Union and, more narrowly, Austria to address poverty. Pichlkastner and her work in the publication of sources form an integral part of the research that has been underway in the Institute of History of the University of Vienna, since under the leadership of Herwig Weigl and with the participation of historians from the countries neighboring Austria several conferences have been held and conference volumes and sources have been published.

The sources which Pichlkastner has published were originally compiled when state relief for the poor was being institutionalized, a process which reflected medieval and (perhaps more palpably) early modern attitudes concerning beggars and the indigent. In her introduction, Pichlkastner offers a detailed presentation of this process, i.e. the institutionalization on the municipal level of relief for the poor, one of the most important aspects of which was the classification of the poor, or in other words, the decision concerning whether or not someone deserved succor or not. One of the most important criteria in this process was whether or not the person in question was a denizen of the city. Similarly important was the question of what lay at the cause of the person's indigence and whether or not he or she was capable of working. The Wiener Stadtordnung of 1526, which brought an end to the revolt of the Vienna City Council,

introduced regulations similar to the regulations in other major European cities. These regulations established limits on begging and a more organized form of providing for the poor. Sources on the basis of which a separate volume of records was kept in Vienna are essentially tied to this. A volume based on these sources from the period between 1678 and 1685 survived among the documents of the Vienna general hospital. A "Bettelzeichen" was essentially a form of identification indicating that the person who bore it was worthy of (i.e. eligible for) the support of the burghers of the city and the municipal government. As was usually the case in questions of municipal administration in the Habsburg Monarchy, the changes moved in the direction of increased state authority and oversight. Pichlkastner makes no specific mention of this, but the issue of relief for the poor was one of the aspects of administrative and governmental life in the city that the commissioners who were delegated to oversee the elections (earlier the so-called Eidkommissar, later the Wahlkommissar) had to audit and oversee. According to the instructions they were given, they were expected to inspect the alms houses and paupers' asylums maintained by the city and audit their management. They were also expected to examine the conditions in which the indigent lived and determine who the people were for whom the city provided support. The decrees of Leopold I (1693) and Joseph II concerning the poor limited the provision of relief for the indigent to care given in alms, houses and hospitals under state supervision and regulation. In these institutions, in compliance with the earlier principles, care could only be provided for people who, according to the state regulations, had been classified as worthy of support.

The source materials that Pichlkastner has now made available are based for the most part on the inspections and audits concerning the poor and measures taken to provide relief for the poor. The reader is presented with the visitations that were conducted by the commissioners. The information in the Vienna source consists of these inspections. Pichlkastner has done a superb job with this source publication, and the source itself is unique in that one rarely if ever finds so much information in one place. The published documents of the inspections contain 1,100 entries, which would be sufficient as the foundation for a complete social history inquiry. The "Wiener Stattzaichen" does not simply offer the reader a mechanical publication of the source (though accompanied with excellent notes). Rather, it offers a complete analysis of the information published. The documents clearly show the relationship between the state and society on the one hand and the issue of the indigent on the other. They also shed light on the determinations that were made concerning who was eligible

for the support of the community. The most frequently cited justifications for providing someone with support included advanced age, many children, various illnesses, and a disability which prevented someone from working. As the capital of the Habsburg Monarchy, a demographically large city with 50,000 inhabitants and a wealthy settlement, Vienna was an attractive destination for people who for whatever reason found themselves on the margins of society. The pivotal events of the period also played a role in this, as illustrated by the fact that the number of people who received care grew dramatically in 1663, when the Austro–Turkish War broke out, and during the siege of Vienna in 1683. Since archival sources deal for the most part with people who were in the highest echelons of society (since in general only people belonging to higher social strata were involved in the legal cases for which written sources were created and kept), the group of sources published here sheds light on a social stratum on which historians heretofore had very little data. The information contained in this source material will be useful from the perspective of social history, for instance the information included alongside the names, such as place of origin, place of residence, age, reasons for needing assistance, denominational affiliation, general health, and family status. One finds no comparable plethora of data concerning a relatively coherent social group anywhere in the region.

Making excellent use of the materials at her disposal, Pichlkastner presents the group of sources she has made available. Her analysis sheds light on the circumstances under which the sources were created, the administrative system which oversaw the social welfare system at the time, and the system of oversight and inspection that emerged. Though her analysis focuses first and foremost on the issue of relief for the poor, one can nonetheless find parallels in it that are interesting from the perspective of municipal politics, since one finds traces of the controlling role of the external council in the case of Vienna, much as one finds signs of its influence a few decades later in the case of the Hungarian royal free cities. The map indicating the institutions where the indigent were taken in (mostly churches and monasteries) also shows the situation of relief for the poor in the seventeenth century.

The second large chapter contains an excellent analysis which sheds light on the reasons for the creation of the "beggar's identification paper" ("Bettelzeichen"), the ways in which the information included in these identification papers evolved over time, and the distinctive features of other kinds of sources that were also related to the issue of relief for the poor. Pichlkastner also presents the antecedents and secondary literature connected to this group of

sources. This is followed, in the third section, by a presentation of the published archival sources. Pichlkastner makes excellent use of the approach characteristic of the younger generation of Austrian archivists. These researchers consider the "Quellenkunde" and "Aktenkunde" analyses found primarily in German scholarship important, first and foremost from the perspective of methodology. Pichlkastner's analysis presents the emergence, evolution, and distinctive features of the identification papers used in Vienna (the "Stadtzeichen"), as well as the circumstances and timing of their inclusion in the archives. In other words, she provides a description of the source materials she has made available that adheres to the guidelines for a General International Standard Archival Description set by the International Council on Archives. In her analysis, she presents the entire series (not just the published volume) in detail, indicating which kinds of source we are dealing with and whether the series can be considered a municipal book or not. Pichlkastner then presents the content of the group of sources and draws attention to the shifts in their structure. This is followed by a brief presentation of the source critical characteristics. In the fourth part, we find a codicological analysis of the published volume, which presents its external and internal characteristics. Pichlkastner separates and offers a detailed analysis of the handwritings in which the notes from the different parts (which to some extent were compiled separately) were written, and she tries to determine the identities of the people who wrote the notes.

The clarification of the fundamental principles of the publication reveals that there was no standard Austrian practice, since had there been, it would have sufficed to refer to a given norm. The basic principles of the publication strive rather for comprehensibility, using letter for letter transcription, but also noting abbreviations and corrections. Adhering to the basic principles established, Pichlkastner provides an excellent source publication with an appropriate quantity and quality of notes. Given the nature of the source, these notes concern primarily the settlements mentioned. The people identified were usually regiment owners or members of larger families. When identifying place names, in general Pichlkastner uses today's administrative and state borders, though she is not consistent in this, since in the case of territories outside of the Habsburg Monarchy, she also refers to the administrative units that existed at the time. In the case of Vienna, she briefly identifies the sites of the municipal buildings, hostels, and churches mentioned. The source critical notes are given in alphabetical order beginning anew page by page, and they are clearly separate from the notes concerning content.

The last chapters contain a source analysis stretching to some 70 pages. Pichlkastner provides a comprehensive analysis of the circumstances of the creation and publication of the source. Her analysis clearly demonstrates that a source can indeed provide important information on a social stratum that is otherwise almost absent from the typical sources used by the historian. This information allows us to map both individual life stories and common characteristics, as well as the circumstances that caused people to fall into poverty. It is particularly worth noting, for instance, that in general the assessments were made concerning women, women who remained, either alone or with their children, without support in Vienna. In contrast, many of the men were either married or no information was provided concerning their family status (this confirms our knowledge of the family model in the early modern era). The difference between men and women living in poverty is also clearly illustrated by the fact that almost every man lived together with children, while in the case of women only 40 percent lived with a child or children. In many cases, external reasons had brought about the fall into poverty: the Swedish war, the currency depreciation in the 1620s, various epidemics, and the Ottoman siege of 1683.

The data also makes it possible (and Pichlkastner takes excellent advantage of the opportunity) to glean insights into the livelihoods of people who had fallen into poverty before their fall. The picture she draws reveals that most of the people who had become impoverished had been day-laborers or vine-dressers. The other notable groups were soldiers and servants. 14 percent of the people fallen into poverty were artisans and 2 percent were peasants, which shows that in general skills as a craftsman or peasant land holdings were enough to ensure someone a living. In addition to the analyses noted above, which are particularly important from the perspective of social history, Pichlkastner also provides a discussion of place of residence (the 1683 Ottoman siege of the city can be considered the dividing line in this), and we also learn of the begging nodes in the city (which are indicated in the identification papers), information which makes the analysis of the cities spaces distinctive and interesting.

In summary, this volume constitutes a remarkable source for the study of institutional relief for the poor in the early modern era. From the perspective of social history, it is unique in the region, since one does not find any comparably informative or comprehensive sources on the stratum of people who had fallen into poverty.

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A test a társadalomban: A Hajnal István Kör Társadalomtörténeti Egyesület 2013. évi sümegi konferenciájának kötete [The body in society: Proceedings of the conference of the Hajnal István Circle – Hungarian Social History Association, Sümeg, 2013]. Edited by Emese Gyimesi, András Lénárt, and Erzsébet Takács. Budapest: Hajnal István Kör Társadalomtörténeti Egyesület, 2015. 435 pp.

The annual conferences of the Hajnal István Circle, a prominent association of social historians in Hungary, always revolve around a theme which offers a variety of opportunities for reflection on and discussion of topical problems and issues in history and society. The 2013 conference, organized in Sümeg, focused on a theme which is paramount to our understanding of historical narratives, as each human experience is strongly shaped by it: that of the body. The proceedings of the conference, organized into six main thematic units *(customs, norms, beliefs; body images; body narratives; body politics; the healthy body – the sick body; sexuality)* were published as a collection of essays in 2015.

Though the editors of the collection kept this structural organization more or less (the book consists of six main chapters under the same headings), however arbitrary it might be, the book begins with an oversight. While the book is a conference publication, so the background information could be found on the Internet (for example, the theoretically well-supported call for papers), an introductory paper would have been useful. Such an introduction could have been used not only to inform the reader about the goals and the results of the conference, but also to prompt reflection on the broader theoretical background and the current trends in body history, in which these findings could be contextualized. The first article (which may well have been strategically selected as the first) by Gábor Klaniczay offers some compensation for this oversight. Klaniczay begins with a few critical remarks, and he reflects precisely on this issue of theoretical background and current trends. As part of the *Body-narratives – Body-images* chapter, his article deals with the question of the human body and stigmatization. Klaniczay aims to give a short theoretical-historiographical overview of the most seminal works in this field. These theories then reappear in the articles throughout the book.

