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The 1672 Kuruc Uprising: A National or Religious Revolt?¹

Georg B. Michels

In the first days of September 1672, a rebel army of ca. three thousand soldiers crossed the Tisza River into the Habsburg province of Upper Hungary (*Hungaria superior*) from Turkish-held territory. This invasion set off a chain reaction. The noble assemblies of Upper Hungary's thirteen counties welcomed the invading army and declared a "general insurrection" (*insurrectio generalis*) of their defence forces (*banderia*). Many hundreds of nobles and thousands of peasants were mobilized, and within less than two weeks rebel forces grew to 15,000, according to some estimates even to 20,000 or 25,000.² Town magistrates, including the wealthy German patricians of Eperjes and Bártfa, also welcomed the invasion, sent large sums of money, and opened their gates to rebel detachments. In the countryside, rebel militias burned the estates of nobles who were known to be supporters of the Habsburg regime, and ransacked and plundered Catholic churches.

On September 14, the Habsburg army under the commander-in-chief of Upper Hungary, General Paris von Spankau, was defeated near Kassa. By the end of September, only two heavily fortified towns (Kassa, Lőcse) and several fortresses remained in the hands of the Habsburg authorities.³ Supporters of the Habsburg regime, including tax collectors, high-ranking officials, Catholic nobles, and Catholic clergy, fled into these fortresses or across the border to Poland. The Viennese court was unable to regain the upper hand until two large armies invaded from the west and brutally reasserted Habsburg power more than six weeks later.⁴

Historiography and Sources

This revolt, commonly known as the Kuruc Uprising (*felkelés*), has received surprisingly little attention from Hungarian scholars.⁵ The eminent historian

Gyula Pauler⁶ described the major events of the revolt in a 1869 essay but only László Benczédi, who wrote more than one hundred years later, has given it serious study.⁷ Benczédi argued that the 1672 revolt deserves scholarly attention because unlike earlier anti-Habsburg revolts, it did not primarily serve the interests of the nobility but instead engaged large numbers of peasants, townsmen, and soldiers. As Benczédi stated, “for decades there had not been an example... of such a spontaneous movement of the popular masses (*néptömegek*).”⁸ To note the popular character of the revolt, Benczédi called the rebels *kurucok*, a designation that is not found in contemporary sources.⁹ He apparently used this designation to invoke the image of peasant warriors, the so-called *cruciati*, *cruciferi* or *Kreuzritter*, who defended the Hungarian Kingdom against the Turkish army in the early sixteenth century.¹⁰

Benczédi argued convincingly that the revolt must be attributed to the aftermath of the so-called Wesselényi Fronde. In 1670, this magnate conspiracy with its epicentre in Upper Hungary, nearly led to a general uprising of the nobility under the leadership of the magnate Ferenc I. Rákóczi. However, Rákóczi lost his nerve at the last minute and betrayed the plot to the Habsburg authorities. As a result, the Habsburg army occupied Upper Hungary and imposed harsh punitive measures. Several hundred Hungarian nobles faced the confiscation of their estates, incarceration, and trial by an “extraordinary commission” which was authorized to impose the death sentence for treason. To escape certain ruin, if not death, at least one hundred nobles fled to neighbouring Transylvania. Meanwhile taxes for peasants and townsmen were increased tenfold, Habsburg troops were billeted in villages and towns, and thousands of Hungarian soldiers guarding the border fortresses with Turkey were declared security risks and summarily demobilized.¹¹

Benczédi argued further that the revolt was set off by “a national ideology” of resistance formulated by Hungarian noble exiles in Transylvania. Ordinary Hungarians, Benczédi maintained, were mobilized by the nobility’s rhetoric of “national togetherness” (*nemzeti összetartozás*) that united top, medium, and bottom layers of Hungarian society. In particular, Benczédi pointed to demobilized soldiers, expelled clergy, and oppressed townsmen as downward transmitters of national ideas. These “medium strata” (*középrétegek*) were effective intermediaries because they shared peasants’ socio-economic grievances, in particular, the introduction of new taxes and the billeting of troops.¹²

One weakness of Benczédi’s interpretation lies in its analytical focus on the Hungarian nobility’s proclamations, speeches, and letters. These sources did indeed create the impression of a Hungarian national movement (*nemzeti mozgalom*) under noble leadership.¹³ But what about sources not

penned by the revolt's noble leaders? Did grassroots sources such as petitions by soldiers and peasants, or letters by clergymen survive the turmoil of the revolt? And if so, what picture do they paint?¹⁴

Secondly, Benczédi almost entirely neglects religious factors. He is very much aware that the thirteen counties involved in the revolt were almost exclusively populated by Lutherans and Calvinists. In fact, he points out that the brutal military occupation of Upper Hungary resulted in violent Counter-Reformation campaigns including the systematic expulsion of Protestant clergy and the imposition of Catholic priests and missionaries.¹⁵ Benczédi acknowledged that many ordinary people were unhappy about the attack on their religion but considered such popular sentiments to be secondary. In his opinion, religion was nothing but “a cloak (*köntös*)... behind which deeper contradictions were in conflict.”¹⁶

A third weakness of Benczédi's interpretation is his glossing over the role of ethnicity. It is important to note that Upper Hungary had large Slavic- and German-speaking populations, especially in the northern counties of Sáros and Szepes.¹⁷ To what extent did non-Hungarians participate in the Kuruc Revolt? Were they mobilized by the Hungarian nobility's national slogans? And if so, how do we need to reassess the meaning of “nationalism” in this context?

To approach the Kuruc Revolt from a different perspective, I have studied two investigations conducted by the Habsburg authorities in its aftermath.¹⁸ The first investigation focused on the Lutheran counties of Szepes and Sáros and resulted in more than two hundred testimonies from eye-witnesses, participants, and victims. Among those interrogated were nobles, townsmen, Catholic and Lutheran clergymen, as well as peasants. At least a third of those interrogated were not native Hungarian speakers, but speakers of German and West-Slavic.¹⁹ The second investigation targeted the Calvinist counties of Zemplén, Abaúj, and Ung. More than one hundred testimonies were gathered, primarily from Hungarian-speaking nobles and townsmen.²⁰

These as yet unstudied testimonies present the perspectives of men and women who lived through the 1672 revolt, and reveal first-hand experiences of the arrival of the rebel army and the concomitant collapse of Habsburg power. In studying these testimonies, we must, of course, consider the bias of the Habsburg officials who gathered them as well as the motivations of those who testified. Rebel supporters were clearly under considerable pressure to depict the revolt in a negative light; in fact, they risked arrest if they expressed their sympathies too openly. Rebel victims, of whom there were many, received license to relate their suffering at great length. The testimonies thus often contain grim experiences not found in the idealistic letters and

optimistic proclamations of the revolt's noble leaders. But at the same time, the testimonies transport the historian from the thoughts and hopes of the noble elite to the actual events of the revolt: we see nobles and non-nobles in action, hear their voices, and observe the consequences of their behaviour. Until petitions and other grassroots sources are discovered in the archives, these Habsburg investigations provide the only means for accessing the popular and local dimensions of the revolt.²¹ In this paper, I will analyze these testimonies to assess the role played by national slogans as well as the overall importance of "national consciousness" in defining the Kuruc Revolt. I will conclude with some thoughts on directions for further research.

The Noble Elite

Proclamations and letters written by nobles uniformly called on "good Hungarians" (*jó magyarság*) to fight against everything "un-Hungarian" (*magyartalan*) and alien (*idegen*) and rise against "the ugly and base nation" (*csúnya, rút nemzetség*) of the Germans in self-defence. A typical passage from a proclamation reads as follows: "Understand, true Hungarians, make yourselves believe that the Germans hate the whole Hungarian nation...The Germans used every means they can get hold of, unheard-of new kinds of taxes to put the poor Hungarian nation's body and soul on the butcher's block and cut it into pieces.... If, therefore, there is any Hungarian sensitivity, or any drop of Hungarian blood in you, my beloved nation, wake up, and love your brethren."²²

During the revolt, nobles spoke out on numerous occasions against the Habsburg dynasty and the German occupation. They called for the overthrow of Emperor Leopold²³ and his replacement by "some future prince" because Leopold's arbitrary measures had broken the Hungarian Constitution and violated Hungary's "ancient freedom" (*antiqua libertas*).²⁴ They called for taking up arms to rescue the "fatherland's freedom" (*libertas patriae*) from the grip of "the cruel Nero" in Vienna.²⁵ Even the Turkish emperor was perceived as better than the Viennese tyrant. "If you want to know who will be your future king, it will be the emperor of the Turks," the noble Miklós Szirmay responded to the anxious burghers of Késmárk who were concerned about the future of their town.²⁶ And Gábor Lónyay, one of the most powerful lords of the Upper Tisza region, stated that "he would prefer the Turk to rule over him to the Germans who offend us in body and soul."²⁷

To prove their "Hungarianness" (*magyarság*) or "Hungarian being" (*Hungarus esse*), nobles often resorted to action against fellow nobles who

were — or appeared to be — loyal to the Habsburg dynasty.²⁸ This is illustrated by the behaviour of György Gyurikovics, a high-ranking noble from Zemplén County, who held a deep-seated hatred for Hungarian officials serving in the Zipser Kammer, the nerve-center of Habsburg administration in Upper Hungary.²⁹ Gyurikovics gathered troops for the systematic destruction of these officials' estates. His victims included András Hartyány who held the high rank of councillor in the Zipser Kammer.³⁰ When asked to explain his hatred of Hartyány, Gyurikovics responded: “[Hartyány] is a dog... even though he is a Hungarian, he denies being a Hungarian (*cum esset Ungarus, se Ungarum esse negaverit*) and makes alliances with the German dogs and troublemakers; he is in collusion with the agents of the German pestilence and the other perfidious Hungarians....”³¹

Many Hungarian nobles shared Hartyány's fate. The magnate István Csáky, for example, fled to Szepes Castle while rebel troops attacked his estates, burning and looting. István Palocsay-Horváth, a wealthy landowner in Sáros County, faced a similar plight and fled to Poland. Both Palocsay-Horváth and Csáky, who had estates in other counties as well, weathered the storm without economic ruin, but smaller landowners risked complete devastation.³² Ezechiel Vas, a Szepes county noble, related the following: “[They] destroyed [my] entire estate, looted one hundred and fifty beehives, seized ten centners of iron, took my three horses with all my weapons and everything else, in a word everything.”³³ And Miklós Korponay's entire properties (*bona universa*) and manor house were destroyed because, as he claimed, “I did not join the rebels.”³⁴

If we look at the testimonies as a whole, we can see consistent evidence that such acts of violence created a climate of fear among nobles and non-nobles alike that facilitated military recruitment. Many witnesses described how noble commanders and heavily armed soldiers descended on towns and villages to assess manpower and weaponry. All adult males of noble origin as well as townsmen had to take an oath of loyalty to the Hungarian Kingdom (*juramentum ad fidelitatem Regni*) and publicly denounce the Habsburg Emperor as a usurper. Anyone who refused was threatened with destruction of livelihood, and death by decapitation or impalement.³⁵ Peasants were also threatened with death, and several thousands fled their villages to escape conscription into the rebel army.³⁶

Considering the importance of threats, violence, and top-down manipulation in the name of Hungarian independence, is it still possible to argue that national slogans generated mass support in Upper Hungary? Yes, but not from all segments of the population. The three hundred testimonies I have studied provide ample evidence of enthusiastic participation, but pri-

marily from three specific groups: Protestant nobles; Calvinist soldiers; and Protestant clergymen, teachers, and students.³⁷

Protestant nobles often justified their participation in the revolt in religious terms. For example, Matthias Szuhay, the scion of a prominent Abaúj family and a Calvinist, fervently believed that going to war against the Habsburg army was sanctioned by God and that every victory over the enemy was the work of God (*est opus Dei*).³⁸ Szuhay loathed Emperor Leopold for attacking the Calvinist faith and called him “a man of the wooden cross” (*lignei Dei hominem*).³⁹ Gábor Dobay, a well-to-do landowner and important office holder in Sáros County, gave religious sermons to his peasants and soldiers in which he promised that God would not abandon them while they were fighting for such a just cause. Dobay, a Lutheran, gained some notoriety among contemporaries by calling on his soldiers and peasants to castrate all Jesuits.⁴⁰ Finally, László Kubinyi, a Calvinist noble from Zemplén County, described the revolt as a campaign against the Catholic “whore’s religion” (*kurva vallás*). Kubinyi made jokes about the pope and accused him of using hundreds of monks as his personal harem.⁴¹

Soldiers, Students and Pastors

The rebel army was also composed of thousands of soldiers whom the Habsburg authorities had recently expelled from the military defence line against the Turks.⁴² Following Benczédi’s argument about the importance of nationalist motivations, it is possible to imagine that these soldiers felt aggrieved as Hungarians because they were often replaced by German, Italian, and Croat soldiers.⁴³ However, they did not speak about their removal from their posts in nationalist terms.⁴⁴ They complained primarily about their catastrophic loss of income and the resulting plight of their families. These unemployed soldiers were desperate for new sources of income, had been roaming as bandits in the Ottoman-Habsburg borderlands, and happily enlisted when word spread that Hungarian exiles from Transylvania had large sums of money to hire them. The financial significance of these new professional opportunities is also indicated by later successful efforts of Habsburg loyalists such as Zsófia Báthori to bribe rebel soldiers into switching sides by offering higher pay.⁴⁵

While the economic motivations of rebel soldiers — as well as their opportunism — are indisputable, the core of the rebel army was made up of soldiers who were fervent Protestants and ready to die for their religion. They

had been dismissed from their posts during the months before the revolt's outbreak simply because they were Protestants and had refused to convert to the Catholic faith.⁴⁶ The Aulic War Council (*Hofkriegsrat*) in Vienna repeatedly ordered General Spankau and overzealous Hungarian bishops to stop such expulsions but there can be little doubt that they had continued to the very eve of the revolt's outbreak. Count Montecucolli, for example, who was General Spankau's direct superior, had openly advocated the notion that Protestant border guards could not be trusted and that they had to be systematically replaced by trustworthy Catholics. Some of the bravest and most experienced soldiers of the military defence line were thus pushed out not because they were Hungarians, but because they were Protestants.⁴⁷

Documents from the Vienna War Archive (*Kriegsarchiv*) further demonstrate that other Hungarian frontier soldiers had fled from their garrisons by their own volition after the seizure of Protestant churches and the expulsion of Protestant clergy. Among them were, for example, several hundred Calvinist soldiers from Ónod Fortress who had risen in revolt when their church was closed in January or early February 1672. Their resistance was not even broken by a large expeditionary force under the leadership of General Paris von Spankau, the commander of the Habsburg army in Upper Hungary. The determined Protestant soldiers fought their way through the encirclement, apparently foreseeing vicious punishments, and withdrew into Turkish territory across the Tisza River. Here they were joined in mid-July 1672 by other Protestant soldiers who had fled from the fortresses of Szendrő, Putnok, and Diósgyőr after the seizure of their churches. It is interesting to note that these soldiers were accompanied by their wives and children.⁴⁸

Fighting on the side of rebels, these mostly Calvinist soldiers demonstrated an astounding tenacity and zeal. As several of them put it in their surviving testimonies, they "had taken up arms for the Glory of God" to fight against the Devil (*eördögh*) and his minions; they "would rather die" on the battlefield than submit to Habsburg authority.⁴⁹ It appears that these soldiers were largely responsible for the repeatedly recorded, and still little studied, atrocities against Catholic laymen and clergy.⁵⁰ The most outrageous of these occurred in Ónod Fortress when the expelled Calvinist soldiers returned in early September and slaughtered the garrison town's entire Catholic population — a shocking spectacle that threw Upper Hungary's few remaining Habsburg officials (in Kassa) into absolute panic.⁵¹

The importance of religion as a mobilizing force is further demonstrated by the presence of Protestant clergymen, school teachers, and students

(*companones*) in the rebel army.⁵² Divinity students from the Calvinist college of Sárospatak, who had lived in Transylvania since the closure of their school in the summer of 1670, flocked to the rebel army in Turkish-held territory. Students from the Calvinist college of Kassa, who had been expelled in early 1672 and had been hiding in villages in southern Abaúj County, immediately joined rebel forces with great enthusiasm. These Calvinist students arrived carrying guns, some were dressed in turbans like Turkish janissaries.⁵³ As the rebel army advanced north, it was joined by students from other destroyed centers of Protestant learning such as the Lutheran colleges of Eperjes (officially closed in May 1671), Bártfa, and Kisszeben (both seized by military force in June and July 1672). These Protestant students, who were sometimes joined by their teachers, infused a radical religious dimension into the revolt: they fought with zealous and suicidal rage against Habsburg troops and died in disproportionately large numbers.⁵⁴ On September 20, for example, at least fifty students died in a pitched battle with the Habsburg garrison of Szatmár when rebel forces unsuccessfully tried to dislodge one of the last strongholds of Habsburg power in Upper Hungary.⁵⁵

Calvinist pastors, whom the Habsburg army had expelled from their congregations along the Tisza River in 1671, were among the first to join the revolt and played highly visible role in the rebel army. According to a report by General Spankau to the Vienna War Council dated September 5, that is, from the very first days of the revolt, “the Calvinist preachers (*Praedicanten*) on this side of the Tisza (Theyss) are actively taking back their churches with naked sabres....”⁵⁶ Others fought alongside the army rank-and-file and led soldiers into battle with sermons describing rebel troops as the vessels of God’s wrath. For example, a preacher who accompanied rebel detachments in southern Zemplén County proclaimed, “God, the Lord, is holding you in His mighty hand and he has chosen you to take revenge for the injustice done to Him. Watch carefully that you are not negligent in carrying out God’s will.”⁵⁷ Preachers such as the Calvinist Minister Adam Luczy celebrated the rebel army’s victories as God’s triumph over “the Catholics, who intended to chase out the [Calvinist] faith.”⁵⁸ Many of these ministers died in battle and a report by General Strassoldo, composed after the revolt had been routed, described a battlefield strewn with the corpses of such clerics. They were armed with swords and had apparently fought to the death after they had been encircled by Habsburg troops.⁵⁹

Germans and Slavs

It is important to note that Protestants supported the rebel army irrespective of their linguistic or ethnic affiliation. Among the enthusiastic participants were many Slavic and German speakers. For example, Slavic peasants in northern Sáros County took up arms and expelled their new Catholic parish priest, the Polish missionary Blasius Tomkovics.⁶⁰ In a similar case, the Lutheran peasants of Vyborna (Bierbronn), a market town located in the mountains to the north of Késmárk, took up arms after a rebel unit had expelled their Catholic priest. Led by the local Lutheran school master, they marched with flying banners and drums to take up positions along a strategic mountain pass and prevent its seizure by the Habsburg army.⁶¹

The peasants of Vyborna were inspired by the apocalyptic sermons of their pastor, Martin Kraska, who denounced Emperor Leopold as an unbeliever, called the Pope the Antichrist, and attacked Catholic worship as blasphemous.⁶² Other Slavic-speaking preachers had a similar impact on ordinary men and women. For example, Andrei Galli, the Slavic pastor of Kisszeben, welcomed the town's seizure by the rebel army as God's intervention on behalf of the Lutheran community. When the Habsburg army surrounded Kisszeben in late October, Galli led a crowd of townsmen armed only with stones to defend the town walls.⁶³

The Hungarian nobility's most important allies in the revolt were the German and Lutheran magistrates of at least twenty chartered towns including the royal free towns of Bártfa, Eperjes, Késmárk, and Kisszeben.⁶⁴ These magistrates had been in touch with Hungarian exiles in Transylvania for some time and offered hundreds of thousands of forint (*floreni*) — equivalent to millions of dollars in modern currency — to help fund the rebel army.⁶⁵ When rebel detachments finally arrived in Sáros and Szepes counties in late September 1672, one town after another opened its gates. This led not only to the surrender of Habsburg garrisons, but a systematic campaign against Catholicism. This campaign, in particular, targeted Hungarian nobles who — after becoming town residents with Habsburg support — had promoted the Catholic faith in these entirely Lutheran towns.⁶⁶

Conclusions

Thus, the story of the revolt that emerges from documentary records is much more complex than suggested by the letters and proclamations of the revolt's

leadership. First, the noble leaders of the revolt often relied on coercion and violence to effect mass mobilization. Many testimonies suggest that contemporaries, including peasants, were hesitant to join the revolt and had to be threatened with punishment or death before they determined to fight against the Habsburg army.⁶⁷ Thus, the view put forward by nobles of an overarching “national” alliance between the bottom and top layers of society, between serfs and landowners, for the defence of the fatherland was probably more a literary ideal than a social reality.

Second, the Hungarian nobles who initiated and organized the uprising drew their support principally from Protestants. In fact, ninety percent of all rebels were either Lutheran or Calvinist. Their most visible representatives included German patricians who bankrolled much of the uprising, Hungarian Calvinist pastors and students who fought in the rebel army, and Slavic Lutheran pastors who gave apocalyptic sermons. Thus, it was Protestantism that provided a sense of cohesiveness and identity to the rebels, not nationality or ethnic background.

Third, among the most enthusiastic defenders of the “Hungarian” cause were numerous Germans and Slavs. The multi-ethnic coalition that formed in opposition to the Habsburg court illustrates a serious limitation of Benczédi’s interpretation of the Kuruc Revolt. Clearly, slogans that glorified the “Hungarian nation” (*natio Hungarica*) did not yet have the ethnic content they would acquire in the nineteenth century when Hungarian and Slovak national movements gave new meanings to linguistic and ethnic differences. During the late seventeenth century, fighting for the “Hungarian” cause was not yet narrowly defined as a struggle for the national liberation of ethnic Hungarians.

The results of my research to date do not yet tell the full story of the revolt, but they do form a necessary corrective to the self-representations of the rebel elite. Viewed from the perspective of the upper echelons of society, the revolt against the Habsburg court may indeed have appeared to be a fight for Hungarian national liberation, that is, for the restoration of an independent Hungarian Kingdom. However, this political view was not necessarily shared by other segments of society. Much more needs to be learned about rank-and-file participants in the revolt, especially the thousands of soldiers and peasants without whom the rebel army would not have come into existence. Since relatively few soldiers and peasants testified in the Habsburg investigations, the evidence concerning their motivations remains fragmentary and inconclusive.

Finally, we must consider whether it is realistic to assume that ideas formulated by a small elite became significant for the rest of society given seventeenth-century means of communication. In particular, is it plausible that in pre-modern times the concept of nation, which is after all based on learned ideas, was embraced not only by the educated political elite but also by largely illiterate soldiers and peasants? Did the Hungarian elites use the printing press to disseminate their ideas? If so, how were these ideas transmitted to the largely illiterate popular audiences?⁶⁸ And how effective were these ideas in competition with the religious sermons and speeches that succeeded in capturing popular attention?

I think it might be useful to ask these same questions about the large-scale uprisings that followed the Kuruc Revolt, that is, the Imre Thököly and Ferenc II. Rákóczi revolts. Studies of these revolts have also emphasized the primary importance of a “national ideology” for mass mobilization while discounting the importance of religion.⁶⁹ Similar to the Kuruc Revolt, these uprisings had their epicentres in Protestant Upper Hungary and drew most of their supporters from Protestants. Was it merely coincidental that the overwhelming majority of those who rose against the Habsburg court under Thököly and Rákóczi were Protestant? If indeed, as Rákóczi himself claimed in his memoirs, ninety percent of his soldiers were Calvinists, shouldn’t we reconsider the role of religion as a motivating factor?⁷⁰ Given these similarities and continuities, the 1672 Kuruc Revolt assumes an even greater importance for understanding the anti-Habsburg revolts of the early modern period.

NOTES

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² László Benczédi, *Rendiség, abszolútizmus és centralizáció a XVII század végi Magyarországon (1664-1685)* (Budapest, 1980), 60, 154; Tihamér Vanyó, comp., *Relationes nuntiorum Apostolicorum Vindobonensium de Regno Hungariae 1666-1683* (Pannonhalma, 1935), 67. If we add militias operating independently of the rebel army — and there were many of these, especially in the northern mountain regions and along the Turkish border — we can easily double this number. In Szepes

County, for example, operations of the rebel army focused on the towns of Késmárk and Szepesváralja, while smaller detachments fanned out into the villages and market towns of the hinterlands.

³ The most important fortresses that did not fall to the insurgents were Szepesvár (Zipser-Haus, Scepusiensis arx) under magnate István Csáky, Regéc (Regéc) under magnate Ferenc I. Rákóczi, and Szatmár under a large Habsburg garrison. Heavy fighting occurred in the vicinity of these fortresses.

⁴ The best and most comprehensive narrative of these events is found in Gyula Pauler, "A bujdosók támadása 1672-ben," *Századok* 3, 1 (1869): 1-16, 85-97, 166-78, esp. 11-16. I have added my own emphases based on my research.

⁵ Slovak scholars also tend to gloss over the revolt as indicated by the brief references in Voitech Dangl, *Slovensko vo víre stavovských povstaní* (Bratislava, 1986), 142-45; Michal Suchý, *Dejiny Levoče* (Košice, 1974), 206-8; and Peter Kónya, *Prešov, Bardejov a Sabinov počas protireformácie a protihabsburských povstaní (1670-1711)* (Prešov, 2000), 49, 54, 59; idem, "Konfesijné ciele posledných protihabsburských povstaní," in *Obdobie protireformácie v dejinách slovenskej kultúry z hľadiska stredoeurópskeho kontextu*, ed. Ján Dorul'ia (Bratislava, 1998), 69-92. Suchý praises László Benczédi's work as path-breaking and calls on scholars to fill "the blank spaces" (*biele mesta*) in late seventeenth-century Slovak history, in "Ulohy habsburskej monarchie a protihabsburské povstania," *Historický časopis* 23, 1 (1975): 73-111, esp. 106-7.

⁶ Despite his interest in the revolt, Pauler expressed reservations about it; in particular, he spoke of the rebels' failure to address the national cause (*nemzeti ügy*) effectively due to the absence of clearly defined goals and the lack of organization. He also noted that violent clashes between Hungarian Protestants and Catholics deflected the national movement from its proper target, that is, Habsburg army and officialdom. Cf. Pauler, "A bujdosók támadása 1672-ben," 1-2, 89, 93. Pauler's essay received a mixed response among later scholars. Gyula Szekfű denounced the noble leaders of the revolt for relying on the Ottoman court and for starting a civil war; given the Transylvanian exiles' "lack of discipline" (*fegyelmezetlenség*), and "lack of success" (*sikertelenség*) he did not think that the revolt warranted much attention. Cf. Gyula Szekfű and Bálint Hóman, *Magyar történet*, vols. 1-8 (Budapest, 1928-34), 4: 193-94. By contrast, Ignác Acsády was fascinated by the participation of "the common people" (*köznép*) in the 1672 revolt and conjured up the image of a mass movement in which "every element of the Hungarian nation, most of all the lower strata (*az alsó rétegek*), stood up against royal power..." [Ignác Acsády, *A magyar nemzet története* (Budapest, 1898), 310-18, esp. 315, 317].

⁷ Benczédi, *Rendiség*, 57-65; "Historischer Hintergrund der Predigerprozesse in Ungarn in den Jahren 1673-74," *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 22 (1976): 257-89; "Hungarian National Consciousness as Reflected in the Anti-Habsburg and Anti-Ottoman Struggles of the Late Seventeenth Century,"

Harvard Ukrainian Studies 10, 3-4 (1986): 424-37. Benczédi explained why he considered the topic important: “Ha azonban az 1672. évi első kuruc hadjárat összesítő mérlegét megvonjuk, ennek ellenére sem juthatunk negatív eredményre... ez a küzdelem a történelem további alakulása szempontjából sem volt kárbavesztett, hiábavaló... az 1672. évi bujdosó hadjárat romjain is gyökeret eresztett, életre kelt a csaknem másfél évtizedig tartó XVII. századvégi kuruc függetlenségi küzdelem” (Benczédi, *Rendiség*, 65).

⁸ Benczédi, *Rendiség*, 65.

⁹ One of the first uses I have found occurred in a letter from October 5, 1678 by Zsófia Bathori and was strictly pejorative. The hostile letter was addressed to the Calvinist clergy of Szatmár County and accused the *kurucok* of committing “godless acts” (*istentelenségeket*) against Catholic missionaries. Cf. József Berey, “A reformátusok üldöztetése Szatmár vármegyében 1660-1680-ig,” *Protestáns Szemle* 19, 9 (1897): 519.

¹⁰ Benczédi, *Rendiség*, 63. For a similar use of the term *kuruc*, see Jenő Szűcs, *Nation und Geschichte. Studien* (Cologne, 1981), 101. The origins and meanings of the term remain much debated. For a critical assessment of the term’s etymology, see László Nagy, “*Kuruc életünket megállván csináljuk...*” *Társadalom és hadsereg a XVII. századi kuruc küzdelmekben* (Budapest, 1983), 95-97.

¹¹ Benczédi, *Rendiség*, 24-40. Benczédi repeatedly cites Gyula Pauler’s nineteenth-century standard work on the Wesselényi Fronde. Cf. Gyula Pauler, *Wesselényi Ferencz nádor és társainak összeesküvése*, vols. 1-2 (Budapest, 1876).

¹² László Benczédi, “A magyar rendi nemzettudat sajátosságai a 16-17. században,” in György Spira and Jenő Szűcs, eds., *Nemzetiség a feudalizmus korában. Tanulmányok* (Budapest, 1972), 120-129, esp. 122, 124; “Parasztok és katonák XVII-XVIII századi Habsburg-ellenes mozgalmainkban,” in Zsigmond Pál Pach, ed., *Vita a Magyarországi osztályküzdelmekről és függetlenségi harcoktól* (Budapest, 1965), 266-78, esp. 270, 274.

¹³ Benczédi largely equates the nobility’s “estate nationalism” (*rendi nacionalizmus*) based on traditional political freedoms (formulated in István Werbőczy’s *Tripartitum*) and “national consciousness” (*nemzeti tudat*). He repeatedly speaks about a process of “popularization” (*popularizálódás*) which assured that noble ideas of constitutional freedom and “national independence... penetrated deeply into the ranks of the unprivileged classes, as a defensive ideology” (Benczédi, “Hungarian National Consciousness,” 436-37). See also Benczédi, “A magyar rendi nemzet-tudat,” 124-25.

¹⁴ It must be emphasized that sources of noble provenance have also not received sufficient attention. Benczédi’s argument is largely based on the letters and proclamations of István Petrőczy, a learned defender of noble estate rights and cousin of Imre Thököly. Members of the Petrőczy clan played prominent roles in the Imre Thököly and Ferenc II. Rákóczi movements and their political views of the Hungarian

nation had without doubt a formative influence on other Hungarian nobles. However, we don't know how representative these views were among nobles. Cf. Gusztáv Heckenast, *Ki kicsoda a Rákóczi szabadságharcban? Életrajzi adattár* (Budapest: História, 2005), 339-40.

¹⁵ These campaigns which Hungarian bishops and magnates carried out with the support of the Habsburg army have not yet received much scholarly attention. Historians have instead focused on the aftermath of the 1672 revolt, that is, the arrest and mass expulsion of the Protestant clergy which culminated in the infamous 1674 Pozsony Trial. Cf. the still representative Peter F. Barton and László Makkai, eds., *Rebellion oder Religion. Die Vorträge des internationalen Kirchenhistorischen Kolloquiums Debrecen, 12. 2. 1976* (Budapest, 1977), 15-120.

¹⁶ Benczédi, *Rendiség*, 29, 53-55, 63; "Historischer Hintergrund," 268-69, 272-73; "Der Leopoldinische Absolutismus und die Leibeigenschaft in Ungarn (1670-81)," in *Aus der Geschichte der Ostmitteleuropäischen Bauernbewegungen im 16.-17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gusztáv Heckenast (Budapest, 1977), 71-76. Benczédi's argument rests on the purported primacy of peasants' economic and fiscal grievances (Benczédi cites only complaints by Hungarian nobles about the new *accisa* and *repartitio* taxes). However, the lowering of the tax-load decreed by the Habsburg court on the height of the uprising (October 5, 1672) did not in any way mitigate the insurgents' fervor. Cf. "Historischer Hintergrund," 272, 275, 281.

¹⁷ I am hesitant to use the designation "Slovak" since the language situation in the territory that is now Eastern Slovakia was still extremely fluid: Polish, Czech, and Ukrainian idioms coexisted with proto-Slovak.

¹⁸ Gyula Pauler called for the systematic study of these and other investigations conducted in the aftermath of the revolt (starting in February 1673). Cf. Pauler, "A bujdosók támadása 1672-ben," 2.

¹⁹ Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL), Filmtár, Egri Káptalan Levéltára, Protocollum Seriale Q, no. 148: 367-534, Attestationes pro Fisco Suae Majestatis Regio, collectae et Inclytae Camerae Scepusiensi sub authentico extradatae (hereafter no. 148). The manuscript is numbered both by folio and page; my citations use only page numbers.

²⁰ Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL), Filmtár, Egri Káptalan Levéltára, Protocollum Seriale Q, no. 186: 671-729, Attestationes pro Fisco Suae Majestatis Regio collectae (hereafter no. 186); no. 189: 751-67, Fassioness...collectae Cassoviae (hereafter no. 189).

²¹ It is noteworthy that many archival materials from this period were lost (such as parish records and town archives) or subsequently destroyed (such as the military *Feldakten*). For an excellent introduction to this analytical problem, see István Szabó, "Protestáns egyháztörténeti adatok az 1670-1681 évekből a bécsi hadilevéltárból," *Egyháztörténet* N. S. 1 (1958), nos. 2-3: 203-230, esp. 203-204; N. S. 2 (1959), nos. 2-3: 132-174. On the few *Feldakten* that have survived in the Vienna

archives, see Josef Pauser, Martin Scheutz, and Thomas Winkelbauer, eds., *Quellenkunde der Habsburgermonarchie (16.-18. Jahrhundert). Ein exemplarischen Handbuch* (Vienna, Munich: R. Oldenburg Verlag, 2004), 165-66, 179.

²² Benczédi, “Hungarian national consciousness,” 429-31. Many similar statements can be found in letters by Hungarian nobles who joined the revolt, in Sámuel Gergely, ed., *Teleki Mihály levelezése*, vol. 6 (Budapest, 1912), *passim*.

²³ Several nobles made derogatory remarks about Leopold and his mother. See, for example, no. 148: 397 (“abiit caesar ad pascendum porcos”), 402 (“mater regis... meretrix”), 423 (“rex modernus canis”).

²⁴ No. 186: 686-87, 699.

²⁵ No. 148: 395, 402-3; no. 186: 682, 692, 694, 703; MOL, E 148, Neoregistrata Acta, fasc. 1431, fol. 10. Emperor Leopold should become “the King of the Germans” and “the German sons-of bitches (*kurva fiuk*)” should leave; otherwise “they were to be wiped out completely from the [Hungarian] Kingdom” (*e Regno extirpandos*).

²⁶ No. 186: 720.

²⁷ “[M]allet supra se regnare Turcam quam Germanos isti enim in corpore et anima nos offendunt” (no. 186: 696). Such sentiments were widespread among the Protestant elite of Upper Hungary. Cf. Pauler, *Wesselényi*, 1: 124-131; 2: 436.

²⁸ MOL, Filmtár, Egri Káptalan Levéltára, Protocollum Seriale Q, no. 137, *Recognitio Reverendi Patris Valentini Balogh* (dated Febr. 12, 1673), 340-42 (hereafter no. 137). The dramatic eyewitness account of the Jesuit Valentinus Balogh illustrates this grim reality. Balogh was abducted from his missionary outpost close to the Turkish border during the first days of the uprising, and spent five months in captivity before being released against ransom. He related, in particular, how his captors had planned military attacks on nobles who refused to join the revolt.

²⁹ Similar to many other leaders of the 1672 revolt, Gyurikovics was a veteran of the Rákóczi Revolt. After his estates had been seized by Habsburg commissars, Gyurikovics was summoned to Pozsony for trial and faced the death penalty. To save his life, he fled to Transylvania in the summer of 1670 (Pauler, *Wesselényi*, 2: 11, 78). His experience was typical of hundreds of Hungarian nobles, mostly Protestant, who had supported the Wesselényi Fronde.

³⁰ Gyurikovics also denounced Sigismund Holló, the highest-ranking Hungarian official in the Zipser Kammer, and István Barkóczy, who had been responsible for hunting down Hungarian nobles for the Austrian occupation army. According to Gyurikovics, these men were traitors to the Hungarian cause and therefore deserved severe punishment. Barkóczy had been a close ally of Rákóczi in 1670, but he had subsequently become an eager agent of Habsburg power, apparently in order to save his own neck (Pauler, *Wesselényi*, 2: 4, 6-8, 86, 199). Holló’s estate in the vicinity of Korompa (Krompach) in Szepes County was occupied by rebel units. Holló lived in Kassa, but several of his peasants were captured and tortured (no. 148: 480, 488-90).