The first chapter deals with textual and figural representations of the body in a variety of contexts, from, for example, stigmatization and body metaphors to transsexuality. It highlights the diversity of readings and approaches that could be taken to the central theme. This multiplicity of readings remains something

of a background issue in the subsequent chapters as well. Above, I mentioned the arbitrariness of the structural organization, since most articles could be put into several categories (not simply representation, health–sickness, or sexuality). Nevertheless, in this instance, this arbitrariness should be emphasized as a merit, since it puts in the foreground the multilateral approaches to the different themes. For instance, Franciska Dede's treatment of her topic is exemplary in this sense. She focuses on the figure of Zsigmond Justh (1863–94), a young late nineteenth-century writer who suffered from tuberculosis. Approaching Justh's illness from several possible interrelated readings, she gives a complex image of the perception of the self in the contexts of health and sickness, as well as in a variety of social settings and networks of relationships. Tibor Takács has chosen a more or less similar method of exploring the murder case of a party functionary; the afterlife and treatment can be clearly traced in a number of disparate documents (indictments, reports, verdicts, autopsy reports) which provide possible understandings and perception(s) of the body.

The subsequent chapter, under the heading *The Healthy Body – The Sick Body*, focuses on a rather traditional and indispensable theme in body history. However, the inquiries do not approach the issue exclusively from the perspective of medical history, but also from the perspectives of historical demography, social history, and sports history. Several of the authors aim to give an overview of their topic in a broader timespan. Ferenc Tar, for instance, summarizes the development of healthcare at Hévíz, and Szilvia Czingel reflects on the hygienic culture of Budapest at the turn of the century, though the articles often fail to maintain their focus. Miklós Zeidler's article on the interrelated issues of sports, health, and ideals of beauty, however, gives a rather balanced image of the transitions in the connections between exercise and ideals of beauty between the eighteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.

Sexuality, which by now is another traditional perspective from which to consider the history of the body, is central to the third chapter. Most of the authors, however, managed to find a less-discussed context or angle from which to consider it. Boldizsár Vörös approaches it from the viewpoint of representations: the use of nudity in Hungarian advertisements at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, showing both sides of the coin (the supporters and the counter-arguments), along with the functionalist application of nudity and the changing legislation. Emese Gyimesi's treatment of the marriage of Júlia Szendrey and Árpád Horváth is an investigation into the separate discourses on the sexuality of husband and wife that served as a basis of conflict in their

marriage, and Orsolya Völgyesi, also focusing on a marital conflict from the first half of the nineteenth century, examines a criminal act (adultery culminating in homicide) through the filter of judicial documents and the letters of Ferenc Kazinczy. Gábor Szegedi discusses a probably less known chapter of the history of marriage and sexuality in Hungary, the history of sexual counselling in the first half of the twentieth century, embedding it in the theoretical context of Foucault's ideas on biopolitics. Szegedi argues that sexuality can be both a punitive and controlling instrument of the authorities, and he also highlights that the Hungarian example underpins another component of Foucault's theoretical approach, notably the role of racism, especially "scientific" racism in the management of modern (bio-politic) states.

The authoritative control of the human body forms the bulk of the subsequent two chapters, which examine the question from two main angles: the control of and the punitive or injurious measures against the body. One of the obvious examples of body control is abortion, the legislation of which often carries ideological underpinnings. In his article, Gábor Koloh examines the increasingly strict legislation and the criminalization of self-induced abortions in the interwar period, while Henrietta Trádler discusses the "fetal politics" of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in the context of socialism, feminism, and psychoanalytic theories.

Another often emphasized approach to the theme of authoritative control is the workings of the secret police in dictatorial states. Rolf Müller, however, examines the operation of the State Protection Authority *(Államvédelmi Hatóság, ÁVH)* from a quite unusual angle—not from the viewpoint of the victims of state violence, but on the basis of the documentation produced by the authorities. He differentiates between the separate levels of violence (demonstrative, direct, and hidden), and he emphasizes that the secret police were anything but secret. Because of its means of operation (measures carried out against the "enemies of the state") and the lack of sufficient infrastructure to hide its activity, the so-called secret police gained symbolic importance in everyday language. Though spatially and temporally farther, the article by Veronika Novák also discusses the logic of state violence (in this case, executions), linking the intensifying focus on deviance and criminal activity in fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century Paris to the changing perception and use of space by authorities.

Taking violence and the possible injuries suffered by the body to the level of individuals, several of the articles explore the actual consequences of state control and violence. Within the framework of punitive and transformative institutions

(the prison and the military), the human body is exposed to deterioration and injuries, as a consequence either of punishment or self-mutilation. This issue forms the focus of the inquiries by Tamás Dobszay and Julianna Erika Héjja. Tamás Dobszay examines the stages of physical-mental deterioration in the context of the deprivation model, drawing on the example of Ferenc Kazinczy's captivity narrative, and Julianna Erika Héjja shows, by examining military recruitment, how state control can lead to self-mutilation as a means of avoiding compulsory military service in the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century.

The last chapter deals with the customs and traditions connected to the human body, though with the exception of Tamás Bezsenyi's article showing the (urged) change in Turkish women's fashion as the catalyst of social transformation, the treatment of the topic seems a bit unilateral. Of all the customs and traditions which could have a bearing on the human body (customs surrounding marriage, birth, etc.), only the questions of death and burial are discussed in traditional (though a bit outdated) contexts and approaches, for example by Tünde Noémi Farkas. Farkas examines the transformation of the approaches to death on the basis of Transylvanian funeral orations and obituaries between the Early Modern and the Modern periods, partly within the context of Philippe Ariés' disputed theory on changing attitudes to death.

My critical remarks notwithstanding, I find this volume a very important contribution to the writing of body history in Hungary. Although the articles vary in quality, the reader can gain valuable insights, for example, into the use and applications of some of the seminal theories in Hungarian source material, or into ongoing or nearly completed research initiatives, and also into the possible further directions for study in body history. Furthermore, one significant merit of the volume is that it gives voice to the younger generation (MA and PhD students), as their ongoing projects (MA theses, PhD dissertations) will shape in part the agenda for further research in this field.

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Metternich: Stratege und Visionär. Eine Biografie. By Wolfram Siemann. Munich: C. H. Beck, 2016. 983 pp.

Metternich has long served as a bugbear and whipping-boy. Victor Bibl's books *Zerfall Österreichs* and *Metternich: Der Dämon Österreichs* with their German-nationalist agenda supplied blunt and salty invectives, while Heinrich von Srbik's massive biography from 1925 and Hanns Schlitter's useful collection on pre-1848 Austria were more appreciative of Metternich's self-conception as "rocher d'ordre". Wolfram Siemann's massive *Metternich: Stratege und Visionär* makes a new case for a nuanced understanding of Metternich, who, Siemann suggests, needs to be liberated from the clutches of his detractors. The best way of rescuing Metternich from liberal and nationalist vilification is an extensive source-based biography, and Siemann succeeds admirably well in tapping fresh material from the Vienna Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv and from the rich collections of Metternich's papers at the Prague National Archives.

Wearing his erudition lightly, Siemann manages to cover his ground in elegant and highly accessible prose. It is in the area of international relations that his narrative reaches full stride. His findings parallel Miroslav Šedivý's splendid *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question* (2013), which demolishes many clichés about Austria's allegedly stolid and reactionary politics towards the Ottoman Empire. Siemann also sheds rich new light on Metternich as paterfamilias, admirer of the arts, lover, and entrepreneur, discussing his manorial governance and the establishment of ironworks on his land at Plaß/Plasy (the chapter heading *Frauenversteher und Majoratsherr* is a gem of historical prose). Siemann offers a very valuable discussion of Metternich's 1819 Italian journey in Emperor Franz's retinue and adduces a striking letter in which Metternich highlights that pagan and Christian art were irreconcilable in late Antiquity. The early Christians, Metternich argues, had to "extirpate" the superior pagan arts "root and branch" (*mit Stumpf und Stiel auszurotten*, p.621). Strikingly, this contention harmonizes with the perceptions of Franz Grillparzer, who also was in the emperor's retinue, yet Grillparzer was reprimanded by Metternich for calling for the removal of the cross from the Coliseum in his poem *Campo vaccino*. Metternich's abolition of feudal dues on his domains, his modernization of harvesting and viticulture, and his advocacy of the Monarchy's participation in the *Zollverein* have been overlooked by previous historians, and Siemann provides a superb discussion of these matters (pp.751–63, 786–91).

Siemann's book is highly remarkable because it offers a reappraisal of Metternich as a conservative Enlightener: Siemann ably reconstructs Metternich's early experience of the Revolution, bringing to life the ransacking of the Straßburg town hall by the urban crowd, which included young Metternich's tutor Johann Friedrich Simon, and Metternich's experience of his father's management of the riot-riven Austrian Netherlands from Brussels. In this key, Siemann convincingly analyzes Metternich's 1794 sojourn in London as a formative period. Having experienced Edmund Burke's oratory skills in the House of Commons during the impeachment trial of Warren Hastings, Metternich also purchased and devoured the first edition of *Reflections on the Revolution in France* while in London.

After having provided a novel and nuanced account of Metternich's diplomatic achievement at the Vienna Congress, Siemann goes on to discuss the fields of policing, political repression, and surveillance after the 1819 Karlsbad decrees. Here Siemann provides an excellent foil to Andrew Zamoyski's glossy and gesticulatory *Phantom Terror: The Threat of Revolution and the Repression of Liberty, 1789–1848* (2014). He carefully reconstructs the horror of violent conspiracies, plots, and planned coups that made Europe tremble in the 1820s; Karl Ludwig Sand's 1818 murder of playwright August von Kotzebue appears as part of a proto-Salafist killing spree of prim fanatics which was directed against lax ancien régime morals as much as it was against political repression (p.662). Siemann highlights the social hardships of a young academic precariat which drove its members into radicalization. In connection with this, Siemann also dismantles the verdict of Gentz and Treitschke, according to which Metternich, obsessed as he was with the machinations of diabolic "demagogues," refused to connect the rise of new liberal and radical political forces to tangible transformations in society. Siemann tries to determine the real threat conspirators posed, and he seeks to show that Metternich, while fighting rabble-rousing "demagogues," also sought to quell radicalism by ensuring prosperity: Metternich was convinced that a rising living standard would diminish the appeal of nationalism across Europe.

Refreshing as readings like these are, they also clearly indicate the limits of Siemann's study. Metternich emerges from Siemann's book as something of a "genius" of statecraft, so much so that Alexander Cammann, in his review for *Die Zeit* ("Gerechtigkeit für ein Genie," 3 March 2016), suggested that the volume would make good bedside reading for Angela Merkel. Metternich's credentials as a peacemaker and prescient, responsible critic of modern nationalism seem impeccable here, but Siemann's treatment of Metternich as a benign advocate of a Europe of multilingual and multi-religious empires remains strangely

lopsided. Siemann's account should be compared with older Austrian post-imperial literature on Metternich's benign role in the nationality conflicts of the old Monarchy (e.g. with the writings of Hugo Hantsch), many of whose basic premises it shares. Siemann makes much of Metternich's moderate "liberalism" (p.166), but his hero's general politics in the Germanies contradict this assessment (one need only think of his thwarting of Hardenberg's constitutional scheme for Prussia).

Siemann's overall argument suffers from a serious weak spot: Metternich's role in the internal workings of the Habsburg Monarchy is surprisingly absent from the book. Siemann does provide a helpful, fresh account of Metternich's rivalry with Franz Anton Kolowrat-Liebsteinsky. He debunks Kolowrat's self-fashioning as a "liberal" as mere window-dressing designed to denigrate Metternich as "reactionary." Siemann argues that this served to disguise Kolowrat's system of patriotic patronage, which cemented the dominance of the Bohemian nobility in the higher bureaucracy (pp.819–24). In March 1848, Kolowrat posed as one of the heroes who brought down the "system" Metternich, with the prince serving as a welcome scapegoat for the old regime (pp.832–40). Siemann reminds us that this "system" was an effective myth created by Metternich's adversaries and that the powers of the prince in domestic affairs were much more limited than critics and admirers would concede. This is a point Metternich himself repeatedly made after 1848: "Mit meiner Allmacht muß es wohl übel gestanden haben!" But this cannot justify the omission of Metternich's role in the internal workings of the Empire, an omission that effectively undercuts Siemann's account of Metternich the "liberal."

Since Siemann chooses to say rather little about Metternich's domestic activities, he remains unable to establish whether there was any solid timber under the beguiling veneer of Metternich's "reformism" and "federalism" (pp.623–27). What reformism, what federalism? Given that the book only briefly discusses Lombardo-Venetia, but completely neglects Galician and Hungarian affairs, Siemann fails to produce tangible evidence in support of his assertions. Quite surprisingly, István Széchenyi and Palatine Joseph are barely mentioned, and the relevant literature in Western languages is completely absent from the bibliography. No reference is made to the works of Gyula Szekfű (for instance *État et nation*; *Iratok a magyar államnyelv kérdésének történetéhez, 1790–1848*, which contains a highly valuable primary source material in German and Latin), Erzsébet Andics (*Metternich und die Frage Ungarns*, the appendix to which contains the rich correspondence between Metternich and Palatine Joseph), or Sándor

Domanovszky's edition of Palatine Joseph's political writings, not to mention the older studies by Eduard Wertheimer, Franz Krones, and Mihály Horváth.

Siemann's remarkable and eminently readable book will remain an indispensable point of reference for Metternich's political life and intellectual profile up to 1815, as well as for the key role he played in the unmaking of the Napoleonic empire. It shows that Metternich's worldview was shaped in the crucible of the Revolution, and it sets new standards for the study of his activities as manorial lord and industrialist. It is in these domains that the study breaks rich new ground. Here Siemann's achievement is massive, but his omission of Metternich's role in the internal affairs of the Monarchy is equally glaring. Given this imbalance, Siemann's claims about Metternich's moderate "liberalism" and "federalism" remain ultimately inconclusive. The Metternich that emerges from Siemann's monumental study is quite simply too good to be true.

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Experten und Beamte: Die Professionalisierung der Lehrer höherer Schulen in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Ungarn und Preußen im Vergleich. By Márkus Keller. (Studien zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte Ostmitteleuropas 24.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015. 276 pp.

The publication under review is the German translation of a dissertation originally published in Hungarian in 2010. Keller worked on the dissertation at the Berlin College for Comparative European History, and further support, encouragement, and contacts were provided through an Immanuel Kant Scholarship and through close cooperation with the graduate program in social history at the Eötvös Loránd University.

The dissertation offers a comparative study of the professionalization of the teaching profession in secondary schools in Hungary and Prussia. The temporal framework is the second half of the nineteenth century, and the focus is on the last third of the century.

Keller provides a detailed chapter on theory and methodology in which he offers an overview of the most important social science theories concerning professionalization in the German and Hungarian science of history (regrettably, he does not offer a more detailed overview on this subject). He does, however, quite accurately note the different terms used in the German and Hungarian social historiography ("Bildungsbürgertum" versus "intelligencia"), and he discusses the most important German literature on the comparative method in the science of history. He thus justifies, more or less convincingly, the selection he made of the things compared and presents the sources on which his inquiry is based (for the most part, print publications of teachers' associations, union statutes, the corpus juris, notices, statistical data, and newspapers). In the case of Hungary, the most important source was the newspaper of the National Association of Secondary School Teachers (Országos Középiskolai Tanáregylet, or OKTE), which was most active from the 1870s onwards. In the case of Prussia, where at the time similar teachers' associations emerged as bodies representative of the interests of people in the profession, Keller draws heavily on *Zeitung für das höhere Unterrichtswesen*, in which the proceedings of the union assemblies were published.

Another chapter is devoted to the foundation of this interest in the comparison of the situation in Hungary and the situation in Prussia. One learns with astonishment that the Prussian union law, which was in force as of 1850, was

more liberal than the Hungarian law "in the time leading up to the Compromise" (p.77). As a source, Keller refers to the state lexicon (Staatslexikon) published by Julius Bachem in 1904. He seems completely unaware of the research found in the eighth volume of *Habsburgermonarchie* ("Politische Öffentlichkeit und Zivilgesellschaft," second sub-volume, Vienna, 2006), which is an essential source for any research on this subject.

The most informative chapters are the next two (chapters four and five), in which Keller presents the findings of the comparative research on two important questions, the "self-image" of pedagogues and their relationship to the state.

The "self-image" of pedagogues in Hungary, we learn, differed significantly from the "self-image" of pedagogues in Prussia. In Hungary, teaching was an increasingly self-confident profession which, thanks to a vibrant sense of solidarity, was able to assert its moral and material social value (and autonomy). In Prussia, teachers constituted a professional group with considerably less solidarity. Moreover, this group was divided into "humanist" and "natural sciences" (Realfächer) factions, and this division prevented teachers from effectively adopting a unified stance and thus left the profession itself in a weaker social position. The treatment of the subject of "nationality problematics" in Hungary in this chapter merits attention. According to Keller, by the 1870s the question of nationality played only a secondary role, since within the profession people were (Keller claims somewhat uncritically) essentially in agreement with the necessity of "Magyarization" policies through education and schooling. Keller offers no discussion of this subject in the case of Prussia. He focuses more on the internal division and the less successful efforts of teachers to achieve financial and social recognition.

Keller examines the relationship between the teaching profession and the state, which is closely intertwined with the question of "self-image" in the long last chapter. The focus of the discussion is first and foremost on the contributions of teachers to education policy and to the reforms in education policy in the late nineteenth century. Here too, one finds parallels and differences. In Hungary, only later was there an increase in the "power advantage" of the state with regard to the requests and reform ideas of the people in the teaching profession although from the perspective of professional level they were equal in rank. Beginning in the 1970s and lasting until the important law for secondary schools of 1883, there was a growing rift between the Ministry and OKTE which, contrary to what one might expect, made it possible for the teaching profession to attain a certain autonomy. In Prussia, in contrast, schooling had been a state matter for

a considerably longer time as was reasserted by the school supervisory law of 1872. But even in Prussia, state intervention grew in the last third of the century, which the teaching profession welcomed since it hoped thereby to achieve a better place, both materially and from the position of social standing. This also explains the process of making teachers in Prussia civil servants, which stood in stark contrast with the situation in Hungary where this was not possible, in particular given the influence of non-state (i.e. Church) schools.

Keller provides a short summary in which he contends that his inquiry refutes an all too familiar view concerning teaching and education according to which the professionalization and modernization of teaching in Hungary and East Central Europe was a "belated development." His refutation of this view is unquestionably one of the merits of his work.

One cannot avoid noting the numerous editorial oversights and failures (typos, grammatical errors, passages that are poorly translated, etc.). The book does not include a register of persons nor a list of abbreviations (the reader is left to her own devices to learn the meaning of the frequently used acronym OKTE, for instance). Some "professional" assistance, both from the perspective of the underlying scholarship and from the perspective of the editing, would have been helpful.

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Habsburg neu denken: Vielfalt und Ambivalenz in Zentraleuropa. 30 kulturwissenschaftliche Stichworte. Edited by Johannes Feichtinger and Heidemarie Uhl. Vienna–Cologne–Weimar: Böhlau, 2016. 261 pp.

At a time when flows of immigrants across borders, the experiment of European unification, and other developments have called forth furious national reactions in parts of formerly Habsburg Europe, the publication under consideration here reminds us that modern nations and nationalism are comparatively recent historical phenomena. Consisting of 30 short essays each subsumed under a keyword (from *Auswanderungen* [Emigrations] to *Zerfall* [Disintegration]), this volume enquires into the historical experiences of plurality, difference, and ambivalence in Central Europe with an eye to the challenges today's societies face. In an opportune way, it documents the attempts by scholars to overcome the national perspectives that long dominated and still influence understandings of late Habsburg history. Until not so long ago, the Habsburg Monarchy was thought of as having been inhabited by a relatively small number of discrete, often mutually hostile nations (whose outlines conveniently corresponded to the conceptions of nationalists and the national power structures that emerged in the twentieth century). This volume reveals that the self-understandings of Central Europeans and their views of one another and the larger world were more ambivalent and conditional, even well into the twentieth century, than nationalists would have us believe.

A short review can hardly do justice to the abundance of essays in this book, which are from a range of disciplines, including literature and languages, anthropology, and the history of music and theater. The few contributions highlighted here seem to me to offer especially promising or interesting samples of current work. Where nations (or their construction) remain at the center of historical interest, the findings of recent scholarship continue to call the old nationalist "master narratives" of political emancipation and progress into question. In an article on "Democrats" (*Demokrat/inn/en*) written from the standpoint of gender history, the historian Heidrun Zettelbauer shows that a nationalist commitment did not necessarily entail a commitment to the expansion of democratic rights—paradoxically even among women. A prominent German nationalist activist in Styria such as Lina Kreuter-Gallé, for example, did not regard the achievement of women's suffrage as a primary political goal: "Democracy as an objective aside from nationalist visions was and remained

suspect for many female players [*Akteurinnen*] on the political right until well into the twentieth century" (p.48).