³¹ No. 137: 341. Gyurikovics omitted to say that Hartyány had been a member of the “extraordinary commission” charged with liquidating noble estates and interrogating noble supporters of the Wesselényi Fronde. The commission had seized Gyurikovics’ estates and summoned him for trial to Pozsony facing the death penalty. Cf. Pauler, *Wesselényi*, 2: 319.

³² No. 148: 397, 467, 468a, 469, 471, 473-74, 475-76, 483, 486 (including short testimonies by Palocsay-Horváth and Csáky). Like Barkóczy, Csáky had been sympathetic to the Rákóczi revolt and quickly sought the favors of the Habsburg court after the revolt’s collapse (Pauler, *Wesselényi*, 2: 21, 23). Palocsay-Horváth was a close ally of István Barkóczy; the family, which was of Croat origin, was notorious (esp. among Protestants in Szepes County) for having carried out a brutal Catholicization campaign on its estates since the early 1640s [Samu Weber, “Az ellen-reformáció a Szepességen,” *Protestáns szemle* 19 (1907), 583-88, 645-50].

³³ Testimony of Catholic noble Ezechiel Vas, no. 148: 486-88.

³⁴ Testimony of Catholic noble Miklós Korponay, no. 148: 472-73. Similarly, István Terbócs, a Torna County official, related that he had become the target of a punitive expedition when he declined to join rebel forces (no. 186: 700-1). The manor house of János Kossa, a small landowner in Sáros County, was pillaged after he went into hiding (cf. testimony of Lutheran noble Michael Bánó, no. 148: 457).

³⁵ No. 148: 397, 421, 433, 440, 448, 451-52; no. 186: 682, 687, 692, 695, 699; no. 189: 755-56, 759.

³⁶ See, for example, no. 148: 380, 401, 411-12, 446, 453, 476, 507 (noble László Farkas threatening peasants in Szepes County with death unless they join the uprising); no. 186: 688, 690, 708; no. 189: 756, 760.

³⁷ The important role of women (e.g., the widows of Protestant nobles) during the revolt needs to be the subject of a separate study.

³⁸ See, for example, no. 189: 754 (“...jactabando dixisse..., quod Deus adjuvit illos”), 755; Pauler, *Wesselényi*, 2: 6-8. For similar language, see Gergely, *Teleki Mihály levelezése*, 6: 300-3 (letters by Pál Szepessy dated 15 and 18. September 1672).

³⁹ Cf. no. 189: 755 (“modernus rex.... numquam erit ipsius Rex quia non servavit fidem”). Cf. no. 186: 703. In 1670, Szuhay had been close to Ferenc Rákóczi but he had never trusted Rákóczi, who was Catholic. Szuhay even boasted that he was more important than Rákóczi because he could count on the support of the Calvinist county nobility (Benczédi, *Rendiség*, 30).

⁴⁰ No. 148: 387, 391-92, 394, 415, 432, 451; Pauler, *Wesselényi*, 2: 12, 29. Habsburg officers were greatly afraid of the mobilizing effects of such “ausgesprengte gefährliche Reden” [Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Kriegsarchiv, Protokolle des Wiener Hofkriegsrates (hereafter KA, Protokolle), Exp. Prot. 1672, fol. 619].

⁴¹ No. 148: 432; Pauler, *Wesselényi*, 2: 10, 28. Among the most influential rebel leaders were the Calvinist magnates István Bocskay and Miklós Forgách who fought largely to reverse the result of violent Catholicization campaigns led by the Rákóczi family (esp. by Ferenc I. Rákóczi's mother, Zsófia Báthori).

⁴² The expulsions had started during the early 1660s, reached a first peak during the suppression of the Wesselényi Fronde in 1670, and had assumed a massive scale by June 1672. Cf. Sándor Takáts, "Kiséretek a magyar haderő felosztatására 1671-1702," *Századok* 38 (1904): 1-24, 114-35, 219-39, 322-43, esp. 15-24, 119-22. Based on Takáts findings' historians have assumed that ca. 7,000 soldiers out of a total of 11,000 were demobilized during this period. Recently it has been suggested that this number should be reduced to 4,000 (from a total of 12,000), in István Czigány, "A végvári katonaság 1671-1672 évi létszámcsökkentése," in Pál Fodor, Géza Pálffy and István György Tóth, eds., *Tanulmányok Szakály Ferenc emlékére* (Budapest, 2002), 97-109, esp. 97, 99, 107.

⁴³ Anti-German resentment is seen as the driving force of "ordinary soldiers" (*egyszerű katonák*) in László Nagy, "A 17. századi végvári katonaság erkölcsi-politikai arculata," in *Magyar és török végvárak (1663-1684)*, ed. Sándor Bodó et al. (Eger, 1985), 87-95, esp. 88, 92.

⁴⁴ Typical are statement like the following overheard by a peasant judge (*judex*) in the hamlet of Onga (Abaúj County): "He heard from the mouth of rebel soldiers that they would never give up the cause they had taken up even if it meant they would have to perish: they [simply] no longer had any other way to eke out a living (*non amplius haberent modum alium vivendi*)." (MOL, E148, Neoregstrata Acta, fasc. 1431, fol. 12).

⁴⁵ Vanyó, *Relationes*, 66, 70. Eyewitnesses reported that demobilized soldiers rushed to enlist as the rebel army formed on Turkish territory. As one observer put it, "the decommissioned soldiers flowed together like a stream... and the chief conspirators promptly held a conscription rally (*mustra*) in a place called Sebes not far from Szováth and Debreczen" (no. 186: 681-2; MOL, E 148, Neoregstrata Acta, fasc. 1431, fol. 9). Other soldiers joined when the rebel army crossed into Habsburg territory. See the testimony by a servitor of the Catholic noble Miklós Beleváry: "...milites Hungari versus rebelles fugerunt et audivit ab illis, quod ad fidelitatem Szuhayi deposuerint milites juramentum" (no. 189: 753). On Catholic magnates trying to recruit such soldiers, see István Czigány, "A végvári katonaság," 102-5.

⁴⁶ Protestant officers seem to have been the primary targets of such purges as demonstrated by the following instruction issued in Vienna 5 October 1672: "Solle mit guter manier sich des Hauptman [Geymans] und anderer uncatholischen Officier nach und nach entübrigen" (István Szabó, "Protestáns egyháztörténeti adatok," 161). Calvinist soldiers were especially suspect (Ibid., 206, no. 6). After the 1672 revolt the Habsburg authorities attempted to drastically reduce the number of Protestant soldiers but only generated "a situation that resembled a religious war" (Czigány, 107, fn. 47).

⁴⁷ See the data in István Szabó, “Ellenreformáció a végvárakban 1670-1681,” in *Emlékkönyv Károlyi Árpád születése nyolcvanadik fordulójának ünnepére 1933 Október 7* (Budapest, 1933), 457-70, esp. 464-65. The catastrophic effects of this policy were understood in Vienna only in the aftermath of the 1672 revolt when instructions were issued to reinstate expelled Protestant clergy (*ibid.*, 467-68). Szabó’s path-breaking research on border soldiers and religion has received little attention among Hungarian scholars (including Benczédi).

⁴⁸ Cf. István Szabó, “Protestáns egyháztörténeti adatok,” 150-52. The Calvinist ministers of Szendrő and Putnok had been expelled shortly before this exodus as indicated by correspondence between the Viennese *Hofkriegsrat* with General Spankau, in Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Austria (hereafter HHStA), Ungarische Akten, Specialia, fasc. 326, Konv. A, fols. 21-22. I have not found any information about events in Diósgyőr but the capture of four Catholic priests by rebel soldiers in early September 1672 (no. 186: 702) suggests a similar scenario.

⁴⁹ Cf. no. 186: 683, 689; no. 189: 760-61.

⁵⁰ “Rituals of Violence: Retaliatory Acts by Russian and Hungarian Rebels,” *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 35, 3-4 (2008): 383-394. On these soldiers’ reputation of being worse than the Turks (“magis saevit quam ipse Turca”) and their readiness to die in battle, see two reports by Habsburg loyalists, in HHStA, Ungarische Akten, Specialia, fasc. 180, Konv. D, no. 2, unnumbered folio; no. 4, unnumbered folio (“...exclamarunt, quod usque ad unicum simul vivere et mori velint”).

⁵¹ HHStA, Ungarische Akten, Specialia, fasc. 180, Konv. D, no. 4; Szabó, “Protestáns egyháztörténeti adatok,” 150-51.

⁵² The close relations between soldiers and Protestant clergy is illustrated by the permission to allow ministers and pastors back into the border fortresses in April 1674 (Szabó, “Ellenreformáció”, 468; Szabó, “Protestáns egyháztörténeti adatok,” 316-17, nos. 342-343; Czigány, 107).

⁵³ On Turkish dress, see No. 148: 392, 472; no. 186: 708 (“...companiones multos inter rebelles existere, qui more Turcico sindones pileos obdlexerunt et in capite portarunt”). General Spankau identified divinity students (especially those with guns) as dangerous rebel rousers in reports to the Vienna War Council, in Szabó, “Protestáns egyháztörténeti adatok,” 142-43, 148-150, nos. 163, 168, 188, 191-192.

⁵⁴ No. 148: 380, 390, 410, 423, 430, 432, 502, 519-20; no. 186: 682-85, 687, 700-1, 708, 711, 714, 718; MOL, E 148, Neoregistrata Acta, fasc. 1431, fol. 11. It is interesting to note that the Lutheran Academy of Eperjes reopened during the uprising until the town’s re-conquest by Habsburg forces on 13 December 1672. Cf. Kónya, “Konfesijné ciele,” 82.

⁵⁵ Samu Borovszky, *Szatmár vármegye* [vol. 17 of *Magyarország vármegyéi és városai*]. Vols. 1-22 (Budapest, 1895-1911), 39. Their gravesite was still known to locals in the early twentieth century.

⁵⁶ “Die Calvinische Praedicanthen thetten die Kirchen disseits von Theyss mit blosen Sabeln wider einnehmen.....” (KA, Protokolle, Exp. Prot. 1672, fols. 683-84). The presence of refugee clergy from the Upper Tisza region is already attested in July 1672 when rebel troops started gathering under Turkish protection in the vicinity of Debrecen (“... in castris rebellium et exercitium suum administrasse juxta ritum ipsorum,” MOL, E148, Neoregestrata Acta, fasc. 1431, fol. 11).

⁵⁷ Testimony of Catholic noble Gábor Kapy, no. 148: 381-84, esp. 384. Kapy’s estates in Sáros County were invaded by rebel detachments accompanied by Calvinist pastors in late September 1672. For names of Calvinist pastors fighting in the rebel army, see Pauler, “A bujdosók támadása 1672-ben,” 13-14.

⁵⁸ This sermon was given in the chapel of Késmárk Castle in early October 1672. Cf. no. 186: 720; Pauler, “A bujdosók támadása 1672-ben,” 167. On the same occasion Luczy’s Lutheran colleague, Blasius Lassius (sic), called for the return of the fugitive Lutheran magnate Imre Thököly from Transylvania. This was one of the first public calls for Thököly’s return to Hungary before he finally invaded Habsburg territory in 1678. Cf. no. 148: 507, 518.

⁵⁹ This report survived in the Szabolcs County archive and refers to the battle of Györke (Abaúj County) on October 26, 1672. Cf. József Porubszky, ed., “Strasoldo levele,” *Magyar Sion* 6 (1868): 449-52, esp. 451.

⁶⁰ Testimony of Reverend Blasius Tomkovics, no. 148: 467-69. These peasants belonged to the mentioned magnate István Palocsay-Horváth. They took action after learning that their master had fled his estate.

⁶¹ Testimony of Késmárk resident Alexander Striowszky, no. 148: 507-8; Testimony of Reverend Adalbert Macsinszky, no. 148: 518-19.

⁶² No. 148: 507.

⁶³ No. 148: 398, 415, 423, 425-26. In his own testimony, Galli made every effort to contradict the observations of other witnesses (no. 148: 431-32).

⁶⁴ These towns’ Lutheran strongmen resented the brutal Counter-Reformation which had begun in 1670, resulting in the seizure of churches and the imposition of Catholic priests by military force. Cf. Ferenc Galla, *A magyar katolikus restauráció misszionáriusa* (Budapest, 1946), 24-26, 35; István H. Németh, “A szabad virályi városi rang a kora újkorban,” *Urbs. Magyar várostörténeti évkönyv* 1 (2006): 109-122, esp. 120-121.

⁶⁵ No. 148: 397, 406 (Kisszeben), 417, 422-23, 484, 501, 517; no. 186: 715, 717 (Eperjes); no. 189: 759-60 (Thirteen Pawned Towns of Szepes county). These towns also provided food, wine, grain, livestock, horses, ammunition, weapons, and cannons. The cooperation of German town elites and Kuruc rebels remains “almost completely unexplored” (*szinte teljesen kidolgozatlan*) not just for this early period. Cf. László Benczédi, *A Thököly-felkelés és kora* (Budapest, 1983), 20.

⁶⁶ For example, János Szegedy, the Hungarian episcopate’s agent in Bártfa, faced the destruction of his estates by rebel detachments. And István Roskoványi,

who had played a vital role in the closure of the Lutheran school in Szepesolaszi, was thrown into jail. Cf. no. 148: 440-42, 482, 484-85 (including testimonies by Szegedy and Roskoványi).

⁶⁷ Of course, this conclusion may be based on an optical illusion. Witnesses had good reasons to conceal voluntary participation in the revolt. The testimonies' emphasis on coercion requires additional analysis.

⁶⁸ For some theoretical thoughts on these complicated questions, see Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *On Becoming National. A Reader* (Oxford, 1996), 106-177.

⁶⁹ See, for example, the observations about popular consciousness in Ágnes R. Várkonyi, *Magyarország keresztútjain. Tanulmányok a XVII. századról* (Budapest, 1978), 353-56; Szücs, *Nation*, 94-101, 125-30. Cf. the following excerpt: "Die Kampfparolen lauteten: 'gegen die fremde Nation', 'für die Befreiung des teuren Vaterlandes', und diese wurden ganz allgemein von den Bauern aufgegriffen, die an den Kämpfen teilnahmen" (Szücs, *Nation*, 97).

⁷⁰ István György Tóth, "The Protestant rebels of a Catholic prince — missions and missionaries in the Rákóczi war" (Budapest, 2004), 1 (unpublished manuscript in the István György Tóth Archive at Central European University); Ján Kvačala, *Dejiny reformácie na Slovensku* (Liptovské Matiašovce, 1935), 244-48; Győző Bruckner, *A reformáció és ellenreformáció története a Szepességben (1520-1745-ig)* (Budapest, 1922), 379-90; Tibor Fabiny, "Rákóczi és evangélikusok," in *Rákóczi-tanulmányok*, ed. Béla Köpeczi, Lajos Hopp, and Ágnes R. Várkonyi (Budapest, 1980), 365-382, esp. 365.

“Extra Hungariam non est Vita”
and the Baroque in 18th and Early 19th
Century Hungary

Gábor Vermes

A self-congratulatory tone emanated from some of the communications by noble delegates at the diet of 1764/1765; one of them, Ferenc Rosty, bragged about the long hours he and his fellow delegates had spent in discussing issues at the sessions, “but God has kept us there.” In a lampoon he was called “a true patriot.”¹ This diet signified either the highest glorious or the lowest obnoxious point in the eyes of those contemporaries who observed the Hungarian nobility’s political role. It is therefore especially significant to evaluate these nobles’ mental make-up. The above-mentioned adjectives entail praise or blame, and as late as 1953, C.A. Macartney was still thinking in such categories.² One should rather attempt to understand the mentality of those who belonged to this powerful estate by placing them in their own time and place, with the system of values they had then and without passing either a worshipful or a denigrating collective judgement on them.

It was imperative from the point-of-view of their mental equilibrium to maintain their own sense of permanence. “The roots of the Magyar nobles’ separatism went deep,” wrote T.C.W. Blanning, “deep into their history, deep into their self-interest, and deep into their institutions.”³ Notwithstanding the occasional presence of progressive officials in the noble-led counties and the slow trend toward the greater inclusion of the less illustrious nobles into the corridors of power, the primary aim of the counties was self-perpetuation, with emphasis on the preservation of noble power and privileges in their “self-interest,” to use Blanning’s word. Without the nobles’ authority and privileges, economic, social and political power, their feelings of self-worth and very reason for being would have ceased to exist. Their self-justification rested in

history. As far as they were concerned, a long and unbroken line connected them to their pagan ancestors, the conquerors of the Danube basin, and to King St. Stephen and to all the other kings and heroes who had defended their country against foreign invaders in past centuries. Their reverence for old traditions and laws signified their belief that the past sanctioned the present, obliterating in their minds any line that would have separated the two. Naturally then, the powerful emotion accompanying their sense of permanence abhorred any rupture in their venerated tradition.

In order to minimize such a rupture, any, or, at least, much “contamination” by the outside world had to be avoided. The patriarchal ideal of “*extra Hungariam non est vita*” followed logically from this xenophobia, although this idea was usually implied rather than explicitly stated by the nobles themselves. As Andor Tarnai demonstrated, German and Slovak students, studying at the University of Wittenberg, brought this saying back to Hungary during the second half of the sixteenth century. Then and later it reflected the Hungarus-patriotism of Lutheran non-nobles, their attachment to the country rather than to any particular ethnicity. Nevertheless, by the late eighteenth century, the saying had acquired its somewhat more widespread and self-congratulatory meaning as well. A minor poet, József Mátyási, upon experiencing sophisticated conversation, nice homes and fine food in Germany, in 1792, felt compelled to disavow, in his own words, “*extra Hungariam non est vita*.” Clearly by then, it came to imply ignorance and a corresponding lack of curiosity about the outside world. This attitude had already been the target of scorn during the eighteenth century and attracted even more attacks in later years. “The small lands the men from the countryside live on,” wrote József Kármán in 1794, “define their entire horizon. . . . When they say the whole world they mean their own county at best. . . . There is emptiness in their heads. . . [and] the blossoming of talents is hindered by their lazy and wild way of life; . . . prejudices, ignorance, and blindness are the consequences.” This and later criticisms are somewhat too harsh, not so much for their not being factually accurate, but for placing the blame for those facts on the protagonists themselves. Given the generally low level of education, economic and social self-interest, and the staunchly conservative political stands of most Hungarian nobles, the peace of mind they craved depended on their not being disturbed or even informed by too much outside influence. As Ákos Beothy, himself a member of a distinguished noble family, wrote in the late nineteenth century, his forbears’ parochial attitude reflected their attempt to attain exactly such a peace of mind.⁴

Looking at the world from a narrow vantage point did, however, distort their scale of comparisons. Self-imposed isolation went together with a sense of grandiosity, based on their own historical narrative of unparalleled heroism. “Our ancestors intimidated the entire world,” Count József Gvadányi stated. Other examples of grandiosity were the frequently expressed idea that the eyes of the world, certainly of Europe, were permanently fixed on Hungary, always with curiosity and at times with awe. Even a well-educated noble, a onetime member of the queen’s bodyguard, the writer Sándor Báróczi voiced such thoughts. In a pamphlet, published in 1790, he admonished his fellow Hungarians to pass “sensible laws” that then would draw the attention of Europe in its entirety. This inflated sense of being Hungarian came to the fore in many of the speeches held even at the 1790/91 diet, where simultaneously and in sharp contrast to the 1764/65 diet, some reform proposals were advanced as well. In his introductory remarks, Personalis József Urményi stated that the Hungarian laws were rooted in “eternal permanence,” promoting “good morality, piety, and the furthering of public good.” He then added, “The entire world is watching us.” The Lord Chief Justice, Count Károly Zichy, seconded this idea: “We have an immense reputation in the whole world,” Zichy said. “Nations and their rulers are watching every move we make, so it is imperative that we return to the ways of our ancestors.” Speeches by prelates mirrored those of the nobility. “Our ancient laws should be made permanent,” declared Prince József Batthány, Hungary’s prince primate.⁵

Two illustrations may further support this nobility’s tenacious adherence to this sense of permanence. One was the fiction of their constitution, a collection of customary laws in fact. It was László Péter who had pointed out that Montesquieu visited the diet in 1728 and was impressed by the Hungarian noble delegates, an impression that was further enhanced by the events of 1741. Montesquieu believed that he witnessed a separation of powers in Hungary between the monarch and the estates, in that “the two powers were interconnected yet existed independently side by side.” That did flatter the nobility and Montesquieu’s *L’esprit des lois*, published in 1748 and translated into Latin in 1751 became “a bible for the nobility.” Furthermore, they, the Hungarian nobles, learned from Montesquieu “that what they possessed was a constitution rather than just a collection of customary rights.”⁶ By making it tangible and old at the same time, powerful imaginary ties to the past were established.⁷ At the 1708 diet, the estates were discussing some arcane financial matter, when a Catholic clergyman told the Lutheran representative Pál Okolicsányi that he was prepared to support ancient laws, including one initiated by King Louis in the 1520s that ordered the burning of Lutherans at

the stake. A large pandemonium broke out at the diet and the Catholic clergyman was roundly denounced. The imagined past could not be disturbingly different from the present it was assumed to resemble.⁸

This last example shows how pride and inflated self-esteem were inextricably intertwined with anguish and agony. The sense of permanence was perpetuated not only by a self-servingly creative manipulation of history but also by vigilance against anybody or anything that appeared to threaten the assumed perennial harmony. Fear of not being able to eliminate such threats kept agony alive along with the inflated sense of being Hungarian that in turn made the agony of losing such elevated status even more excruciating.

The sense of exclusivity and superiority was by no means a monopoly of the Hungarian nobility but one that was shared by nobles all across Europe. Sir Francis Bacon supposedly said, "Nobles are born to rule."⁹ Even if this saying is apocryphal, it accurately reflected an overriding sentiment among the nobles. One can then further narrow the scope of a search and look for patterns that closely approximated the parochial mentality of the Hungarian nobility. In doing so, three major criteria stand out: first, relative isolation from the mainstream of European social and political developments, second, a strong sense of collective heroism projected back to their country's past, and finally, a sense of defensiveness against real and imagined slights.

The nobility of Spain certainly qualified. There, the entire nobility was perceived as theoretically one, with the poorest *hidalgo* and the richest grandee alike belonging to it, even though the former was often an object of ridicule. Honour to them was more important than anything else, inherited from what they thought were "ancient Visigothic" values. The concept of nobility, the *hidalguia*, "was a perpetual reward for the preservation of Spain" implying that the Spanish nobles too had their own sense of permanence. Indeed, it was the Spanish nobility, along with a militant Catholic Church, that fought the "*reconquista*," the re-conquering of Spain from the Moslem Moors. Following the successful completion of that struggle, fears continued about a Moslem comeback and the assumed subversion by *moriscoes* and *marranos*, Moslems and Jews who were converted to Christianity respectively but were not trusted at all. Monarchs were not necessarily disdained by these nobles, but very tellingly Benito de Penolosa y Mondragon said the following in 1629, "Being a *hidalgo* is sufficient to say that one owes nothing to the king." The encroaching state with its "utilitarianism and bureaucratism of the eighteenth century" undermined the nobles' "aristocratic paternalism."¹⁰ Such a process surely liberated some of the nobles, but others must have felt a re-occurrence of fear and anguish in new forms.

The nobles in Poland provide another example. “The late medieval and early modern Hungarian and Polish-Lithuanian monarchies” wrote R. J. W. Evans, “display some extraordinary similarities,” that included strong resemblances between the *sejms* and the diets and in the respective mentalities of the two nobilities. True, Polish nobles, the *szlachta*, developed the fantasy of having descended from the Sarmatians, warriors who lived in the third century north of the Black Sea, while Hungarian nobles flaunted their extraction from the Huns, but in both cases, their “noble patriotism was exclusive, atavistic and ritualized.”¹¹ Other similarities included the reverence both the Hungarian nobility and the *szlachta* had shown for their representative institutions and the law, and finally, they both “drew in on themselves” in the eighteenth century. In the Hungarian case, this was a defensive measure against threatening changes that they felt were coming from the West, while the Polish reaction had to do with the multiple adversities that had inflicted Poland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, resulting in anarchical conditions at times. In both instances, the bulk of these nobles resolutely defended their privileges, their “golden freedom,” as the Poles called it.¹² Along this line, to the *szlachta*, the Sarmatians were conquerors which filled the Polish nobles with a powerful sense of superiority not only vis-à-vis the huge serf population in Poland itself but also over other nations. This feeling resulted in a great deal of “theatricality...in a colorful and oriental guise in dress, rhetoric, and manners” which in turn gave a lasting cultural unity to the *szlachta* across the Commonwealth, but it proved incapable of adapting to changing circumstances. It became inseparable from the ‘golden freedom’ and intolerant Catholicism.”¹³ In Hungary as well as in Poland nobles entertained a grandiose vision of themselves, while, at the same time, they were both afraid of their noble universe being undermined and subverted by internal and external adversaries alike.

For all these similarities there were considerable differences between the nobility’s situation in Hungary and Poland. The occasional baroque exuberance in Hungary was no match to the relentless Sarmatian excesses in Poland. Nor was the republicanism of the *szlachta* a stabilizing step in comparison to the Hungarian nobles’ monarchism. On the contrary, because, the odd fusion of Polish privileges, rooted in the Middle Ages, with the republican idea of civic virtues, borrowed from the Ancient World, were in fact leading to “phases of stagnation and then decay.”¹⁴ Polish nobles did not only revere their institutions and the law but the monarchy as well as long as their kings remained weak.¹⁵ Consequently, the Polish state declined while the Hungarian nobles’ loyalty to their monarchs, notwithstanding their problematic egocentric obstinacy and the few exceptions during the reigns of Joseph

II and Leopold II did end up strengthening the state. Somewhat ironically, because while the Polish state was fully sovereign, the Hungarian state was not.

Another major difference had to do with the power relations between the better-off untitled nobility and the aristocracy. There was tension and conflict between these two in both countries, but while in Hungary the control of the counties was firmly in the hands of the former, certainly by the middle of the eighteenth century, in Poland, from the late sixteenth century on, the influence of the magnates grew. They consisted of a small number of families, and their growth in power further undermined the theoretical equality of the *szlachta*, although the voices of lesser nobles could not be completely stifled and there was a steady drumbeat of “anti-magnate feelings within (the) political life” of the country.¹⁶

A further difference had a somewhat ironic twist to it. In the early-mid eighteenth century Poland’s fortunes hit rock bottom. Although the author of the above quotes, Robert Frost denies that the magnate elite represented an oligarchy because of its inherent instability, still, in his words, an “anarchic stalemate” ensued in the eighteenth century, when, by 1721, “the Commonwealth’s international position (was) in ruins, its political system paralyzed and its economy wrecked.”¹⁷ The situation was so dire that a growing number of Polish noblemen saw no alternative to reforms. The reformers were determined to replace the weak elective monarchy by a constitutional one possessing stronger executive power. This movement began in the 1760s and climaxed in the Constitution of May 3rd, 1791, which declared the sovereignty of the nation, consisting of all the people in Poland. Although, in reality, the nobility preserved its leading role, “the old, class-based idea of a noble nation was gone forever.”¹⁸

In contrast, in Hungary, conditions had never deteriorated to that degree; on the contrary, reforms by the Habsburg dynasty and the protection that Vienna provided to the country from any possible foreign threat secured a stability that not even noble recalcitrance could undermine. With the nobles’ control in the counties deeply-entrenched, the pressure for reforms was far less than in Poland, and consequently, this nobility could easily persevere in its domination at the 1790/91 diet and after.

The Baroque in Hungary

The Hungarian noble delegates' exuberant offer to rescue their queen at the 1741 diet in Pozsony was a perfect piece of baroque theatre. Yet, it presaged not another flowering of the Baroque but the beginning of its decline. King Charles III was still wedded to a Baroque with heavy Spanish coloration, but the pomp and ostentation that were integral parts of that style cost a great deal of money, money that Maria Theresa could ill afford. Consequently, she eliminated or cut down the extravagant expenses that she had inherited from her father, although similarly to many of her predecessors before her, she too became a patron of arts, especially of music and ballet, and she completed the building of the great Schönbrunn palace. The transformation of her governing system into a more efficient bureaucratic administration was not conducive to anything so exuberant as the Baroque, thriving on monarchical and aristocratic patronage on a grand scale. The latter did continue to exist among rich families of the aristocratic upper crust; in their case, nothing stood in the way if the family in question chose the path of extravagance.

A good case in point would be the fabulously wealthy family of the Princes Esterházy, who carried on the baroque tradition of ostentation on a grandiose scale. Their residence in Eszterháza, near Hungary's present-day border with Austria, was completed in the 1760s and was compared by the contemporaries to Versailles (their principal residence was in Kismarton, today's Eisenstadt, in Austria). Prince Miklós Esterházy, the owner of both palaces, spent huge sums not only on their upkeep but on lavish entertainments as well. He employed Joseph Haydn as his composer and conductor of the Esterházy orchestra. At times, the prince threw parties for thousands of invited guests. The Hungarian writer, György Bessenyei, was enchanted by what he saw there. "The glory of our monarch and our nation demanded," wrote Bessenyei, "that Eszterháza become a marvel. We had to show that French customs, nourished in Paris and London, could find a home in Hungary, which in turn will enhance the respect our country has among foreigners." A few other aristocratic families in Hungary, such as the Pálffy, Erdődy, Csáky, Grassalkovich, and Forgách families, tried to imitate the grandeur at Eszterháza, but they could afford to do so only to a limited degree.¹⁹ Still, it was less the grandiosity of individual aristocratic families but of the court that truly mattered in a baroque society, and such grandiosity was increasingly missing from the court in Vienna.

Not only the dynasty but the Catholic Church too, another mainstay of the baroque spirit, proved unable to sustain the level of its previous extravagance, although individual bishops, such as Ferenc Barkóczy, bishop of

Eger and later prince primate of Esztergom, carried on a building and educational program, especially while still in Eger, that was unabashedly done in an impressively magnificent baroque manner. Still, growing state control over the churches under both Maria Theresa and Joseph II weakened that spirit, as did the spread of reform Catholicism, propagated by the Italian theologian Lodovico Muratori, which de-emphasized the external trappings of the Baroque in favour of returning to a more spiritual Christianity.²⁰

Nor was the combined impact of the great aristocratic families, the Esterházy and the others compelling, because for all their glitter and glamour, they merely presented examples of their own “isolated private lives” rather than models that others could or would imitate. When a well-known traveler, Caspar Riesbeck took a trip to Hungary, he was struck by the sharp contrast between Prince Esterházy and his neighbours who looked to him like ghosts in comparison.²¹ Certainly, the broad masses of the nobility did not have the means to cultivate the baroque style, nor were they so inclined for the most part. Classical education and culture instilled in them a yearning for harmony, poise and a sense of balance that they identified as integral parts of their cherished Greco-Roman heritage. These attributes contrasted sharply with those of the Baroque, “ornate, florid, bombastic, excessive, and eccentric” in Rudolf Endres’ formulation.²² Historical reality of course is rarely so clear-cut. Just as the yearning for balance and poise coexisted, often in the same people, with quarrelsome litigiousness, so traces of the Baroque coexisted with devotion to the classical ideals. During the second half of the eighteenth century, not only ancient Roman texts but also French classical literature was being taught at Catholic schools which contained a healthy dose of the baroque spirit. The latter was hardly noticeable in the Protestant schools of course.²³ Also, the classicist poets of that time were mostly Catholic priests who were naturally all touched by the Baroque as well to varying degrees. A similar fusion of style characterized the period’s architecture, where, “...the richness of the late eighteenth century Baroque during the last quarter of the century mingled with easily discernible Classicist elements.”²⁴ Consequently, the overall mentality of the society cannot then be categorically characterized solely as Baroque; rather, it was an amalgam with Baroque as only one of several trends.

The illusion of its predominance derives from a particular proclivity of the Hungarian nobility. Much as their vast majority could not consistently afford either the expense or the exuberance of the Baroque and lived a relatively modest and confined life that accorded with their classical ideal of simplicity, their self-image as chivalrous and generous *seigneurs* did motivate

them to seize occasions when their natural inhibitions and circumstantial limitations would give way to unbridled, ornate, and excessive, that is baroque celebrations. Maria Theresa and her husband, Emperor Francis visited Pest-Buda in 1751. "One festival followed the other," recorded the event a latter-day historian, adding the following, "bells were ringing, the canons of the fortress were roaring, red and white wine were gushing for the people, music was blaring, and the spectacle of illumination was not missing either."²⁵

Pest-Buda was the scene of another celebration in 1780, when the country's sole university, recently transferred from Nagyszombat (today's Trnava in Slovakia), was inaugurated. The queen was planning to attend but was feeling ill; in fact, she died in that year. Count Károly Pálffy, deputy chancellor, represented her. He arrived to Pest in the company of festively attired noblemen on horseback and richly decorated coaches with an archbishop and other dignitaries in them. They were received by the honour guards of Pest-Buda and by delegations of students and professors. Flowery speeches and sumptuous banquets followed. The coronations were special occasions of baroque exuberance, and so was the memorable event in 1790, when the crown was returned to Buda from Vienna. Joseph II transported it there from Pozsony after having refused to allow himself to be crowned so to avoid taking the binding coronation oath. The loud jubilation that greeted the return of the crown appeared to vindicate the nobility through the restoration of historical continuity, a critical building block in their sense of permanence. Even the installation of lesser officials was cause for collective festivities. The one for the palatine, Archduke Alexander Leopold lasted for three days when he was invested with the office of lord lieutenantcy of Pest County in 1791. In remote Zemplén County, the installation of Count Károly Pálffy as lord lieutenant in 1779 took place amidst "royal pomp" in Ferenc Kazinczy's personal recollection.²⁶ This baroque spirit did at times reach the urban population as well, but the very fact that it was tied to special occasions meant that its grandiosity was less an everyday reality than an occasional exercise of nostalgia, accompanied by extravagant flights of imagination and frenzy, in lives otherwise simply and modestly lived.

The external manifestations of baroque exuberance, both in the arts and in the festivities, were not the sole evidence of the Baroque in Hungary, which was woven into the tapestry of everyday life in a variety of ways, proving that various trends were not necessarily separated into neat compartments and isolated from one another. It was surely not at all unusual for an educated nobleman, brought up to appreciate the culture and the values of the Ancients, to enjoy the baroque poetry of an István Gyöngyösi at the same time. In the religious life of Catholics, the power and influence of the Church were

diminished by encroaching secularism and state interference, and that did make some impact on religious life itself; still, simultaneously, baroque piety flourished among the believers. The veneration of saints, and of the Virgin Mary in particular, became wide-spread in all the lands ruled by the Habsburgs. In Hungary, this cult was strengthened by the belief that St. Stephen offered up his country to Mary herself with Hungary becoming “*Regnum Marianum*.” The Jesuit order was dissolved in 1773, but before that date, Jesuit education and the Jesuit-led Maria congregations, the building blocks of a *Regnum Marianum*, fostered popular piety along with pilgrimages and religious processions. Even after the dissolution of the Jesuit order, in 1776, the papal nuncio, Giuseppe Garampi, visiting Hungary, expressed his doubts about some of the bishops’ reliability from the Church’s standpoint, but was delighted over the religious enthusiasm of the masses. The idea of *Regnum Marianum* fostered not only baroque piety but it reinforced a sense of permanence as well, specifically among Catholics in this case, because it suggested to them that their past was “unified and continuous.”²⁷

The nobility was also dominant in matters of culture, because what most people read in that period reflected, by and large, the literary taste of most nobles. A majority of the books in circulation were books on religion or prayer books. Equally popular were almanacs, containing all kinds of information, which were read by all who could read, including peasants. Poetry, especially the poems of the seventeenth-century poet István Gyöngyösi was also published, and his heroic baroque poetry resonated well with Hungarian noblemen a century later. Cheap and popular versions of baroque literature, in the form of trashy books, celebrating various heroes and kings, were sold at markets and widely read, as were collections of anecdotes, including one by János Kónyi, who aimed at amusing his readers with a rather crude sense of humour. Humour and biting sarcasm characterized the pasquill literature, which was a collection of topical poems, written anonymously while the diets were in session. Finally, there were baroque novels, some totally fantastic, such as Ignác Mészáros’s *Kartigam* and András Dugonics’s *Etelka*. The latter appealed to national vanities, while *Fanni Hagymanyai* by József Kármán catered to the growing taste for sentimentality. *Etelka* was by far the most popular book. It was published in 1788, and the first one thousand copies were sold so quickly that a second and a third edition followed. The story reached back to the times when the Magyar tribes conquered the country. It was written in a folksy style, its plot was bizarre and muddled, bad history and bad literature alike, but it brought that period closer to the readers’ own times, thereby elevating their pride in what they thought was their history and

reinforcing their sense of permanence at the same time. *Etelka* herself was thought to embody the eternal virtues of Hungarian womanhood, while *Róka*, the evil councillor to the tribal chief *Zoltán*, came to represent all those who were betraying their nation.²⁸

NOTES

¹ István Szijártó M., *Dieta. A magyar rendek és az országgyűlés 1708-1792* [Dieta. The Hungarian estates and the national assembly] (Budapest: Osiris kiadó, 2005) (hereafter cited as *Dieta*), 178, 194.

² C.A. Macartney, "Hungary," in *The European nobility in the eighteenth century; studies of the European nobilities of the major European states in the pre-reform era*, ed. Albert Goodwin (London: A&C Black, 1953), 133.

³ T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II* (London, New York: Longman, 1994), 115.

⁴ Andor Tarnai, *Extra Hungariam non est vita....egy szállóige történetéhez* [extra Hungariam non est vita... on the history of a common saying] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1969); József Mátyási, "Ötvenkét jó napból mulatságos egy óra, vagy frankfurti utazásom 1792-ik esztendőben" [Fifty-two days of fun, or my journey to Frankfurt in 1792], *Széphalom* 1 (1927), 85; József Kármán, *A nemzet csinosodása* [The nation becoming refined] (Budapest: Magvető kiadó, 1981), 14-15; originally published in *Urania* in 1794; Ákos Beöthy, *A magyar államiság fejlődése* [The evolution of the Hungarian state] 3 volumes (Budapest: Atheneum kiadó, 1900-1906), 1: 770-771.

⁵ László Negyesy (ed.), *Gróf Gvadányi József, Fazekas Mihály* (Budapest: Franklin kiadó, 1904), 116; Sándor Baróczi, *A védelmezett magyar nyelv* [The protected Hungarian language] (Bets [Vienna]: Hummel-Verlag, 1790, re-published in Budapest in 1984), 15; *Naponként való jegyzései az 1790dik esztendőben Felsőleges II. Leopold Császár és magyarországi király által szabad királyi várossába Budára rendelt s Posony királyi városába átalítottatott s ugyanott, 1791dik esztendőben befejezett magyar országgyűlésnek* [The printed proceedings of the 1790/91 diet] (Buda: Királyi nyomda, 1791), 4, 7, 16, 14.

⁶ Laszlo Peter, "Montesquieu's paradox on freedom and Hungary's constitution 1790-1990," *History of Political Thought* 16, 1 (1999): 79, 80.

⁷ The perpetuity of this constitution was taken for granted so there was no need to affix the adjective "ancient" to it. That happened later as a reaction to Joseph II's perceived assault on that constitution in the second half of the 1780s. I am grateful to András Gergely for this information.

⁸ *Dieta*, 127-128.

⁹ Johannes Rogalla von Bieberstein, *Adelsherrschaft und Adelskultur in Deutschland* (Limburg: Limburg a.d. – C.A. Starke, 1998), 176.

¹⁰ I. A. A. Thompson, “The Nobility in Spain, 1600-1800,” in *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, volume 1, ed. H. M. Scott (New York, London: Longman, 1994), 1: 174, 177, 178, 184, 231, 235.

¹¹ R.J.W. Evans, “The Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy in International Context,” in *The Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy in European Context, c.1500-1795*, ed. Richard Butterwick (New York: McMillan Palgrave, 2001), 29-30.

¹² Jerzy Lukowski, *Liberty’s folly. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1697-1795* (London, New York: Routledge, 1991), 86, 8.

¹³ Richard Butterwick, *Poland’s Last King and English Culture: Stanislaw August Poniatowski 1732-1798* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1998), 26.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁵ Lukowski, *Liberty’s Folly*, 86.

¹⁶ Robert I. Frost, “The Nobility of Poland-Lithuania, 1569-1795,” in Scott, *The European Nobilities*, 1: 203, 204, 214, 215.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 216.

¹⁸ Robert Frost, “Ordering the kaleidoscope: the construction of identities in the lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth since 1569,” in *Power and Nation in European History*, ed. Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 219, 220.

¹⁹ Gábor Tolnai, *Régi magyar főurak* [Hungarian aristocrats of old] (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társaság, 1939), 155-157; Rebecca Gates-Coon, *The Landed Estates of the Esterházy Princes: Hungary during the reforms of Maria Theresa and Joseph II* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

²⁰ Antal Meszlenyi, *A Jozefinizmus kora Magyarországon: 1780-1846* [The age of Josephinism in Hungary] (Budapest: Stephaneum kiadó, 1934), 15-30; Ádám Somorjai and István Zombori, *A Katolikus Egyház Magyarországon* (Budapest: A Püspöki Kar, 1991), 63-64; György Kokay, *Felvilágosodás, kereszténység, nemzeti kultúra* [Enlightenment, Christianity, national culture] (Budapest: Universitas kiadó, 2000), 11-20.

²¹ Tolnai, *Régi magyar főurak*, 157; Ernst Wangermann, *The Austrian Achievement: 1700-1800* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 111.

²² Rudolf Endres, *Das Zeitalter des Barocks* (Simmelsdorf: Altnuremberger Landschaft, 1997), 9.

²³ Imre Bán, ed., *Irodalomelméleti kézikönyvek Magyarországon a XVI-XVIII. században* [Literary manuals in Hungary from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1971), 99.

²⁴ Anna Zador, *Revival Architecture in Hungary. Classicism and Romanticism* (Budapest: Helikon, Corvina, 1981), 2.

²⁵ József Zoltán, *A barokk Pest-Buda élete* [The life of the baroque Pest-Buda] (Budapest: Szabó Ervin Könyvtár, 1963), 83-93.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 98-105; Ferenc Kazinczy, *Az én életem* [My life] (Budapest: Mavető kiadó, 1987), 91.

²⁷ Anna Coreth, *Pietas Austriaca* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2004), 7, 46, 65, 66, 81; Somorjai and Zombori, *A Katolikus Egyház Magyarországon*, 62; Egyed Hermann, "A vallásos ember a barokk korban" [The religious person in the baroque period], in *Magyar Művelődéstörténet*, ed. Sándor Dománovszky (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1940) (hereafter cited as *MM*) 4: 427-432; László Tóth, "A jubileumi bucsu kihirdetése Magyarországon 1776-ban" [The proclamation of jubilee in Hungary in 1776] *Századok* 62, 4-6 (1928): 646-665; Imre Wellmann, "Barokk és felvilágosodás" [Baroque and Enlightenment] in *MM* 4: 99.

²⁸ Zsolt Alszegehy, "A könyv és olvasója" [The book and its reader] in *MM* 4: 492-760; G. F. Cushing, "Books and Readers in 18th Century Hungary," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 47, no. 108 (1969): 33-77; Géza Fülöp, *A magyar olvasóközönség a felvilágosodás idején és a reformkorban* [The Hungarian reading public in the time of the Enlightenment and the Age of Reform] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1978), 24-28; Adorján Kulcsár, *Olvasóközönségünk 1800 táján* [Our reading public around 1800] (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1943), 31-69; József Szauder, *Az estve és az álom: felvilágosodás és klasszicizmus* [The night and the dream: the Enlightenment and Classicism] (Budapest: Szépirodalmi kiadó, 1970), 136-155; Dezső Kerecsenyi (ed.), *Régi magyar próza* [Old Hungarian prose] (Budapest: Magyar Szemle Társaság, 1942), 461.

Franz Liszt: A Bicentennial Tribute

Alan Walker

*From the cradle to the grave I remain
Magyar in heart and mind.*

Franz Liszt

*For the formation of the artist, the first pre-requisite
is the improvement of the human being.*

Franz Liszt

Liszt was once asked why he never wrote his autobiography. 'It is enough to have lived such a life as mine,' was his reply.¹ When we consider the rich complexities of his life, and the vast extent of his musical output, we realize that he spoke no more than the simple truth. He really was too busy living his life to write it.

Liszt's career unfolded in at least six different directions simultaneously. He was the world's greatest pianist; he was the composer of more than 1400 individual compositions; he was a charismatic teacher through whose hands more than 400 students are known to have passed, some of whom became eminent; he was an orchestral conductor who introduced a new range of body signals on the podium, which still leave their mark on conductors today; he was a director of international music festivals, designed to promote the music of his great contemporaries, Wagner, Berlioz, Schumann and others; and finally he was a writer of books and articles, some of which contain deeply philosophical observations about music and musicians.

To excel in any one of these fields would be reason enough for celebration. But to excel in them all makes Liszt possibly unique. He leaves us no choice but to describe him as a genius. But the moment we introduce that tired, overworked term (which has almost fallen out of use in the banal world of equivalence in which we live today) we run the risk of retreating into platitudes. When I use the word genius I am not thinking of anything vague. I am thinking of the differential diagnosis that Arthur Schopenhauer made in his famous commentary 'On genius versus talent'.

‘A talent,’ Schopenhauer wrote, ‘is like a marksman who can hit a target that the others cannot hit. A genius, is like a marksman who can hit a target that the others cannot even see.’²

All his life Liszt was hitting targets that the others could not even see.

In all six fields that I have mentioned Liszt did something new. He introduced the solo piano recital even giving it the name ‘recital’. In the field of composition he introduced new genres such as the Symphonic Poem, and he developed the harmonic language of music, pushing it to the brink of atonality.

As for teaching, he introduced the concept of the masterclass, which is alive and well in pedagogical circles today. On the orchestral podium he was far more than a simple time-beater, and at a time when it was a minor triumph to get the band to start and finish together, he was able to bring out the nuances of orchestral performances through a new range of body-signals. As a director of music festivals he showed uncommon diplomatic skills in bringing players and singers to Weimar from across Thuringia — Jena, Eisenstadt, and Erfurt — to form large festival orchestras of 150 players or more and choirs of 200 singers. And finally, while all this was going on, he was writing pamphlets and books, which reveal his philosophy of music and contain some timeless aphorisms about music and musicians.

It was well said of Liszt that had he not been a musician he could have become the first diplomat in Europe. And he had the skills to do it, to say nothing of the contacts. His position in the world of musical diplomacy was well illustrated when he went to London, in 1840. He mixed with high society, met royalty, including Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and had an encounter with Lady Blessington, an intimate of Lord Byron, and whose claim to literary fame still rests on her ‘Conversations with Byron’. She examined Liszt through her lorgnette, admired what she saw, and exclaimed: ‘What a pity to put such a man to the piano!’³ That was at the beginning of the Victorian era, when the career of a musician was not considered to be a suitable activity for a gentleman. Even so, the remark went deeper than we may realize. Liszt’s diplomatic skills were already well honed. He had assumed a position of leadership in the profession of music. When Liszt walked on stage wearing his medals, and his clanking sword of honour given to him by the Hungarian nation, it was not merely to display them to the world, but rather to raise the status of musicians everywhere. ‘Here’, he seemed to say, is a musician with as many decorations and titles as a prince.’

Consider his famous reply to Tsar Nicolas I of Russia when the two men had their first encounter in St. Petersburg, in 1842. Nicolas made a noisy entrance during one of Liszt’s recitals, and continued chatting to his entourage

during the performance. Liszt stopped playing and sat before the keyboard with bowed head. When Nicolas inquired why he had stopped, Liszt replied: 'Music herself should be silent when Nicolas speaks.' The remark has earned a place in the annals of musical diplomacy. It is also said to have cost Liszt a medal. As Sacheverell Sitwell pointed out, it was the first time in history that 'Music herself' had answered back.⁴

Finally, a much more private incident concerning Robert Schumann, which throws light on Liszt the man: Liszt visited the Schumanns in Dresden, in 1848, and got into an argument about the merits of Felix Mendelssohn who had just passed away. Schumann became so agitated in defence of Mendelssohn that he struck Liszt on the chest and disappeared from the room. Liszt calmly turned to Clara Schumann with the remark, 'Please tell your husband that he is the only man in the world from whom I would accept such behaviour.'⁵ Again we observe the diplomatic grace under pressure, so typical of Liszt the man. These anecdotes, with their verbal adroitness, suggest that he was cut from the same cloth as an ambassador, a man for all seasons, someone with a suitable remark for every occasion.

In the third volume of my life of Liszt I tried to enumerate all the titles and medals that Liszt received during his long and productive life. Altogether I counted forty-eight, and I am sure that the list is incomplete. Even so, it ranges from an Austrian knighthood to the Freedom of the City of Weimar; from Commander of the French Legion of Honour to the Hungarian Sword of Honor; from the Order of St. Michael of Bavaria (bestowed on him by King Ludwig II) to the Freedom of the City of Jena. It would be an impressive enough catalogue for an aristocrat. For a musician it probably remains unmatched in history.⁶

Towards the end of his life, when his pioneering battles to secure a better deal for musicians had been won, Liszt noticed that such decorations were being devalued, especially by the French, because unworthy people were now receiving them. That explains his acid remark: 'Whenever you are in Paris you *must* wear your medals, otherwise you are so noticeable on the boulevards.' And behind it all was his watchword: 'Génie oblige!' — 'Genius carries obligations!' Because music is a gift of Nature, even of God, Liszt argued, we have a duty to give something back. During his lifetime a river of gold poured in. But a river of gold also poured out. Liszt gave generously to a variety of humanitarian causes: to the victims of the Danube floods; to the casualties of the great fire of Hamburg; to the building fund of Cologne Cathedral; to the foundations of schools and music conservatories; and to the erection of statues to Beethoven and Bach. He also did much good by stealth, giving money anonymously to people who needed it but did not know him.

And it is well-known that Liszt never charged a penny for his lessons. One of the more touching scenes from his sunset years comes to us from his Hungarian pupil Janka Wohl. She recalls seeing him sitting at his desk putting bank notes into envelopes and addressing them to people in Budapest who had pleaded with him for financial help. It is a small wonder that as he approached old age, having divested himself of a fortune, Liszt faced a life of genteel poverty. And he did it willingly.

What drove him to occupy such a position? Underpinning his view of music as an ethical force (for that is surely the deeper meaning of his imperative ‘Génie oblige!’) was a profound and unusual theoretical picture of Art. Music, for Liszt, was a *vocation*, a calling, a term of which we hear hardly anything today. He argued that music must never be confused with a mere trade, although it frequently is. The butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker can all exchange places with one another; but not one of them can exchange places with a musician. No one is called upon to become a candlestick-maker! Even in Liszt’s time, there were candlestick-makers in the profession. And there are many more today, people for whom music is just a job of work, a way of making money. Liszt despised them. He even accused them of ‘Mammon worship’. They not only lacked a sense of vocation, they lacked what he called ‘a sacred predestination’ — that sense of destiny which marks the artist from birth. ‘It is not *he* who chooses his profession — it is his profession that chooses *him*’, he observed.⁷ If we think this through, it would mean that one could no more determine to become a musician than one could determine the colour of one’s eyes. You may develop your talent, but you cannot develop what was never given to you in the first place. This is a deeply Freudian notion, and Freud himself found the words for it in his timeless aphorism, ‘We are lived’. We are not drawn from in front but pushed from behind. Such a fatalistic notion was not unknown even to Arnold Schoenberg, who once declared that the true musician is in the grip of forces he cannot understand but has no alternative but to obey.

It should come as no surprise to learn that a musician who believed that music was God-given should have practiced what a later generation would call ‘music therapy’. For Liszt was music’s ambassador to the poor, the sick, and the down-trodden as well. Even as a young man Liszt visited hospitals, insane asylums, and prison-cells containing those condemned to die. He brought music to society’s outcasts, and gave those unfortunates a degree of comfort in their hour of distress. The gripping accounts of his visits to the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris, in 1833, where his piano-playing eased the symptoms of an incurably autistic woman, and to the insane asylum in Cork,

Ireland, in 1841, make haunting reading today. When he entered the asylum in Cork, it was with the intent of playing the piano to the inmates — his usual practice. But it did not happen. He was so overcome at the horrors he witnessed that after a time he was obliged to withdraw. About thirty females were confined to one area, some howling, some bent up like animals, some scraping the walls, others rolling on the stone floor. To this menagerie of depraved human beings Liszt was offering the balm of music. We cannot begin to imagine what his distinguished contemporaries Brahms, Wagner, Mendelssohn or the fastidious Chopin would have made of this dreadful scene.⁸ Without exception they would not have gone near the building.

The musician, then, was for Liszt somewhat like the priest: a chosen intermediary between God and Man. We could almost call him a spiritual ambassador. Music was a divine fire that he brought down to earth from heaven, to enable the huddled masses to warm their spirits and enrich their souls. In a memorable phrase, Liszt once defined the musician as ‘the Bearer of the Beautiful’. And when he was asked how the artistic personality itself should be fostered, he gave a reply that cannot be bettered. ‘For the formation of the artist, the first pre-requisite is the improvement of the human being.’⁹

These were among the ideas that Liszt took with him to Weimar, where he settled in 1848. He had already given his last piano recital for money in Elisabetgrad, in Ukraine, and in the early part of 1848 he took up fulltime duties in Weimar, bearing the grand title of ‘Kapellmeister-in-Extraordinary’, with a salary that was so small he called it his ‘cigar money’. And it did indeed just about cover the cost of the cheap cigars that Liszt smoked and regularly handed out to his friends. But Weimar had attractions for Liszt. It had an orchestra, an opera house and a strong theatrical tradition. It was the city of Goethe and Schiller, and Liszt wanted to restore the city to its former glory. He wanted it to become, as he put it, ‘The Athens of the North.’

In Weimar Liszt’s diplomatic skills were put to wonderful advantage. Here, if anywhere, we may call him ‘A Cultural Ambassador’. He not only mustered the whole of Weimar’s musical resources, but those of the province of Thuringia as well. He reached out to the satellite towns of Jena, Eisenach, and Erfurt, and brought them all into his orbit. He often pooled their orchestras and choirs and put on great Wagner and Berlioz festivals with combined forces of 150 players and choruses of 200 singers or more. His work in behalf of both composers is well known. What may not be so well known is that when Liszt decided to mount the world premier of *Lohengrin*, an opera that Wagner had dedicated to him, he was obliged to arrange 46 rehearsals of this complex work before everything came together. If you read the background

correspondence, you see that this premier performance really did make him worthy of the title of 'diplomat'.

Like the good ambassador that he was, Liszt also formed a number of musical societies for the promotion of modern music. He established the 'Neu Weimar Verein' in the 1850s. It was a kind of musical club that held regular meetings in Weimar's Erbprinz Hotel; it had an executive committee, a constitution, and even a newsletter called 'Die Laterne' — or 'The Lantern' — by whose light the members were presumably meant to find their way. Its local members included Peter Cornelius, Joachim Raff, Hans von Bronsart, and Alexander Ritter. The out-of-town members included Hector Berlioz, Joseph Joachim, Karl Klindworth and Richard Wagner.

In 1859 came the Allgemeine Deutsche Musikverein, a national organization intended to put 'The Music of the Future' on the map. It became one of the most powerful musical organizations in Germany. It still exists today. Liszt was its first president, and he remained in this elevated office for 25 years. After his death the Presidency was assumed by Richard Strauss.

These organizations involved Liszt in an enormous amount of labour. And in order to undertake this vast amount of administrative work he often had to shelve his own musical activities until a better moment came along. Let us not forget that during all the time he was conducting new works, teaching, composing, and burying himself in letters and messages connected with his various festivals, he was also writing books and articles. The articles usually took the form of topical commentaries on works and composers that were being featured in the upcoming Weimar concerts, and they served as programme-notes. There were essays on Schumann, Schubert, Wagner, Robert Franz, Berlioz, Beethoven, John Field and Gluck. And at the height of all this activity he also found time to bring out his edition of the Complete Beethoven Sonatas, and an edition of the Nocturnes of John Field. Later on he would produce collected editions of Schubert and Weber as well, and he also joined the editorial team of Breitkopf and Härtel's Complete Chopin Edition.

It is during the latter part of Liszt's life that his image as the 'grand seigneur' of music emerges in all its fullness. That shock of flowing white hair, the lined but kindly face, the piercing green/gray eyes, the abbé's collar, and the overwhelming sense of authority that emanated from everything that he did, gave him an aura that all who bathed in it never forgot. Two images come to mind. In 1867 Liszt attended the first performance of his 'Coronation' Mass in the Matthias Kirche, in Budapest. The Emperor Franz Josef and his entourage were present, together with many high-ranking dignitaries of the courts of Hungary and Vienna. At the end of the performance, as everybody

streamed out of the Church, crowds lined the road all the way through the Castle area and down to the Danube, there to see the Emperor. Suddenly Liszt appeared at the main door of the church and walked slowly through the ranks of the massed crowds. A great roar of acclaim went up as he was recognized. 'Not *like* a King,' one of his compatriots observed, 'but *as* a king!' The other image comes to us from Busoni, who once remarked that the Grand Duke of Weimar had told him that 'Liszt was what a prince *should* be.'¹⁰ And we are reminded, too, of Liszt's own words about nobility: 'It is better to *become* noble than to be born noble.'¹¹ By now, much of the musical world was turning to Liszt for help and support. He was weighed down with an avalanche of correspondence, mostly from people he never met but who wanted his support. He tells us that he received upwards of 50 letters a week. 'Some write for money, some ask for letters of reference, some ask for concerts and for decorations, others send parcels of their manuscripts for me to read.'¹² He called it 'playing Providence'. A lesser man would have ignored everything, but Liszt usually replied. That is one reason we now have well over 11,000 extant letters from him to hundreds of correspondents.

When we survey Liszt's life complete, and compare it with the lives of his great contemporaries — Chopin, Schumann, Brahms, Berlioz, Verdi, and above all of Wagner — we see at once what makes him different. They were ambassadors only for themselves. Liszt was an ambassador for others. Can we imagine Berlioz as the President of the Allgemeine Musikverein? Can we imagine Chopin as a writer of books and articles about other musicians? And can we imagine Wagner as a fund-raiser for needy musicians? It could not have happened. Wagner, after all, was the first Wagnerian.

With the passing of time Franz Liszt has come to be seen as the paragon of much that is best in the profession of music. We don't really know him if we see him merely as the world's greatest pianist, or as the 19th century's most experimental composer, or as its most charismatic teacher. It is only when we see him as the cultural ambassador for his generation that his exceptional personality shines forth in all its totality. Liszt was a powerful historical force. He made things happen. Voltaire used to say that if God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him, otherwise how to explain the complex world around us? If I may be allowed to borrow that image, I would say that if Liszt had never existed it would be necessary to invent him, otherwise much of what happened in the 20th century would remain inexplicable. By putting Liszt back into history, his importance in the general scheme of things stands revealed.

Are Liszt's thoughts about music and musicians out of touch with the world in which we live today? Are they relevant to our everyday existence as

artists? Are they, in a word, too ‘romantic’? In my opinion we banish them to time and place at our peril. That would subject us all to an irreplaceable loss. Music and musicians surely function best when placed in the service of a cause somewhat higher than self-interest. We need constantly to remind ourselves that if the art of music is to have a meaningful future, if it is to rise above the level of a mere trade, it must surely look to its past, and to those ideas that Liszt was not only the first to articulate but also the first to put into practice.

NOTES

This essay is the text of an inaugural address delivered at the International Liszt Congress “Liszt and the Arts” held in Budapest, November 17-20, 2011. Alan Walker also delivered an address with the title “Franz Liszt: The Cultural Ambassador of the 19th Century” by way of introducing a recital entitled “Liszt the Voyager” by Valerie Tryon (piano), at Memorial Hall, University of New Brunswick, May 28, 2011, during the annual meeting of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada. The event was co-sponsored by the Canada-Hungary Educational Foundation. See the appendix.

¹ Janka Wohl, *François Liszt: Recollections of a Compatriot*, translated by B. Peyton Ward (London, 1887), 88.

² Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, translated by E.F.J. Payne (London and New York, 1966), vol. 2, p. 391.

³ Marie d’Agoult, *Correspondance de Liszt et de la Comtesse d’ Agoult*. Edited by Daniel Ollivier, 2 vols. (Paris, 1933-34), vol. 1, p. 433.

⁴ Sacheverell Sitwell, *Liszt* (London, 1934; rev. ed. 1967), 121.

⁵ Berthold Litzman, *Clara Schumann: Ein Künstlerleben* (Leipzig, 1902-08), vol. 2, pp. 121-22. Also, Jensen, *Robert Schumanns Briefe*, p. 523.

⁶ For a comprehensive catalogue of Liszt’s various distinctions, see Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years, 1861-1886* (New York, 1996), 549-51.

⁷ Lina Ramann, ed., *Franz Liszts Gesammelte Schriften*, 6 vols. (Leipzig, 1880-83), vol. 2, p. 135.

⁸ It is described in graphic detail in the diary of the singer John Orlando Parry, with whom Liszt toured the British Isles in the winter of 1840-41. See David Ian Allsobrook, *Liszt: My Travelling Circus Life*, pp. 144-45.

⁹ Ramann, *Franz Liszts Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 195.

¹⁰ Ferruccio Busoni, *The Essence of Music*, trans. Rosamond Ley (London, 1957), 138.

¹¹ Julius Kapp, *Liszt-Brevier* (Leipzig, 1910), 92.

¹² Edward N. Waters, ed., *The Letters of Franz Liszt to Olga von Meyendorff, 1877-1886*, translated by William R. Tyler (Dumbarton Oaks, 1979), 213.

Appendix

From the Program of the Opening Event of the 26th Annual
Conference of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada
at the 2011 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences of
Canada. Memorial Hall, University of New Brunswick,
Fredericton, N.B., May 28th 2011

LISZT THE VOYAGER

**a recital by
Valerie Tryon (piano)**

FRANCE

O, quand je dors, S. 536

SWITZERLAND

Au bord d'une source, S.160
(Années de pèlerinage, 'Suisse')

GERMANY

Wagner-Liszt: 'Isolda's Liebestod' from *Tristan*, S. 447

ITALY

Venezia e Napoli, S. 162
Gondoliera
Canzone
Tarantella
(Années de pèlerinage, 'Italie,' Supplement)

(Appendix, continued.)

Intermission

ENGLAND

God Save the Queen

RUSSIA

Alabieff-Liszt: 'The Nightingale', S. 384

AUSTRIA

Schubert-Liszt: 'Ave Maria', S. 558, no. 12

THE VATICAN

Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este, S. 163
(Années de pèlerinage, vol. III)

HUNGARY

Hungarian Rhapsody no. 11, in A minor, S. 244, no. 11

Budapest and Its Heroines in *Fin-de-Siècle* Hungarian Literature

Agatha Schwartz

The end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, generally referred to as the *fin de siècle*, brought about dramatic shifts in the development of many a European city. Budapest experienced a rapid modernization as it was redefining itself as the capital of a nation that had finally acquired self-government after centuries of Habsburg domination. With the 1867 Compromise, Hungary received its long-coveted autonomy, and shared only foreign affairs, defence, and common customs and revenue policies with the Austrian half of the Habsburg state (Dreisziger 27). Budapest¹ became the fastest growing city of the Dual Monarchy. Between 1870 and 1910, its population tripled in size, from 270,685 to 863, 735 (Sármány-Parsons 85), a rate of growth nine times faster than that of the country as a whole. Hungary needed to validate a capital different from Habsburg Vienna. Thus Budapest quickly developed into one of the most modern cities of Europe and into Hungary's true economic and cultural centre. Its public transportation system was ahead of many other European cities: Budapest had an electrical tramway as early as 1889 and, in 1896, Swiss engineers built the first underground railway in continental Europe (Johnston 344). New boulevards crossed the centre of the city and many new buildings were erected, including the Parliament building, which was finished in 1902 and became the largest Parliament building in the world at the time (Lukacs 49).

These developments were coupled with a blossoming in *high* as well as *low* culture: literature and the arts, coffee houses, restaurants with *gypsy* music, and theatres with operettas flourished. Thus for the upper classes, Budapest represented a happy picture, a "dream world" (Frigyesi 4). This new metropolis also attracted a new kind of bourgeoisie, different from the Viennese. The Budapester bourgeoisie was more of a parvenu type, younger and less established than the old *Bildungsbürgertum* and *Besitzbürgertum* of Vienna (Hanák 157) and essentially started to be formed only after the Compromise (Pynsent 123). It was mainly composed of German and Jewish

ethnicities, as well as some lesser Magyar nobility. All this gave Budapest an atmosphere very different from Vienna. This seemingly “semibarbaric country and place,” looked down on by many a Viennese intellectual, among them Freud, was, however, “breaking away from the nineteenth-century habits of thought, vision, manners and even speech” much faster and in different ways than old imperial Vienna (Lukacs 27-28).²

On the other hand, the rapid growth and process of industrialization that took place in Hungary within a few decades, went hand in hand with negative social developments. A huge gap existed in Hungarian society between its wealthiest and poorest segments: “In 1901, 36 percent of the population of Budapest lived in what was considered at the time “worrisome bad conditions, — that is, six or more persons per room” (Frigyesi 45), many in humid basement apartments. As many as one in three inhabitants were subtenants, renters of, at best, a crowded room or, worse, a bed or even mattress for the night (Lukacs 98). It is estimated that as much as about 65% of the population lived in poverty. Although by 1900 illiteracy rates had declined to about 10% in Budapest itself (Lukacs 100), in the rest of the country, illiteracy affected as much as 50% of the population. With these large contrasts, the description of Budapest as “a city between east and west, between feudalism and modernity” (Johnston 346) seems justified.

Budapest, like other cities, offered ample material for the artistic imagination. In literature and art the city is frequently seen as a “centre of *negative* meanings for subjective passions: for vice, the body, for power and property; the city as whore, the jungle, the slaughterhouse” (Scherpe 130, emphasis in the original). On the other hand, the representations of the city as a destructive and alienating organism often go parallel with a fascination for the metropolis and its many modern attractions. Ilona Sármany quotes *fin-de-siècle* critic and writer Zoltán Ambrus, who was in love with Budapest, comparing its youthfulness to a young lady: “I like that beauty of yours that is transitory and belongs to the devil, the beauty of your youth. Because you are the youngest metropolis, you are the young lady of the ballroom among all metropolises” (*Ecset*).³ Sármany expresses this love-hate relationship between Budapest and its artists and writers with the metaphor of the “stepmother capital” (*mostoha főváros*). Ferenc Molnár, who expressed strong social criticism of Budapest in his famous 1901 novel *Az éhes város* (The Hungry City), later adamantly defended his native city. In 1913, in a speech held at the celebration of forty years of the city’s unification, Molnár stood up in defense of Budapest against its many detractors (Sármany, *Ecset*). He countered those who opposed modernization and who accused Budapest of being “American, international, lacking patriotism and Hungarianness [...] undeserving of the

name ‘the country’s heart’.” And in 1911, he expressed his own love-hate relationship with Budapest in another article (qtd. in Sármany. *Ecset*). This co-existence of a fascination for the city coupled with criticism bordering on disgust is typical for many literary and artistic expressions of the time.

Numerous *fin-de-siècle* writers took up the theme of the city and the contradictions of modernity in their fiction, offering different forms and degrees of social criticism. In Hungarian literature of the period, social realism is present in the writings of several canonical authors. Other than the above-mentioned novel by Molnár, *Az éhes város*, Tamás Kóbor’s novel *Budapest* (1901) was one of the first to present “the conflict of the modern city” (Frigyesi 43). Unlike in Molnár’s novel, Kóbor’s main protagonists are women whose lives are broken in their struggle for a better life in the city. The same is true for their contemporary Sándor Bródy who published the collection of novellas *Erzsébet dajka és más cselédek* (Nanny Erzsébet and Other Maids) in the same year (1901). These writers and their narratives are well known in the Hungarian literary canon. With the exception of Margit Kaffka, much less known today are their female contemporaries who offered just as interesting and valid representations and interpretations of women’s lives in the big city, Budapest, and thus add another dimension to the image of the city at the turn of the century. In the following, I will discuss Kóbor’s *Budapest* and Bródy’s *Erzsébet dajka és más cselédek* along with the following novels: Szikra’s *A bevándorlók* (The Parvenus, 1898), Terka Lux’s *Budapest* (1908), Anna Szederkényi’s *Lángok, tüzek* (Fire and Flames, 1917), and Margit Kaffka’s *Állomások* (Stations, 1917). All these narratives offer a portrait of the city through the perspective of a female protagonist. Szikra and Kaffka choose hers from the gentry, Szederkényi from the middle class, Kóbor and Lux from the working class, and Bródy from the peasantry. I will discuss the narratives in a chronological order according to their publication date and examine them regarding their literary style and common themes, from which I will be drawing conclusions as to their place within Hungarian and European literature.

Szikra’s *A bevándorlók*

In the novel *A bevándorlók* (The Parvenus, 1898), Szikra offers a criticism of Budapest’s upper classes and their lifestyle. This was the author’s first novel. Szikra alias Countess Teleki was, for about a decade, Hungary’s most famous woman writer.⁴ Even though her fiction is largely forgotten today, it was acknowledged and positively received by many a contemporaneous literary

critic and historian. Thus István Boross mentions her satire and sharp observation. He notes her novels' refined and polished narrative structure (15-6). Jenő Pintér praises her realistic and satirical portrayal of the aristocracy's haughty demeanour (127-28). Jób Bánhegyi, on the other hand, stresses the well-drawn psychological portraits of her characters and points out her talent for acute observation (69). Nándor Várkonyi adds to the above Szikra's talent to render not only fine details but also more complex situations. He also notes her interesting storylines (322). Anna Fábri, one of the exceptional present-day scholars to take any notice of Szikra's literary work, establishes a link between Szikra's feminist essays and her fiction: "She qualifies, judges, summarizes, stresses — which means that she remains a publicist in her fictional writings as well" (172). It is true that Szikra imports some of her feminist ideas into her literary texts. However, this should not undermine their overall literary quality as acknowledged by the above-mentioned critics from the first half of the 20th century. While all these scholars recognize the social criticism present in Szikra's work, none of them, including Fábri, mentions her critical portrayal of gender relations.

In *A bevándorlók*, through the story of Mrs. Szob, who is nicknamed Mrs. Sznob by Budapest's high society, and her daughter Ilona, the reader witnesses the life and value system of the Hungarian gentry and nobility. Although Szikra also addresses the schism between the city and rural Hungary, she does it through satire of the social mores thus eschewing a black-and-white portrayal. The widowed Mrs Szob is portrayed as the descendant of an old yet impoverished Hungarian gentry family. Her highest aspiration is to marry off her daughter Ilona to a Hungarian nobleman and thus move up the class ladder. In order to carry out her plan, she is willing to squander her modest means and visits Budapest with Ilona for the season of the balls, that major site of husband-hunting. Although in this novel Szikra's main focus is not so much the criticism of the marriage market and the double standard it imposes on young women (and men), this topic at least fleetingly becomes the object of her mockery.

In Budapest, Mrs Szob does all in her power to keep up an appearance of wealth. Yet she still encounters an arrogant and cool reception, bordering on disdain, among the members of Budapest high society. Although, in some situations, she almost becomes a tragicomical character, she fails to elicit the reader's sympathy, not only because of her prejudice against people without a title or with a different religious background, but also because of her arrogance toward those coming from the lower classes. One example is the scene where she takes a fiacre with her daughter to visit a rich relative and cheats the driver of the appropriate payment: "Mrs Szob turned a five-forint bill eightfold and,

with a movement suitable for an aristocrat, slipped it into the driver's palm. Then she walked up the stairs with hurried steps. By the time the driver could realize what amount she had given him, Mrs Szob had disappeared" (Szikra 77). In this paragraph, we see Szikra's taste for details that reveal the character's psychology and moral flaws.

Szikra's satire of both the nobility and the gentry is all the more convincing as she herself was an aristocrat and thus knew the flaws of her own class first hand. She aptly describes their decadent lifestyle, their anti-Semitism, their thriving on gossip, their use of theatre as a social institution rather than an art, and, mostly, their alienation from the people and their problems. As Frigyesi points out, the "two nations" of feudal Hungary, the huge schism between the upper and lower classes, was still very much a reality at the turn of the century (45). Ilona becomes everybody's favourite dancer, as, coming from rural Hungary, she is the only one who really knows how to dance the *csárdás*. But Szikra also demonstrates the importance of class and wealth on the marriage market; when it comes to considering Ilona as a potential wife, the aristocratic suitors quickly withdraw, for, despite her beauty and the fact that she comes from an old family, she has no title nor can she count on a large dowry.

Imre, the only suitor who, despite his lack of a title and Mrs Szob's disapproval, persists in his pursuit of Ilona, refers to Budapest as "Snobopolis," because of "the people who live there, its architecture, its customs" (Szikra 230). Here Szikra offers a critical view of Budapest's rapid growth as a city. Imre equates the city's architecture with its inhabitants and their desire to appear bigger than they really are: "the only desire and aspiration of the majority of those living in the houses is to appear as more than what they are entitled to in reality. So it is only natural that the snobs have turned the country's heart into Snobopolis. Although, he added in a very serious tone, dear God, how little would it take to make Budapest the world's most beautiful city!..." (213). Through Imre's words, Szikra addresses the discrepancy between Budapest's fast development as a new capital and a national metropolis and the remnants of a provincial position and mentality within the larger context of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.⁵ She also confirms what John Lukacs says about the architecture of *fin-de-siècle* Budapest, namely, that it had a particular inclination for the neo-baroque style and lagged behind in modernism. Whereas in many European cities, including Vienna, a breaking away from traditional architectural styles had begun by 1900, in Budapest only a few modern buildings were built between 1903 and 1906: "It was not until 1910-11 that the first impressively modern buildings appeared in some of the Budapest side streets" (49).