In recent years, the study of the use of language(s) has become one of the most promising ways of approaching the difficult question of perspective and self-understanding among those subject to Habsburg rule. This is especially notable given that the spoken and written word have traditionally been regarded as crucial markers of nationality. As the contributions on "Antagonisms" (*Feindschaften*), "Historical Representations" (*Geschichtsbilder*), "Multilingualism" (*Mehrsprachigkeit*), "Pluriculturality" (*Plurikulturalität*), and other topics suggest, the inhabitants of Central Europe were far more flexible in daily language practices than historical and popular accounts of clearly distinguishable "peoples" continue to allow. In large urban agglomerations as well as in small towns and villages there were "areas of crossover, of cultural hybridity, and multilingualism" (Simon Hadler, p.59). In the real social world, as Elena Mannová and Jozef Tancer point out, there were "no essentialist *linguistic* communities, as nationalists imagined them, but rather groups of *speakers* who made up intended and situational communities of communication" (p.136). Anil Bhatti usefully distinguishes what is labelled "pluriculturality" from "multiculturalism," a term which implies closed parallel societies (such as those imagined by nationalists) existing side by side with little meaningful contact. The pluricultural world refers, by contrast, to "complicated nets of similarities which overlap and cross" (p.175).

Several of the contributions, such as those on "Orientalism" (*Orientalismus*) and "Austrian Islam" (*Österreichislam*), draw highly topical attention to a phenomenon which was apparent in the relationships among other groups in the Central and Southeast European area: the long experience of living side by side or in close proximity bred familiarity which did not necessarily set aside strong elements of strangeness or foreignness. The form of "frontier orientalism" (as opposed to "classical colonial orientalism" p.161) which Andre Gingrich suggests prevailed in Central Europe brought about the transfer from the Near East of themes and motifs in all manner of both high and popular culture, from architecture to figures of speech and place and street names. Franz Fillafer's article reminds us that the Habsburg Monarchy was a legislative pioneer (1912) in the treatment of (Bosnian) Muslims among its subjects. The "Islam law" passed in 2015 by the Second Austrian Republic improved on the earlier achievement, even as it built on the Monarchy's "confessionalizing" (p.167) strategies with respect to religious groups.

Pieter Judson's contribution offers a helpful introduction to the term "national indifference," which thanks to his efforts and those of other scholars has become one of the most promising analytical tools with which to move beyond dominant nationalist historical discourses. The notion of "national indifference" was in fact a contemporary one employed by nationalist activists as of the 1880s "to describe the behaviors, attitudes, [and] choices of people who appeared to live their daily lives ignorant of nationalist concerns" (p.151). Nationalism was the tool activists then employed to combat indifference, and it therefore should be understood, according to Judson, as a question of "political practice" rather than "cultural authenticity" (p.152). Hence, if we accept linguistic-ethnic-cultural reductionism, then we also accept the premises of nationalism. This is a valuable insight for future scholarship.

Though the book under review is entitled "Re-thinking Habsburg," the Habsburg Monarchy as a discrete polity composed of distinct territories and existing for a long time as one of Europe's leading powers is oddly absent from most of the contributions. What did its existence mean to its subjects and citizens, and how did these meanings change over time? To what extent did its existence evoke a (cultural) sense of belonging among its people(s)? How might this sense of belonging have differed from place to place? In a volume devoted to questions of culture and forms of belonging, one might note with some regret the absence of keywords such as "religion" and "Catholicism" or "territory" and "locality." If people were indifferent to nation, then what influences might have induced affinity? Even after 1900, affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church must still have constituted the most frequent form of culturally conditioned belonging. Precisely in the case of the Habsburg Monarchy, with its long and intimate association with Catholicism, the question of this affiliation needs to be added to the cultural-historical research agenda. Werner Telesko's fine essay on the widespread revival of the "Baroque" in the nineteenth century recalls the link between this "dynastic-supranational style" (p.30) and the Counter Reformation, which was one of the formative experiences in Habsburg history. Thus, Telesko suggests ways in which the early modern and later history of the monarchy might fruitfully be reconnected.

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Eugenics and Nation in Early 20th Century Hungary. By Marius Turda. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 343 pp.

For a long time, eugenics remained a largely under-researched subject within the scholarship on Hungarian intellectual history and the history of science. The topic was rarely discussed, and its controversial nature led to a series of misunderstandings. However, the last 15 years have seen a significant increase in the number of contributions to this field in the form of numerous journal articles and book chapters. The most active author behind this growing body of literature is Marius Turda, and Turda is also the author of the first monograph on the subject reviewed here.

The lack of comprehensive secondary literature on Hungarian eugenics meant that Turda could not follow or challenge any historiographical interpretations; he was forced to develop a new historical narrative practically from scratch. When doing so, he laid down the following three guiding principles: first, "to identify the most important Hungarian eugenicists and to contextualize their arguments within their discursive cultures" (p.12), second, to analyze the connections between eugenics and nationalism, and, finally, to discuss "eugenics in Hungary as part of an international movement of social and biological improvement" (p.12).

Turda´s narrative begins at the turn of the century and ends in 1919, after the demise of Austria-Hungary. These two moments in time could not be more different. The chapters themselves focus on the abovementioned aspects while following the history of Hungarian eugenics chronologically. Some of the milestones in this account are world events like the outbreak of World War I, while other significant turning points are related to the development of the eugenics discourse.

Fin de siècle Hungary and especially Budapest, which at the time was an emerging metropolis with a vibrant intellectual life, were hotbeds of new ideas. They formed the world in which Hungarian eugenics first appeared. Turda convincingly argues that the Hungarian version of eugenics should be classified as a social science (p.16.) Although many eugenicists came from scientific or medical backgrounds, eugenics still enjoyed a position comparable to that of the emerging sociology of the time. It is therefore unsurprising that it was roughly the same circle of intellectuals who showed interest in these two disciplines. These intellectuals were receptive to new ideas and eager to learn about the latest scientific developments, but they were also very keen on using the new

theories to understand and critique contemporary Hungarian society. The book demonstrates how eugenic concepts gained influence in Hungary's intellectual and scientific circles and how the participants in the debates were up-to-date on the latest literature on eugenics from the outset.

Turda is not only a scholar of Hungarian eugenics, but also a historian of Romanian and South East European eugenics who has even published on the general history of the movement. Thus, his description of the international context, including the intellectual influences on the Hungarian eugenicists, is especially intriguing. Similarly captivating are the passages in which he discusses the thoughts and impact of Géza Hoffmann, the only Hungarian eugenicist who managed to gain international recognition.

The book also explains the dissemination of eugenic thought in Hungary and its later institutionalization. According to Turda, from the beginning, these ideas were not considered obscure and they were regularly given attention in various public forums. For instance, the topic was extensively covered in the influential journal *Huszadik Század* from the mid-1900s onwards. Still, over the years, eugenics became more and more influential. By the time World War I had broken out, eugenics enjoyed considerable significance in wartime health and welfare policies and in a widespread infrastructure of different associations and publications. It even enjoyed recognition in Hungarian officialdom as illustrated by the appearance of eugenic arguments in parliamentary debates.

The influence of eugenics is also indicated by the number of prominent figures who endorsed such ideas. As is commonly known, Count Pál Teleki, who served twice as prime minister (for under a year in 1920–21 and then again in 1939–41), had an avid interest in eugenics. However, it is not common knowledge in Hungary today—and it is to the credit of the book that it draws attention to this—that the similarly influential and equally controversial Bishop Ottokár Prohászka, the leading intellectual behind political Catholicism and Christian socialism, also shared such interests (p.90). But right-wing or conservative intellectuals were hardly the only people to participate in the eugenic discourse. Left-wing intellectuals, socialists, and feminists saw in eugenics a method of social progress (if one accepts a pliable definition of progress, of course).

While most historians who specialize on early twentieth-century Hungary tend to concentrate on the political divisions between left and right, according to Turda, this was only one of the important dividing lines between eugenicists. Dichotomies like the one between the followers of the classical Galtonian interpretation of eugenics and those advocating the German school of *racial*

hygiene were crucial too. Similarly, the nurture vs. nature debate and the debates concerning state intervention further divided eugenicists. These positions cannot be explained merely with reference to the political leanings of the people who espoused them. For instance, József Madzsar was a strong proponent of state enforced eugenic measures despite his firm leftist sympathies.

Perhaps the most interesting and thought-provoking aspect of Turda's analysis concerns "the problem of nationalism and eugenics." Initially, the main problems discussed by Hungarian eugenicists paralleled the problems faced by their Western European and North American colleagues, i.e. social issues and public health concerns, such as alcoholism and sexually transmitted diseases. However, Turda argues that in the context of the ethnic tensions of late dualist Hungary, nationalist eugenicists attempted to redefine the *Magyar race* in a biological framework and develop their study into a bio-political project that combined the eugenic concept of heredity with Hungarian nationalism.

The monograph on this previously understudied topic is not only an important step towards a better understanding of early twentieth-century Hungary's intellectual landscape. It will also further our understanding of some later developments, such as important aspects of Hungary's interwar nationalist discourse. In addition to the main body of the volume, the appendices will also be of great benefit to future scholars. Since no similar list of works by Hungarian eugenicists has ever been published, Turda's 25 page-long bibliography makes it not only useful but downright necessary for anyone planning to do research in this field in the future. The biographical information is similarly helpful, since many of these people remain unknown to historians even today.

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Etnicitás, identitás, politika: Magyar kisebbségek nacionalizmus és regionalizmus között Romániában és Csehszlovákiában 1918–1944 [Ethnicity, identity, politics: Hungarian minorities between nationalism and regionalism in Romania and Czechoslovakia, 1918–1944]. By Gábor Egry. Budapest: Napvilág, 2015. 560 pp.

Until recently, historians in East Central Europe have analyzed the fates of Hungarian minorities in the various successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy separately, with a focus on the political parties of minorities and ethnic conflict. Gábor Egry, director-in-chief of the Budapest-based Institute of Political History, has embarked on a comparative investigation of Hungarian minorities in his recent 500-page monograph, *Ethnicity, Identity, Politics. Hungarian Minorities between Nationalism and Regionalism in Romania and Czechoslovakia 1918–1944*. The book brings two welcome innovations: it is comparative in nature and Egry resists the temptation to analyze Hungarian minorities in a vacuum. Slovak, Czech, and Romanian reactions to Hungarian identity politics feature prominently in his monograph. His extensive use of Romanian archival records concerning the German, Hungarian, and Romanian populations is especially remarkable.

Based on years of in-depth archival research in Bucharest, Budapest, Cluj-Napoca, Timişoara, and Târgu-Mureş and other cities in Transylvania with important archives, Egry offers crucial insights into the history of Hungarian minorities and the study of national identity in East-Central Europe more generally. He confidently draws on the so far less thoroughly studied records of the Directing Council (*Consiliul Dirigent*), reports of provincial agents of the state security police, the mandatory Romanian language exams taken by minority state and municipal officials, and personal correspondence, along with other sources.

Ethnicity, Identity, Politics analyzes the networks among the Budapest, Bucharest, and Prague governments, as well as Slovak, Transylvanian Romanian, and Transylvanian Hungarian political elites. The monograph focuses on how these elites attempted to influence the national identity of Hungarian populations in Transylvania and Slovakia, with particular emphasis on the activities of the administration in Budapest. For Slovakia, Egry overwhelmingly relies on the rich collection of the Hungarian National Archive, which is understandable given that a substantial portion of the book is devoted to a reconstruction of the "Felvidék" [Slovakia] policies of Budapest governments. The author concentrates on policy makers who wielded considerable power in their efforts

to influence the ethnic identities of Hungarians and he pays less attention to alternative attempts at identity politics coming from the marginalized political left, liberal writers, and the press. Egry concludes that it was impossible to create a homogenous Hungarian national identity out of the various Hungarian ethnic identities and identifications in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Romania between 1918 and 1944.

Egry asks how Hungarian identities evolved in the interwar period and during the Second World War in Slovakia and Northern and Southern Transylvania, and how changes in these Hungarian ethnic identities contrasted with the identity politics promoted by Budapest governments. The analysis of policies aimed at shaping national identity, which is broken into two parts entitled "Identities" and "Policies and Ethnic Categories," takes up two-thirds of the book. The third part, which focuses on "Everyday Life," examines how populations reacted to policies concerning ethnic identity by complying with, ignoring, or selectively conforming to them. While *Ethnicity, Identity, Politics* compares Hungarian ethnic identities in Romania and Czechoslovakia, it avoids any affirmation of simplistic conceptions of Transylvania or Slovakia as homogenous regions with solid boundaries, and it draws attention to variations in forms of ethnic identification city by city and sub-region by sub-region (p.65).

The geographical and social differences in Hungarian ethnic identity serve as a background to explain both the divergent impact of the Treaty of Trianon on Hungarian populations and the difficulties of Hungarian state-building during the Second World War. In both Slovakia and Transylvania, Hungarians opted for definitions of "Hungarianness" that differed sharply from the one promoted by Budapest, and these initial differences became even more pronounced between 1918 and 1944. Transylvanian Hungarian elites promoted a regional national identity that radically differed from Budapest's homogenizing and centralizing agenda. This Calvinist-inspired "theological" narrative of ethnic identity stressed differences between Hungarians in Trianon Hungary and Transylvania by pointing to the importance of ethnic community building and community service (*népszolgálat*) in the latter, for instance. Hungarians and Hungarian elites in Slovakia, on the other hand, represented a geographically, socially, and politically more fragmented group, which did not develop a unified narrative on Hungarian ethnic identity in Slovakia (pp.156–67, 196–204).

Although Hungarian crowds cheered Miklós Horthy during the re-annexation of Southern Slovakia and Northern Transylvania, Egry argues that the buildup of differences in ethnic identity since 1918 threw into question the

extent to which the re-annexation actually united minority Hungarians with those in Trianon Hungary. Finally, Egry points out that the territorial revisions of the Treaty of Trianon produced traumas and shifts in national identification comparable to the dissolution of historical Hungary, partially because the nationalizing Hungarian state pushed forcefully to readjust the national identities of Hungarians in the re-annexed territories (p.489).

Egry's work also serves as a contribution to currently popular debates in Hungary concerning the so-called "Trianon trauma," which centers on the impact of the demise of Greater Hungary on Hungarian populations. Importantly, *Ethnicity, Identity, Politics* situates the disintegration of historical Hungary in the history and recent historiography of the "Long First World War" in East Central and Eastern Europe (Heather Jones, Jennifer O'Brien and Christoph Schmidt-Supprian, eds.: *Untold War. New Perspectives in First World War Studies* [2008]; Jochen Böhler, Włodzimierz Borodziej, and Joachim von Puttkamer, eds.: *Legacies of Violence: Eastern Europe's First World War* [2014]). Egry marshals case studies in support of his contention that Hungarian populations went through a series of "traumas," such as World War I and the subsequent revolutions in the 1910s and 1920s. This argument ultimately questions the uniqueness of the "Trianon trauma" in our understanding of modern Hungarian history. In addition, he points out that the dissolution of the pre-1918 Hungarian state had sharply different impacts on various social groups and in different parts of the former Kingdom of Hungary.

Egry oscillates between arguing that the period of the Second World War marked an important turning point in the national identities of ordinary people and between showing that Hungarian populations had indeed comparably flexible attitudes towards ethnic identity in the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s. This ambiguity partially stems from the methodology and source base: the analysis is driven by a series of case studies, some of which clearly represent outliers, such as the story of one Hungarian-Jewish railway operator who decided to move to Moldova in Greater Romania at a time when Hungarian populations from Transylvania were fleeing to Trianon Hungary (pp.466–69). Nonetheless, these case studies show that it was possible to go against the current of ethnic nationalism well into the period of the Second World War.

Given the persistence of flexible ethnic identities and flexible uses of ethnic identity (labeled "everyday ethnicity") throughout the period under study, it is nonetheless difficult to prove that the ethnic identities of Hungarian populations solidified during the Second World War. While case studies in this book do not

allow for sweeping conclusions, they nevertheless persuasively point to the persistence of flexible ethnic identities in the first half of the twentieth century. The inclusion of voices from small town pubs, crowded train carriages, and middle-class dining rooms enriches our understanding of interwar East Central Europe and questions the extent to which Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Greater Romania managed to nationalize populations.

Egry convincingly stresses the importance of East Central European middle-class cultures for both the mediation of ethnic identification and as non-ethnic venues of identity politics, an often overlooked aspect of the interwar history of this region (pp.444–62). The legacy of Austro-Hungarian middle-class culture in Transylvania managed to create bonds among Transylvanian Hungarian and Romanian bourgeoisies vis-à-vis "outsiders," such as Romanians from the pre-1918 Kingdom of Romania after the collapse of the Monarchy (p.459). Egry shows that an important impact of middle-class sociability in Transylvania was the performance of cultural superiority by educated Transylvanians (both Romanians and Hungarians) against "intruders" from the pre-1918 Kingdom of Romania. At other instances, however, middle-class sociability and the performance of social difference towards majority peasant populations served as a tool with which to erase boundaries between the Hungarian and Romanian bourgeoisie of Transylvania and the Old Kingdom of Romania (pp.457–62).

One of the many important insights Egry offers is that Hungarians and Slovaks in interwar Czechoslovakia had fewer venues for shared middle-class sociability or the construction of joint fronts in identity politics. One reason for this was that the cultural superiority of Hungarians and Slovaks in Slovakia vis-à-vis "petit-bourgeois" Czech culture or the "oligarchic" society of post-1920 Hungary was questionable; Hungarian, Slovak, and Czech ethno-political entrepreneurs were inheritors of Austro-Hungarian "middle-class culture" and thus could not be "stigmatized" as "Balkanic," unlike the Romanians from the prewar Kingdom of Romania (p.460).

Whereas works published in East Central Europe rarely draw on English-language scholarship on the theory and practice of nationalism, Egry's work stands out in its unique contribution to both English-language historiography on the region and debates among historians in Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. Through the integration of Czechoslovak, Hungarian, and Romanian perspectives on ethnic identity, Egry rethinks Rogers Brubaker's 1996 "triadic nexus," which described the interplay of "nationalizing state," "the national minority," and the "external national homeland" as relational fields which

explain ethnic mobilization (Rogers Brubaker: *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* [1996]). Egry adds to this nexus regional non-minority elites, in this case, Slovaks and Transylvanian Romanians, an addition which draws attention to the fact that within "nationalizing states" there were important internal divisions; these divisions allowed for more agency for minorities (pp.18–29). Moreover, Egry argues that the boundaries between regional minority and non-minority elites were often blurred. His addition of regional minority elites to Brubaker's "triadic nexus" stresses that the binary opposition between Hungarian and Romanian or Slovak and Hungarian national histories can be overcome, and that the history of populations in Slovakia and Transylvania was often "entangled" and impossible to understand from the perspective of national histories (pp.29–30).

Egry's confident narrative voice connects the dots among the often disparate case studies: the reader should expect a series of brief stories of the manifestations of ethnic identity rather than detailed case studies, which are common in works of this kind (Pieter M Judson: *Guardians of the Nation. Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* [2006]; Jeremy King: *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans. A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* [2002]; Tara Zahra: *Kidnapped Souls. National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* [2008]). The voice of ordinary people is mediated by both contemporary state officials who produced the sources and often by Egry himself, who mostly resorts to paraphrasing rather than directly quoting this rich material—an understandable approach given the breadth and depth of his monograph. A divergence from this approach comes mostly in the third part of the book on "Everyday Life," in which "freely speaking individuals" come to the fore (pp.362–84).

The main focus on political elites as the people who crafted politics aimed at influencing ethnic identity is less convincing, especially given that Egry shows how even interwar states believed that literature and popular culture (de)formed ethnic identities, which led to the censorship of even inane operettas such as Imre Kálmán's *Countess Maritza* in Transylvania (p.451). Writers, left-wing and liberal journalists, and editors of literary journals (even of papers with limited circulation, such as Cluj's *Korunk*) likely impacted the ethnic identity of broad middle-class audiences, despite the lack of their direct impact on policy making; more attention to Hungarian Jewish identity politics in Czechoslovakia and Romania could have strengthened Egry's point that Hungarian ethnic identities

were far from homogenous and contradicted the Budapest government's expectations.

What needs to be stressed is that the breadth and depth of *Ethnicity, Identity, Politics* makes it one of the most significant contributions to Hungarian historiography in recent years. This monograph is a crucially important reading for historians interested in the politics of ethnic identity in East Central Europe, and it is also useful as an in-depth survey of the history of Hungarian populations in Romania and Hungary between 1918 and 1944. Graduate students will find inspiration in Egry's use of archival material, while *Ethnicity, Identity, Politics* will hopefully inspire future comparative studies of the region.