But Szikra's criticism addresses more than simply a tendency in the city's architecture. It points out the fostering of appearances over authenticity. Budapest is presented as an artificial construct, a stage for a vanity fair. Moreover, Szikra implicitly thematizes the city's alienating mechanisms and thus anticipates some of Georg Simmel's ideas from his 1903 essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life." In this essay, Simmel reflects on the alienation and de-personalization that he sees as by-products of life in the modern city. Simmel describes as one of the major effects of city life a reserved attitude and indifference between individuals, producing "a slight aversion, a mutual strangeness and repulsion" (15) resulting in "quantitative relationships" (19). We can see these effects of the metropolis in Szikra's depiction of Budapest high society and the distrust its members have of each other. On the other hand, Szikra constructs Ilona and Imre, who both come from the "country," as more authentic and connected to their traditions and people and also capable of forming a relationship based on true love and respect rather than interest. One has to add that Szikra does not go as far as to embrace a conservative glorification of the "country" as the place of "true" Hungarian values in opposition to the city as a place of modernist decay. Such discourses were present in some of the literature on the city at the time as well, as we will see in Anna Szederkényi's novel *Lángok, tüzek*.

A bevándorlók offers a conventional happy end with Ilona marrying Imre, which confirms the novel's overall lack of pretentiousness on the formal level. Nevertheless, with its acute portrayal of class issues, of Budapest high society, its "blasé attitude" (Simmel 14) and alienation, this novel remains an important literary document of its time.

Tamás Kóbor's *Budapest*

Tamás Kóbor (1867-1942), who published the novel *Budapest* in 1901, addresses some of the same topics while also bringing in other ones.⁶ In *Budapest*, but also in other novels and short stories (as well as in journal articles), Kóbor puts social injustice under his scrutiny and demonstrates an acute awareness of social issues that were becoming rampant in the capital, such as rising poverty and sharp social differences: "Through the lives of many of his characters — most successfully in his novel *Budapest* (1901) — he depicts the appalling psychological and moral effects of poverty" (R. Horváth). Kóbor's literary style is closest to naturalism; Várkonyi sees it reminiscent of Zola with its thorough documentation (306-9). During his lifetime, Kóbor was called *the Hungarian Zola*.⁷ According to Antal Szerb, he

was the first Hungarian writer who “practised the naturalistic novel” (469 qtd. in Sánta). Aurél Kárpáti described Kóbor’s role in Hungarian literary history as one of the first writers who “discovered Budapest, the metropolis [...] for the Hungarian novel and who was one of the most talented writers in Hungarian literature to shape the novel with a social and psychological realism” (Kárpáti qtd. in Sánta).

In *Budapest*, the reader becomes acquainted with the city through the trials and tribulations of Éva, a young and beautiful woman from a working-class family that, as we find out much later, fell down the social ladder following the father’s death. Thus Éva carries much of her earlier middle-class upbringing, including her taste for nice clothes. Her name is chosen accordingly as the one who has been “banned from paradise” (Kóbor 7). Kóbor’s narrator likes to dialogue with the reader and invites him/her to follow him through the streets of Budapest and to visit the shops and meet the clientele that belongs to the various social strata. Kóbor aptly describes the mentality of the developing consumer society as one that creates false needs and fosters the upholding of appearance. Thus, similar to Szikra, Kóbor also constructs Budapest as a stage but one where only dramas and tragedies are played out. The vast social differences that separate the classes from each other feed the moral double standard, which becomes a major target of Kóbor’s criticism, replete with irony. Young women from the lower classes, like Éva, are shown to be the main victims of the upper-class men’s lifestyle that drags these young and still innocent girls into a life of financial dependency with no promise of marriage, ultimately leading to a road with no return. Kóbor offers a vivid (and ironic) picture of this double standard in the scene of the parliamentary session: “All along the ladies’ gallery one is surprised to see almost all the ladies that take their usual promenade along Koronaherceg Street around noon. And silently, with no interruption whatsoever to the country’s affairs, relationships are woven between the gallery and the council-room. By the time the agenda has been gone through, the following question has also been clarified: who will meet whom and where” (91). But Kóbor’s analytical eye delves deeper into the fallacy of the generally accepted moral double standard and demonstrates its fatal effects on the relationships between spouses that become rooted in lies and mutual manipulation. The city and its young money-economy become the backstage of various personal dramas and, ultimately, tragedies.

Through Éva’s love affair with a young politician who, for a while, breaks up their relationship when he marries a girl from his class, Kóbor presents an in-depth psychological portrait of the vicious circle of poverty, the alluring promises of money and luxury and their effects on social and moral

values. After she has become a “fallen” woman, due to her affair with Deméndy, Éva cannot go back to her previous lifestyle of honest but poorly paid work anymore. She must continue to keep up the appearances of a lady as this is what earns her a certain social prestige and, consequently, self-esteem. But that self-esteem gradually becomes mired in her ever growing disgust with her lifestyle. The love and admiration she at first felt for her lover turn into a desire for revenge over the fact that he rejected her for another, more “appropriate” marriage partner. Kóbor could have used this motif of revenge and constructed Éva as a *femme fatale* that destroys men with her charms. Instead, he masterfully shows how class is a much stronger factor in shaping such an unequal relationship in the scene when the former lovers meet again and Éva feels how Deméndy is her superior, her “master” (159). Ultimately, her only motivation to keep up their relationship becomes the simple yet very real need for money, for herself, her mother and her siblings. Yet despite the gradual emotional distance between Éva and Deméndy and Éva’s increasing dullness, she does not completely lose her sense of self-worth and the insight that ultimately, it is her lover and his class that have pushed her into this situation. This is most strongly expressed in Éva’s diatribe against the double standard she pronounces during her brief visit to the Deméndy residence in the presence of both her lover and his wife, Olga: “Wasn’t I also pure and respectable, like yourself, before he put his hands on me? And after I became his, lulled by his sweet words and treacherous affection, captivated by poverty, didn’t I remain faithful to him — to him? no, to myself — to this day? [...] But I have had no share in legal respectability because I am poor, a creature sold for money because I need it, money that you receive just as I do but you do not depend on it. This is the entire difference” (362). I do not agree with György Bodnár’s criticism that both Éva and Olga lack cohesion and thus become “the author’s mouthpieces” (*Budapest* 384). Both protagonists are portrayed as intelligent young women who are capable of making their own judgments.

Éva’s moral and emotional tragedy is completed in Olga’s tragedy that leads to the death of the latter. Olga is Kóbor’s ironic construction of a girl from a good family who takes the ideals of her upbringing literally in a Don Quixotesque way. Olga is purity and naivety incarnated although she lacks no intuition. She, the child-wife as she is often referred to given her petite stature, believes in total love between spouses and is passionately in love with her husband not knowing anything about his double life. While the reader gets to know the Budapest of the lower classes through Éva and her family and friends, Olga guides us through the realm of Budapest high society, their manors in Buda castle and their parties that are a horror for Olga. She is ridiculed by women of her own class, including her own mother, as her

innocence and genuine belief in true and exclusive love between the spouses are taken for a childish dream, a refusal to grow up and accept the “true” reality of marriage. Her dream world will soon be trampled down as her mother makes sure that she finds out about her husband’s affair with Éva. Olga’s demeanour completely changes after this discovery and she falls ill, an illness from which she will briefly recover only to die shortly thereafter. She becomes the sacrificial lamb on the altar of moral and class hypocrisy, a hypocrisy she condemns in her passionate outcry to her father: “So why don’t you teach your daughters about all this? [...] Why don’t you tell them that marriage is a brutish condition and why do you marry off a girl who is weak and ill?” (Kóbor 337). What Kóbor expresses here are genuinely feminist ideas, ideas that Hungarian feminists like Szikra amply discussed in their essays, articles and fiction, in which they criticized young women’s upbringing that did not prepare them for marriage and left them in darkness regarding sexuality.

Olga’s death is mirrored in the suicide of Éva’s brother Jani who is, similar to Olga, an idealist and cannot accept the city’s morally corrupt reality to which both of his sisters fall prey. He gives up his high hopes of finishing grammar school and, eventually, throws himself into the Danube.⁸ Thus Budapest’s mores are shown as being fatally destructive for young and innocent people from both the upper and lower classes.

This rather unflattering image of Budapest regarding its morality becomes even less flattering through the image an outsider, a young Englishman, Webston, paints of it. He describes Budapest as a “young, small town” whose people are very withdrawn, not at all welcoming and inviting toward foreigners (99); it is a city in which a foreigner gets sucked into its destructive night life and street acquaintances (100). Indeed, Webston becomes a victim of the city and of its hunger for money exemplified through his morally corrupt wife.

Kóbor’s Budapest is a Janus-faced creature. It shows one face during the day, the face of busy streets with busy shops that offer a mixture of cheap and luxury items produced with the “slave labour” (7) of the lower classes. At night, another Budapest comes to life. Éva and her brother Jani have a brief encounter with this Budapest during their search for their little sister, Sárka who has disappeared into Budapest’s night life. Jani is fascinated by the rapid change of scenes he observes, like in a movie, from his seat on the carriage pulled by galloping horses through the streets. What he sees is a city in which he does not recognize his city. The doors of the shops that are so busy during the day are now closed; dark and sleepy streets alternate with lively ones filled with light. Busy cafés with loud “gypsy” music and tables populated with

young men in the company of ladies pop up. Prostitutes walk up and down dark street corners. Poverty and richness alternate. However, Éva and Jani do not become *flaneurs* with the luxury of discovering their city leisurely.⁹ The rapid succession of images of which they catch a glimpse from their horse carriage reflect the urgency of their mission to find their little sister. They do not choose their stations in Budapest's night life according to their whims and at the spur of the moment, as a real *flaneur* would, but rather so as to follow Sárka's tracks. And their discoveries of Budapest-by-night are anything but that of a "dream world" as described by Frigyesi; they get a taste of the city's night life from the perspective of the women from the lower classes who are its victims. The impressions of this night face of the city are so dismal for young and innocent Jani that he will not recover from them anymore.

Similarly, what may appear as Éva's *flaneries* during the day when she walks up and down Koronaherceg Street and its various side streets is actually motivated by her economic needs to visit the shops where she can get credit to buy new shoes and clothes so as to appear seductive and win back her estranged lover. Her choice of cafés is also economically motivated as she can only afford, before she meets Deményi again, some small cakes in a cheap pastry shop. Thus although on the outside, she appears as a *flaneur*, a closer look reveals her dire situation. She does walk seemingly aimlessly and slowly (which are typical *flaneur* elements in her character, as pointed out by Györgyi Horváth, 171), but this only makes her an object of the many male *flaneurs'* voyeuristic pleasure. The city and its men do not become the objects of *her* voyeuristic pleasure. Rather, we see her route revolve around Koronaherceg Street that another writer of the time called "a modern slave market" (Circulus 85-6 qtd. in Gy. Horváth 169). Women walking the streets of Budapest is thus a class issue for Kóbor. "Respectable" women do not walk certain streets and those who are not so "respectable" always come from the lower classes and fall prey to the men of the upper classes. Koronaherceg Street is thus part of the general stage of the city on which young lower-class women's moral tragedies are initiated. This theatrical aspect of Kóbor's Budapest is completed in the fact that Éva, in the end, becomes a celebrated actress. She loses her authentic self on the city's metaphorical stage so as to continue her life playing out many inauthentic selves on a real stage.

Éva also stands for the consumer which Rita Felski refers to as "a key symbol of modernity" (68). Although Kóbor in general takes on a negative and critical attitude toward the emerging consumer society whose products are made with the "slave labour" (Kóbor 7) of the lower classes, through Éva we can see the ambivalent nature of consumerism and consumption. As Felski points out, consumption does not simply stand for alienation, but, rather,

involves “agency, imagination, and even work” (68). This can be seen in Éva’s efforts when, on her shopping sprees for the latest fashion items she goes a long way and uses all her skills to negotiate the price and extensions for her payments. However, this consumer behaviour, while opening up some space of agency for the woman, is also shown to be anything but synonymous with freedom, to paraphrase Arjun Appadurai (33 qtd. in Felski 69). Rather, we can say that Kóbor demonstrates how consumer society feeds into the maintenance of the moral double standard along class lines and offers no real alternative for the women of the lower classes.

As part of his diagnosis of the city’s various social ills, Kóbor also weaves in the widespread anti-Semitism in *fin-de-siècle* Hungarian society and he shows its presence among both the upper and lower classes. The few instances in which there is any mentioning of Jews are enough to convey the impression that they were considered outsiders. One example is in the recaption scene at the villa of Olga’s parents. The lady of the house complains that she has to receive a Jewish woman out of consideration for her husband, the count, because that Jewish woman’s husband is important at the bank where the count is president. She gets the following reaction from one of her guests: “So what? [...] Her husband is your husband’s house Jew, let her be your house Jewess” (121) (a laughter of all those present follows). Another scene reveals the anti-Semitism of the lower classes. Jani, while wandering down by the Danube, runs into one of his classmates who invites him to the swimming pool, offering to pay for him. Jani is thinking for a moment that he could borrow some money from him, but then he changes his mind with the thought: “Jewish boy!” (291). These brief encounters with anti-Semitism give the reader a taste of its wide acceptance and they complete Kóbor’s critical portrayal of *fin-de-siècle* Budapest.

Sándor Bródy’s *Erzsébet dajka és más cselédek*

The same year (1901) that Kóbor published the novel *Budapest*, Sándor Bródy brought out a collection of novellas with the title *Erzsébet dajka és más cselédek* (Nanny Erzsébet and Other Maids).¹⁰ Of all the writers discussed here, Bródy is the one whose name figures uncontested in all literary histories as very much part of the Hungarian literary canon and who, therefore, does not need too much introduction. György Rónay considered *Erzsébet dajka* to be the best of Bródy’s works. In this collection, Bródy thematizes the life of the urban poor with naturalistic frankness. I will discuss two novellas from this

collection: the title one, which is divided into three parts, and a shorter one with the title “Maris dada” (Nanny Maris).

Both novellas have the same plot: a young peasant girl who brings “shame” to her family by giving birth to a child out of wedlock is given the chance to “correct” her faux pas by being employed as a wet nurse by a well-off Budapest family and their young child. It is interesting to note that both Erzsébet and Maris have a baby girl of their own that they have to abandon back in their village so as to give their invigorating breast milk to a weak baby boy in Budapest. Thus Bródy’s explicit class criticism is expressed, ironically, by Erzsébet’s “master” (az ura) while he is trying to seduce her: “it isn’t just that we, the gentlefolk exploit the ancient forces of the peasantry” (“Erzsébet elbocsájtatik” 31). This is coupled with an implied gender criticism: the peasant baby girl has to be abandoned and, in the case of “Maris dada,” dies due to malnutrition whereas the upper-class baby boy thrives and is given a chance to grow up on the breast milk of the mother of that very same baby girl.¹¹ Although Erzsébet’s little girl does not die, this very same topic is addressed in the scene when Erzsébet meets with other nannies in the park and some mention that their own children have passed away.

Erzsébet’s encounter with the city outside of the confines of the family’s apartment and its immediate neighbourhood happens abruptly and from the perspective of the underdog when she is brutally thrown out of the house in the middle of the night: “She left barefoot, in one underskirt, into the unknown city, the autumnal slush, the moist dirt of untrodden paths” (37). This image of the city reflects her own social position at that point. The city she gets to know during that one night is the city of the dispossessed: prostitutes, poor students and workers. She has no knowledge of the streets her anger, confusion and fear take her to as she is trying to avoid the lascivious approaches of various “gentlemen” whom she gives a good telling off. Unlike Kóbor’s Éva and Jani on their night race through Budapest’s streets in search for their little sister, Erzsébet is running through the streets of Budapest, “the evil city” (49) aimlessly until she reaches the Danube. Here the reader gets tricked into expecting for a moment that she would end her young life by jumping in, but instead she meets two helpers, two poor students who guide her to an acquaintance from her village. She spends a bacchanalian night of dancing and drinking at her village acquaintance’s quarters. Bródy describes here one of those dwellings of misery John Lukacs refers to where several renters or subtenants share not only a room but sometimes just a bed for the night or the day, in shifts. In the early morning, the owner, a policeman appears on the scene offering his litany of drunken wisdom that foresees no end to the cycle of poverty: “a poor girl brings a poor child into the world and

this way poverty cannot die out” (“Erzsébet boldog lesz” 55). Following a marriage proposal coming from one of the subtenants, the former blacksmith of her village who had lost one arm, Erzsébet drinks a glass of wine with toxic phosphorus and ends her young life that way. Bródy’s irony here is twofold: on the one hand, the subtitle “Erzsébet boldog lesz” denotes a double meaning, “boldog” in the sense of “happy” but also in the sense of “blessed;” the promise of happiness turns into death implying that there is no possibility of a happy ending-narrative for the wretched. On the other hand, he masterfully demonstrates the power of class hierarchy that haunts the poor nanny all the way into the last image she sees before her death, an image of a child, not her own miserable, malnourished little girl but the fat baby boy she so lovingly cared for.

“Maris dada” is less dark in its ending although it shares, as mentioned above, some common elements with the previous novella. Here the city gets introduced right at the beginning when the nanny has to find a grocery shop off Andrassy Street. But during the whole winter, she has to live “imprisoned” (84) in the apartment, i.e. confined indoors so as to look after the baby night and day; she can merely catch a glimpse of Andrassy Street through the window and see the tramway, a symbol of modernity. In the spring, she receives the news about her baby girl’s passing away. Soon after, Maris goes for a walk and wants to find the Danube. Again, like in “Erzsébet dajka,” the reader gets tricked into thinking that she wants to commit suicide in her sorrow over the death of her child that she does not get to fully express. Maris walks in a *flaneur*-like way through the streets of Budapest, dressed in her best clothes. For a moment, Bródy paints an almost expressionist half-abstract picture of the city when he describes the mass of people in a square moving slowly like a snake and above them, a concentration of some twenty churches but whose towers the nanny cannot see (90). This picture could, however, be a product of the nanny’s imagination rather than coming from the narrator as Maris is in a state of extreme exhaustion, not having slept properly for months. Finally, she arrives at the Danube. There, she meets a soldier who takes her hand and they go for a walk together, like two *flaneurs*. When she goes home late in the evening, she gets heavily told off and even slapped by her “master.” But instead of despairing, she can finally get a good night’s sleep as the little boy is taken away from her. The novella ends on an ambivalent note when the nanny has to interrupt her sleep after all due to the baby’s bitter crying.

Bródy’s two novellas demonstrate the vulnerable position of these young village women who came to the big city so as to earn some money and send it home to their families. Whereas Erzsébet’s life in the city comes to a tragic end, Maris may continue her “career” as a nanny but with unforeseen

outcome. Bródy depicts a brutally naked picture of the life of the lowest in the city's jungle, a picture that did not always earn him a positive appraisal.¹²

Terka Lux's *Budapest*

Terka Lux casts a young working-class woman as the heroine of her novel that bears the same title as Kóbor's. Lux's *Budapest* was published in 1908.¹³ Lux, similar to Szikra, is one of those female writers whose name had been edited out of Hungarian literary history to receive some scant attention more recently (see Fábri; Sánta, "Schneider"; Földvári). However, Lux was a well-known author in her own time, praised by her contemporaries, particularly for her critical portrayal of Budapest and its social life (Bánhegyi 70). *Budapest* continues the mostly negative image of the city that we have found in the previous narratives. This novel is interesting for today's readers for several reasons. Lux not only attempts "to address the birth of the myth about the Hungarian capital which had grown into a metropolis" (Fábri 183), but she also represents Budapest as an organic creature living according to its own rules. In this, Gábor Sánta detects Kóbor's influence ("Schneider" 97). But, unlike Kóbor, Lux embodies her Budapest as a female. Such "allegorization" of the city as female, "as a quasi-organic body" (Weigel 177) is not only a quintessential part of city-literature but builds on a very long tradition, going as far back as the Bible, a tradition of a stereotypical representation of femininity in the process of civilization (see Escher 178). Lux's novel continues in this tradition of an allegorical personification of the city as female, but she, as shall be demonstrated, also modifies this tradition.

Her *Budapest* equates the city with the main protagonist, Fáni Schneider, as described in the introductory "Chat with the Reader" which offers an anticipatory summary of Fáni's life: "That beautiful, lovely, elegant, intelligent, cunning Budapest of light morals that has made a fantastic career. Her mother is a Slovak day-worker, her father a Swabian foreman-builder and she, the barefooted little Fáni Schneider with tousled, flying hair plays at first in the dusty streets of Rácváros and later in the former Saint Peter suburbs. She sings for drunken horse-dealers and fishmongers, then at the present Gizella square and at the German theatre, to finally become a Hungarian courtesan and grind innumerable legions of people with her beautiful teeth" (Lux 7). Through Fáni, Lux exemplifies Budapest's shifting identity as a young capital where many ethnic groups met and merged; a city that offered many possibilities for some but exercised a destructive effect on many others by "sucking out their blood and their brains," "breaking their bones" and "squandering their

fortunes” (8). All the negative characteristics associated with the city as listed by Klaus Scherpe and quoted earlier (vice, power, the city as whore, jungle, slaughterhouse) are thus present. Moreover, Budapest-Fáni is clearly defined as a *femme fatale*, a vamp, a seductive and destructive female. The modern city was often represented in such terms which reflects, according to Sigrig Weigel, the fears associated with modernity and the big city that threatened to “gobble up” the individual (see Escher 180). The *femme fatale* was a popular figure in American, English, French, and Austrian *fin-de-siècle* literature and arts, yet, according to Ilona Sármany (“A femme fatale”) virtually absent in Hungary, which makes this neglected novel all the more interesting and valuable a literary text of the Hungarian *fin de siècle*. The definition of the city as a *femme fatale* usually connotes decadence and decay. But Lux’s *Budapest* is not unequivocally defined in negative terms. Her narrator conducts a love-hate relationship with the city, thereby taking a position of ambivalence: “They say that he who criticises, doesn’t love. Maybe. But I love Budapest. It hasn’t done me any good, but I love it” (Lux 10).

The narrative is divided into several units, the first three of which follow the life path of Fáni on the streets of Budapest: “The Street in the Morning;” “The Street at Midday;” and “The Street at Night.” All three are allegories of Fáni’s own development. In the morning, when the air of the city is still “virginally clean” and the city itself “strong, fresh, good and honest” (18), Fáni is an innocent, attractive fifteen-year-old from a modest family background who is easily seduced by a “gentleman,”¹⁴ a sculptor, whose mistress she soon becomes. While her brother Szepi reads Marx and becomes interested in class struggle, Fáni becomes a “fallen woman” who reads novels with dubious moral content given to her by her lover. While Szepi blames capitalism and the imbalance in class power for his sister’s seduction, Fáni’s life gradually moves away from her family and her class. Following the rejection by the sculptor, she becomes the mistress of an old count, who invests in her education. Within a few years, Fáni becomes a refined and very beautiful young woman. This is the “midday” of her life, the most fulfilling part. But class interferes again when the count refuses to marry someone of a non-aristocratic background. This class double standard hurts Fáni very deeply and she bitterly accuses the city of having pushed her into a debased existence: “This city has lost me, has robbed me, now I will rob it myself!” (64). Her revenge is thorough, as she turns into Budapest’s most famous, desired yet feared *femme fatale*.

The *femme fatale* is usually associated with destruction as she steps out of the traditional roles set for women: “She has lost her capacity to love, and with it her role as wife and mother. She is now a mistress, beautiful but

profoundly unnatural" (Ridge qtd. in Pynsent 180). It comes as no surprise that in this, third, part of her development, the "night," Fáni becomes one with the city's nightlife and its unleashed ruinous passions. She is the object of everybody's fantasies and the main topic of conversation at every *soirée*, to the point of absurdity. But as such, Fáni objectifies men and manipulates their desire. By constructing Fáni as a *femme fatale*, Lux brings in a feminist perspective. It is significant that the figure of the *femme fatale* is used here by a female author as, traditionally, it is a creation of male literary and artistic fantasy.¹⁵ According to Carola Hilmes, the image of the *femme fatale* at the *fin de siècle* comes out of a romantic tradition which relies on the "mortification of the feminine" (Hilmes 28). Hilmes regards the sensual woman as a projection of the male imagination, an expression of both male desire and male fears. The *femme fatale* thus becomes the "other" of the male self and an expression of the crisis of that very same self (Hilmes 236). In texts written by male authors, the *femme fatale*, despite the fact that her actions of destruction are central to the narrative, is still put into the background for the sake of the male (anti)heroes (Hilmes 225). Fáni's destructive actions, on the other hand, are not only central to the narrative, but the story is also told from her perspective. She is a literary figure that embodies feminine power and tries to subvert male supremacy. Through Fáni's seductive games with men, Lux also unmasks the projection of male desires and fears upon women as embodied in the image of the modern city. She exposes male fantasies that project upon women the dualistic images of Madonna and whore, images that Lux associates with Christian mythology and its morals. Thus Fáni, under her angelic face, harbours devilish qualities. This dualistic aspect in Fáni stands as a metaphor for the city itself, for both the fascination and the horror it inspires. Only one of her suitors, a journalist, realizes that Fáni has not become evil by herself, but that men and their desire have turned her into this vengeful creature. Her devilishness inspires fascination mixed with horror as she stands in front of him; Lux underlines Fáni's devilishness through her physical appearance: "Like a tall, slim torch, her red silk dress with a long train was burning on her in flames, her black hair throwing sparks and her face white as marble or a lily put in the middle of a pool of blood, was casting a cold glow" (130). However, the fact that Fáni helps the city's poor, her class of origin, with the money she earns through her morally dubious lifestyle shows the complexity of her character that argues against a black-and-white assessment.

Fáni's actions, however, are far from being motivated by remorse, which leads the narrative away from a moralizing denouement. The only true motivating force in Fáni's life becomes her desire for power which she hopes to share with her brother Szepi, who, in the meantime, has become a socialist

MP. In her striving to achieve power, Fáni moves away from the frequent scenario of physical destruction or self-destruction typical for the *femme fatale*. Yet these aspirations are short-lived, as Szepi is shot dead by the brother of a young woman whom he had seduced — thus mirroring his sister's story. This repetition of the same scenario shows Lux's critical attitude toward socialism as an alternative to capitalism regarding moral decisions. Lux does not portray the people of the lower classes as morally superior to the upper classes; she does not take sides nor does she idealize any segment of society.

Fáni becomes a bored, lonely woman whose only pastime is spending large sums of money and occasionally visiting “her dead” at the cemetery — yet her heart, as suits a *femme fatale*, is empty: “and her coach carried Fáni through the dark, early winter morning, alone, toward an unknown future. On her head, she wore a red wig, her lips were coloured red and her heart was dead...” (211). Although Fáni, unlike many *femme fatale* characters, does not physically die, her inner devastation is representative, on the one hand, of the “mortification of the feminine” that Hilmes (28) has defined as a dominant trait of the *femme fatale* at the *fin de siècle*; on the other hand, it also stands for the effect that the city's destructive forces exert on the — here female — individual.

With this ending, Fáni's life, now having reached its “night,” continues to mirror the city, its ambiguous identity and morality as well as its unpredictable future. However, whereas at the beginning of the novel the city's portrayal was not wholly negative but, rather, contained elements of a love-hate relationship, the ending offers a purely negative vision for the future, with death as the dominant image. Such a vision of the city is reminiscent of German expressionism that often represented the city in very negative, even hateful tones as a phenomenon with “cannibalistic manifestations” (Hermann 61).

Anna Szederkényi's *Lángok, tüzek*

Anna Szederkényi's image of Budapest is a similarly negative one. Szederkényi was already a successful author and journalist when she published the novel *Lángok, tüzek* (Fire and Flames) in 1917.¹⁶ She draws a very clear dichotomy between the “country” and the city. Interestingly, she gives her heroine the same name as that of the heroine of an earlier novel, *Amíg egy asszony eljut odáig* (Until a Woman Goes That Far): Judit Koszorús. But unlike the earlier Judit, who is a teacher and ends up leaving a bad marriage to find her path to an independent life, the Judit of *Lángok, tüzek* is initially a twenty-year old middle-class woman who, in her thirst for knowledge, leaves

her small hometown to study philosophy in Budapest.¹⁷ Given her belief in the principles and ideas of women's emancipation and women's responsibility for their own actions, she becomes a member of the Modern Women's Association (Modern Nők Egyesülete). However, it soon becomes clear that the narrator is far from supportive of the free lifestyle Budapest offers a young woman like Judit.

The first target of criticism is the morality of the city, the ideology of "free love" that makes Budapest so attractive to young people; this "love from Pest" is "artificial love." It is a "contagious fever" that "in those days crept into young girls' pure souls and swept them away" (39). The narrator, disapprovingly, calls it a matter of fashion, similar to the easy-to-open dresses or women's short hair. The "love from Pest," which also sweeps Judit away in her affair with the painter Demeter, is represented as a purely physical passion which ultimately leaves the lovers strangers to each other and does not result in any deeper connection between them. This distance between Judit and Demeter is also shown in their addressing each other with the formal "you," *maga*. In the depiction of this relationship, Szederkényi embraces Simmel's position regarding the alienating and depersonalizing effect of the metropolis on human relationships. Moreover, particularly in phrases such as "The holy fire didn't warm them" or "Not the holy madness in the name of which even the hand of the murderer dripping with blood must be forgiven" (39), the narrator adopts a Christian moralizing voice.

The image of Budapest as a place of moral decay and degeneration becomes more pronounced as the novel unfolds. During a visit to her hometown, following several months of exposure to "love from Pest," Judit's white dress with a 5 cm slit showing her ankle as she walks causes general disapproval. We could see here a touch of irony on the part of the narrator in exposing small town petty bourgeois mentality. This vacillation between a critical attitude toward the city and one toward the "country" is reflected at this point in the narrative in Judit's inner struggle between the values of her upbringing and those of the city that she thinks she has adopted. In a conversation with Mihály, who will eventually become her husband, she defends Budapest and her decision to live there, citing the freshness of the life it offers her, the "new woman," the "female human being" (74) that she has become, versus the provincial dullness and the "silent dying" (73) she has fled. Unlike with Demeter, Judit and Mihály address each other with the informal *te*, which shows their proximity. Mihály speaks up in defence of country people in a patriotic voice. He compares the people from the village to the people of Budapest, who travel on fast trains yet in their confusion fail to see the whole picture around them. Country people, on the other hand, have

more stamina and steadfastness and are therefore able to “stand guard” (75) for Hungary, as opposed to the “moderns” of Budapest who are not capable of producing any lasting truth. Although, during this conversation, Judit continues to defend life in the city for giving her a chance to be herself, her tone becomes less persuasive, her silences longer and her speech more lethargic. Gradually, she comes to the recognition that she belongs to the village, and that Budapest and its values have only been an aberration. The initial ideal of the strong, independent woman gives way to the desire to be led by Mihály’s strong arm. Thus, the criticism of the city and of modernity not only has a nationalist tone attached to it, with the idealization of rural Hungary, but is also accompanied by a re-embrace of a traditional ideal of femininity.

This is further stressed by the satirical portrayal of the leader of the Modern Women’s Association, who wants Judit’s support for their general meeting concerning trafficking in women.¹⁸ Szederkényi portrays the leader of the association with all the stereotypical attributes that antifeminists have used to ridicule feminists: she is physically unattractive, an “old maid,” and has absolutely no style in fashion or behaviour. All the other women who work in the association are represented in the same manner as well. Moreover, the whole feminist cause is ridiculed as a pastime of wealthy women who only throw around empty slogans but have no real platform for action and do not help women in need.

Judit’s last visit to the Modern Women’s Association only strengthens her already half-formed decision to leave the city and move back to the country where “firm” values await her and where she will be safe from various temptations. The conversation with her father upon her arrival concludes the return of the errant daughter: “So you are back, my dear daughter? – I am, father. – Have you had enough of studying? – Enough, father. – I had the blue room prepared for you. Máríka will help you unpack. I knew it would end like this. A girl needs a bonnet,¹⁹ not scholarship” (157). The one element of emancipation that Judit will keep is to be allowed to speak occasionally in an erudite way as a proof of her studies of philosophy. Yet overall, the voice of traditional, rural family life and conventional romance triumphs, with Judit marrying Mihály and giving birth to their child. This superiority of rural Hungary and of traditional values and lifestyles is also apparent in the act of Mihály “forgiving” Judit her pre-marital affair with Demeter. Moreover, rural Hungary’s vitality is also emphasized in the symbolic slaying of the city and its decadence when Demeter, the “modern” and “decadent” one, jumps under the train conducted by Mihály, the “traditional” and “stable” one. Thus in this novel, Szederkényi adopts a discourse of nationalism that was rising in Hungary around 1900, a new nationalism that regarded Budapest as “corrupt,

antinational, destructive, decadent” (Lukacs 186) and was anchored in a nostalgic view of a semi-feudal Hungary in which an ineradicable gap separated the capital (with its high percentage of a non-ethnic Magyar population) from the rest of the country.²⁰

Margit Kaffka’s *Állomások*

Margit Kaffka adopts a very different view of the city in her novel *Állomások* (Stations), also published in 1917, only a year before the author’s death.²¹ Kaffka has been called Hungary’s most prominent woman writer to date (Bodnár, *Színek* 297).²² Moreover, as Steven Tötösy notes, she is a “canonized woman author” (77, emphasis in the original), the only one among those discussed here, and one of the few in Hungarian literature altogether, although certainly not the only woman writer in Hungarian literature of the *fin de siècle* to have introduced in her fiction the struggles of the “new woman.”

Állomások has been repeatedly read as a *roman à clef* (see Bodnár, *Állomások* 542) and its protagonists have been linked to famous real-life figures of the modernist *Nyugat* circle in particular. But, as Bodnár rightly points out, this is not the most important value of the novel. Kaffka certainly shows the lifestyle of the “Budapest *bohème* [...] the small circle in which writers, artists, journalists, sociologists and those snobs rubbing against them lived” (Schöpflin qtd. in Bodnár, *Állomások* 545). Aladár Schöpflin also praises Kaffka’s ability to simultaneously move around about a hundred different protagonists, some more central, some more marginal to the plot, and her skilful placing of them into the novel’s structure (546). As in her other two novels (*Színek és évek*, 1912, translated into English as *Colours and Years*, and *Mária évei* [Mária’s Years], 1913) that, along with *Állomások*, are often considered Kaffka’s trilogy about the struggles *fin-de-siècle* women of the impoverished gentry faced, the author addresses these struggles from a woman writer’s perspective. Bodnár acknowledges that she dissects these struggles with such refinement of which a male writer would have never been capable (543). In *Állomások*, Kaffka yet again takes up the theme of the difficulty, not to say impossibility of happy male-female relationships. Yet unlike the two heroines from her previous two novels, Éva Rosztoky does not become ground up in an unhappy marriage nor does she end her young life. Rather, following her divorce, she chooses the independent life of a single mother and artist. Thus with this novel, Kaffka opens up a new perspective for women of her time (and class), a perspective that particularly life in the

metropolis, Budapest, made possible. She thus presents a more diversified image of Budapest than the narratives discussed before.

Kaffka herself called *Állomások* “a great novel about Budapest” (Bodnár, *Kaffka* 227) and others have also acknowledged that she presented here a most complete picture about the cultural life of *fin-de-siècle* Budapest (Horváth Gy. 175). The reader gets to catch a glimpse of the meeting sites of the cultural elite of Hungarian modernism in cafés, galleries, ateliers, at house parties, and of their promenades along Andrásy Boulevard in Pest or the *Halászbástya* in Buda castle. Much like in Kóbor’s or Szikra’s novels, a tension between a search for authenticity and the upholding of appearances in the big city and its consumer mentality are also present. This can be seen, for instance, in the different approach to life and art between Éva and her former husband. For Éva’s former husband everything is but an article for pleasure, nothing has lasting value, including a woman’s body. Kaffka weaves in a criticism of the sexual double standard when she has Éva distance herself from the man who never truly loved her and who continued his bachelor lifestyle during their marriage as well. But her criticism extends to one of the developing consumer society in general in which everything and everybody has but a market value attached to it. And Kaffka demonstrates how it is very difficult to escape from this pressure, despite Éva’s stubborn insistence on authenticity. As Györgyi Horváth has demonstrated, it is precisely Éva’s attempt to create art that does not fit into the expectations of the market that pushes up her market value for a while (183). This attempt to resist the power of consumer society’s values extends to Éva’s refusal to use her femininity as a tool on the marriage market. Following her divorce, she turns down another marriage proposal precisely because it comes in the form of an open business proposal: my money and social status for your youth and beauty. It is important to point out the class aspect that gives Éva the power to turn down such a lucrative proposal. Éva Rosztoky does not *have* to sell her body to a man she does not love, unlike Kóbor’s Éva or Lux’s Fáni who come from the very bottom of society. She can be a respected woman and artist while keeping unwanted suitors at a distance.