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Két évtized: A kolozsvári zsidóság a két világháború között [Two decades: The Jewry of Kolozsvár between the two world wars]. By Attila Gidó. Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2016. 356 pp.

Attila Gidó is a skilled and successful young Transylvanian historian associated with the Cluj-based Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities. In recent years, he has conducted several valuable research projects involving research in the major Romanian, Hungarian, and Israeli archives. Dealing with the interwar history of the Jewish community in Cluj (Kolozsvár in Hungarian), one of the major cities and cultural centers of Transylvania, his new book is an expanded version of his doctoral dissertation, which was first published in Romanian (Două decenii: Evreii din Cluj în perioada interbelică [2014]).

The Jews of Cluj were proud Hungarians before 1920, and they were almost fully integrated into the society of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. Later, under Romanian rule, they tended to refer to the previous period as the Golden Age of the Hungarian/Transylvanian Jewry. After acquiring Transylvania, the Romanian authorities did practically everything in their power to dissociate Transylvanian Jews from the Hungarians, promote the dissimilation of the community from its Hungarian language and culture, and force the assimilation of the Jewish inhabitants of the region into the Romanian state. At the time, this strategy was an essential demographical and political matter for the young nationalizing state of Greater Romania.

Gidó is convinced that without a full understanding of the identity strategies of the Transylvanian Jewry, one cannot understand the anti-Semitism of the 1930s or the Hungarian reproaches and anti-Jewish accusations of the early 1940s. Neither, according to Gidó, can one comprehend the post-Holocaust Jewish disillusionment with anything and everything connected to Hungarian identity and culture. Accordingly, Gidó states already in the introduction that the period under scrutiny is of key importance in the history of the integration of Jews. This is probably why he extended and contextualized his research period: to analyze first the situation of the Jewish community of Cluj before the First World War and to conclude with a presentation of the situation of the community after 1940, when under the provisions of the Second Vienna Award the city, together with the northern and southeastern parts of Transylvania, became part of Hungary again, followed less than four years later by the deportation of the Jews in these territories to Auschwitz.

Gidó adopts an unusually complex approach: in addition to using classic historical research methods, he also employs a variety of anthropological and sociological tools. Consequently, his work is not simply historical writing, but rather an interesting experimental attempt at a comprehensive monograph of the Jewish community of Cluj. It is therefore not surprising that the author examines his topic with particular focus on the questions of identity strategies and social integration.

The book is divided into ten chapters, each analyzing the history of the community from a different perspective: historiography and sources; the frames of the research; the history of the community before the First World War; demographic and settlement structure; occupational structure and economic potential; exclusion and restrictions of rights; internal organization of the community, including religious and secular institutions; education and schooling strategies; various identity policies; and the fate of the Jews of Cluj after 1940.

The author offers a clear description and in-depth analysis of the condition of the Jews of Cluj after the First World War, when their history, together with that of the city, went through many dramatic changes, affecting most of all the economic environment and behavior, but also political, social, and cultural relations, as well as religious and minority institutions. Demanding more and more space for themselves in the city and in Transylvania, the Romanians used a wide array of tools to expel Hungarians and Jews from public institutions, prominent places in economic life, liberal professions, and in many cases even from their own homes. The existence of Jewish institutions was also greatly impeded or made impossible. For example, in 1927, the Tarbut, the only Jewish high school of the town, was closed. The institution was accused of being "the nest of Hungarian irredentism," and it was not permitted to function because the Romanian administration sought loyalty from the Jews to the new state. Furthermore, they also questioned the citizenship of Jews, and this condemned many families in the community to poverty, because there were several occupations which one could only pursue if one had Romanian citizenship.

An intriguing part of Gidó's work is his presentation of the activity of the Romanian student movements in support of the introduction of the *numerus clausus* principle (already adopted by Hungary) as a defining expression of anti-Semitism in interwar Romania. He describes the psychological and the physical acts of aggression against Jewish students, intellectuals, merchants, craftsmen, village barkeepers, and simple citizens during the first years after the Trianon Peace Treaty. He elaborates on the most severe instances, such as the student

protests of December 1927, which culminated in the so-called "traveling pogrom," during which the Romanian students of the Old Romanian Kingdom, traveling by a special train, vandalized and set to fire numerous Jewish religious and secular institutions and businesses on their way through Oradea (Nagyvárad), Huedin (Bánffyhunyad), and Cluj.

An unspoken question seems to run through the book: did the Jews of Transylvania in some sense betray the Hungarians during the interwar period, as alleged by some Hungarian contemporaries and historians, or did they simply try to find workable personal solutions in order to adapt to the new realities and conditions of Greater Romania? Gidó's analysis is not confrontational, he does not argue for or against these anti-Jewish accusations. Rather, he tries to exploit and parse an impressive amount of press, archival, and bibliographical information to reveal historical facts, influences, conditions, traps, and, ultimately, the historical truth.

Based on the results of the Romanian census of 1930 and his own approximations, Gidó's conclusion is that around 1930 more than half (54 percent) of the Jews of Cluj declared themselves to be of Jewish ethnicity, while the rest of the community continued to identify as Hungarian. Although the author notes that the great majority of the Jewish population of Cluj continued to speak Hungarian at home and in public, consumed Hungarian cultural products, and had many ties with the Hungarian minority society (and thus continued to act as a kin-minority), he is somewhat reluctant to admit that such a dramatic change could not have take place in the period of one decade. In fact, the Jews of Cluj, like many other members of the Transylvanian Jewish community, realized that the political options of the Hungarians and of the Jews living in Transylvania were not always convergent, and by establishing a Jewish Party, an important part of the community started to cast "Jewish votes" instead of Hungarian ones. Otherwise, when for example the non-Jewish Hungarians were supporting the party of Octavian Goga in droves, Jews would have been forced to vote for a political party with an anti-Semitic program.

Nonetheless, Gidó provides an excellent and highly suggestive example how impossible far-reaching dissimilation proved in a short period of time: that of Mór Deutsch, who in November 1918 filed a request to change his last name from Deutsch to Dévényi. The Hungarian Ministry of the Interior informed him on January 30, 1919 that his request had been approved, but by then Mór Deutsch was already living under Romanian rule, and the Romanian authorities did not recognize the decision of the Hungarian administration. We know from

other sources that eventually Deutsch changed his name to Dévényi, probably sometime between 1940 and 1944, because in October 1943 his son was enrolled as András Gábor Dévényi in the Jewish High School of Kolozsvár. Beginning in 1953, András Gábor Dévényi lived and worked as a renowned physicist in Bucharest, and when he passed away in December 2015 he still bore the same last name: Dévényi. The Deutsch-Dévényi example may illustrate how advanced the Hungarian assimilation of the Transylvanian Jewry was.

Gidó's well-documented book, which contains some 1,260 footnotes and an exhaustive bibliography, offers us a good opportunity to clarify the origins of many clichés and stereotypes, and to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the complicated history of the Jewish community of Cluj and, through it, of Transylvanian Jews as a whole as part of Hungarian and Romanian history.

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Căpitan Codreanu: Aufstieg und Fall des rumänischen Faschistenführers. By Oliver Jens Schmitt. Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 2016. 288 pp.

While there is a plethora of biographies on Hitler and Mussolini, the life of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the founder and leader of the *Legion of the Archangel Michael* (also known as the *Iron Guard*), is less known. Apart from Codreanu's autobiography *For My Legionaries* or hagiographic works like Ion Banea's *Căpitanul*, so far there are no other attempts at a comprehensive portrayal of the leader of the third biggest fascist movement in interwar Europe. This is why Jens Oliver Schmitt's biography *Căpitan Codreanu – Aufstieg und Fall des rumänischen Faschistenführers* [Captain Codreanu – Rise and Fall of the Romanian fascist leader] is a novelty on a variety of grounds. Schmitt, professor of South-East European History at Vienna University, seeks to provide a meticulous account of Codreanu's political, ideological, and private life, drawing on a variety of source documents from Romanian archives, contemporary writings and theoretical works on comparative fascism. Crucially, too, the author attempts to place Codreanu's life in the broader political context of the interwar period. The biography spans the period beginning with Codreanu's birth in Huşi in 1899 and ending with his violent death in 1938. It is divided into 48 short chapters which are grouped thematically, a chronological table, and an index of names.

While Schmitt's volume is at first glance a comprehensive narrative of Codreanu's political life, its real strength lies in its examination of how Codreanu's closest allies shaped his ideology and leadership. Schmitt focuses on Codreanu's immediate circle of friends and family, aspects of his life which until now have been neglected, yet which Schmitt argues are significant for an understanding of his political career. There is much to support this assumption, as nationalist narratives were intrinsically tied to the Codreanu family's self-image. In 1902, Codreanu's father, Ion, a German teacher from Bukovina, changed his family name from the Polish Zelinski to the Romanian-sounding Zelea. "Codreanu" referred to the Romanian broad-leafed forest (*codru*), an element of the national imaginary. By making the national myths part of his family's identity, Codreanu's father expressed his devotion to the Romanian nation, and this was to shape his son's political convictions. (It is hardly surprising that the family's genealogy later became the subject of anti-Legionary propaganda, which claimed that the Codreanus were of Slavic ancestry). According to Schmitt, even Codreanu's military ideals, which were to shape the organizational structure of the Legionary Movement, stemmed from his father and, to a lesser extent, from his

education at the Mănăstirea Dealu military school. As for Codreanu's allies, the author claims that historians have tended to overstate the impact of Bucharest-based intellectuals such as Mircea Eliade or Emil Cioran on Codreanu and his movement. Instead, Schmitt directs his reader's attention to members of the aristocracy, such as Prince Nicholas of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen and members of the Cantacuzène family, such as Gheorghe (Zizi) Cantacuzino Grănicerul, the leader of the Legionary party All for the Fatherland [*Totul pentru Țară*]. Their connections to the royal house were to become Codreanu's life insurance after 1933. At the same time, Schmitt manages to debunk many of the more lurid stories which emerged concerning Codreanu by noting the lack of evidence.