More and more, Éva moves toward a single lifestyle. Her gradual confirmation of such a lifestyle is reflected in her attempts to use the city as a *flâneur* who can walk its streets undisturbed and frequent art shops and cafés. But Kaffka points out that the space for the female *flâneur* was still rather limited and thereby confirms what Anke Gleber has observed about the situation of the female *flâneur* at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Even though in most big European cities public spaces became relatively open for the single woman, the perception of her presence in those

spaces was changing very slowly. Single women on the street and in cafés, in particular (as seen in Kóbor's novel), were generally perceived as “easy women” and as “available” and would often be approached by men. Thus it comes as no surprise that Kaffka's Éva feels uncomfortable in cafés on her own. She travels to Italy where she is hoping to have more of a chance to discover towns on her own. She seeks anonymity, something Budapest could not give her. She purposely avoids meeting Hungarian acquaintances and takes routes that cannot bring her in contact with anybody she knows. But even in Italy, she is occasionally harassed with words or looks. Kaffka thus confirms that the city and its women still largely belonged to the male voyeuristic pleasure. The only time Éva Rosztoky does not feel objectified because of her sex is in the German artists' colony near Munich where she feels she is being perceived more than just a woman: “I never once noticed that any of them would have seen in me anything but a *human being*, or that they would have given away anything like that; they drink, just like other students, a lot of beer but, goodness, they don't constantly bring their masculinity into the conversation” (*Allomások* 513, emphasis in the original). Kaffka implicitly expresses the hope for a new kind of male-female relationship, one based on equality, mutual respect, and camaraderie. The fact that she lets her heroine remain single speaks to her lack of trust that, in her time, such relationships were possible in Hungarian society.

However, Éva's single lifestyle opens up a new, clearer perception for her of her city, Budapest: “How *well one can look* at everything when one walks alone! ... How beautiful this world is!” (538, emphasis in the original). But, in the same monologue, Kaffka puts into Éva's mouth the same love-hate attitude toward Budapest seen in other narratives of the period as well: “Oh this city; ‘the hungry city, the poisoned city!’ as the poor late young poet Berei said it. Where is that contagious substance, the mushroom of decay [...] that with a rabid speed makes decompose, fall apart or crumble every beautiful, good and promising beginning? And where do all these dear scents and colours come from, the sad and kind beauty that makes us love it so much despite everything?” (538). In the beauty of springtime that she enjoys in her city, Éva is not afraid of solitude anymore and she embraces life.

Conclusion

In all Hungarian narratives analysed above we could see a critical portrayal of *fin-de-siècle* Budapest. The authors depict their capital as a place of both aversion and fascination, painting it often in a negative light and as a source of

numerous conflicts, struggles and shifting identities. Budapest is represented as a site of decadence which exercises a destructive force on those wanting to belong to it, usually by such means as trying to transcend class, social and gender boundaries, as well as on those who are outsiders (through their provincial roots or their belonging to a lower class or a different religion), which speaks to the very strong class and gender segregation and prejudice in Hungarian society of the time. This is demonstrated with a naturalistic bluntness in Kóbor and Bródy. Szikra, on the other hand, focuses her criticism on the capital's haughty demeanour and its provincial complex as a young metropolis. In Szederkényi's novel rural Hungary is sharply contrasted to the city and triumphs over its modernity with its more conservative and "stable" values that withstand new fashions and their "temptations." Lux, on the other hand, offers a feminist and an almost expressionist picture of the city, with no happy ending. Kaffka's novel is the one that, despite its critical focus, presents a heroine who finds her place under the sun in the city thus embracing the new horizons that the 20th century did open up for some women in the metropolis. For Kaffka's heroine, "urban anonymity" and "increased individualism," which Elizabeth Wilson has pinpointed as some features of modernity that "have been exhilarating and liberating for many women" (qtd. in Felski 204), take on a positive meaning. Speaking through the perspective of female heroines, the above narratives thus show both the negative aspects of Budapest's growing into a metropolis as well as the new possibilities it brought about for women's lives in particular. Moreover, they make abundant use of topoi that were typical for modernist literature, such as the *flâneur* or the *femme fatale*, which speaks to their relevance not only within Hungarian literature but in the wider European literary context as well.

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NOTES

¹ Budapest was created as one city officially in 1873, when Buda, Pest and Óbuda were amalgamated into one city.

² As reported by Terri Switzer, Austria regarded Hungary in many ways "as a problematic Eastern inferior." In the census reports of the Habsburg Monarchy, Hungarians were qualified as "Asians," which, at the time, was not a desirable ethnic labelling (Switzer 164). Carl Emil Franzos, the influential Austrian critic and writer, referred to the Eastern parts of the Monarchy as "Halb-Asien," (half-Asia) "a region of transition between Europe and Asia, civilization and barbarism, the Occident and the Orient" (Glajar 92). Although Franzos himself does not include Hungary in his list of

“half-Asian” regions (he includes Galicia, Romania, and South Russia), the general perception of Hungary at the *fin de siècle* in the Austrian part of the Monarchy corresponded to Franzos’s description. Hungary and Hungarians were thus a semi-oriental “other” in the German-Austrian cultural mind.

³ All quotes from non-English sources have been translated by Agatha Schwartz.

⁴ In her home in Pest, Countess Teleki b. Juliska Kende (1864-1937) organized a literary salon frequented by many intellectuals and other important women writers. In 1924, she co-founded the Magyar Irónők Köre (Circle of Hungarian Women Writers). Szikra was also a well-known feminist, an active member of the Feministák Egyesülete (Feminist Association), founded in 1905 and a regular contributor to the Association’s journal *A nő és a társadalom* (Woman and Society). She became a member of the editorial board of its sequel, *A nő*. Szikra was the author of numerous important feminist essays in which she criticized social problems of the day such as trafficking in women, the marriage market based on the moral double standard, women’s poor education and their lack of legal and political rights. In 1913, she was on the organizational committee of the 7th Congress of the International Women’s Suffrage Alliance held in Budapest.

⁵ Georg Escher points out a similar process in the literature about *fin-de-siècle* Prague. See Escher 178. He refers to works by Gerhard Melinz and Susan Zimmermann on the same topic.

⁶ The novel appeared first in a series in the periodical *A Hét* in the same year (Gy. Horváth 168).

⁷ Kóbor was born in Pozsony (today Bratislava in Slovakia) as Adolf Bermann into a Jewish family. The family moved to Budapest when he was very young. Although the family was poor, the boy’s talent and intelligence attracted the attention of his famous teacher, Alexander Bernát whose protegee he became. He studied law and started his literary career at the periodical *A Hét*. Kóbor published in many periodicals, among them *Magyar Hírlap*, *Magyar Újság* and *Pesti Hírlap*. He often used various pen names, most often Semper and Simplex. He was a very prolific and a celebrated writer. Kóbor also tried to fight against his country’s growing anti-Semitism. He wrote a series of articles on the “Jewish Question” in *Az Újság*. According to the *Zsidó Lexikon* (Jewish Lexicon, 1929), these articles were the most important defence of Jews in Hungary (see R. Horváth). But the strengthening of anti-Semitism and WWII impacted his health and he died, following a long illness, in 1942 in Budapest. His only daughter, Noémi Kóbor, also a writer, was killed in the Holocaust.

⁸ The Danube seems to be a kind of Styx in Hungarian *fin-de-siècle* literature. Literary characters often throw themselves into the Danube when they see no further hope for their lives.

⁹ The *flâneur* is a quintessential topos connected to modernity and the city, which the various national literatures (and films) of the 1920s will fully explore.

Traditionally, *flanerie* was a male privilege and the *flaneur*, on his rambles, turned the city and its women into the object of his voyeuristic pleasure (Weigel 179). The situation of the female *flaneur* followed a different development. Anke Gleber refers to Jules Michelet and his analysis of women's increasing presence in public spaces at the end of the 19th century: "How many irritations for the single woman! She can hardly ever go out in the evening; she would be taken for a prostitute. There are a thousand places where only men are to be seen and if she needs to go there on business, the men are amazed, and laugh like fools. For example, should she find herself delayed at the other end of Paris and hungry, she will not dare to enter into a restaurant. She would constitute an event; she would be a spectacle: All eyes would be constantly fixed on her, and she would overhear uncomplimentary and bold conjectures" (Pollock 69 qtd. in Gleber 71). Even after public spaces started opening up for the single woman toward the end of the nineteenth century, the perception of her presence in those spaces was changing very slowly. We can see elements of this perception of the single woman in public spaces in Kóbor as well. They are generally perceived as "easy women" and as being "available" and get approached by men on the street and in other public areas.

¹⁰ Sándor Bródy also published a play with the title *A dada* (The Nanny) in 1902 which has the same plot. Bródy was born as the son of a poor Jewish tailor in Eger in 1863. He started his writing career in Kolozsvár (Cluj, today in Rumania) and later moved permanently to Budapest. He wrote for the *Magyar Hírlap* and later founded the monthly *Fehér könyv* that he published for a year. Then he founded the weekly *Jövendő*. Bródy has been called the most influential writer to prepare the literary stage for the modernist generation of Endre Ady. Literary historians often call him the first Hungarian naturalist writer. However, others have contested this judgment and see other strong elements in Bródy's writing, such as a continuation of romanticism and realism. He was a prolific author of novellas, novels, and plays. In the footsteps of Mór Jókai, he introduced the topic of the poor into the literature of the Hungarian *fin de siècle* which he approached with a mixture of romantic and naturalistic elements. Bródy's personal life was full of conflicts. He attempted suicide in 1905; and in 1919, the antisemitic wave of the counterrevolution forced him into exile to Vienna. His long love affair with another celebrated Hungarian writer, Renée Erdős, is famous for the scandal it caused as Bródy was not only much older but also married with four children. He died in Budapest in 1924.

¹¹ Although in the Western world the status of female children has substantially improved over the past hundred years, in some parts of the developing world female babies are still being considered useless and a burden on the family and therefore abandoned or starved in the hope for a male offspring.

¹² Thus Várkonyi pronounces the following judgment on Bródy's works: "But because of the struggles between his accepted tendencies and his true nature, his messages became fragmented and deficient, messages that were not very pleasant anyway" (297).

¹³ The novel had previously appeared in a series in the *Pesti Hírlap* between 1907 and 1908.) Dancsházi (or Dancsházy) Oláh Ida was born in Szilágysomló in 1873. She married when she was only sixteen, but the marriage did not last long. Following her divorce, she adopted the pen name Terka Lux and became a prolific Budapest-based author of stories, novellas and novels. She was also known as a feminist and published in the feminist journal *A nő és a társadalom*. She also had a feuilleton in *Pesti Hírlap* under the title "Hétköznapok" (Weekdays). She often chose female protagonists for her novels (such as in *Marcsa gondolatai* [Marcsa's Thoughts, 1903], *Leányok* [Girls, 1906], and *Budapest* [1908]). She thematized women's lives and the city's social atmosphere. She died in Budapest in 1938.

¹⁴ The Hungarian original, "úr" means both "gentleman" and "master". Thus it connotes not only the class difference between the two protagonists but it also implies Fáni's subordinate position as a young woman.

¹⁵ Thus Hans-Joachim Schickedanz in his by now classic *Femme fatale* completely ignores the existence of *femme fatale* characters in the works of female authors and artists.

¹⁶ Anna Szederkényi (Pármiczkyne) was born in 1882 in Mező-Nyárad. After finishing teacher's college, she first worked as a teacher and then began publishing in various periodicals. She moved to Budapest and became the first Hungarian woman member of the Budapest Association of Journalists (Budapesti Újságírók Egyesülete). She was also involved in various charitable women's organizations. Her drama, *A kőfalon túl* (Beyond the Stone Wall), first performed in 1911, caused a lot of controversy due to the touchy topic of adolescent sexuality, the taboos attached to it and its criticism of young girls' religious upbringing behind the walls of a convent. As a prolific writer, Szederkényi subsequently published numerous novels: *Amíg egy asszony eljut odáig* (Until a Woman Goes That Far, 1915), *A nagy nő* (The Great Woman, 1914), *Lángok, tüzek* (Fire and Flames 1917), *Amiért egy asszony visszafordul* (What a Woman Turns Back For, 1929), to mention but a few. She is the first Hungarian woman writer whose works became published in a series. Her protagonists are usually women whose lives she portrays from different angles, from feminist to conservative. For her interest in women's lives and the depiction of their struggles for emancipation she was placed next to Margit Kaffka. She died in 1948 in Budapest.

¹⁷ The Faculty of Philosophy (Arts) and the Faculty of Medicine (which included pharmacy) were opened for women in Hungary by a ministerial decree in December 1895 and began admitting students in the fall of 1896.

¹⁸ Trafficking in women was a major problem in Hungary at the time. In her speech *A feminizmusról* ("On Feminism," read before the Lloyd-society and published in 1911), Szikra quoted some frightening statistics on this issue, namely, that Hungary was responsible for 50% of the world trafficking in women.

¹⁹ Bonnet (*fűköti*) is used here as a metaphor for marriage, as traditionally, in Hungarian a woman who was not married, would be referred to as *hajadon*, meaning a woman who does not cover her hair.

²⁰ This city-country dichotomy and conservative literary representations of the city can also be observed in other national literatures of the time as pointed out by Georg Escher: "The metropolis becomes the starting point for a culturally conservative criticism of civilization directed against the city as the place and essence of a story about civilization's decay, a criticism that establishes the country as a compensatory counter-utopia" (181).

²¹ An earlier, abridged version of the novel was published as a series already in 1914 in the weekly *Vasárnapi Újság*.

²² Margit Kaffka was born in 1880 in Nagykároly. She was a secondary school teacher and taught in Miskolc. Many consider her one of the most important, some even *the* most important Hungarian woman writer of the early 20th century. She began writing in 1902, initially mainly poetry. Her first volume of poetry appeared in 1904 under the simple title *Versek* (Poems), followed by a volume of novellas in 1910, *Csendes válságok* (Silent Crises), the title of which alone marks it as a major contribution to literary modernity. Following her divorce from Brunó Fröhlich in 1906, she moved to Budapest in 1910 where she re-married. She became a regular member of the circle around the modernist magazine *Nyugat*. Between 1910 and her tragic and premature death from Spanish influenza (both her young son and she died from it) in 1918 in Budapest, she was very productive and published several novels and volumes of novellas, poems and fairy tales. Three of her novels in particular deal with the struggles of women's emancipation and are often regarded as a kind of a trilogy: *Színek és évek* (1912, translated into English as *Colours and Years* in 1999), *Mária évei* (Mária's Years, 1913), and the one discussed here, *Állomások* (Stations, 1917). Kaffka often expressed feminist views outside of her fiction as well.

**The Impact of Trianon:
Intellectual and Activist Movements
of Hungarian Youth in the Detached Territories,
1920-1933**

Deborah S. Cornelius

The effects of the Treaty of Trianon were nowhere more intensely felt than by the new generation of youth in the territories cut off from the former Hungarian kingdom. The partition of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, and in particular of the Kingdom of Hungary, by the treaty radically altered political borders in Central Europe. Hungary was required to cede seventy percent of its territory to the neighbouring countries; the regions lost contained three million Hungarians who overnight became national minorities within the “successor states.” Two minority Hungarian youth groups formed in the aftermath of Trianon: the St. George Scout Circle, later Sarló [sickle], in newly-formed Czechoslovakia, and the Transylvanian Youth [Erdélyi Fiatalok] in the greatly enlarged Romania. Their members had been born in the old Kingdom of Hungary and they grew up as the members of the country’s dominant majority. Suddenly finding themselves an unwanted minority in a foreign country, they sought a way to maintain a Hungarian identity as members of a minority community. In contrast to the older generation of Hungarians who kept demanding treaty revision and a return of their lands to Hungary, they foresaw the need to work for cooperation among the peoples of a multi-ethnic Central Europe. They also came to believe that they were destined to play a role as future leaders of the Hungarian minority.

Although the Paris Peace Treaty was based on the premise that the “successor states” would be nation-states, the newly-formed or newly enlarged neighbours of Hungary were all multi-ethnic. Since the new states claimed to be national states, their success depended on the formation of new national identities and loyalty by the citizenry to the new state. In this situation the large Hungarian populations were considered a threat and governments introduced policies to eliminate or neutralize this danger. Between 1918 and 1924 an estimated 426,000 Hungarians left the ceded territories. For many the time

of decision came when the government of the successor states began to purge Hungarians from the state administration and educational systems; government officials, railroad employees, and teachers were dismissed. Subsequent purges in commercial, financial and industrial establishments forced many professionals and members of the managerial strata to leave. Land reforms, which destroyed the economic power of Hungarian landowners, also affected a large number of estate employees: managers, and even servants whose existence was tied to large-scale agriculture. As result of massive flight, the total number of Hungarians remaining in the ceded territories sharply declined; in Czechoslovakia, as compared with the 1910 census, the Hungarian population decreased by 13.7 percent and in Romania by 13.4 percent.¹

Slovakia

The Hungarian population of Upper Hungary, the Felvidék, ceded to Czechoslovakia, was radically changed as the result of the refugee exodus. The Hungarian-speaking area of Upper Hungary had been an integral part of the Hungarian Kingdom for centuries and had no independent history as a region. Many of the former political and cultural leaders had fled and the remaining population — divided by class, occupational status, and religion — had no political or cultural tradition to unite them. Sixty-four percent of those remaining was made up of agrarian and forestry workers. The potential political strength of the Hungarian population was weakened by the census of 1921 which included a separate national category for Hebrew/Yiddish. Since many who were both Hungarian-speaking and Jewish declared their nationality as Hebrew, the census figures for Hungarians were reduced to 745,431. Under Czechoslovak regulations this number was considered too few to qualify for the minority rights granted the country's German minority, including the right to a separate university.

Over the centuries of Hungarian rule in Upper Hungary had been a natural process of assimilation, reinforced at the end of the nineteenth century by the Budapest government's aggressive Magyarization policy. Assimilation was rewarded by upward social mobility, and many middle class non-Magyars or those aspiring to middle class status, embraced Hungarian culture and even the language eagerly. Completion of a secondary school education in the Hungarian *gimnázia* was the route to a career in teaching or the bureaucracy. In the extremely class conscious society of the age Hungarian was the language of the educated, conferring the social status so important for respectability.

In the years immediately following the territorial changes wrought by Tiranon, the Czechoslovak administration worked to reduce Hungarian influence in the country. According to the law of 10 December 1918 Hungarians would be retained in their positions only if they were willing to take the oath of allegiance to the Czechoslovak constitution, learn to speak the official language within one year, and finally if they met certain unspecified qualifications required for holding a particular office. Under a new ministry for Slovakia, the minister plenipotentiary, Vavro Šrobár, considered Hungarian culture and education to be contaminating influences on the Slovak population. He felt it was his duty to cleanse Slovakia of Hungarian influence so that the new generation of Slovaks could be educated in Slovak schools. Hungarians were removed from positions particularly in the administration and in education even in predominantly Hungarian areas. Secondary schools were viewed of particular importance as the means to educate the new Slovak elite and fully incorporate of Slovakia into the Czechoslovak Republic.

The rapid Slovakization of the secondary schools was confusing and disorienting for Hungarian-speaking youth. All but eight of the former sixty Hungarian-language secondary schools were dissolved, and in the remaining schools many Hungarian teachers were removed and the administration became Slovak. Since there were few Slovak teachers capable of teaching in Slovak there was a rapid turnover of teachers and even schools were changed. For the Hungarian-speaking students the new national anthem confirmed their status as outsiders. Rezső Limbacher, a future Sarló member, commented that when singing the words of the second stanza which spoke of raising our swords for the destruction of our enemies — “it wasn't pleasant to think of the fact that the enemy, the destruction of whom the song foretold, was us.”²

Measures by the state authorities to dissolve or suspend the activities of Hungarian cultural and educational organizations paralyzed Hungarian cultural life. No form of Hungarian organization was allowed aside from the officially recognized Hungarian minority political parties. The two parties in Parliament represented the interests of the different classes; the conservative National Christian Socialist Party the land owning classes and clergy, and the Hungarian National Party the peasants and tradesmen. The parties formed an opposition block rather than cooperating with the government in power, and their negative attitude eliminated any possibility of working in harmony with the government in Prague.

The youth who were to form the St. George Scout Circle found their home within the Slovakian-Hungarian scouting movement. During these early years when Hungarian institutions had ceased to function, the Hungarian scout troops provided a haven for the disoriented minority youth. The scouting

movement in pre-war Hungary had gained great popularity in the secondary schools, and shortly after the war scout troops began to reorganize. Czechoslovak officials were reluctant to recognize Hungarian scouting, believing that the Slovakian-Hungarian scouts would be influenced by the Hungarian government's policy of irredentism. Nevertheless a number of scout troops found ways to function, registering as clubs in secondary schools or functioning semi-legally, as did the Little Carpathian Touring Society, the training ground for the St. George Circle scouts, which registered as a hiking group.³

A scout publication, *A Mi Lapunk* [Our Paper], founded by Lajos Scherer in January of 1921, attempted to fill the vacuum left by the lack of a formal Hungarian scouting organization. The monthly publication served as a forum for the isolated secondary-school scouts, who were encouraged to send in their own writings, accounts of hiking trips, ideas and articles, in order to make the paper their own. In this way scouts who were unable to meet came to know each other and create a sense of a scout community. Hungarian minority youth of all classes came together within the scouting movement, unusual in the hierarchical stratified Hungarian society of the time. They considered themselves part of a community united by scouting bonds of brotherhood and by their Hungarian identity within the Czechoslovak state.

By the second half of the 1920s the situation of the Hungarian population in Slovakia began to improve. The consolidation of Czechoslovakia had progressed to the point that Czech and Slovak politicians no longer feared that the national minorities would cause the disintegration of the state. For the first time they considered the possibility of including national minority parties in the government, and the government lifted its ban on Hungarian cultural organizations. A new generation of Hungarian youth began to attend Czechoslovak universities. The majority of students went to Prague and enrolled in the excellent Charles University which had both German and Czech divisions. Edgár Kessler/Balogh, the future leader of Sarló, had spoken German from childhood and registered in the German language division. Ferenc Horváth had learned Slovak in Érsekújvár and graduated from the Czech division. Those who knew German could also enrol in the new German-language technical university in Brno. Zoltán Boross was among the few who registered at the Slovak university in Bratislava/Pozsony. He had learned some Slovak but understood little during the first weeks of classes. Since there were not enough educated Slovaks to fill the positions, they were filled by Czech professors.⁴

The scattered Hungarian students were at a disadvantage compared to the German and Czech students who had strong student organizations that administered scholarships, dormitories, and clubs. Following the precedent set by other student groups, in 1925 the Hungarian students in Prague founded the Hungarian Christian University and College Students of Prague; after protests by Hungarian Jewish students the word 'Christian' was dropped. Later that year the Prague organization combined with students in Bratislava and Brno, forming the Czechoslovak Hungarian Academic Organization (CsMASZT). Most Hungarian-speaking students joined the organization and eventually received support from the country's Hungarian political parties and clubs.

The St. George Circle

In 1925 in Prague four former members of the Little Carpathian Scout Troop decided to establish a senior scout group, the St. George Circle. To emphasize their Hungarian identity they took their symbol from the statue of St. George and the Dragon in the Prague Castle courtyard, sculpted by Hungarian brothers in the fourteenth century. Of mixed ethnic and religious background, they searched for a unifying principle, finally deciding that only Hungarian culture could unify the Hungarian minority. Their constitution, written for the Czech authorities, was quite traditional emphasizing scouting goals, but their secret aim was to unite all Hungarian youth in Czechoslovakia (including Ruthenia) through the scouting movement.

At first they had little luck recruiting new members, but through a competition of "story-telling afternoons" they were able to appeal to secondary school scouts. It was these two cohorts of students who had spent their childhood in the Hungarian Kingdom that were to form the Sarló movement later. Functioning on the assumption that the village community embodied Hungarian culture with roots in the past, they recruited students to go to villages and teach the children Hungarian culture through folk tales, legends and games. The few scouts who participated were awarded with the title of "regös" [minstrel]. The title recalled the heroic service performed by minstrels who carried news to isolated Hungarian communities during the time of the Turkish occupation.

A significant step in the growth of the fledgling movement was the all-scout camp at Liptószentiván [in Slovak: Liptovský Mikuláš] called by the St. George Circle in summer of 1926 in order to create a united Hungarian scout way of thinking in the Republic. This was the first time that scouts who had communicated through *A Mi Lapunk* were able to meet one another, as

well as the paper's editor, Lajos Scherer. Representatives from scout troops in seven cities attended and adopted the idea of a village friends movement, agreeing that the scouts should cultivate their Hungarian roots in the villages. Unfortunately for the movement's founders, their romantic view of the village did not reflect the reality. The definition of "village" in Slovakia was simply that of any settlement with fewer than five thousand people, therefore not eligible for certain public services, including a middle-school. Villages in Slovakia were extremely diverse, some made up of farming populations, but many combined agrarian labourers with small scale-manufacturing, lumbering, and paper mills.

An unusual alliance began to form between urban youth of Bratislava /Pozsony and provincial youth from the agrarian town of Nové Zámky [Érsekújvár], an alliance which was to give the movement its unique character. There had been no tradition of scouting in the worker/peasant town, since scout troops had been established primarily in the elite *gimnazia*, but Odiló Hornyák, the scout master of the Little Carpathian scout troop, had been transferred to Nové Zámky [Érsekújvár] and soon organized the Czukor scout troop. During the Easter school-break he took the members on a trip to Bratislava/Pozsony to join the Little Carpathian troop in a two day camping trip. During the trip the scouts began to plan the next project — a summer hiking program to the countryside.

During the summer of 1927 the scouts planned a "regös" contest to hike through the countryside making friends with the village children and collecting ethnographic materials. Lajos Jócsik from Érsekújvár mapped out the Hungarian-inhabited territory of Slovakia into six regions assigned to four senior scout patrols. The scouts visited more than fifty places in the countryside recording what they perceived as village traditions. After the successful experiment they began to make detailed plans for more extensive "minstrel wandering," but their visits to the villages were unexpectedly banned by the Czechoslovak authorities.

By 1928 the senior scouts had built up a core membership of secondary school and senior students. St. George Circles were formed in the university cities of Brno and Bratislava. The scouts from all social classes were bound by their collective identity and activities of going to the villages. When the older generation, suspicious of city youth's activities among the peasantry, questioned whether the programme fit into traditional scouting, Edgár Balogh, the acknowledged leader of the group, countered that scouting was not just an extension of school but a serious movement to correct the problems of a society in crisis.⁵ The Hungarian writer, Zsigmond Móricz, who joined the St.

George Circle members in a drive to raise money for the benefit of a student *mensa* fund, found the students more serious and clear-sighted than their fathers who lived in a fantasy world. “Their fathers are the prisoners of the old ideologies: the sons the modern masters of ‘*realpolitik*.’”⁶

Transylvania

The situation for the Hungarian population in the territory of Transylvania, ceded to Romania after World War I, was quite different than that of northern Hungary. Transylvania formed a geographical unit with a long tradition of political autonomy and separate corporate identity. From medieval times the three 'historic peoples' of Transylvania — the German Saxons, Hungarians, and Székely Hungarians — had maintained their separate identities, including religious freedom and the special privileges of the Saxons and Székelys. Although many Romanians had moved into the area over the centuries they had not been included as one of the region's historic peoples. After the collapse of Hungarian rule and the transfer of Transylvania to Romania the Romanians intended to change this situation. Romanian nationalists believed the Romanian nation to be unique and regarded the ethnic minorities in Greater Romania as foreigners; they were particularly antagonistic to the Magyars — the former ruling nation — and Jews. Measures were taken to eliminate the potential influence of both Hungarians and Jews in the new state.

From 1918 to 1920 voluntary flight and the expulsion of prominent Hungarian citizens with their families by Romanian officials sharply reduced the number of Hungarians who were to remain in Transylvania. An estimated 222,000 Hungarians left the territories granted to Romania between 1918 and 1920.⁷ The great majority of refugees were members of the upper and middle classes, including large numbers of government officials and members of the intelligentsia.

After this early exodus the remaining Hungarian intellectual community floundered. Attempts by the Transylvanian Hungarians to unite were marred by political conflicts between conservative former officials, mainly concerned with drumming up international support for the revision of the Peace Treaty, and others who believed it necessary to attain accommodation with the Romanians of Transylvania and perhaps achieve autonomy for the region. Many Transylvanians, both Romanian and Hungarian, believed in the existence of a unique Transylvanian identity. They did imagine it within the framework of Greater Romania.

The problems of nationalizing the schools in post-1920 Transylvania were similar to those in Slovakia. Magyarization had been so successful in places that it was not easily shed with the change to Romanian political rule and there was a dearth of qualified teachers to teach in Romanian. Romanian elites had been partially responsible for the staying power of the Hungarian language. Many of the elites had embraced magyarization: parents did not want to send their children to Romanian schools and their children often did not know Romanian. In 1926 a Cluj/Kolozsvár magazine article expressed concern that Romanians in Cluj did not read Romanian newspapers, and that Hungarian was spoken often in the family, society, stores, and at parties, concluding that the language of the Romanian 'elite' in the city was Magyar.⁸

On 12 May 1919 the Royal University of Kolozsvár was taken over by representatives of the Transylvanian provisional government. When it opened its doors as Cluj University under Romanian management in fall of 1919 the former Hungarian professors and a majority of the student body emigrated *en masse* to Hungary. A whole generation of young Hungarian intellectuals left Transylvania. The university's immediate and total takeover by Romanians did not have universal support. Romanian historian and politician Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940) spoke out against immediate nationalization, arguing that minority nationalities deserved the opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue, and that there were not enough trained people available to staff a Romanian university Cluj, but Onisifor Ghibu, secretary general in the Department of Public Education of the provisional government, was adamant. He had found very few Romanian students or staff in the city's public schools, which reinforced his determination to reverse the situation at once.⁹

With the Romanization of public schools, the historical Hungarian churches, Unitarian, Reformed [Calvinist], and Catholic, expanded the number of denominational schools.¹⁰ Yet in this way they separated the Hungarian youth by denomination which prevented the Hungarian youth of Transylvania from uniting as did the youth of the St. George Circle/Sarló in Czechoslovakia. After 1919 most Hungarian-speaking students attended the confessional secondary schools. For their university education many left the country to study abroad either in universities in Hungary or in Western Europe. The remainder attended the Hungarian theological academies: for example the later Transylvanian Youth leader Ferenc Balázs attended the Unitarian Theological Seminary, and Dezső László attended the Reformed Theological Seminary.

Béla Jancsó, future leader of the Transylvanian Youth, was caught in the dilemma of minority students after the war. Those who chose to study in

Hungary were often unable to return; yet university education in Romania required the knowledge of Romanian. Jancsó enrolled in the faculty of medicine in Budapest in 1921 but the violence and bloodshed of the counter-revolution repelled him. Within a year he returned to Cluj/Kolozsvár and enrolled in the Romanian university. Because he had no knowledge of Romanian, he flunked out in December. In 1923 he returned to Hungary and enrolled in the medical faculty of the former Kolozsvár University, now located in Szeged in southern Hungary, where he studied for the next five years before returning to Transylvania.

For those few students who enrolled in the Romanian universities in Cluj/Kolozsvár or Bucharest the situation was quite different than for the Hungarian students at Czechoslovak universities. Students with Czech high-school certificates had many opportunities for financial aid — and the Hungarian minority students succeeded in founding the organization of Hungarian University Students. Romania in 1925 under the Liberal Party regime was under martial law with a limited right of association. There was little student aid available and a state law expressly prohibited the establishment of any organization of university students based on nationality.¹¹

The Formation of Sarló

By 1928 the conceptual framework and aims of the St. George Circle members had begun to crystallize. The students had come to realize that their romantic view of the villages had little resemblance to the reality of the serious economic and social problems, and decided to investigate the actual living conditions of the people — of all the working masses. At a second all-scout camp meeting held at Gombaszög (in Slovak: Gombaseck) from August 3 to 13, the two flags flying over the camp symbolized the transformation of the movement — the St. George Circle green lily scout banner on one flagpole, the sickle [sarló] the symbol of the Hungarian peasants and workers. The Sarló flag was voted by the scouts to be the symbol of the movement, proclaiming the birth of a Hungarian scout movement with its roots in the people. The scouts had only intended to modify the character of scouting with no intention of leaving the scouting movement, but the founding of Sarló came to be regarded by conservative Hungarians as a move to the left. Eventually, some members of the older generation withdrew their support. Over time the generational rift was to contribute to the radicalization of the Sarló group.

Nearing the end of their university studies, the students in Bratislava/Pozsony organized self-education seminars to learn practical subjects to

further their careers. Student experts taught seminars in law, medicine, engineering, social sciences, and teacher training, each with an established curriculum and assigned readings; in April 1929 they published their first semester program in their new publication, *Vetés* [Sowing], to help Hungarian students in Prague and Brno prepare themselves to address the problems of the villages. The Slovak and Hungarian agrarian populations had endured the harsh consequences of Slovakia's economic stagnation. In addition the Hungarian population suffered from legal problems, cultural decline and a land reform which had reduced employment for day labourers. The students realized that their careers might well depend on these minority populations of workers and peasants.

The influence of the Sarló group spread rapidly in the late 1920s. They had become the acknowledged leaders of the Hungarian minority university youth and had also begun to attend meetings of Czech and Slovak students in liberal groups such as the YMCA and the Czech ethical movement *Etické hnutí*. They were warmly greeted by the radical Slovak vanguard of the group, DAV, a group of young Slovak Marxist and leaders of the new Slovak intelligentsia who were even more critical of the Czechoslovak state because of what was seen as its unjust policies toward Slovakia.¹² As the first generation of Slovak intelligentsia they had expected to replace the Czech administrators and teachers imported into Slovakia, and because of the delays in this process they had begun to look on the Czechs as colonizers.

Sarló's new initiatives reached a broader group of young intellectuals and university students in Hungary and Transylvania. In Hungary intellectual circles had followed the senior scout activities through *A Mi Lapunk*, and after 1928 their influence spread through their cooperative activities with the Bartha Miklós Társaság [Miklós Bartha Society, hereafter BMT]. The BMT had been founded in 1925 by refugee graduate students from Transylvania, Slovakia, and Yugoslavia, and in 1927 under a new leader, Dániel Fábian, the society became a meeting place and forum for the new generation of youth, debating Hungarian economic and social problems. Cooperative ventures with Sarló began after Balogh spent a semester in Budapest in 1928, and in 1930 the society's publication, *Új Magyar Föld* [New Hungarian soil] carried six articles by Sarló members publicizing their activities and concerns.¹³

News of their activities had begun to reach other groups of university students. The first issue of *Vetés* reached the students in the Gábor Bethlen Circle, the future Szeged Youth, which had been founded by refugee students from Transylvania in the transplanted University of Kolozsvár. The leader, György Buday, wrote to praise their work, which influenced his plans to

develop a Village Settlement Movement among the agrarian proletariat on the outskirts of the large agrarian town. The new group of Hungarian students beginning to form in Kolozsvár learned about Sarló from the articles in *Vetés*.

In 1930 Sarló's ill-advised March 15th demonstration known as the wreath affair led to their becoming *persona non grata* in Hungary. The members had become convinced that Hungarian minority problems could only be solved within the framework of a Danubian Federation of Peoples. They decided to send two emissaries to Budapest for the March 15th celebration of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution for Independence, a traditional student holiday. To symbolize the need for cooperation among peoples, the emissaries carried ribbons in the colors of each of the Danubian peoples along with a red banner to be attached to the wreath which they were to place at the statue of Hungarian patriot Sándor Petőfi. The students had clearly misjudged the political climate in Hungary. The wreath laying was forbidden and the "wreath affair" raised a storm in a Parliamentary session called to discuss the matter. Representatives believed the students had insulted the nation by placing ribbons bearing the colors of the "successor states" on the statue. Interestingly, leaders of the Hungarian opposition parties defended Sarló, attributing their action to naiveté. In a chance encounter, Balogh met conservative leader Géza Szűllő who greeted him, saying: "Well, you've made a fine mess of things... but I'm sure you'll find some way to put things in order."¹⁴

The Transylvanian Youth [*Erdélyi Fiatalok*]

By 1929 several trends had converged which made possible the emergence of a critical mass of Hungarian students at the university in Kolozsvár/Cluj after a hiatus of ten years. Attitudes among the Transylvanian Hungarian middle classes had begun to change. Romanian rule no longer appeared to be transient. Hungarian territorial revisionism had been surprisingly muted in regard to Transylvania. The local political situation for the Hungarian minority had improved after the elections of 1928. The National-Peasant cabinet headed by the Transylvanian politician Iuliu Maniu (1873-1953), which had come to power on November 10, 1928, lifted martial law, censorship, and other restrictions on communication which had been imposed under the government of General Alexandru Averescu (1859-1938). Under Maniu, the first genuinely free elections in Romania were held on December 12th, and the Hungarian population received a more proportionate representation in Parliament.