The middle chapters offer many insights into Codreanu's personality and beliefs. Schmitt depicts the founder of the Legionary Movement as a disciplined mystic who regularly withdrew to a hermitage in the Rarău mountains, as a leader who emphasized silence over the loquacity of the political establishment, and as a person who preferred pictures over words. This was indeed a novelty in Romanian politics which stood in sharp contrast to how the satirist Ion Luca Caragiale depicted Romanian archetypical characters. For Codreanu, the promotion of moral rigorousness as a Legionary virtue went hand in hand with the sanctification of violence. He raved about medieval knights and placed more emphasis on chivalric honor than the code of law. These findings are supported by recent research on Codreanu's charismatic leadership and his and the Legionaries' religious activism. Schmitt argues that Codreanu's charisma was not simply a product of his own ostentatiousness, but rather was also sustained by his devotees, who occasionally regarded Codreanu as a demigod or reincarnation of the Archangel Michael. Likewise, Codreanu's own Christian Orthodox faith was not merely metaphoric or instrumental, but rather constituted a promise of transcendental salvation to the Romanian people. However, his messianism and religious mysticism came increasingly into conflict with his role as a fascist leader. Codreanu's inability to bring these contrasting identities in line resulted in an irresolute leadership and led to the movement's collapse in 1938. Correspondingly, Codreanu failed to arbitrate between the different factions which emerged in the 1930s within his organization. Schmitt refers to a "moderate" royalist faction represented by intellectuals like Nae Ionescu on the one hand and a social-revolutionary faction represented by various violent-prone groups and the Legionary Worker Corps on the other. By shedding light on the role workers played within the Legionary movement, Schmitt applies

findings from recent studies on this group, which until now has only rarely been made the subject of historical inquiries.

Schmitt's biography provides new insights into a person who has come to be regarded as one of the most notorious and charismatic fascist leaders in interwar Europe. One strength of the book is that it explores the life of the Legionary leader in settings and from perspectives often overlooked by scholars of fascism. Moreover, it is stimulating to see emphasis placed on the persons and the networks whose impact on Codreanu have been overlooked in the earlier secondary literature. For those less familiar with politics and personae from interwar Romania, the volume is at times less accessible. Some chapters introduce numerous politicians, parties, and places and are so dense that readers may lose track. A slight tendency occasionally to depart from Codreanu's development in order to incorporate broader historical events notwithstanding, Schmitt's biography is balanced and well-written, and it presents enough strong arguments to make it worth a read for any scholar of comparative fascism or East European or Romanian history. Overall, *Căpitan Codreanu* can be regarded as the first authoritative account of the life of the Romanian fascist leader, an account which has been long overdue.

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Demokrácia negyvenötben [Democracy in 1945]. By Éva Standeisky. Budapest: Napvilág, 2015. 247 pp.

Éva Standeisky has written an unusual account of circa two crucial years in Hungarian history. Unlike most authors who have dealt with the delicate issue of immediate post-World War II Hungary and its Sovietization, Standeisky does not start from or devote much space to politics, parties, or the intricacies of diplomacy. Nor is the book focused on the rapid social changes that swept through the defeated country. Similarly, the horrors of war and the abusive Soviet occupation only linger in the background. Instead of dwelling on these already familiar aspects of the period, Standeisky attempts to further a nuanced understanding of the elusive concept of democracy in a fluid historical context, and she studies how this elusive concept impacted the trajectory of the country.

These choices do not make the book less politically charged. Connecting 1945 to the topic of democracy is a political statement in today's Hungary, in which the country's so-called Basic Law made "constitutional" one specific understanding of national history by declaring that the country's sovereignty was lost on March 19, 1944 and the subsequent years did not constitute part of "authentic" national history. Neither is Standeisky deterred by such legal "niceties," nor is she willing to swim with the current of the recent wave of research eager to uncover dictatorial tendencies in all areas starting as early as 1944. Instead, she boldly attempts to reveal people's agency, a crucial prerequisite of functioning democracy. While a single academic definition of democracy would be difficult to arrive at (the book provides ample illustration of this through the example of intellectual discussions in 1945), Standeisky argues that after the collapse of the old regime and with the slow crystallization of the new, a space for individual agency appeared (*köz* in the original). Standeisky defines this concept not simply as a social sphere in which people could act and interact, but rather as a view of society beyond its individualist understanding, a view which creates the opportunity but also the moral obligation for everyone to act in the defense of the common good and public interests. In 1945, due to the collapse of the state, she argues, people not only had a chance to engage with the public, this engagement was a necessary precondition of social reconstruction.

In the course of these attempts, democracy was the main guiding principle for most people, understood as a clean break with the undemocratic past (and the cornerstone of reconstruction). But, as Standeisky shows, democracy was as elusive and contested seven decades ago as it is today. One of the most

important disagreements unfolded between an egalitarian understanding of the concept (democracy as a system that strives for the greatest possible equality between people in material terms) and an interpretation of democracy as the guarantor of individual liberties (a system that tries to defend individual freedom from the intrusion of others and the state). It was this contestation that enabled the Communist party to divide and weaken its opponents, because the egalitarian interpretation was more popular than the individualistic (which was chiefly represented by intellectuals), and this enabled the Communists to curtail individual liberties.

Intellectuals and ordinary people are both in the focus. However, given the huge difference from the perspective of the paper trails they left, it is hardly surprising that the former's presence is more prominent. Standeisky does not provide an all-encompassing narrative. Rather, she uses meaningful episodes to illustrate her point: democracy was contested, often elusive, but a powerful idea that defined Hungary for a short period when it was equally important for politicians, intellectuals, and ordinary people. Thus, the book includes chapters on a lecture series at the Budapest Pázmány Péter University that provided a platform for politicians and intellectuals to discuss democracy. The views expressed ranged from a communitarian/egalitarian perspective (Péter Veres from the National Peasant Party) to the idea that democracy is a form of government based on consensus building to provide freedom for individuals (professor of law Gyula Moór). In another chapter, Standeisky examines the views of intellectuals concerning the moral foundations of democracy. She shows how sober and generally pessimistic the evaluations by contemporaries tended to be who felt that Hungarian society neither had the necessary democratic experience nor had properly come to terms with its own responsibility for the tragedy that had befallen the country in 1944. These themes recur in a later chapter that presents the views of Gyula Szekfű (of whom Standeisky has an unusually positive opinion) and Imre Kovács from 1945–47.

Standeisky connects her discussion of democracy and morals with politics, demonstrating how instrumental the debate about democracy and the lack of democratic experience was to the success of the Communists. In this context, they were able to "hijack" the debate and position themselves close to the center. Another chapter is devoted to *Világ* (1946–47), a short-lived journal edited by Lajos Kassák and published by the Hungarian Council of Artists, which was the home of Western artistic Modernism in a country rapidly sliding towards dictatorship. Finally, a sadly all too brief chapter is dedicated to a local emanation

of the "public," the so-called Republic of Dévaványa, a spontaneous popular attempt that exemplifies how local society could be reconfigured in the absence of the state and would be dominated by a strong figure, but also how the new state gradually compelled these local attempts to submit to its will.

The framework connecting these disparate examples is the concept of the public and democracy as an idea embraced by all of the actors permitted to participate in public life. It is certainly a promising approach, although the book remains a somewhat traditional work in the history of ideas. This lack of methodological innovation becomes especially visible in the case of the analyses of debates on democracy, as Standeisky does not use any of the more recent analytical concepts, such as populism or communitarianism, which would have meaningfully complemented her take on the dichotomous interpretation of democracy. Her argument that brief periods like 1945–47 can offer new insights into prior and subsequent periods is an appealing one, but it remains to be more fully explored in further case studies on ordinary people. Nonetheless, Standeisky largely succeeds in presenting a refreshing perspective on a short period that is often too easily lost amidst the large-scale processes of Sovietization. She thereby aptly demonstrates that emphasis on the anti-democratic politics of the Communists from late 1945 onwards should not necessarily lead to a general condemnation of 1945 or its erasure from the history of democratic traditions.

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A magyar irodalomtudomány szovjetizálása: A szocialista realista kritika és intézményei, 1945–1953 [The Sovietization of Hungarian literary studies: Socialist realist criticism and its institutions, 1945–1953]. By Tamás Scheibner. Budapest: Ráció, 2014. 314 pp.

Tamás Scheibner's book does not seek to map the ways in which literature functions on the basis of literary historical and aesthetic contexts which focus on the oeuvres of individual authors, nor does Scheibner seek to understand how the aesthetics of Socialist Realism functioned on the basis of poetical analyses of individual works. He works from the presumption that in the given era, critical judgement was held captive by individual institutions which were dominated by politics, not literature. He approaches the subject first and foremost from the perspective of interrelationships in cultural history, thus adopting the approach of the current international (primarily Russian and Anglo-Saxon) theoretical literature. Following in the path of Evgeny Dobrenko and Katherina Clark, Scheibner writes about the discourse of Socialist Realism, which as a complex communicational system contains the critical language with which the single accurate narrative concerning external "reality" can be produced. As an aesthetic ideology, Socialist Realism constitutes an unusually closed system, and the symbolic universe which reigns within it determines the single language with which the ideological problems of the era can be discussed and examined and the political and cultural strivings can be expressed. Furthermore, the political, linguistic, and power technique of Socialist Realism was not so much the distinctive property of the people who were actually involved in the practice of literature (in other words, not an internal requirement) as it was a technique of the representatives of political power. In Hungary, József Révai played this role, even as György Lukács assumed a similar role in the field of theory.

Before diving into the substance of the work, it is worth offering some brief discussion of the term Sovietization, which figures in the title of the book. Drawing first and foremost on the works of American scholars (though also taking into consideration the views of some Hungarian authors), Scheibner comes to the conclusion that the notion of Sovietization can only be used in a limited sense. His stance is nuanced, since he does not treat Sovietization as a practice that was implemented on the basis of carefully developed plans, but rather as a technique of domination that evolved and was implemented gradually. The linguistic and methodological nuances of his inquiry notwithstanding, he nonetheless dates the beginning of Sovietization to 1945, and in my assessment

he finds himself on "thin ice" in this because he bases his conceptualization on the views of political historians. By this, I only mean to suggest that the scholarship on the era is hardly sufficiently detailed or nuanced to allow us to venture holistic views concerning the entire country on the basis of political decisions, particularly when it comes to social sub-systems.

Given his conceptualization, Scheibner logically begins by examining the institutional steps that were taken by the Hungarian communists in order to seize control of literature. One of the most important ideas took root in Szeged before the liberation of the country from the occupying German forces. Essentially, the idea was that—regardless of any and all financial or infrastructural problems that might arise—the party should have its own printing press, which would be called Szikra (Spark). Scheibner uses all of the tools in the toolbox of the cultural historian to provide a detailed reconstruction of the tasks that the leadership of the printing press would have to address concerning material culture, organization, circulation, and delivery. He then examines the publication politics of the Szikra printing press and comes to the conclusion that – in contrast to the ideologically motivated success stories told in the Kádár era and in spite of the fact that at its launch in the wake of the war it enjoyed a tremendous advantage – it proved a failure. As the author shows, this was due, above all, to logistical blunders and mistakes in publication policy.

The second chapter of the first part of the book examines the cultural and diplomatic background of the establishment of the Hungarian–Soviet Cultural Society, which was created in order to win the sympathies of the urban middle class or at least to temper some of the hostility to the Soviet Union. The Society was emphatically not political in nature. Its primary purpose was to spread knowledge of the culture, sciences, language, and value system of the Soviet Union among the Hungarian citizenry. In the actual activities in which it engaged, however, the Society made clear that the communist elite not only had no desire to nurture any notion of cultural continuity with non-communist and partly even communist left wing initiatives of the inter-war years, it actually sought to dismiss them as a kind of heterodoxy or misunderstanding— separate paths to be scorned. At the creation of a new literary canon and the new intellectual elite, neither political commitment nor artistic calling was the primary question. What mattered, rather, was whether or not the person in question would be able to accommodate and fit into the frameworks of the new system, and also whether or not, with his or her name and reputation, the party might be able to gain some legitimacy.

One of the key questions of the literature of the era concerns what Scheibner—drawing on György Lukács—refers to as the "unity" of Hungarian literature, a symbolic goal that was intertwined with the fashioning of a new literary canon. In my assessment, this question makes vividly clear the difficulty of drawing boundaries between historical eras. It would be problematic and perhaps impossible to understand the emergence and crafting of this canon if one were to take into consideration only trends and events after 1945. Scheibner continuously alludes to the activities of Lukács before the war and outside the borders of Hungary, and indeed he situates all this in the context of the debates concerning Soviet literature and cultural politics. In my view, however, it still would have been worthwhile to have offered a more detailed analysis and discussion of the historical context and nature of Lukács's vision of canon formation. After all, so-called workers' literature or the literature of the working class included a significant body of theoretical literature even in the interwar period, which offered critical assessments of potential aesthetic and ethical dilemmas.

Scheibner devotes considerable attention to the so-called Lukács debate (1949–51). He presents the context in which the debate took place, both from the global and the domestic perspectives, and then offers a detailed analysis of the individual standpoints. These events were discursive in nature, much as the political and sociological positions of the individual participants and their places in the party hierarchy played a role in the debate. From this perspective, even Lukács, who is treated as an institution, was not an exception. At the same time, one might well ask, if there was in fact a fixed plan to dismiss or marginalize him (and there may well not have been any such plan), then why the need for a debate at all? In my assessment, which concurs with that of the author, the debate was needed because (though we often forget, in our efforts to understanding the communist concept of politics, that the exercise of power was centered on text and interpretation) the Lukács debate had a function: the introduction of the Socialist Realist discursive style and the establishment of this style as a matter of routine. If we put the whole affair in a larger context and we string the debates together to form a kind of chain that seems reasonable, then—in the shadow of the Rajk trial—we have the Lukács debate (1949–51), the big architects' debate (1951), and the debate concerning *Felelet* [Answer] (1952), the first two volumes of a novel by writer Tibor Déry which was initially intended to be a trilogy. As Scheibner argues, on the one hand, these de-bates concerned the accurate interpretation and the introduction of Socialist Realism, while on the other, they

also signified a kind of changing of the guard within the party – the communist intelligentsia that was educated in the professional sense was being pushed out of the party.

In the last two chapters of the book, Scheibner logically takes his analysis further in this direction: the First Hungarian Writers' Congress, which was held in 1951, was essentially the last phase of the process described above. It was a ritual of acceptance, in that Hungarian literature was significantly reorganized and was given a new central forum in the form of *Irodalmi Újság* [Literary News] and, in the person of Béla Illés, an unusual past master. The long-term goal of all of this was the creation of a new literary and critical language: what was the role of Soviet literature and sentimental evocativeness, and how should the attitudes of writers and readers be transformed? The final chapter before the conclusion deals with the transformations in the structure of the Hungarian Society of Literary History and the content of its journal *Irodalomtörténet* [Literary History]. This was a move that took place on the level of politics of the profession, and the essential question was how to introduce the aesthetic ideology of Socialist Realism (which in theory was in use) and Marxism into a traditionally Humanist branch of the sciences and how to assure that work would begin and progress in a manner that was acceptable from a political point of view.

In Hungary, after the change of regimes, very little emphasis was placed on the importance of critical self-examination in the individual branches of the sciences, in spite of the fact that there is a great deal in the recent history of the disciplines of philosophy, history, literary history, and of course several other branches of the sciences that would merit rigorous examination. Scheibner's book is an example of the new modes of thought of a new generation, and if one takes into consideration, alongside this book, the work of scholars like Gábor Rieder, Dávid Szolláth, Gábor Reichert, Ádám Ignácz, and András Ránki, it seems this new generation has a marked interest in (and is making a demand for) a critical reassessment and rethinking of the era in question. Scheibner's book is based on a well-developed methodology, a serious study of sources, and rich international scholarly references. It is to be hoped that his scholarly efforts will be continued – by himself and many others.

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The Emergence of Historical Forensic Expertise: Clio Takes the Stand. By Vladimir Petrovic. New York–London, Routledge, 2017. 258 pp.

Over the past century, the number of legal proceedings in which historians have been called on to provide expertise has grown significantly. Depending on the nature of the case, judges and representatives of parties have sought answers to all kinds of questions, such as the history of a particular community and its presence in a geographical space, the ideas that have driven the adoption of legal documents, and the functioning of various institutions which were involved in the oppression or extermination of a particular ethnic, national, racial, or religious group. Practitioners needed answers concerning history and, in particular, political and social history. Historical forensic expertise has thus been called on to contribute in legal settings, and it has done so, with varying levels of success. In this book, Vladimir Petrovic traces the development of this inclusion of historical expertise in a setting to which it had previously largely been foreign: the courtroom.

The book begins with a question: is there a role for the historian in court? The issue of historians participating in proceedings has been controversial and has caused heated debates, even if, by now, it is hardly a practice without precedent. Scholars strongly disagree with one another, and they tend to treat the question as a zero-sum game. For some in the field of historical research, historians should not participate in courtroom proceedings at all, while for others, the contributions of historians are both valuable and necessary to the desired outcome, i.e. a fair legal decision. For the former, law and history are simply fundamentally incompatible methodologically, epistemologically, and in purpose, while for the latter, they are based on similar principles and can work together. After all, historians and judges do, fundamentally, establish truth based on evidence (p.6). Disagreements aside, history is inevitably brought into the courtroom, in criminal and civil cases, in numerous jurisdictions, when the courts are called upon to decide on claims that simply cannot be addressed without reference to history in one way or another.

To help address this problem of the role of the historian in the courtroom, Petrovic turns to the past, investigating "history on trial," "history of trial," and "history in trial" (p.4). These three themes run through the book, and Petrovic presents the intriguing aspects of each to the reader. By approaching the subject through these themes, he manages to map successfully the different ways in which history and law have interacted. When he began his research,

Petrovic found that, somewhat ironically, the story of historical expert witnesses was largely obscure, even though some of the cases in which historians were involved were exceptional and impacted the societies involved strongly. In many ways, some of these legal proceedings influenced how events from the past are remembered and talked about. In Petrovic's view, a monographic overview of the evolution of historical expert witnessing was needed to help resolve some of the lingering questions on the roles of historians in the courtroom. Petrovic studied sources on several key cases in countries such as France, the United States, Germany, and Israel. Many of the cases aimed to provide a measure of justice for some of the worst crimes of the twentieth century, such as the murder of Jews in Europe and the oppression and segregation of black Americans. The various types of proceedings were conducted in both civil law and common law jurisdictions, which differ considerably from the perspective of how proceedings are conducted. Insights presented in this book on cases as iconic as Brown v. Board of Education (decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954) or the Eichmann and Auschwitz trials in Israel and Germany in the early 1960s greatly enrich the reader's understanding of legal history.

The book is structured largely chronologically, analyzing the shifting relationships between history and law in six chapters organized in three parts: one focusing on the preconditions for the emergence of historical forensics, the second part on experiments with this expertise in court, and the third on institutionalizing the practice. These three phases began to become significant in legal practice in the late nineteenth century, and they are not neatly separated. The process of including historical expertize in courtroom proceedings was gradual and multifaceted. In the chapters, important questions concerning the purpose of legal proceedings are raised, especially in criminal cases involving individuals charged with genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. Do these trials have only the narrow purpose of establishing the guilt or innocence of an individual, or do they have a broader social function, such as to inform, educate, and even reconcile populations? These questions are still passionately debated in academia and in legal and policy circles, especially those working in the field of transitional justice.

Given this, some discussion of the experiences of the international, hybrid, and domestic tribunals that have conducted criminal trials would have greatly enriched Petrovic's inquiry. Ever since professor James Gow of King's College in London provided testimony at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in its first ever trial (that of Dusko Tadic), historical expertise

has been both heavily relied on in investigations and included as expert testimony. Scholars like Robert Donia have appeared in the courtroom in The Hague dozens of times over the course of the past two decades, and this emerging tradition of relying on experts in the courtroom, which present the conclusions of historical research, continues to the present day at the International Criminal Court. Richard Ashby Wilson's 2011 book *Writing History in International Criminal Trials* was important in bringing to light the relationship between history and law in international trials, and Petrovic's contribution is important in that it expands on this broad theme. These trials, after all, also produce an incredible amount of records which are themselves subjects of historical inquiry.

Petrovic succeeds in his efforts to depict the evolution of the use of historical forensic expertise in legal proceedings over the course of the past century. The book is incredibly rich in detail, describing individuals who took part in the inclusion of historical expertise in legal proceedings and the struggles they faced on this path. This in-depth study is, by all means, a significant contribution to scholarship. It establishes a foundation for even better-informed discussions on the still controversial questions: do historians "belong" in the courtroom, and when their expertise is used, how can this practice be improved? Historians are now regular participants in proceedings in the courtroom, and they are likely to remain there. Therefore, the task is now to improve their contributions, and this process of improvement begins with an increasingly subtle understanding of past experiences, the experiences so eloquently presented by Petrovic. Beyond this vital purpose, the book discusses the crucial question of the social role of historians, which in these turbulent times seems even more pertinent.

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