An increasing number of Transylvanian Hungarian students realized that if they wanted to pursue their careers in Transylvania, they would have to

study at Romanian universities. Two conditions which had up to then prevented Hungarian youth from registering at a Romanian university, the lack of knowledge of Romanian and the possibility of attending a foreign university and validating the diploma earned later in Romania, had largely disappeared. The Romanian authorities made a rule regarding foreign diplomas under which it became almost impossible to validate degrees from Hungarian universities. As a result of this change a small number of Hungarian students returned from abroad, including Béla Jancsó. By 1929 a generation of secondary school students had completed their eight years of *gimnazium* studies under Romanian rule and had attained fluency in Romanian.

In 1929 two groups of students came together, an older group and a younger one, fresh from the *gimnázia*. They faced the common problem of marginalized Transylvanian Hungarian intellectuals — how to select careers and direct their lives to a future as members of the Hungarian minority within Romania.¹⁵ Most were members of families long established in Transylvania and had been educated in the religious and generally conservative spirit of the denominational schools. For the younger generation the system of values of the older generation was no longer meaningful. The sentimental and uncritical patriotism advanced by their educators and religious leaders was perceived as a sign of an unwillingness or inability to recognize the new conditions facing the Hungarian minority. The efforts of Hungarian politicians to maintain the position of the former Hungarian ruling classes and their failure to formulate policies to help the large majority of Hungarians in the countryside proved these people's incompetence. The new generation considered themselves better qualified than their fathers to perceive the "realities" of the minority situation and seek new alternatives.

József Venczel, a member of the younger group, defined the beliefs of these twenty-year olds: "This generation never lived in or experienced imperial Hungary and has no sense of belonging to a Hungarian state.... As a generation we have little belief in our self-worth.... Our generational inferiority complex rests on our lack of education: the 20s generation has no understanding of literature, they do not know Hungarian history, they have no knowledge of Hungarian intellectual life." Concerning the differences between the generations, he explained: "We have no connection with the generation before us. Our strength has never been based on the concepts of power and prestige. On the other hand, the idea of leadership of the people — the creed of cultural *magyarság* — differentiates us completely from the older generation."¹⁶

In the years from 1929 to 1933 the Transylvanian Youth [*Erdélyi Fiatalok*] became a forum for the new generation. Unlike the Hungarian students in Czechoslovakia, the Transylvanian Youth were never able to establish a legal organization of students recognized by the state authorities. Their activities took place within the denominational youth groups of the historic churches, Unitarian, Reformed and Catholic, which also provided the only form of student aid through maintaining residential student *kollégiums*, although some assistance also came from the National Hungarian Party for a student *mensa*. The publication, *Erdélyi Fiatalok* carried out the work of organizing and directing the youth movement from 1930 until 1933 when a split occurred in its membership.

In January 1929 Béla Jancsó began to organize the Transylvanian minority youth, inviting leaders from the three denominational student groups to meet on neutral territory, using the facilities of the regional Székely Association. He chose the tenth anniversary of the poet Endre Ady's death, a bold move since Ady's work was banned from the Hungarian classroom because of his criticism of the Hungarian ruling classes, his pessimistic view of the Hungarian future, and his immoral lifestyle. Jancsó's interest in and respect for Ady had been strengthened by the work of a young Hungarian bishop of the Reformed Church in Transylvania, Sándor Makkai. In 1927 the *Soli deo Gloria*, a Reformed youth group in Budapest, had asked Makkai to write a critique of Ady's poetry. In response to this request Makkai produced a book titled the *Magyar fa sorsa — A vádlott Ady költészete* [Hungarian fate: the poetry of the accused Ady]. Unexpectedly, especially for members of the older generation, Makkai did not condemn Ady but used him to criticise the older generation, in particular its members' glorification of the Hungarian past. Makkai considered Ady's tragic vision of the nation overly pessimistic — but justified. The catastrophe that had struck the Hungarian nation with Trianon had been brought on by the mistakes made by the pre-war Hungarian leadership. Makkai's conclusion, intended to counter Ady's pessimism, gave direction to the new leadership. To minority youth in Romania, cut off from the larger Hungarian community and under pressure to assimilate, Ady's vision of the tragic fate of the Hungarians was especially relevant. Ady viewed the Hungarians as a people who had lost their way. To him Hungarians were a dying race, caught between East and West ... doomed to remain backward, they were never to be able to actualize their own unique characteristics as a people.¹⁷

The leaders gathered at a meeting of the Székely Association were intensely conscious of the small number of Hungarian university students and the inroads Romanian influence and assimilationist policies had made on

Hungarian culture in the countryside. Ady's vision of Hungarians as a "dying race" made it all the more important to people such as Jancsó to unify Hungarian students in Transylvania in an organization. He and the other young leaders decided to form a Youth Division of the Szekély Association, agreeing to meet weekly for lectures and discussions. Organized up until then only in denominational youth groups, this was their first opportunity to debate those topics of particular significance to their generation. Their weekly meetings, held in Kolozsvár/Cluj, formed the basis for a surge of organizational activity in the summer and during the fall semester.

It was in this atmosphere of heightened student activity that Jancsó made his plans for a student publication, following the example of the Sarló periodical *Vetés*. Jancsó was determined to keep the publication independent from any official influence, either political or denominational, and the surprise appearance of the *Erdélyi Fiatalok* in January foiled any chance of the founding of a politically supported youth publication. During the next three years the movement's founding members and four co-workers played a leading role in organizing and directing the movement's varied activities. The lack of a national organization left a void that was filled partly by the denominational youth organizations which were led by several of the movement's leaders. These groups met weekly and carried out most activities, but often their activities overlapped.

The ultimate goal of the Transylvanian Youth was to ensure the survival of the Hungarian minority in Romania and their most successful work was in their self-education seminars and their village research. Practically speaking, the village offered almost the only possible opportunity for Hungarian youth to get work — as teachers, ministers, doctors, agrarian engineers. Since almost three-fourths of the Hungarian population, which included peasants, craftsmen, factory workers and miners, was concentrated in small towns and villages, the continuation of the Hungarian language and culture depended on these rural Hungarians. Most endangered were those in the ethnically mixed areas of Hungarian and Romanian populations where government policies worked toward assimilation through discouraging Hungarian language education and the work of the Hungarian churches.

The leaders had been influenced by the Sarló publication *Vetés*, which described their self-education seminars in which students studied minority law, health issues, engineering, social sciences, and teacher training, to educate themselves for leadership of the villages. They organized a village seminar with lectures planned throughout the year, aiming to work out a scientific method of village work, to give practical direction to village studies,

and to help the villages, but organized village work began only in November of 1930. The program to work with the rural population was only possible in the authorized denominational organizations. They worked cooperatively with the Unitarian Ferenc David Society and the reformed Young Christian Association to put together a sociographic questionnaire which was distributed by members who lived in rural areas and resulted in about twenty-five serious studies. Simultaneously the Catholic league, which kept its activities separate, initiated a contest soliciting articles on the villages to encourage their youth to make contact with the villagers.

The research during summer of 1931 produced mixed results. The most extensive sociographic research was conducted by five students in the area of Kolozsborsa/Borşa north of Kolozsvár as guests of Baron Ferenc Banffy. Imre Mikó's research resulted in his book *Az Erdélyi falu és a nemzetiségi kérdés* [The Transylvanian village and the nationality question] published in early 1932, which was attacked by conservative Hungarians because of its references to class warfare and the need to cooperate with the Romanians — but it was praised by Romanian and Hungarian scholars for its evenhandedness. A project of the Catholic League, with József Venczel as one of the leaders, visited twenty-four villages and collected ethnographic material. This last project revealed potential strains in the movement's unity. Venczel, although secretary of the village seminar, did not act in that position but worked within the framework of the Catholic League. The village seminars continued during the next academic year but the momentum to establish a large-scale program of student village research floundered.

The Demise of the Hungarian Youth Movements

With the onset of the Great Depression the once liberal government of Czechoslovakia began to use repressive measures to quell worker and peasant unrest. By this time the views of Sarló leaders, especially the avant-garde, had begun to diverge more sharply from those of the organization's leaders as well as many of its members. Their concern for the working masses, their willingness to cooperate with Slovak and Czech students, angered and upset many members of the older generation. The shift in alliances and emphasis on class divisions rather than Hungarian unity by the more radical members came when many of the members were completing their university education and were facing a difficult employment situation. Radicalization of several of the leaders after a bloody attack on Hungarian workers by the Czech gendarmerie brought

them into conflict with both the Czech and Hungarian political leadership and led to the fragmentation of the group and its eventual decline.

The Transylvanian Youth movement suffered a damaging blow in spring of 1932 with a reversal of support from the Székely Association that had provided them movement with loans, moral support, and the free use of its facilities. A newly elected leadership decided to withdraw these privileges and require payment for the use of meeting rooms. The work of the movement was radically affected and the Village Seminar lectures were cancelled for the rest of 1932.

Tensions had been mounting within the membership between the Catholic League Student Section and Marxist students — and they exploded at the student conference in November 1932. During a heated debate, János Demeter, a founding member and a Marxist, attacked one of the speakers, Dr. Jenő Szentimre, a member of the Székely Association who had actively supported the youth group. The altercations began the process through which the unity of the youth group disintegrated during the early months of 1933.

There were other causes for the break-up. Few students who had matriculated in 1931-1932 had joined the movement, and the generation of 1929 were finishing their studies and leaving Kolozsvár. The papal bull of 1931 "Quadragesimo anno" had an increasing influence on Catholic youth, leading to a new definition of social responsibility under neo-Catholicism. But perhaps the most significant cause was the change in the political situation after Hitler's assumption of power in 1933 and the growing domination of Romanian politics by King Carol. In December of 1933 the right-radical Iron Guard, which had recently been banned, took its revenge with the assassination of the liberal Prime Minister Ion G. Duca (1879-1933). Martial law was declared and a new government instituted increasingly repressive measures including the imprisonment of a number of intellectuals and the banning of publications. From this time on the Village Research field trips and evening performances of the Transylvanian Youth were banned.¹⁸

Perhaps it was inevitable that the groups should break up given the political trend toward polarization in Europe during the early 1930s. In Slovakia the Slovak socialist students became more radical, joining the Leftist Front, while the *Nástupisti*, the younger generation of leaders in the Slovak People's Party were attracted by the policies of fascist regimes. In Romania, the fanatic and nationalistic Iron Guard, its membership made up mainly of young people and peasants, was increasing in strength. The goals of the new Hungarian generation of minority youth to work for the cooperation of peoples in ethnically mixed Central Europe appeared utopian.

Despite progress made in the years since the demise of communist rule and the Soviet Empire, including the extension of the European Union to countries in Central Europe, that goal has still not been achieved.

NOTES

¹ István I. Mócsy, *The Effects of World War I. The Uprooted: Hungarian Refugees and Their Impact on Hungary's Domestic Politics, 1918-1921* (New York: Social Science Monographs, Columbia University press, 1983), 10-14.

² Rezső Peéry, *Reguiem egy országrészért* [Requiem for a part of the country] (Munich: Aurora Kiskönyvek, 1975), 50.

³ For a full account of the history of the St. George Circle/Sarló movement see: Deborah Cornelius, *In Search of the Nation: The New Generation of Hungarian Youth in Czechoslovakia 1925-1934* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

⁴ Zoltán Boross, Interview with author, Debrecen, 22 March 1988.

⁵ Edgár Balogh, "A csata fele" [The battle joined]. January 1927. *A Mi Lapunk*, 3-4.

⁶ "Pesti Napló," 21 April 1927, in Zsigmond Móricz, *Tanulmányok, cikkek* [Studies, articles] (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvtadó, 1959).

⁷ Mócsy, 12.

⁸ Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building & Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 154.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 219-223.

¹⁰ Between 1918 and 1920 the Unitarian and Reformed churches doubled the number of their schools from 348 to 690 (Livezeanu, 179).

¹¹ The animosity of Transylvanian-Romanian officials toward the idea of the establishment of Hungarian student organizations is discussed in Livezeanu, 181-182.

¹² DAV means mob, a name originally given in jest by the Slovak youth.

¹³ *Új Magyar Föld III*, 1930.

¹⁴ Balogh, *Hét próba*, 196.

¹⁵ The number of Hungarian speaking students matriculated at the University of Cluj/Kolozsvár in 1930 was over 700. It grew to over 1,000 in the next few years.

¹⁶ József Venczel, "Határnemzedék: erdélyi magyar húszévesek" [Border generation: Transylvanian Hungarian twenty-year olds], in *Erdélyi föld – erdélyi társadalom* [Transylvanian soil — Transylvanian society] (Budapest: Közgazdasági és jogi könyvkiadó, 1988), 43-46.

¹⁷ Sándor Makkai, *Magyar fa sorsa: a vádlott Ady költészete* [Hungarian fate: the poetry of the accused Ady] (Cluj-Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Szépmíves Céh, 1927), 16-17. Makkai (1890-1951) was a teacher of theology. He also wrote poetry and fiction. His book on Ady provoked bitter debates. Almost as controversial was one of his early historical novels, *Ördögsekér* [The devilwagon] (1925), but it contributed to his popularity. Several of his novels were translated into foreign languages.

¹⁸ Cseke Péter, ed. *Erdélyi Fiatalok: Dokumentumok, Viták 1930-1940* [Transylvanian Youth: documents, debates 1930-1940] (Bucharest: Kriterion Könyvkiadó, 1986), 14.

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A Life Lived for Progress and Democracy: Sára Karig (1914–1999)

Mária Palasik

Since the downfall of the old regime in 1989-90, gender studies, starting from almost ground zero, have undergone an evolution in Hungary. On the other hand, historians of gender still have a long way to go to catch up with the state of women's and gender studies in the so-called Western world. A few outstanding and progressive Hungarian women have been singled out as subjects. Others, equally outstanding, have been overlooked, probably because they do not fit the mould: they are not heroines of resistance against the previous regime, they did not assume leadership role in the revolution of 1956, they did not seek martyrdom, although they may have suffered it. One such person is Sara Karig — poet, literary translator, and editor — according to the obituaries from 1999.¹ Yet she is not studied or discussed by the literary historians, but rather by those of us who are students of history, because her fate is a segment of 20th century political history. We may refer to this fate — no offence is intended — as absurd, because Karig was always there when something was occurring or, better said, something was occurring wherever she happened to be. Even if we focus merely on what she accomplished in 1944-45, her humanity, her altruism, the risks she took time and again would certainly deserve our attention. She saved the life of countless children, providing for their sustenance. She harboured the persecuted without regard to their ethnicity, religion or political affiliation. A clandestine printing shop was set up in her apartment, later described by the actor/director Tamás Major as a “laundromat” for producing extracts of birth certificates. Karig was most resourceful — fighting for the survival of the victims with her inexhaustible intellectual gifts. At an early age she committed herself to progress and democracy, for life. As a Social Democratic official she publicly objected to some aspects of the parliamentary elections held on August 31, 1947, when the Hungarian Communist Party perpetrated fraud. She was arrested as a result by the Hungarian political police and handed over to the Soviet state

security authorities. First she was deported to the Soviet occupation zone in Austria and then, some months later, to the Vorkuta forced labour camp (in the northern Ural Mountains, north of the Arctic Circle) from where she would return to Hungary only at the end of 1953.

Childhood

Sára Karig was the offspring of a family of teachers in Baja, in southern Hungary. Her mother, also a teacher, had an unusual life. She escaped from a forced marriage, immediately after the church wedding, eloping with the love of her life, a hydraulic engineer. The engineer, however, fell victim to an accident while practicing his profession, falling into the icy waters of the Danube. He contracted pneumonia and died soon afterward. Before he died he entrusted his wife to his friend, Emil Karig, the music teacher at the teachers' college in Baja. She and Karig married a year later, and eventually had three children, Emil Ubul, Júlia and Sára, who was the youngest. Her family lived under modest circumstances. To use Sára's own expression, the children were educated in "instalments" since they could only purchase clothing one item at a time. From the children's point of view, however, their life was a life of leisure, amidst books, music and flowers, and outings to the Danube, where they swam in the summer, skated in wintertime.

By the time Sára was enrolled in the convent school named Notre Dame (Miasszonyunk), she was able to read, and her special personality was already manifest; for example, on the first day of instruction she stood up during the period, declaring that her leg "had fallen asleep." The instructor on that day was a substitute teacher, and when she summoned the little girl to the front of the class as punishment for her remark she struck her fingers with her ruler. Sára seized the ruler and hit the teacher back (Gergely 1988, 12). Such insubordination would have sufficed to get her expelled, but her grandmother intervened, and offered a cow to the convent to assuage the institution. Thus Sára Karig became home-schooled in the first four grades as well as later, in the first two grades of the public middle school, under the auspices of the Roman Catholic bishop of Baja.

Learning languages was a family tradition in the Karig family. So, at the end of the school-year her parents decided to send Sára, along with her older sister, to Bavaria, to the Neuhaus convent of the English nuns to take an equivalency examination. (PIL, container 2). Thus Sára completed middle school, and took an entrance examination for admission into the fifth grade of the Saint Elizabeth School for girls (Saint Elizabeth of the Árpád dynasty). By

then she was studying Latin, English and French, in addition to the German she had already mastered. She was very good in her studies and thus she was exempted from paying tuition because of the outstanding grades she maintained throughout her school years (PIL, container 10). From third grade on she contributed poems and short stories to *Független Magyarország* [Independent Hungary], a daily of Baja. The October 9, 1931 issue of the paper refers to Karig as a regular contributor, reporting with considerable pride that the students of the high school in Szeged had elected her as president of their literary study circle (PIL, container 3).

Choosing a career — beginnings and friendships

Karig would have liked to become a teacher of English language and literature, but there was no such discipline at the Francis Joseph Royal University of Szeged. Thus, in 1932, immediately upon graduation from secondary school, she enrolled in the Hungarian-German department of the University while attending courses at the Hungarian/German department of the university's Teacher's College. Among her professors were Sándor Sik, Antal Horger and Gedeon Mészöly. Although she completed only one year, the friends she made in this period affected the course of her life. She was accepted into the legendary Circle of the Young of Szeged, comprising Miklós Radnóti, Gyula Ortutay, György Buday, Dezső Baróti, Ferenc Hont, Gábor Tolnai. Radnóti never failed to send her a dedicated copy of whatever he published, and Karig preserved these with great care (PIL, container 15).

Sára also contracted lifelong friendship with Albert Szent-Györgyi and his family. Szent-Györgyi's daughter Neli became a close friend. Karig had free access to Szent-Györgyi's home, and the famous scientist showed true affection for her. Karig basked in the glory of his Nobel prize and helped him answer the letters of congratulation from abroad. He exerted considerable influence on her ways of thinking, her world view; their correspondence indicates meaningful human relations (PIL, containers 8, 14). "Szent-Györgyi and his family," she was to write in the 1980s, "broadened my understanding of the world. Albert lived an ascetic life, loved music, poetry, and taught me that I should travel while I am still young" (Gergely 1988: 12).

Two years with the Faculty of Liberal Arts did not satisfy Karig's ambitions; she sought a different career, perhaps precisely because of Szent-Györgyi's mentoring. In the summer of 1933 she completed a six-week course in infant care at the Szeged Hospital; at the same time she tried to enrol into the Faculty of Medicine of the university, but her application for admission

was rejected by the Dean on the grounds of lack of space. Clearly, the young woman was still seeking her place in life. She attended law school at the Péter Pázmány University in Budapest for two semesters in the academic year 1945-46 (PIL, container 14). Following the example of her sister, she was also seeking a job with a secure income: she completed the course in Commerce at the Commercial Academy of Budapest and became a certified accountant.² Thanks to the intercession of Mrs. Szent-Györgyi she became an *au pair* in England for two years.³ Her child-caring duties notwithstanding she was able to attend lectures at the University of Durham. She also obtained a certificate as a language teacher from the University of London, while attending the meetings of the Fabian Society.

While Sára had several great loves in her life, she resolved, around the time she returned from England, that is around 1937-38, to remain single. Her rationale is indicative of her sense of sovereign independence:

I decided that it [i.e., marriage] was not for me. One contributing factor was that my area of interest was not the ideal of the time. Of course, it may have been possible to train or educate a husband, but not at a time when the entire country on the one hand, and myself in particular, except for perhaps one or two emancipated and sophisticated individuals, could not even imagine a man doing the dishwashing. That may have been possible in England ... Even my great role model, Szent-Györgyi, spent no time with his only beloved daughter, until she became an adult, a more sensible person (Bakonyi 1988-89: 140).

Upon her return from London in 1937 Karig was employed at the Budapest plant of the Vas és Gépgyár [Iron and Machine Works] of Salgótarján. She was in charge of German and English correspondence. Her supervisor was Pál Justus, a leading personality among Social Democratic intellectuals, appreciated and respected by Karig. Under his influence she came to sympathize with the Social Democratic cause; in fact, she joined the Party in 1943.

In 1939 she worked for two years at the Kereskedelmi Bank [Bank of Commerce], and then, for another two years, with the Viticulture Trade Corporation of Count Somsich. The chief executive officer of the latter, Oszkár Zerkovitz, was a follower of Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky;⁴ during the war they hid weapons in the wine-cellars on behalf of Bajcsy-Zsilinszky's resistance movement (Gergely 1988: 13).

1944-45

In March, 1944, when Hungary was invaded and occupied by Nazi German troops; the change forced Sára to make a clear choice. It was most natural for her that when human beings were persecuted by those in power, her conscience dictated that she assume the role of rescuer. After March 1944 she helped hundreds of individuals find apartments, acquire documentation, receive counselling. She placed children into safe homes, enabling them to avoid the horrors of the ghetto, as we may read in an archival document from 1945 (MOL XIX-B-1-r, 802). She hid Polish refugees and British soldiers who escaped from captivity in ten different apartments, rented under her name. She contracted nominal marriage on eight occasions, to enable the husbands to pass for Christians. Officially she was working for the Swedish Red Cross child services, led by Asta Nielsson and Waldemar Langlet. The overall head of this humanitarian undertaking was Raoul Wallenberg.⁵ The infants and children entrusted to Karig and her friends were placed in regular Hungarian orphanages and children's homes, as these were deemed safer than the homes set up by the Swedish Red Cross. The precaution paid off; all the children in the orphanages survived, whereas the Arrow-Cross militants broke into the safe-houses "protected" by the Swedish Red Cross (Gergely 1988: 13).

Immediately after the war Sára Karig received the Alexander Medal awarded by General Alexander, the commander-in-chief of the Allied forces in the Mediterranean area, expressing his gratitude to Karig for the aid provided to soldiers of the British Commonwealth.⁶ According to Karig's recollection the British offered her citizenship in the UK. Indeed, Karig's name appears on the list in a British dispatch; the list includes the names and addresses of those who worked with the British in 1944-45.⁷ In 1985 the Israeli government rewarded her activities with the Yad Vashem award.⁸ In 1987 she participated in the Wallenberg commemoration in Israel; she planted a locust tree along the row of trees of the Worthy — according to a recently established — tradition.

Her activities during the German occupation were also acknowledged in Hungary. The actor Tamás Major, a member of the Communist Party and deputy in the Provisional National Assembly who became the director of the National Theatre, wrote as follows in 1945:

Sára Karig ... courageously and actively supported our Party during the entire Nazi occupation (from March 19, 1944, to liberation). She gave lodging to comrade Sándor Haraszti and his family (Haraszti is now the editor-in-chief of *Szabadság*), to our comrade Géza Losonczy, now the editor-in-chief of *Szabad Nép* — at a time when they were

harassed almost to death by the Def [the Hungarian military's counter-intelligence department].⁹ The doors were open to myself as well, when I had no place to stay. I received a pile of documents from her — her apartment was practically a workshop for laundering excerpts from all kinds of registries. On several occasion we met our comrade Ferenc Donáth, a member of the Central Committee, and with comrade Gyula Kállai (now undersecretary of the Interior) at her place. I believe this may suffice to demonstrate that Sára Karig is among those few who really and truly¹⁰ took part in the resistance movement (MOL XIX-B-1-r, 802).

At the beginning of April 1945 Karig was visited by the leadership of the Social Democratic Party asking her to accept the administrative post in the office of Undersecretary Sándor Millok, at the Commissariat of the Returnees. There was great need for her knowledge of languages. When that office disbanded in December 1946, she joined the British Council as an official, later as secretary. All along she was a party activist in social work with the executive committee of the Social Democratic Party in the Second District (nowadays District I.). She also became involved in the work of the Education Section of the party; she organized preparatory courses for the benefit of those interested in joining the party (Bakonyi 1988-1989: 115).

Elections of August 31, 1947

Karig was already involved in preparing voters' lists for the elections to the National Assembly in 1945. She was coordinating these activities as the head of the voting center of in the Second District, once again prior to the elections of August 31, 1947.¹¹ It was here that she met the next political challenge: to record the electoral abuses committed by the Hungarian Communist Party. Her sense of justice and devotion to democratic principles would not allow her overlook these abuses. She could have remained silent, but she chose to speak out! In fact, compared to any other district in the country, the abuses in this district were the most notorious.

There were over fifty polling stations in the district. Karig developed a special telephone conference network for keeping in touch. During her sojourn in England she became aware that business transactions could be carried out by involving several conversation partners simultaneously, resorting to what we today would refer to as conference calls. She mentioned her experience to the employees of the postal services in the Second district; the mail personnel responded by offering to hook up a similar network locally. Thus the Social

Democratic workers of the Telephone Bureau carried out the assignment and, accordingly, on August 31, every polling station employee could listen to her at the same time if she felt it necessary (Bakonyi 1988-89, 151-152).

The electoral law of 1947 differed from the law of 1945 in several respects. One such area was the extension of suffrage by the use of the so-called “blue slip”, that is, voting by temporary listing of the name outside one’s own district. In 1945 this procedure applied only to pollsters and to those members of the electoral committees who were not serving in their own district. In 1947, however, anyone could avail themselves of this opportunity, if she or he knew in advance that they would not be near their home on electionday, and could thus secure the document, coloured blue, giving them the right to vote. These papers were printed out in the State Printing Office, but the paper used bore no watermark or any other unique feature which might have prevented forgery.

Since no abuses had been reported during the elections of 1945, the legislators took no precautions in this regard. As the chair of her district electoral committee Karig received the package of blue slips from István Ries, the Social Democratic Minister of Justice. Once these papers were distributed to the appropriate parties, a member of the electoral committee, who happened to be the secretary of the local branch of the Hungarian Communist Party, asked Karig to turn over the remainder of the blue slips, and he would return them to headquarters. Karig answered that, since she had received the temporary register of voters from Ries she felt obligated to account for them herself. In other words, she refused to hand over the package. At this point, according to the Karig’s recollection, the person uttered the following threat: “Comrade Karig, Siberia is not that far away!” (Bakonyi 1988-89: 152; Gergely 1988: 13).

Then a faint suspicion arose in Karig: what were these “blue slips” good for? After all, those who needed them could acquire them legally. Sára had a well-developed sense of trust, and it did not even occur to her that these slips could be abused. As a good organizer and a decisive person, at the last meeting before the elections she asked the chairs of the polling committees to let her know immediately whenever someone was using the “blue slip” as a ballot, to enable her to keep track (Bakonyi, 1988-98: 152).

On August 31 Karig received the first phone call, not long after the polls opened: industrial worker such and such had voted with a blue slip. In and of itself, this would have been innocuous but, to exclude all suspicion, Karig called in the personnel data of said voter to all polling stations, just in case the person showed up at some other polling station. If he did, he was to be detained along with his documents and turned over to the police officer on

duty, under suspicion of fraud. Indeed, Karig's suspicion proved correct; many tried to vote at several polling stations during the day. The news of the arrests reached the National Election Committee without delay, and István Ries called Karig by phone to find out the particulars. Karig requested trucks to transport the arrested abusers. Finally the police took the culprits to Andrásy Avenue 60 — the headquarters of the political police. According to Karig, however, they entered through one door and left by another. The documents remained with Karig (Bakonyi 1988-1989: 153).

Karig's intervention caused a furor. We know from the recollections of Vilmos Böhm, the grand old man of the Social Democratic Party, that the voters who used false papers were indeed turned over to the police for identification and investigation. When, however, this came to the knowledge of László Rajk, the Communist Minister of the Interior, he issued a confidential order by radio, to the effect that all police personnel who are arresting the abusing voters, will be suspended from their position. Thereupon István Ries instructed the prosecutor to visit the polling stations with immediate effect, arrest all voters who used forged papers and hand these persons over to the courts. Whereupon Rajk issued a fresh directive by radio to the police, that any prosecutor who showed up at a polling station be turned away and, should he refuse to leave, place him under arrest.¹²

Karig knew nothing about the circumstances of the "blue slip" affair. (Szerencsés, 1992, Gyarmati, 1997/98).¹³ The day after election day the same person who had approached her earlier to collect the unclaimed blue slips, now asked for the documents of all those who had been "arrested" because of the unlawful use of the blue slips. Karig refused once again, upon which he uttered another threat, and left (Bakonyi 1988-1989: 154).

The abduction of Sára Karig

On the morning of September 1, 1947, Karig was getting ready to report for duty at the British Council; she intended to stop at the precinct station on her way and turn in the key to the official safe that had remained in her custody; the confiscated documents were kept in that safe. As she stepped out of the entrance to her apartment building on Ponty Street she was accosted by two men in civilian clothing who informed her that she was to be taken to the headquarters of the economic police for deposition. Sára called her sister who shared the apartment using a convened whistle signal, and shouted that she was "heading for the economic police and, should I disappear, call the Ministry of Justice!" (Bakonyi 1988-1989: 383).

She was escorted to a big black Zis limousine parked around the corner, *with* curtains pulled, and driven to the building on the Avenue of Princess Vilma (now Városligeti fasor) 34-36, where she was handed over to the Soviet authorities.¹⁴ Her documents and valuables were taken away, including the Socialist insignia — the naked red man wielding a hammer! That same day the Russian authorities transported her to the Soviet occupation zone in Austria, and interned her at Baden bei Wien. The Soviet occupation forces used the cellars of a row of villas as prison cells, and detained Karig there for almost three months. She was subjected to continuous interrogations at night, whereas she was prevented from sleeping in the daytime. At first Karig was hoping that there may have been some misunderstanding; after all she was not a high-ranking party leader, nor was she a professional politician.

The repercussions of Karig's disappearance

Karig's disappearance met with incomprehension among the Social Democratic leaders. According to the recollections of Klára Szakasits, the daughter of Árpád Szakasits, the First Secretary of the party — the latter assumed it had something to do with the upcoming elections, since she had submitted specific proof of the electoral fraud perpetrated by the Hungarian Communist Party (Mrs. Siffer Szakasits, 1985, 216-17). Vilmos Böhm merely confirms this in his memoirs. He adds that he paid a visit to Mátyás Rákosi, the First Secretary of the Communist Party, and asked for his intervention in tracking down Karig. Rákosi did not hesitate: he placed a call to the Minister of the Interior László Rajk and to György Pálffy, the head of the Military Police section of the Ministry of Defense. Both told him that they knew about Karig's fate. Böhm sought out the leader of the Allied Control Commission,¹⁵ Lt. General Sviridov, who promised him that if Karig was indeed in their custody, the Soviets would release her. A few days later Böhm was informed, once again, that she was not under arrest. (Böhm 1990, 182-85). However, according to Antal Bán, the party's Deputy First Secretary, Karig was taken away in order to intimidate the Social Democrats (Bán, no date: 86).

In fact, the Social Democratic leaders had no idea of what became of Karig: the Social Democrats of the Second district did place an advertisement regarding the disappearance — that is, they started an official search for a missing person (Bakonyi, 1988-89: 382). Friends and family did not remain idle. When Karig's older brother turned to the Ministry of the Interior with an official request, he was told that she had probably defected to the West. The widow of the well-known artist István Dési Huber — a close friend of Sára —

also inquired with the authorities, but she was scared away upon being told that whoever is looking for Sára will end up suffering the same fate (Bakonyi 1988-89, 380). Finally, a Social Democrat lawyer came up with the correct information: he told the family that he knew for certain that Sára had been arrested by the political police who turned her over to Soviet counterintelligence (Bakonyi 1988-89: 382). The family found confirmation of the fact that Sára was alive when, toward the end of 1947, a woman released from camp in Lwow sent them a letter at Sára's request (Bakonyi 1988-89, 379). In one instance they received a postcard from Sára herself, from Vorkuta, during a visit to the camp by the Red Cross (Bakonyi 1988-98: 382).¹⁶

Held in the Soviet occupation zone in Austria

Karig was detained in Baden bei Wien until November 1947. In this period her questioning was carried out by the Soviet counter-intelligence. It became obvious, almost from the start, that she was accused of spying. Actually, this was mostly a bluff, since the interrogators did not even know that Karig was employed by the British Council. Karig herself revealed this fact in the autobiography she was forced to write, of which there are at least forty versions during these few weeks. Towards the end of the interrogations she was confronted by two high-ranking officials. One of the two was a prosecutor who informed Karig that her case was being investigated in Hungary as well, but the Soviet authorities did not file any charges against her, nor did they find out why the Hungarian authorities handed her over to the Soviets. They also made her sign a declaration to the effect that after her release, she was not to mention to anyone her experiences during her detention there. Not long after the door to her cell opened one night and she was told to gather her few belongings — but this time she was not taken for interrogation. She was put on a van that took her to the prison at Neunkirchen. Upon boarding the van an official read out a resolution to her; it was translated into German as well. From this resolution Karig found out that she had been removed from Hungary at the request of Hungarian authorities with the justification that her presence would interfere with the democratic collaboration between the Communist and Social Democratic parties, and that her presence would hamper democratic development in general. Therefore she was banned from Hungary for an undisclosed period (Bakonyi 1988-1989: 169).¹⁷ Only then did Karig realize that there was no way out; that, she would be taken to the Soviet Union. She was far from acquiescing, however; during the first three years of her imprisonment she seized every opportunity to appeal, besieging the authorities

with her petitions, every six month (Bakonyi, 1988-1989: 376; Gergely, 1988: 14).

Several more months had passed before she was removed to the Soviet Union; in the meantime she was detained at Neunkirchen, a camp which functioned as the Soviet concentration camp within Austria. Large transports of prisoners left from there to the distribution center at Lwow, transiting through Hungary, of course. Conditions at Neunkirchen were better; there was heat and warm water, she was receiving rations of milk. In her recollections she repeatedly mentions that it was only once she arrived in the tundra region that she realized how good the fare had been in Austria. She received the fare destined for the officer class: pork with lard, large pieces of beef joints with plenty of cabbage which, however, she could not stomach given the diet to which she was accustomed. Consequently, she lost 22 kilograms at the very beginning of her detention. Later, when the fare became truly poor and had little caloric value, she was to regret not eating properly while she had the chance. She found out too late — as she put it — “that it was not a matter of eating tasty food, but rather adequate caloric intake.” (Bakonyi, 1988-1989: 203-204.)

Sára was given chores at Neunkirchen: cleaning toilets, operating a sewing machine: along with a Czechoslovak medical student of Hungarian descent, she was told to mend the clothing of the detainees. During the summer vacations at Baja, and thanks to her mother’s insistence, she had taken courses in home economics, in tailoring and sewing, knitting and crocheting, cooking, canning fruit and other household chores. It should be noted, in all fairness, that at the time she had felt this was an imposition but, after returning from her detention she had to admit that there were great benefits to all this practical knowledge during her years of captivity. In Neunkirchen it enabled her to become part of the prison’s two-person tailoring workshop.

With regard to the old Singer sewing machine there was an interesting episode which tied her to Béla Kovács, the First Secretary of the Smallholder Party, arrested on February 25, 1947 (see Palasik 2002, and 2011). Kovács, too, was held by the Soviet authorities at Neunkirchen, in the men’s wing of the prison. On one occasion Sára was given a man’s drawers to repair, embroidered with the monogram KB. Her intuition told her this must refer to Béla Kovács,¹⁸ even though all she knew about his fate was that he too had been taken into custody by the Soviets. The two seamstresses were able to obtain red/white/green thread, which they sew under the fold, along with a small heart, before returning the item to Béla Kovács (Bakonyi 1988-1989: 179). On another occasion they were told to tailor a man’s suit from German military felt. They were given an old suit for measure, but the material barely sufficed

for a pair of trousers. Only after Béla Kovács was released did it dawn upon them that this article was also designed for Kovács. In fact, Kovács was to ask Karig much later: “Tell me, why did you make it so extra-large? I felt so loose in it!”¹⁹

In the tundra district of Vorkuta

In late December of 1947 Karig was removed from Neunkirchen and taken to Lwow, by the last transport of the season heading in that direction. The railroad car was idling at the Déli [South] railroad station in Budapest, but the detainees were unable to get a message out. At the camp in Lwow she was able to make good use of the know-how acquired during the infant care course she had taken in Szeged. She worked alongside the camp doctor, especially in curing scabs and syphilis, and the extermination of an infestation of bedbugs (Bakonyi 1988-1989: 181). Karig was transported further after two months, spending a day in Moscow, at the infamous Ljubjanka prison, and a day and a half at Kirov. Her attire in Lwow was the same as on the morning she left her apartment on Ponty Street in Budapest on September 2: a camelhair coat, a woolen dress and leather thongs. She bartered these for warmer clothing with the woman, already mentioned, who related her encounter with Karig in a letter she sent upon her own release. Thus, at the time of her departure for the arctic region she had a cotton overcoat and a pair of cotton pants. Much later she acquired a pair of gentry boots that had been patched innumerable times, and a buslat²⁰ which reached half way down her legs, a cap with earmuffs and a pair of one-fingered gloves. By then no one had their own underwear, everyone being forced to wear the official issue (Bakonyi 1988-1989: 185-207, 378).

Sára Karig arrived at Vorkuta, at the northern edge of the Ural mountain chain, an island the size of Rhode Island, in March of 1948. The average daily temperature was subzero: minus 19 degrees Celsius [minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit]. In Vorkuta the winters are long and the summers last only six weeks. The so-called correctional labour camp was situated near factories and mines. The prisoners were housed in barracks built for two hundred inmates, with separate facilities for women and men. Except for one year, when she was transferred to a camp at Sverdlovsk, she spent her entire detention in the arctic region under the most inhumane conditions. For two and a half years she performed hard labour, working in a clay mine, where she had to load the wagons and push these to the brickyard manually. She was never able to meet

the prescribed quota. She also worked in the production of peat, in gardening and in gathering hay, in a region 200 kilometres to the south of Vorkuta.

In addition to the rigors of the climate and the dire working conditions, she found it humiliating that the brigade leaders, who were common criminals, insulted the prisoners as “fascists”, as “ones who had raised their hands against the holy Soviet fatherland” (Szira, 1089: 13). Sára’s physical health deteriorated, she fell ill. Her cheeks became swollen as a result of a serious inner ear infection. She was taken to the hospital and told a mastoidectomy was necessary, but the surgeon refused to undertake the operation for lack of analgesics. Karig would not give up, insisted she was familiar with caring for the sick, and that she would perform the surgery on herself, if necessary. Her tremendous willpower stood her in good stead, the surgeon relented and the operation was performed. She remained in the hospital for a few months, as a nurse’s aide. We do not know why she was transferred to Sverdlovsk, then back to Vorkuta. In Sverdlovsk, however, she lived under relatively humane conditions in a German P.O.W. camp, as the only woman in a camp of 440. Separate quarters were made available to her in the medical complex. She was not required to work, all day she could read the books sent as packages to the German generals from Germany. Once she returned to Vorkuta, she was assigned to the camp’s book-binding workshop. Her friends managed to make those in charge believe that she had training in the craft, and she was able to convince her supervisors that she could not read Russian. This became necessary because often the assignment involved binding confidential camp records, using glue made from starch. They were able to save enough flour to prepare *palacsinta* [crêpe] for themselves on holidays.

Karig, always the optimist, felt that nothing in her life happened by chance, and that every event had a positive side. She contracted lifelong friendships in captivity with Estonians, Lithuanians and Russians. Soviet citizens could receive packages which they often shared with others. Garlic, cone-sugar, and double toast figured as treasures in the camp. The relatives of her closest friends sent Sára a package every other month, illegally, even after she was transferred to a different camp in Vorkuta. The sole reason for the transfer was to prevent deeper relations from forming among those considered politically unreliable.²¹ Karig wrote as follows: “If I am in a good mood I say, that at a stage in life when people usually don’t make new friends, I succeeded under those special conditions to win over people who were to become lifelong friends and who, at great sacrifice, shared whatever was good in their own life, to save mine” (Bakonyi, 1988-1989: 3878).²²

Karig felt that the new languages she learnt were yet another positive aspect of her captivity; she was now able to read Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoi-

evsky in the original. She persisted in learning Russian and Ukrainian, and this enabled her later on, after her release, to learn Bulgarian as well. She kept a versified journal during her detention, parts of which have been published. These offer lyrical accounts of the reindeer, of the Zurjen shepherd, of the tundra, of her friends... The entire diary reads as if there had been no forced labour involved at all (Karig, 1995).

The return home

The death of Stalin in March 1953 brought about changes in the camps. At first the inmates did not expect to be released but some of them were. Karig was among the first to make it back to Lwow, where she now worked in the POW triage camp. At the end of November in 1953 she left for home in a freight-car flying the Hungarian flag, and a load of POWs. There were no guards on the transport. At the border the Hungarian authorities took over the passengers in alphabetical order, and issued a certificate to everyone certifying their status as prisoners of war.²³ The next stop was Nyíregyháza-Sóstó for further sorting. After a few days Karig was informed that her family was living under 14 Ponty Street, but was not told which members were alive. She could travel free, as a returning POW, was issued ten *forints*, and was placed on a train heading for Budapest, with the instructions that upon arrival she was to report to the office of the district physician. According to official documents Karig had crossed the border on November 26, 1953, and according to the registry of residents she arrived at the apartment on Ponty Street on December 2. On the 10th she duly reported to the office of the district physician on Maros Street (PIL container 3).

When Sára arrived at the Nyugati railroad station in Budapest, she looked for a phone booth and sought her own name in the directory. To her amazement she found it, but she felt discouraged upon dialling the number and getting no answer. She headed for Buda by way of the Margit Bridge. She was surprised to note that the name Karig was displayed on two mailboxes, one bearing the name of her sister, the other of her brother. Sára knew nothing about them. She had no idea that her father lost his mind and died because of her disappearance. Then her mother moved from Baja to Budapest to live with her daughter Júlia. Her brother moved next door, with his own family.

Sára Karig arrived from the Soviet Union as two-thirds invalid.²⁴ For a long time after her return she suffered from claustrophobia. She did not go out, neither to the movies nor the theatre, not even to meet friends. She felt ill at ease in any confined space. As she confessed:

I am not saying that I was drowning, but I distinctly felt that I could not get out, that I was locked up once again. I would wake in the middle of the night, suffering from insomnia; in other words, my health was poor. Moreover, I had to sort out this accumulation of terrible events in my own mind. This became all the more entrenched in me because I had paid no attention to it during my captivity, but looked at things with a bright outlook, that such was my life, even if I had to spend it over here, and, even if I died here, there could be no other existence for me. (Bakonyi, 1988-1989: 373-74).

Even though Karig lived the years after her return in such negative terms, she did not remain inactive. In the middle of 1954 she completed an advanced course as translator at the Soviet-Hungarian Friendship Society. In 1956 she passed an advanced language examination at the Eötvös Loránd University in English and Russian; then, in the spring of 1957, in German as well. In 1957 she registered as a distance learner with the Department of Hungarian Ethnology.

It was not easy to resume life as a civilian; it took her a while to get over the feeling that she had been forgotten at home, that she had been missed by no one. There were friends who were afraid of what might happen to them should they resume contact, and even went to the trouble of crossing the street to avoid greeting her (Bakonyi, 1988-1989: 392-94). Others, however, came to her help when the opportunity presented itself. Among them we find Gyula Ortutay, her former friend from Szeged; Professor János Holló, chairperson at the university; Éva Derera, the editor in charge of the children's section of Hungarian Radió; Endre Barát, the editor-in-chief of the magazine *Ország-Világ*; János Domokos, the editor at the Új Magyar (after 1957 Európa) publishing house. All of them helped Sára find temporary employment until June 1956, when she signed a contract with Európa Publishers. Prompted by Domokos, she learnt Bulgarian. She became involved in long-range planning for the publishing house, acting as editor-in-chief for decades. She was in charge of special series such as the volumes of *Népek meséje* [Tales of nations] and the anthologies entitled *Égtájak*. She interpreted the works of Mikhail Bulgakov for Hungarian readers, as well as many a masterpiece of Ukrainian and Bulgarian literatures. She contributed a great deal to intercultural communication; we might even say, she "managed" the literatures of Finland, of Africa, of Australia, of Vietnam, among others. Since 1977 she was also editor of the *Új Tükör* [New mirror] for world literature. She remained active in literature even after she retired in 1989. She was an active

member of over ten scientific, literary and other societies; among these, she became president of the Mihály Károlyi Society.²⁵

Beginning in the spring of 1956 Sára Karig tried to seek rehabilitation. She filed petitions with the Soviet ambassador to Hungary, with Erik Molnár, the Minister of Justice, and with the Ministry of the Interior. She was rehabilitated by the secretariat of the Ministry of the Interior in 1957. The official justification on the cover of that file reads “since they had no document referring to any data on enemy activity”.²⁶ According to another source, the document pertaining to her rehabilitation by the Ministry of the Interior was dated October 2, 1957. The memorandum regarding the process of rehabilitation mentions that Hungarian law enforcement agencies turned to the Soviet authorities inquiring about Karig. The latter responded “that since nothing had transpired against her, there was no judgment against her. In 1953 she was offered Soviet citizenship, but she opted to return to Hungary.” Consequently the Hungarian rehabilitation commission determined as follows: “The commission examined the case of Sára Karig. Neither we nor the Soviet authorities found any act that would have justified her internment, hence we are issuing a document of rehabilitation.” The document of rehabilitation, issued by the military prosecutor’s office in Moscow, is dated November 6, 1957.²⁷

The rehabilitation made Sára’s life somewhat easier, but nothing could compensate her for the years lost. By the time she returned from the Soviet Union she had reached forty. In her view, she embarked on a third life. She was grateful to fate that at long last she was able to perform work she truly enjoyed. This new stage of her life proved as active as the previous ones: she became acquainted with hundreds of persons from around the globe; she corresponded extensively, and traveled a lot. No one begrudged her success; she was the kind of person whose success was appreciated everywhere. From the late 1970s on she received all kinds of political and literary awards; the one she prized most was the Attila József prize, awarded to her in 1986.²⁸

She never married; her mother, siblings, nieces and nephews, friends and beloved dogs formed her family. Her life, so rich in highlights, came to an end in February 1999.

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NOTES

This essay was translated from the Hungarian original by Professor Mario Fenyó, in cooperation with the study's author.

¹ Sára Karig died on February 2, 1999.

² She passed the course in Commerce, with a mark of “very good”, on June 13, 1934 (PIL, container 10).

³ She was a nanny to a small boy in Newcastle. She corresponded with the family even after 1945, nor did the correspondence stop when the head of the family, a surgeon, had to relocate to India (Bakonyi, 1988–1989: 384).

⁴ Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky (1886–1944), became a martyr of the anti-Fascist movement in late 1944. Having completed his studies in law he was associated with the extreme right until the late twenties. Then he gradually veered toward democratic opposition forces. In 1930 he formed the National Radical Party. On 15 March (a national holiday, sometimes official, sometimes not) in 1932 he launched an anti-Nazi weekly titled *Szabadság* (Freedom), which became a forum for intellectual and political resistance to Nazis. In 1936 his party united with the Independent Smallholders and Bourgeois Party. He was a deputy in parliament since 1939. In spite of the German influence he advocated a federation of the Danubian nations, and fought against Fascism. He was in touch with members of the Social Democratic and the underground Communist parties, stood up for those persecuted for racial or political reasons — became a leader of the anti-Nazi resistance. He was arrested twice in 1944 during the German occupation (which started on March 19, 1944). The Arrow-Cross national assembly handed him over to the military tribunal, which sentenced him to death. He was executed on Christmas Eve.

⁵ Raoul Wallenberg (1912–?), the Swedish ambassador to Hungary (serving from July 1944), was able to prevent the deportation of twenty thousand Jews to the concentration camps. He was arrested by the Soviet army in Budapest in January 1945. The ultimate fate of the diplomat is still unclear.

⁶ The award can be found in PIL Karig Sára collection, container 3.

⁷ National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, FO 371, 48512. The interesting thing about this archival source was that it was classified for fifty years. These particular documents were opened in 1996.

⁸ The award was brought by Sára Reuveni from Israel and handed to Sára Karig.

⁹ Department 2 of the General Staff of the Hungarian Royal Defense, the infamous VKF-2, was in charge of counterintelligence; the “defenziv”, or “def” for short, was one of its components.”

¹⁰ This word is underscored in the original.

¹¹ She was given two months’ leave without pay from the British Council for this purpose.

¹² Referring to the event, more particularly to the fact that he could not guarantee “the rule of law”, handed in his resignation, albeit he withdrew it after protracted negotiations. See Böhm 1990: 154-55, 176.

¹³ In the elections held on 31 August 1947 the votes given on blue slips illegally gave the Communist Party more seats, or about 60,000 more votes, than they were entitled to; this translated into two or three unearned seats in Parliament. Palasik 2011: 140.

¹⁴ The NKVD, the Soviet state security office, moved here in the second half of January 1945.

¹⁵ The armistice agreement on 20 January 1945 obligated Hungary to carry out the “anti-Fascist measures,” and she was to accept the Allied Control Commission (ACC) as the organization in charge of the execution of the armistice agreement. The ACC, made up of the delegates of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the USA, remained in operation until the ratification of the peace treaty on 15 September 1947. In similar bodies created in other defeated countries the office of chairman, and the decisive voice, always belonged to the great power that was occupying a given country or that had pushed the German forces out. Thus the Soviet Union presided over the ACC in Hungary. Moreover, the Yugoslav and Czech missions also functioned to ensure the payment of reparations to Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Executive Agreement Series 456, 1945, 59 Stat.: 1321; Palasik 2000: 25-30; Palasik 2011: 16-19.

¹⁶ She was able to indicate her return address on the card, and the family did send letters and packages, but these were never received.

¹⁷ The decision was reached by the “Osobennoye soveschaniye Moscowi”—a council composed of three members, fondly nicknamed the “Troika.”

¹⁸ Béla Kovács (1908–1959). Farmer of peasant background and politician. Joined the Smallholder Party in 1933. Political undersecretary of state in the Ministry of the Interior from December 23, 1944 to November 15, 1945. Minister of Agriculture from November 15, 1945 to February 23, 1946. First Secretary of the party from August 20, 1945, and a member of Parliament. He was widely regarded as the most popular peasant politician, as a charismatic individual — a spokesperson for the various strata of the peasantry. He consistently defended democratic principles, was less willing to compromise or sell out than many a member of his party, and resisted the attempts of the two workers parties to take over power. Consequently, on February 25, 1947 he was arrested and deported by the Soviet occupation forces, at the insistence of Mátyás Rákosi. He was sentenced to twenty years of detention, without due process. He was brought back to Hungary in 1955, but returned to his family only on April 2, 1956. See Palasik, 2002.

¹⁹ This comment simply indicates that Béla Kovács also lost a lot of weight in detention.

²⁰ A warm overcoat.

²¹ This policy failed, however, for Karig was able to maintain lifelong friendship through correspondence and exchanges of visits.

²² Karig belongs among the few who went back to Vorkuta. This happened at the beginning of the 1990s, at the instance of Sándor Sára who was filming a documentary entitled “Hungarian women in the GULAG.”

²³ So far the details regarding Karig’s return have not surfaced from the archives. On the other hand, her name appears on several rosters of POWs returning from the Soviet Union, or registers of persons under investigation. See ÁBTL 3.1.9. V-113; V-110209/2.; V-110209/5; V-110209/10; V-113409/10 and A 1341. Karig is listed under identification number 740, ÁBTL 3.1.9. V-113409/5 118, 123.

²⁴ This is also the consequence of the double mastectomy performed in Vorkuta. The operation was carried out under primitive conditions and with inadequate instruments, but it was corrected after her return to Hungary.

²⁵ From the seventies Sara developed a meaningful friendship with Katinka Andrássy (widow of Count Mihály Károlyi). In her last will the latter designated Karig and János Jemnitz as her spiritual heirs. They were also granted custody of the papers of Mihály Károlyi.

²⁶ ÁBTL 2.2.1. I/13.5. 598.

²⁷ Belügyminisztérium, Történeti Irattár, 22, documents pertaining to rehabilitation proceedings.

²⁸ Among the many medals and awards, Karig received the Order of Knighthood of the Finnish Order of the Lion (1989), The Star Cross of the Hungarian People’s Republic (1989), and the Star Cross of the Hungarian Republic (1994).

Hungary's Darkest Days (1939-1945) Revisited

Thomas Sakmyster

Deborah S. Cornelius. *Hungary in World War II: Caught in the Cauldron*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2011. 519 pages. ISBN 978-0-8232-3343-4 cloth; ISBN 978-0-8232-3344-1 paper.

Writing a work of synthesis is one of the more daunting tasks a historian can undertake. When done correctly it requires the mastery of a broad range of relevant secondary sources and the ability to integrate the material into a narrative that is both accessible and interesting to readers who are not specialists in the topic. The author's difficulties are notably increased when the topic is bristling with controversy, as is the case with the history of Hungary in World War II. Deborah Cornelius has successfully met this challenge and written a book that meets an important need. No other book in any language provides such an authoritative and comprehensive overview of Hungary during the great cataclysm that was unleashed in 1939. The only other directly comparable work is one published in 1987 by the Hungarian historian Gyula Juhász, but it was not designed for a broad audience and is now outdated.¹ Another Hungarian historian, Ignác Romsics, has offered a valuable, but relatively short, overview of the topic in his excellent book on the history of 20th Century Hungary.²

In researching and writing her book Deborah Cornelius has skilfully integrated the scholarship of several generations of historians who have pondered the problems of Hungary in the era of the two world wars. She draws on the work of C. A. Macartney and his successors in the West, as well as the publications of those historians born in Hungary who pursued their careers in Western Europe or North America. As the book's extensive bibliography reveals, Cornelius has also familiarized herself with the vast output of historical work on the topic by Hungarian historians both before and after 1989. Furthermore, because the book is meticulously footnoted, the

reader is able to identify the source of particular quotations or assertions, something that is not always the case in works of historical synthesis. To construct her narrative Cornelius relies mainly on published monographs and articles, but the book is strengthened by occasional citations of archival material and by very effective use of memoirs and autobiographies. Quotations from such first-hand accounts enliven the narrative and at times offer new perspectives on and insights into otherwise familiar events.

Nearly one-fifth of Cornelius's over 500 page book is devoted to the legacy of World War I, the peace settlement, and developments in Hungary during the inter-war period. Relying heavily on Margaret Macmillan's study of the Paris peace conference, the author explains how the Treaty of Trianon, which created sizable Magyar minorities in the Successor States, was formulated and approved by the victorious Great Powers. Though scrupulously even-handed in her narrative, she makes it clear why most Hungarians regarded the peace settlement as "an inexplicable miscarriage of justice." (p. 27) In discussing the psychological impact of the Great War and the partitioning of Hungary, Cornelius makes deft use of quotations from memoirs and interviews she conducted to illustrate the plight of those Hungarians who chose to migrate to Trianon Hungary rather than live under foreign rule. Some found it difficult to acclimate to their new surroundings, such as the Protestant woman from mountainous Transylvania who felt uncomfortable in the largely Catholic city of Szeged on the plains. Others felt unable to identify with the multi-ethnic capital city, Budapest, which somehow did not seem Magyar in the same way as Kolozsvár or Pozsony.

Cornelius's treatment of the interwar period for the most part covers familiar ground, with an emphasis on how the fixation on territorial revision led Hungarian leaders to make a devil's pact with Hitler's Germany. The author is particularly effective in explaining the rightward drift of Hungarian political life and the growing appeal of right-wing radicalism. Economic issues are not dealt with in detail, but the author makes the incisive point that the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire disrupted trade patterns and made Hungary extraordinarily dependent on foreign trade and the vagaries of the world markets. Considerable attention is given to an interesting discussion of interwar populist and youth movements, topics on which Cornelius has published extensively. Yet there are occasional imbalances in coverage. Several pages are devoted to an interesting but disproportionately long section on the International Eucharistic Congress of 1938, yet much less attention is given to the role of the Christian churches in everyday society and the development of Christian nationalism.³ Similarly, although the growth of anti-

Semitism and the genesis of anti-Jewish legislation receive careful attention, the reader learns almost nothing of the Jewish community itself.

In her description of the way in which Hungary recovered some of its lost territory in 1938 and 1939, Cornelius is both thorough and dispassionate. Thus, while noting that Hungarians understandably rejoiced in the return of Ruthenia and southern Slovakia, the author points out the subsequent problems when Hungarian officials realized that for the most part Hungarians who had lived in Czechoslovakia enjoyed a higher standard of living and a more advanced social welfare system than their counterparts in truncated Hungary. Furthermore, the Hungarians of Slovakia had, in the opinion of many Hungarian leaders, been “contaminated by Czech ideas,” which led the Hungarian government to treat the newly recovered land as an “occupied territory.” The Slovaks, of course, deeply resented the loss of territory and the appearance of arrogant Hungarian gendarmes, who invaded schools and destroyed Slovak language text books, announcing that “you can’t use these anymore.”(p. 97) Nor were the “liberated” Hungarians fully satisfied. An official report in late 1938 suggested that the enthusiasm of the Hungarians in the recovered territory was waning, for many believed that “under the twenty years of Czech rule they had never been so cheated as in the days after the Hungarian occupation.” In her effort to be completely even-handed in discussing what has always been a highly contentious issue, Cornelius goes so far as to conclude that in retrospect “it was a mistake that the Hungarians were not more generous to the Slovaks in the first Vienna Award.” (p. 93).

The core of Cornelius’s book, chapters 5 through 9, consists of a thorough narrative of the political and military events of World War II as they affected Hungary. Although she does not go out of her way to emphasize the point, this is a history fraught with paradox and irony. The first years of the war brought misery, destruction, and chaos to much of Europe, including near neighbours to Hungary like Poland. For most Hungarians, however, the war at first meant relatively good times. 1939, described as “one of the best years ever for the Hungarian economy,” (p. 152) ushered in a “war boom” that lasted right up to 1944. Rearmament, the expansion of exports to Germany, and the exploitation of newly available natural resources in the recovered territories combined to boost the economy and raise the standard of living. The greatest social problems of the 1930s, unemployment and underemployment of the agrarian population, were now greatly mitigated, as surplus farm workers began to migrate towards jobs in the factories of Budapest. Unemployed intellectuals found positions in the civil service in the newly regained territories, although they were often disliked by local Hungarians who resented the

fact that these “parachutists,” or outsiders, had suddenly appeared to take jobs that rightfully should have gone to them.

The prosperity and relaxation of social tensions in the early war years were accompanied by the introduction of several long-overdue social reforms. There was a modest upturn in the construction of housing and apartments, and certain social welfare programs were instituted or expanded. Compulsory school education was extended to eight years, and a vigorous program of folk high schools was launched. These reforms were enacted, however, against the backdrop of increasing discrimination against and persecution of Hungarian Jews. The Jewish laws of 1938 and 1939 caused considerable hardship and humiliation for most Hungarian Jews, for whom the legislation was both an economic and psychological blow. But, as Cornelius carefully notes, the Jewish laws were not always strictly enforced and ways were sometimes found to circumvent their intent, as for example the “Strohmann” system, which was used to conceal continued Jewish ownership of firms. As a result, most Hungarian Jews continued to believe that the government, and especially Regent Miklós Horthy, would “protect them from the fate of Jews elsewhere in Europe.”(p. 165) Even so, there were ominous signs that an even more virulent anti-Semitism lurked just below the surface in Hungarian society, especially among military officers. This was demonstrated in the Újvidék massacre of 1942, the course and impact of which Cornelius treats at length.

As the author demonstrates, the Jewish laws also had certain unintended psychological effects on Hungarian society. When the definition of a Jew shifted from religion to race, Hungarians found it necessary to conduct research into their family origins to establish that they had no Jewish ancestors. Some discovered, to their chagrin, that they were unable to authenticate the pure Christian origins of themselves or their spouses. This was the case even with about seventy high-ranking military officers. A Roman Catholic priest, discovering that according to the Jewish Laws he was now defined as a Jew, declared that “never, even in my dreams, did it occur to me ... that my Hungarian-ness could be placed in doubt.”(p. 187) When Béla Imrédý, the Prime Minister and strong proponent of anti-Jewish legislation, was shown documents that supposedly showed he had a Jewish ancestor far back in his family tree, he was so horrified and humiliated that he immediately resigned. Others who considered themselves to be pure Magyars were dismayed to find previously unknown ancestors who had been Slovak, Romanian, Serb, or German. In other words, the very concept of what it meant to be a Hungarian was thrown into question.

Cornelius is very effective in describing the anomalies that characterized the home front in Hungary up to 1944. In many ways life went on in a normal way. True, the soldiers who were sent in large numbers to fight on the Russian front confronted the true horror of modern warfare, and there were enormous casualties and loss of equipment. In fact, the Hungarian army was woefully unprepared in almost all ways, and the support promised by the Germans never fully materialized. The inevitable result was a series of catastrophic defeats in late 1942 and early 1943. This had a shattering impact on the Hungarian public, for previously news reports from the front had been misleadingly optimistic. Yet Hungary itself was still spared the direct impact of the war. The actual military combat remained far off and no Allied air raids were conducted before 1944.

Cornelius points out that Hungary remained an exception in Hitler's Europe in certain other ways as well. The country's conservative elite relied on the prestige and popularity of Regent Horthy to hold off radical right-wing measures demanded by the Nazi Germans and their sympathizers in Hungary. The Hungarian government steadfastly refused to force Jews to wear the yellow star or to accede to Hitler's suggestion that they be sent to Germany as forced labourers. Horthy also resisted pressures to establish a full-fledged dictatorship and totalitarian control of society. He even allowed himself to be convinced that justice demanded that the perpetrators of the Újvidék massacre be brought to trial, which ended in early 1944 with the conviction of the four officers responsible for the atrocity. As Cornelius rightly points out, it was a truly "unique event for a country to put its own officers on trial during wartime." (p. 266) Also of note was the remarkable persistence of a pluralistic system in which parties from almost all points of the political spectrum, including the Social Democrats, were permitted to participate. Perhaps the greatest irony was that Hungary, which had been regarded in the inter-war period by many in the West as a reactionary and backward country, should during World War II remain as one of Europe's few "islands of cultural and intellectual freedom," (p. 276) a place where the press continued to be relatively open and free and even books by Jewish authors could still be published.

All of that came to an end in March, 1944, when German troops occupied Hungary. In the next twelve months Hungarians were to feel the full fury of the war: the horror and misery they had earlier been spared now seemed to descend on them in a concentrated form. With Horthy's tacit approval, the Jews were rounded up and deported — but they were sent not to Germany to work in the war factories as promised but to Auschwitz where the young, the old, the frail, and those without exploitable skills were gassed on

arrival — and those put to work often didn't survive very long. Only when he came to realize the true nature of the Holocaust did Horthy intervene successfully to protect most of the Jews of Budapest. Hungary's capital city, which had been largely unscathed in the first four years of war, now was targeted by Allied bombers. In late 1944 and early 1945 Budapest became the site of some of the most devastating combat in World War II. The siege of Budapest, Cornelius points out, was "one of the longest and bloodiest" of the war, and the intensity of the fighting was comparable to that seen in Warsaw, Leningrad, or Stalingrad. 1944 brought a major political transformation as well. As the Red Army drew closer to Hungary and a German defeat seemed inevitable, Regent Horthy agreed to secret negotiations with the Russians to arrange for an armistice. When Horthy's attempt to implement the resulting agreement miscarried, the Germans stepped in, forced Horthy to resign, and installed a radical right wing government run by Ferenc Szálasi and his Arrow Cross Party.

Cornelius's discussion of these events is comprehensive and riveting. The narrative is enlivened with eyewitness reports on key incidents, such as Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky's one-man resistance to the German occupation and the public reception of Horthy's radio address announcing the country's withdrawal from the war. The author is even-handed in her discussion of the many controversial issues relating to Hungary in the last year of the war: What was the nature of the agreement Horthy made with Hitler at Klessheim in March, 1944? Why did the Jews not try to resist? Why did the Christian churches not intervene more forcefully to stop the deportation of the Jews? Would it have served Hungary's interests better if the regent had resigned in protest of the German occupation, or, if he remained in office, should he not have spoken out earlier against the persecution of the Jews? For the most part Cornelius refrains from taking a position on these thorny issues, although she gives a cautious approval to Horthy's decision to cling to power and wait several months before stepping in to halt the deportations of the Jews. Had he tried to intervene earlier, Cornelius argues, "he would have been removed or silenced," (p. 310) but by biding his time he was able to take advantage of the substantial weakening of the German military position after the Allies had landed at Normandy and the Soviets had launched their massive summer offensive.

The last two chapters of the book deal with the transition from Arrow Cross rule to the Soviet occupation and the situation that confronted Hungarians in the immediate post-war period. Personal accounts are again used to provide vivid illustrations of key developments in the last months of the war,

including the rescue efforts of Raul Wallenberg, the catastrophic policies of the Arrow Cross government, and the ruthless methods first of the retreating German troops and then of the invading Red Army. Cornelius ably sums up the policy of the Soviet Union toward Hungary in this period: it was “to squeeze out of Hungary everything possible in industrial goods, agricultural goods, and even human resources” in order to “contribute to the rebuilding of the Soviet Union.” (p. 383) She deplores the depredations of the Soviet troops, which included widespread plundering and massive deportation of Hungarians, often randomly selected, to serve as forced labourers in Soviet Russia. Rape by Red Army soldiers of Hungarian women, young and old, was so common that “few women were spared.” (p. 376) Cornelius presents a stark picture of the horrors of the Soviet occupation, but she also notes that the “Soviets, justifiably, regarded Hungary as an enemy state.” (p. 374)

For her brief description of developments in the immediate post-war period Cornelius draws particularly on the work of Peter Kenez and Bennett Kovrig.⁴ She provides useful sketches of the key issues in this period, including land reform, war trials, negotiation of the peace treaty, and the Communist Party’s strategy for the destruction of the democratic coalition that arose after the first elections. She describes step by step how the briefly established pluralist system was eroded and disillusioned Hungarians sought to emigrate. Finally, by early 1948 “Hungary as well as the rest of Eastern Europe was firmly established in a Soviet-style system.”(p. 417)

Both general readers and specialists in Hungarian history owe a debt to Deborah Cornelius for her notable accomplishment. *Hungary in World War II: Caught in the Caldron* is so eminently readable and comprehensive that one hesitates to point out a few omissions from the bibliography or suggest certain topics that might have been covered. Cornelius displays an admirable mastery of English and Hungarian language materials, but a few German language titles of importance have escaped her notice, notably the works of Árpád von Klimó and Christian Gerlach.⁵ Her section on the inter-war period might have been enhanced with brief mention of such topics as the Roma (gypsies), right-wing feminism, or the professions.⁶ And in general art and popular culture get little attention. For example, one finds almost nothing on literature, music and the cinema, which had an impact both within the country and elsewhere. Yet these are mere quibbles. Cornelius’s book is a major scholarly accomplishment that will long remain the definitive historical synthesis of Hungary in World War II.

NOTES

¹ Gyula Juhász, *A háború és Magyarország, 1938-1945* [Hungary and the War, 1938-1945] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986).

² Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. Században* [Hungary's history in the 20th century] 3rd edition (Budapest: Osiris, 2005), also available in English: *Hungary in the Twentieth Century* (Budapest: Corvina, 1999).

³ On this see Paul A. Hanebrink, *In Defense of Christian Hungary: Religion, Nationalism, and Antisemitism, 1890-1944* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

⁴ Peter Kenéz, *Hungary from the Nazis to the Soviets: The Establishment of the Communist Regime in Hungary, 1944-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2006); Bennett Kovrig, *Communism in Hungary: From Kun to Kádár* (Stanford: Hoover, 1979).

⁵ Árpád von Klimó, *Nation, Konfession, Geschichte: Zur nationalen Geschichtskultur Ungarns im europäischen Kontext (1860-1948)* (München : R. Oldenbourg, 2003); Christian Gerlach and Götz Aly, *Das letzte Kapitel : Realpolitik, Ideologie und der Mord an den ungarischen Juden 1944-1945* (Stuttgart : Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2002).

⁶ For the latter two topics, see Mária Schmidt, *Liberal Professions and Illiberal Politics: Hungary from the Habsburgs to the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford U. P., 1994).

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The Image, Concept and Language of the Rose: From Antiquity to the Renaissance

Lajos Somogyvári

János Géczi. *A rózsza kultúrtörténete. Az antik Mediterráneum* (The cultural history of the rose. The Antique Mediterranean). Budapest: Gondolat, 2006. 340 pages. ISBN 963 961 081

János Géczi. *A rózsza kultúrtörténete. Keresztény középkor* (The cultural history of the rose. The Christian Middle Ages). Budapest: Gondolat, 2007. 286 pages. ISBN 978 963 961 099 6

János Géczi. *A rózsza kultúrtörténete. Reneszánsz*. (The cultural history of the rose. The Renaissance). Budapest: Gondolat, 2008. 350 pages. ISBN 978 963 693 066 0

Western civilization has an old concept about the existence of an ideal language, one that is perfect and universal. This language contains a lot of symbols and stories — one of them is the image of the rose. János Géczi's monumental trilogy surveys the evolution of this symbol and image from the Antique Mediterranean through the Christian Middle Ages to the Renaissance. This paper tries to offer the potential readers of this work an idea how they can (or how they should) read the language of the rose.

The theoretical background of these three volumes is determined by the aims of scholarship and the possibilities of historiography. As Hayden

White had said, historical narratives are constructed by us. Géczi realizes that his own narrative is only one of the many variations possible, with the help of which we can describe the foundations of our culture. He believes that previous ages need to be understood rather than explained. What questions must have governed Géczi's inquiries? In his researches he first collected the mentions of the rose in various texts. Next he analysed the functions and the meaning of the rose's human interactions. As Géczi takes us through the phases and epochs of humanity's cultural evolution we can observe how the arts and the sciences became separate and how the latter became more structured. One of the benefits of reading Géczi's volumes is that they help us understand the process through which the Western World freed itself of mysticism — and from the domination of magic — a process that started during the Renaissance.

Géczi creates connections amongst words, texts and images, in this way he develops the diversity of cultural patterns. His multidisciplinary method has advantages as well as disadvantages. One advantage of such means of exploration is that it can place cultural phenomena in different light. We can observe how European semantics developed from such constituent components as the rose. Various fields of knowledge converge in this process, including botany and art history. The apparent chasm and contradiction between the arts and the sciences is a development of the modern age. Before ten these two spheres jointly formed our knowledge about the world, and within it, humanity. Accordingly there was no need for humans to perceive a difference between action and theory, visualization and verbalization, the sacred and the profane. In the age of professionalization of — and ever increasing specialisation in — the arts and sciences, this approach can easily invite charges of dilettantism. The question emerges: Which rules and ideas define the limits to the interpretation and the rendering of meanings? We can produce infinite number of narratives from the same information — who can judge the validity and legitimacy of our interpretations?

Iconology and Iconography

The title of the volumes under review, the *Cultural History of the Rose*, refers to the hypothesis that ideas, imaginations and symbols of our culture are objectified in texts and images, and they have forms that through the progress

of time might be constant, or they might be changing. These representations and cultural patterns, which we might even call semantics, can be studied with the aid of numerous new historiographical tools or methodologies, such as oral history, micro-history, or iconography and iconology. In his researches Géczi relies mainly on iconography and iconology.

The rose is a symbol of the universal human culture and society but it also has botanical, historical, literary and other aspects. The process of analysing images consists of several steps and procedures. It begins by examining whether a certain image has anthropological affinities. In other words: the subject of iconographical and iconological research can only be human bodies and their surroundings — this circumstance restricts the possible corpus of the sources. The researcher always has to be careful to separate the image's various components. Some components refer to the specific human figure, while others offer information about the person who created the image — and about his or her world view that dominated the thinking of the epoch when the image was created. The examination of the image can have other purposes too: the analysis of spaces, human interactions, individuals, attitudes, and symbolisms. Géczi uses the products of numerous fields of knowledge: literature, arts, botany, medicine, history of sciences — and the image of the rose unites these elements.

In the study of cultural history there are two concepts about the rose: the rose that is sacred and the rose that is natural. These concepts had lived side-by-side ever since antiquity. The image of the sacred rose was dominant in medieval times, while the image of the natural or profane rose began its ascendancy in the time of the Renaissance. The separation of these two concepts is crude and is an oversimplification but it helps us to understand our culture and its complexities.

The Sacred Rose

Every epoch has different methods of collecting and sharing information about human beings and the world. The generating and producing of knowledge before the Modern Age was very different from what we are familiar today. According to the sacred world view created beings are proofs of an eternal cosmic order made by God or the Gods: so people can only discover

knowledge *again*, knowledge that composes the essence of the things. Later ages however introduced order into the chaotic world from an outside point of view: and new knowledge and world-views that competed with each other came into being.

If we want to understand how an everyday person in Medieval times (by way of example) looked at the image of the rose, we have reconsider our ideas about the picture and the inter-relatedness of text and image. Our European culture has two main elements: of these the first, the Judeo-Christian tradition, assigns definitive importance to the Book which contains the revelation of God. We can compare this concept with the other building-block of our culture, classical Greek thinking, the metaphysics of Aristotle and his writings about the micro- and macro-cosmos. In certain ways these two traditions or mentalities are analogous to each other. Images and texts signify the presence of living creatures as well as of a sacred harmony that exists beyond the realm of human emotions and temporal existence.

Image of the rose concerns various senses: those of sight, taste, smell and touch. When we face a picture of a rose, it should not only be a visual experience but a multiplicity of experiences — the people of ancient times experienced these sensations together. Another important remark: we simplify pictures too much when we see them only as illustrations or works of art. An image is always part of a narrative that has been produced by specific causes, and this fact has to be accepted by every viewer of the image. The ideal reader of the picture reproduces these meanings, discovers the attributes of the Holy Mary, of Jesus Christ, of the martyrs of the Church, and the unseen world that is connected to the picture's surface. Until the Renaissance, when a fundamental change occurred, a picture signified the omnipresence of God and the existence of a certain cosmic order.

The Natural Rose

The rose, both as a symbol and as a concrete plant, was domesticated and came into use in the civilization that arose in the ancient Mediterranean. It became employed in medicine and hygiene, in ritual and sacral proceedings, and even as a component of nutrition. This latter practical use largely disappeared in the Christian Middle Ages.

During the Renaissance the sacral approach to the use of the rose was re-evaluated and transformed. The sign of the rose began to refer not only to spiritual beauty, but also to such secular pleasures as the beauty of a human body, the feeling of love, or as a decoration in a garden. The process of the rose's "desacralisation", its "demagification" to use terms coined by Max Weber, coincided with the individualisation of images and the standardisation, specialisation, formalisation and growth of the sciences, including botany. New kinds of sources emerge in this connection: books on medicine (herbariums), descriptions of gardens, scientific writings, catalogues etc. Some of these existed in antiquity and they were just re-invented in the Renaissance. Géczi's reasoning always confirms to the circumstances and the mentality of the given epoch, this is the key to the multiplicity, the greatly varied nature of the objects he examines.

An important notice regarding the changing times: representations of the rose began to diverge from the traditional (symbolical and ethical) approach. Starting with the Renaissance, two different manners of speech developed about the rose: the allegoric-symbolic one and the scientific-illustrative. It is another interesting development how the idea of *hortus conclusus* turned into a decorative park — similarly to how the representations of the rose had changed. Gardeners of the Renaissance deprived the rose of its primary, emblematic function and meaning. The rose became used again in pharmacology and medicine — just as it had been so used in antiquity.

Story of the rose is brought to a close in Géczi's third volume with a discussion of the images of the rose in the Carpathian Basin. Symbols of the rose in this region are similar to those found in the rest of Europe, apart from some local peculiarities. Since the time of Saint Stephen I (ruled as king: 1000-1038) the Kingdom of Hungary stood under the protection of the Holy Virgin (this is the reason why the Kingdom is called the country of Mary, that is, *Regnum Marianum*). One of its attributes is the rose. We have to mention that the cult of Mary was very wide-spread in Central and Eastern Europe — just see how many shrines dedicated to her can be found in the Carpathian Basin! This cult is associated with the existence of exquisite jewellery and other objects in the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom. The examination of these artefacts, this material legacy of a bye-gone age, could be the focal point of a new research project.

Given the geographical location of the Carpathian Basin at the cross-roads of Western Eurasia, the question always arises how the diverse cultural influences and mentalities interacted here and influenced each other: the

Orthodox and the Latin Christian worlds, the Muslim and Christian realms, and the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. Through the image of the rose Géczi throws light on connections between western traditions (such as troubadour singing, Petrarchist lyrics) and the Turkish divan poetry for example in Bálint Balassi's (1554-1594) oeuvre. Hopefully this theme will be further explored in the forthcoming volumes of Géczi's series.

Gender in the Mosaic of the Habsburg Monarchy

Maura E. Hametz

Agatha Schwartz, ed. *Gender and Modernity in Central Europe: The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Its Legacy*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010. 337 pages. Cloth. ISBN 978-077660726-9. \$34.95

English-language literature on gender and modernity in the Habsburg monarchy tends to concentrate on perspectives emanating from Vienna — focusing on the denizens of the glittering capital to illuminate cultural, intellectual, political and economic trends in Central European life. Such recent collections as Tag Gronberg's *Vienna: City of modernity, 1890-1914* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007) and Christian Brandstätter's *Vienna 1900: art, life & culture* (New York: Vendome Press, 2006) delve deeply into the world of turn of the century Vienna, following a path forged by Carl Schorske in *Fin-de-siècle Vienna* (New York: Vintage, 1980) more than three decades ago. Deborah Holmes and Lisa Silverman's *Interwar Vienna* (Rochester: Camden House, 2009) and Gemma Blackshaw and Leslie Topp's *Crazy for Vienna 1900* (Burlington, VT: Lund-Humphries, 2009) continue to build on these cultural history traditions by expanding the chronological and disciplinary foci. Agatha Schwartz's provocative collection takes a broader view to examine the impact of competing modernist and anti-modernist forces and to demonstrate how they played out in gendered political, social, economic, and cultural contexts throughout the lands of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and in the successor states. Like Judith Beniston and Deborah Holmes's *From Ausgleich to Jahrhundertwende: Literature and Culture, 1867-1890* (Leeds: Maney, 2009), published in *Austrian Studies* in 2008, this volume includes scholars' works in a variety of academic disciplines to illuminate literary and intellectual currents of the late Habsburg monarchy. Schwartz's volume also goes further to explore the Habsburg legacy bequeathed to contemporary society, particularly to Central European society, in the decades since the

collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War to bring to the fore aspects of the “various facets and intricacies of the debate around gender and modernity” in the Dual Monarchy and successor states (6).

As is characteristic of compilations that originated in conference papers, the individual essays vary considerably with respect to their quality, originality, and adherence to and interpretation of the twin themes of gender and modernity. The editor divides the fourteen articles among five sections to guide readers seeking specific emphases on gender or modernity or both. Themed sections range from rather specific to broad, from “Early Psychoanalysis and Its Legacy” to “The Historical and Cultural Legacy of Austria-Hungary.” Or, they distinguish specific groups from others in the empire as in “The Contribution of Jewish Women to Viennese Modernity.” The overall effect is one of syncretic rather than synthetic coverage and certain themes emerge more clearly than others.

The book explores gender from a variety of perspectives. Helga Thorson’s essay examines new conceptions of gender and sexuality that emerged in Grete Meisel-Hess’s “Zwei vergnügte Tage” (21-23) to demonstrate how literature reflected the highly contested gendered terrain of the monarchy. She points to the shaping and reshaping of identity based on exclusionary or “anti” movements that sprang up on the Habsburg political landscape (19) as responsible for conflict and sexual “othering.” Basing his interpretation in ideas of the “civilizing process” theorized by Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu, Miklos Hadas explores the complexities of notions of masculinity in the monarchy in an article examining the development of cycling in Hungary. He demonstrates how the evolution of cycling as a sport and how sports technology reflected underlying gendered and bourgeois assumptions that were regionally specific. Focusing on the example of Hungary, he shows how ideas of masculinity and maleness changed over time and space and that “modernity” itself was a dynamic notion. Saskia Elizabeth Ziolkowski also focuses primarily on notions of masculinity. Her essay highlights Austro-Italian literary relations comparing depictions of sexually inept men in Italo Svevo’s and Robert Musil’s writings. She consciously employs gender as her lens to compare the two writers’ “men without qualities” (93) and to show how conflicting expectations and gendered assumptions affected male sexuality. Ziolkowski’s concentrates on the two texts, but her detailed reading could be taken further to highlight the universality of intellectual currents and gendered conceptions related to modernity that affected the inter-related, multi-lingual literary world of the monarchy and Europe.

Several essays touch on ambiguous or confused gender expectations related to ambivalent responses to modernity. Marcin Filipowicz examines how the universal theme of misogyny played out in Czech modernist poetry and depictions of the *femme fatale*. He concentrates on Czech modernism to show the “intricate interplay between misogyny, misandry, and pro-feminist ideas,” concluding that the recognition of inequality played a conspicuous role in fomenting modernist “revolt” (114). More might be made of the Bohemian nationalist context and nationalist “othering” that Filipowicz touches on, but the essay offers an intriguing look at Czech modernist poetry and gender. With respect to ambivalent responses to modernity, more “sexy” but perhaps less analytical, is Jill Scott’s interpretation of the mixed metaphors of gender reflected in Gustav Klimt’s “The Kiss.” Although scattershot in its method and analysis, the article raises interesting questions regarding the intersections of “political power” and “erotic power” (33) in Klimt’s visions and explores the artist’s ability and intention to “tell many stories” in a single work (42). Scott’s “rich” reading of the colors and images embedded in Klimt’s iconic painting provides an art history perspective that contributes to the interdisciplinary appeal of the collection.

Tina Bahovec, too, adopts an approach using images, but her emphasis is on propaganda in the context of the political and territorial conflict between Austria and Yugoslavia and Germans and Slovenes in Carinthia. She explores the ambiguous constructions of gender encapsulated in fin-de-siècle images of the “new (emancipated) woman” and the “effeminate” man and then shows how war propaganda undermined and ridiculed these “modern” images as “unnatural” in an effort to reassert traditional gender roles (222). She also shows how traditional gender images were employed in modern political agendas to promote women’s nationalist political activism in exercising their vote in post-World War I territorial plebiscites. The emphasis on the political context ties well into recent trends in Central European history to explore women in the context of their public and legal relationships relating to citizenship, patriotism, and emancipation.

Susan Ingram’s “Czech Maters” offers a sketch of competing Habsburg presences at the Chicago Columbian Exhibition of 1893, reminding readers of the possibilities for examining how Habsburg women’s identities were articulated outside the territorial boundaries of the monarchy. Ingram’s discussion of the participation in Chicago and particularly her emphasis on the number of books written by women of various “nationalities” of the empire and the comparison between Czech and German presences in donations to the library in the Women’s Building (120-24) is intriguing, yet the article suffers somewhat from scanty evidence.

Several essays highlight the challenges of competing currents of tradition and modernization in the patriarchal and paternalistic Habsburg society. In a succinct and polished essay based on women's autobiographies, Michaela Raggam-Blesch explores the experiences of three Jewish intellectual pioneers on the "particularly notorious battleground" of the university (148). She defines Jewish women based on the well-known models proposed by Paula Hyman and Deborah Dash Moore (133) and proceeds to highlight their struggles for higher education, intellectual recognition, and to enter the Viennese academy. Raggam-Blesch's emphasis on generational conflicts to demonstrate the evolution of gendered expectations and to show the effects of early women's activism on developments in higher education in the last decades of the monarchy reflects critically on the tendencies to consider modernity as an established and accepted viewpoint and emancipation as a welcome and ineluctable process in the fin-de-siècle.

Alison Rose adopts a similar biographical approach to the examination of Jewish *salonières* in Vienna in an article that focuses on the ways in which Jewish bourgeois women of the salon set responded to contradictory impulses of modern and traditional society. She emphasizes the clash of traditional Jewish life and currents of assimilation and acculturation that affected women's paths to "cultural modernity" and political mobilization (119). While Rose suggests that Viennese salons offered "an alternative sphere in which women could operate as leaders and still maintain their bourgeois femininity" (132), she points to the negative depictions of these women in period caricatures and parodies. The contradictory vision of *salonières* she presents, as both villains and heroines, begs further analysis and explanation. The story of the heroine or even the "hagiography" of the cult of "Sissi" is teased out in Judith Szapor's essay on images and the memory of the Empress Elizabeth, the Queen of Hungary. Szapor uses gender as a lens to explain the longevity of Sissi's appeal and to point to the ways in which the empress's image has been used and reused in a variety of Hungarian nationalist political contexts. The essay, which touches on aspects of memory popular in recent approaches to European society, skillfully traces the ways in which "reverence" for Sissi developed and changed over the decades after her death to explain the contours of the contemporary cult of Elizabeth.

Several of the essays interweave notions of modernity and gender in the development of Central European intellectual culture, and here the authors' various multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches lend richness to the volume and help to point to intersections across different fields of research. Anna Borgos offers a complex and nuanced discussion of multi-

layered conceptions of women, femininity, and women's relationship to intellectual endeavor in her essay that examines assumptions regarding gender norms and social tensions in psychoanalytic theory, particularly in Freudian thought. Borgos then goes on to show how Freudian thought and uncertainties in gendered notions it provoked affected early women analysts' conceptions of femininity and practice of psychoanalysis. Perhaps the greatest strength of this essay is its explanation of the difficulties such female psychoanalysts as Helene Deutsche faced in their attempts to square theoretical views with their own intellectual position and career trajectories (164).

Emphasis on the importance of the emerging social sciences and concomitant debates over the effect of these studies on understandings of gender and gender roles threads through the volume. An analysis of Sándor Ferenczi's "harsh rejection of spiritualistic worldviews" (171) forms the foundation for J. Edgar Bauer's essay highlighting the interplay of religious belief, notions of sexual identity, and psychoanalytic theory in the push-and-pull of the evolution of "modern" thought. Emphasis here on Ferenczi's ambivalent position with respect to religion and religiosity and its relation to sexuality provides a nice counterpoise to less nuanced discussions of Jewishness or religion in the volume and points, at least obliquely, to the broader currents of social science thought and debates on nature and nurture that raged in the late years of the monarchy.

Bauer's essay also provides the link for understanding the enduring influence of Ferenczi in Hungary and throughout the lands of the former monarchy and the importance of the relationship of Ferenczi and Freud that emerges in Ferenc Erös's essay, a translated version of an essay published in 2007 that explores psychoanalytic approaches to war neurosis and hysteria in the wake of the First World War. Erös carefully situates Ferenczi in the Hungarian intellectual world, demonstrating how Freudian thought introduced by Ferenczi revolutionized the treatment of war-related neurosis in the postwar period (191-192). The emphasis of Ferenczi in the section on "Early Psychoanalysis and Its Legacy" points to one of the broader contributions of the collection, its inclusion of a variety of ethnic, cultural, and political perspectives de-centered from the German or Germanic perspective, so often emphasized in studies of the monarchy and successor states.

The importance of such alternative ethnic views is no where more evident than in Matthew Stibbe's detailed explication of the political internment of subject "minorities" during the First World War and its impact on population politics in the successor states. His focus on the political deportation of Serbs, Ruthenians, Italians and Galician Jews (seen as Russophiles) brings to light the troubling legacy of the Habsburg inability to deal with

ethnic rivalries and nationalist conflicts that erupted during wartime. He places the Habsburg experience in the context of broader European experience and historiography, particularly with respect to the analysis of internment and captivity (214). Stibbe's essay along with the contributions of Szapor, Ziolkowski, and Bahovec offer particularly fertile ground for further comparative work on aspects of inter-ethnic and multi-ethnic relations in the monarchy and their legacy. Borgos, Erös, Raggam-Blesch, Filipowicz, and Thorson point to important themes that highlight the universal applicability of Habsburg thought and experience.

More succinct definition of such key concepts of the "modernity," "modernism," and clearer delineation of the volume's conceptual approach to gender, sexuality, and the politics of identity would have helped to make the volume more cohesive. Explanation of the variety of the author's viewpoints and more consistent adherence to the volume's twin themes would have made the links among the essays and approaches more evident and strengthened the volume's contributions to comparative analysis. However, this does not appear to have been the editor's intent. Rather, the essays offer tantalizing bits that are certain to provoke interest and provide further avenues for study of gender and modernity in the late Habsburg monarchy and its impact on Central European society today.

NOTES

On the subject of comparative feminist studies of German-Austrian and Hungarian women's literary contributions in the *fin-de-siècle* see also Agatha Schwartz, *Shifting Voices: Feminist Thought and Women's Writing in Fin-de-Siècle Austria and Hungary* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, Cornell University Press US Distributor, 2008).

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The Art of Andor Weininger in Transition

Edit Toth

Oliver A. I. Botar, *A Bauhausler in Canada: Andor Weininger in the 50s*. Oshawa, ON: The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-921500-98-8. 280 pages. \$57.95

Oliver Botar's *A Bauhausler in Canada: Andor Weininger in the 50s* offers a richly illustrated biographical study of a European modernist's encounters with the postwar artistic scene in Canada. Based on archival research from the artist's bequest, Botar reconstructs the circumstances of Weininger's engagement with and disappointing rejections within the Canadian art world. His topic is a refreshing take on the usual success stories of canonical artistic figures, as it provides an uncharacteristic story of an artist attempting to make difficult transitions. Coming from the prestigious Bauhaus, why could Weininger not make a name for himself in Canada similarly to his peers Josef Albers and László Moholy-Nagy who also settled in North America before or during World War II?¹ While searching for the reasons behind Weininger's lack of success, Botar sketches the outlines of the contemporary Canadian artistic changes which the older artist was reluctant, and perhaps, unable to fully engage. Countering other biographers' dispirited pronouncements, Botar defends the Canadian artistic establishment and explains Weininger's failures within the changing artistic scene and the artist's lack of self-promotion. Unlike Bauhaus professors, Weininger relied on creative design without teaching or publishing credentials to support his efforts at gaining acceptance. Through the account of Weininger's personal involvement, we gain an insight into the ongoing shift from artists' societies to the gallery promotion system, a development that reveals the increasing specialization in the artistic field that

was unreceptive to Bauhaus experimentation and its philosophy of the whole man outside the theoretical or scholastic approach.

The book describes the decisive impact New York Abstract Expressionism had on the international art world in the early 1950s, when even an artist garnering Bauhaus principles felt compelled to confront the cult of artistic individuality. In particular, the Toronto-based group *Painters Eleven*, an organization that did not invite Weininger into its ranks, embraced the young North American artists' emphatic rejection of the hegemony of European art.² While trying to make the transition from the Bauhaus and desperately in need of an artists' community, Weininger was reluctant to do the same denial to meet the expectations of the Toronto artistic tastes. His modest-sized works and their lack of gravitas stood in opposition to North American monumentality and grand seriousness appropriate to the tense Cold War political atmosphere. Weininger's art of the time seems to be oblivious to the devastation of World War II. The fact that the artist had fled Germany, the country that had originated the Holocaust, with his potentially persecuted wife, who was partially Jewish, did not lessen the Weiningers' interest in the German language and their favorite school, as Botar states. Maybe trying to "fit in" was not enough at that moment and the Canadian art world expected Weininger to come to terms with Europe's recent past and the ongoing turmoil. Canadian artists were absolved of the same responsibility.

Although Botar perceptively points to these problems, the explanation of Weininger's whimsical approach is left incomplete. Instead of incisive psychological self-analysis or emotional drama, however, what we see in the work produced in Canada involves whimsy abstraction and the clownish in its light-heartedness. Can we attribute any meaning to the artist's avoidance of historical events and personal experiences? It should be noted that Botar successfully accomplished the difficult task of delivering a biography on an artist whose work resists a conducive treatment toward a biographical interpretation. And here one might see a disjuncture between Botar's biographical undertaking and Weininger's impersonal art. Since we have grown accustomed to biography illustrating the psychology of the artist's work, we accept Weininger's artistic approach if only it suggests his longing for the friendly involvement with the famous school. Yet it is precisely Weininger's whimsical style, a legacy of his Bauhaus clown persona that posits a comedic self to link his eclectic experimentation, just as his involvement in the Bauhaus jazz band and theater as master of ceremonies had managed to unify diverse interests at the Bauhaus. Botar does point out that Weininger was shy by nature, but neglects to develop a dialogue with the numerous images in the book.³ Wein-

inger appears to be hiding behind his “clown face” to mask his frustration, darkening a few drawings by pressing a face behind a curtain of black (*Untitled*, 1955, figure 198).⁴ Weininger fails to come to terms with self-promotion as a “genius” adhered to in the era. At the time, unity of the *Painters Eleven* is accepted as a device to promote their personal artistic styles in thriving Canada, not to advocate communal principles central to the Bauhaus.

Chapter five inventively tries to overcome Weininger’s multifaceted eclecticism by establishing his “Canadian style” rooted in biomorphic imagery that would forge a link with a nature-centrist trend in Canadian art.⁵ In turn, in chapter six the discussion triangulates Weininger’s contact with the burgeoning field of Canadian design; Botar convincingly situates the couple’s Bauhaus background in relation to the contemporary developments in Canada, even if they produced only one unrealized chair design. In view of other immigrant artists’ success in Canadian design at the time, the Weiningers’ lack of engagement is explained as missed opportunity in a largely open field, during a period of economic boom. Botar brings his study to a close by proposing that contrary to earlier scholarship, Weininger’s Toronto and later New York periods should be treated as a single continuum, the former serving as an introduction to and “apprenticeship” in North American culture. On the final analysis, despite the careful description of Weininger’s experimentation and inventiveness during his Canadian years, Botar seems to accept that it was a failure.⁶ Weininger’s carnivalesque attitude juxtaposed with the creative geniuses of mid-century artists, who relished wealth and fame, perhaps foretells our current interest in contemporary art and its defaming of high art.

Often surmounting the difficult assessment of an eclectic oeuvre, *A Bauhausler in Canada: Andor Weininger in the 50s* is a story of a Bauhausler trying to keep the Bauhaus commitments going in a rapidly changing world, a topic that previously had been addressed by scholars without the intense investigation Botar was committed to do.

NOTES

¹ For a discussion of Albers and Moholy-Nagy’s art in North America see Achim Borchardt-Hume ed., *Albers and Moholy-Nagy: from the Bauhaus to the New World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

² Botar, *A Bauhausler in Canada*, p. 106.

³ Botar, *A Bauhausler in Canada*, p. 185

⁴ Botar, *A Bauhausler in Canada*, p. 142.

⁵ For Oliver Botar's relevant writings on biocentrism see "Biocentrism and the Bauhaus," *The Structurist*, no. 43-44 (2003-2004): 54-61; "The Origins of László Moholy-Nagy's Biocentric Constructivism," in *Signs of Life: Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. Eduardo Kac (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2007), 315-344; *Technical Detours: The Early Moholy-Nagy Reconsidered* (New York: Graduate Center, The City University of New York, 2006); and Oliver Botar and Isabel Wünsche eds., *Biocentrism and Modernism* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

⁶ Botar, *A Bauhausler in Canada*, p. 186.

**Misinformation, Disinformation
or Pseudo-science?
István Kiszely's Quest for a
Glorious Hungarian Past**

Nándor Dreisziger

István Kiszely. *A Magyar ember: A Kárpát-medencei magyarság ember-története*. [The Hungarian Man. The human history of the Hungarians of the Carpathian Basin]. Budapest: Püski, 2004. Illustrations, graphs, and maps. 2 volumes.

Books on the origins and ethnogenesis of Hungarians have proliferated in recent decades both inside and outside of Hungary. One prominent figure of this new popular historiography is István Kiszely. A physical anthropologist by training, Kiszely during the past five decades has published numerous books and great many articles on the early history of Hungarians and on their anthropology. In a sense, the work under review is Kiszely's tribute to his mentor Lajos Bartucz, an outstanding figure of mid-20th century anthropology in Hungary. Even the main title of Kiszely's present book is patterned on Bartucz's similarly entitled work that appeared in 1938.

The late 1930s were characterised by intense preoccupation with physical anthropology. Scholars and the general public alike, especially in Central Europe, believed that it was possible to identify the anatomical features that made individuals — and even nations — different from others. This belief is still held by Kiszely who feels that it is possible to define the anthropological characteristics that differentiate Hungarians from their neighbours and, in fact, most other peoples in the world.

Volume I of Kiszely's work being reviewed here starts with a history of the discipline of anthropology in the world and in Hungary. He focuses most of his attention on the "golden age" of this science, the mid-19th to the mid-20th centuries. Kiszely concludes this part of his work by bemoaning the

fact that in the 21st century this science has fallen on hard times. As far as Hungary is concerned, he blames this fact on the lack of patriotic consciousness on the part of the country's political and academic establishments.

Kiszely's second chapter asks the question whether there are human beings with unique Hungarian characteristics? He promises to answer this question in his book. He also hints that his answer will be a positive one. In fact, he goes further and states that today's Hungarians are more unique than they had been a millennium ago, at the time of the Hungarian nation's ethnogenesis. He does admit however, that from the point of anthropology it would not be accurate to say that Hungarians constitute a separate race of humanity. Nevertheless, he goes on to make some statements that readers, especially in Western countries, will find controversial, to say the least. Most of these we will discuss later. At this point we will mention only one point, which is the fact that, in referring to the origins of the Hungarians' unique language (Magyar), Kiszely makes no mention of its place in the Finno-Ugric linguistic family tree. In fact he hardly mentions the Finnic languages at all.

An important question of Hungarian history is the story of the so-called Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century. According to all schoolbooks used in Hungary today, the ancestors of Hungarians, including the Székelys, arrived in their present homeland in 895. It should be mentioned that from the end of the Roman Era in Europe to the 11th century, about a dozen similar conquests or occupations of a homeland (the Hungarian word "*honfoglalás*" is not quite the equivalent of the English word "conquest"). Interestingly, all these conquests in one respect had a different outcome than the Hungarian one as it is told in the history textbooks in Hungary: in all these cases the conquering population, in the course of a few or several generations, lost its original language and learned the vernacular of the conquered inhabitants — or at least that of the most numerous ethnic group among them. In other words, the conquerors were assimilated by the autochthonous populations. Until recently, the only exception to this "rule" was believed to have been the conquest of England by West Germanic-speaking peoples (the Saxons, Angles and Jutes) in the early 5th century. They were supposed to have brought the ancestor of the English language to the British Isles. This interpretation, however, has fallen on hard times recently and now it is increasingly believed that a proto-English language had come to England not so much with these post-Roman invaders but with the prolonged or repeated migrations of West-Germanic speakers from north-western continental Europe that had started already in pre-Roman times.¹

In most of the “conquests of a homeland” of the early medieval period in Europe it seems that what happened was that a militaristic people did the conquering and the conquerors occupied lands that were inhabited by a larger number of settled and often less militaristic ethnic groups. Historians of the Hungarian experience are acutely conscious of the importance of the relative size of conquering and conquered populations. All historians who endorse the “dominant” theory of the Hungarian conquest claim that in the case of the Magyar conquest of the Carpathian Basin, the conquerors outnumbered the conquered. Kiszely does the same. In the work under review here he says that the population of the pre-Hungarian conquest Carpathian Basin was only 250,000, (or 400,000 as he states elsewhere) while he claims that the conquering Hungarians numbered half a million. Only a decade earlier, Kiszely gave very different numbers, in another 2-volume history of the Hungarian distant past. In that work he estimated that the local populations, including descendants of the Huns and of the Avars, outnumbered the conquerors two to one.² In giving high estimates of the numbers of the conquerors and underestimating the size of the pre-conquest population Kiszely is very much in agreement with other Hungarian historians who uphold the dominant theory of the Magyar conquest.

In the opinion of this reviewer the numbers given by Kiszely (and the establishment historians in Hungary) are untenable. A much more realistic number for the size of the conquering population has been offered by the renown Hungarian medievalist Elemér Mályusz. He had estimated the numerical size of the conquering tribes at 70,000.³ However, it is the size of the Carpathian Basin’s pre-985 population, as given by Kiszely as well as mainstream historians in Hungary, that is a vast underestimation. In his history of East Central Europe Piotr S. Wandycz gave population estimates for various regions of Europe at the turn of the millennium. According to him the lands that constitute today’s France at the time had a population of nine million, the Italian peninsula seven million, and the German lands close to five-and-a-half million.⁴ If many millions lived in other parts of Europe it is inconceivable that the population of the pre-conquest Carpathian Basin would have been only 250,000 — or even only 500,000 as Kiszely estimated in his 1996 book. Five times that number would probably not be an unrealistic estimate. In fact one Hungarian historian, Gábor Vékony (1944-2004), who taught at Hungary’s most eminent university (ELTE) before his untimely death, estimated that the ratio of conquerors to the masses of autochthonous people in the Carpathian Basin in the early 10th century might have been as low as one percent.⁵

By all counts, the Carpathian Basin of the times was a land rich in rivers teeming with fish, forests with abundant fauna, and plentiful natural

resources. It could not have been an abandoned wasteland, even if there had been wars in the region in the decades preceding — wars had ravaged just about all parts of Europe in the 9th century. Indeed we know that tens of thousands of Avar-age graves had been excavated in this part of Europe, testifying to the densely-populated nature of this region in early medieval times, and historians as well as contemporary sources talk about numerous peoples having lived there. These include, if we are to believe the many scholars who say so — including Kiszely himself — the Székelys.

The early history of the Székelys is a perplexing question of Hungarian proto-history. The Székelys constitute a Magyar-speaking ethnic or cultural group that today inhabits the south-eastern counties of Transylvania, a land that used to belong to the old Kingdom of Hungary but which was transferred to Romania in the post-World War I peace settlement. According to Székely oral tradition, the Székelys are descendants of the Huns whose empire had reached its zenith under their leader Attila during the first half of the 5th century. Kiszely explicitly endorses this idea. (pp. 159, 180) He even disagrees, probably quite correctly, with the suggestion that the Székelys had changed their language some time during the Dark Ages from Turkic to Magyar. Interestingly, Kiszely does not speculate what happened to the Székelys once they had settled in the Carpathian Basin. Other scholars, such as the above-mentioned Vékony,⁶ have suggested that they probably populated their new homeland in the following centuries even though they had come under the rule of nomadic military elites that arrived from the east, most notably the Avars in the 560s and the Onogurs or “late Avars” in the 670s. But, neither of these probably Turkic-speaking warrior peoples had an interest in exterminating their subject peoples, neither the Székelys nor the others.

A far more likely scenario than the one presented of the “Hungarian conquest” by Kiszely — and most historians in Hungary — is that this conquest resulted in the conquerors being assimilated by the local population. In this the “Hungarian conquest” was no different from all the others in Europe in early medieval times: those of the Franks and Burgundians in France, the Visigoths and Ostrogoths in Iberia, the Longobards in Lombardy, the Scandinavians in Normandy, Novgorod, Kiev and elsewhere, the Normans in England, and the Bulgars in the Lower Danube Basin, and the list could go on citing even some non-European examples, all of which resulted in the assimilation of the conquerors by the autochthonous populations.

We may ask at this point who were the tribes that conquered the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century? The answer is that they were most likely an assortment of mostly Turkic-speaking nomadic peoples (the fact

that some of the tribes — the Kabars — were Turkic is admitted by everyone), similar in language and culture to the also Turkic-speaking Bulgars — who had been by that time assimilated by their Slavic subjects in the Lower Danube Valley. And who were the people who assimilated the newcomers in the Carpathian Basin? They could not have been the local Slavs as several scholars have suggested, because if they had been the Slavs, then today's Hungarians would be speaking a language similar to those of most of their neighbours: the Croats, Slovenes, Serbs, Slovaks and Ruthenians. The people who assimilated the newcomers of 895 must have been an Ugric-speaking people, probably the very people mentioned as autochthons by Kiszely: the Székelys themselves. The Székelys' ancestors were probably not the Huns, but an ethnic group that had been a part of Attila's extremely heterogeneous empire. Their presence in the Carpathian Basin before 895 is mentioned by contemporary sources (by the names Ungari, Ugorski, Wenger, or simply Huns, as the Székelys had been calling themselves since time immemorial) as well as by eminent scholars such as Gyula László (1910-1996), the above-mentioned Vékony, as well as János Makkay (1933-). Even the renown Bálint Hóman (1885-1951) entertained the possibility of the Székelys having settled in the Carpathian Basin long before 895.⁷

While Kiszely is probably wrong on the subject of the “Hungarian conquest” he is definitely misinformed or disingenuous on several other issues. One of these is his ignoring of the Finnic connection in Hungarian proto-history. In fact, it almost seems that according to Kiszely, the Finns and other Finnic-speaking peoples had been inconsequential in medieval European history, or at least this is what the maps presented in his book on pages 220-222 suggest. The three maps on these three pages are completely identical, yet each of them has a different caption. The one on p. 220 is entitled the “ancient homeland of the Slavs”, the one on p. 221 is described as the lands of the “Western Slavs in the 8th century a.d.”, and the one on p. 222 is described as an ethnic map of Russia in the 9th century. The gravest error in these maps is that areas inhabited till modern times by Finnic-speaking peoples (including the whole of today's Finland) are described as Slav-inhabited territory (*sic*!).⁸

A strange claim that Kiszely makes is that Europeans (but presumably not Hungarians) are the descendants [*utódai*] of the “early Neanderthals”. (p. 169) Of course, Kiszely might mean, by using the word “*utódai*” rather than “*leszármazottjai*”, that Homo Sapiens inherited Europe from the early Neanderthals. But, early Neanderthals lived in Europe more than 100,000 years before our Homo Sapiens ancestors arrived there. How could today's Europeans be their descendants or even inheritors? And if they are descendants of the Neanderthals they would have to have “descended” from the late and not the

early Neanderthals.⁹ Kiszely's discussion of this subject suggests a limited, even faulty knowledge of European proto-history.

The list of Kiszely's misconceptions and distortions could go on. The cause of some of these is probably his being mired in an outdated science or, more precisely, in an outdated version of a science that today still has some relevance to the comparative study of populations. Just one point: to Kiszely the study of such things as the longevity of certain populations as well as the study of their average height is important, while most scientists today would say that these characteristics are governed more by nutrition and other economic and cultural factors (such as the state of medical knowledge at any given time) than by genetics. It must come as no surprise to most people today that the neglect of Kiszely's brand of physical anthropology by Hungary's political and academic establishments — as well as their neglect everywhere else — is motivated not so much by lack of patriotism, but by other, much more relevant factors — such as the advancement of scientific knowledge.

In his second volume to this work Kiszely devotes an entire chapter to the discussion of genetics. The overall message here is that geneticists have found “no evidence” of a genetic link between Hungarians and Finnic peoples. Nowhere does Kiszely admit that, from a distance of more than 4,000 years, a genetic relationship can not be easily documented between peoples who at one point belonged to the same ethnic group — just as after 6,000 years of separation, no connection can be established between languages that at one point were spoken by the same people. Here Kiszely is inconsistent. He laments the fact that since the conquest some eleven centuries ago, the genetic characteristics of Hungarians have changed a great deal, but he does not admit that after more than 4,000 years of separation, the genetic characteristics of Finnic peoples and Hungarians cannot easily show similarities. Only with the further advancement of this science is there a prospect for a genetic marker being found that is common to Ugric (including Hungarian) and some Finnic (including the Volgaic) populations — and that genetic marker might already have been found.¹⁰

Kiszely's works have been quite popular with the general reading public in Hungary. His insistence that anthropologically and culturally Hungarians are unique beings, and his ignoring — one might say denial — of the Finnic connection, while certainly not unique, has earned him respect on the streets of Hungary, as did his emphasis on the Hun, Avar and other “inner-Asian” roots of today's “Hungarian Man”. (vol. 2, p. 788)

In reality, there is very little evidence that Hungarians are the descendants of Asian ancestors. At the same time there is every indication that

they are predominantly of European background. The evidence is both anthropological and genetic. Physical anthropologists who have examined the skeletal remains of people who have been found in 11th to 13th century graves in the Carpathian Basin have come to the conclusion, according to the eminent medievalist Pál Engel, that between 95 and 97 percent of these people showed “Europoid” anatomical features.¹¹ The physical anthropologist Pál Lipták, who taught at the University of Szeged and then at the University of Budapest (ELTE), concluded his researches on this subject by saying that “the populations of the Conquest and of [the] Árpáadian Age [in Hungary] taken together are dominated by the Nordoids and the Mediterraneans.” He admits that there were Mongoloids (not Mongolids who were absent but Europo-Mongoloids) in the population “in the Conquest Period and in the Árpáadian Age” but argues that the frequency of these anatomical types “hardly exceed[ed] 6 percent.”¹²

Another proof of the essentially European origins of Hungarians is the relative scarcity of Asian y-DNA among them. Members of the Q, C, and certain Asian sub-groups of N and the R1a Z93+ haplogroups make up only 6 or 7 percent of present-day Hungarian y-DNA groups. The ratios for these groups among Hungarians are only slightly higher than they are for some of their European neighbours. This is remarkable when we consider that from the 10th to the 13th century Hungary witnessed large influxes of nomadic refugees from the east, including the Pechenegs and the Cumans.¹³

This reviewer suspects that Kiszely’s popularity in Hungary is rooted not only in his belief that the Hungarians are descendants of mysterious Inner-Asian peoples but also, and perhaps more importantly, in the present state of Hungarian public psychology, which in turn is influenced by Hungary’s current situation. As is known, Hungary has been troubled in recent years by myriad economic, political and social problems. And when the present of a nation is dismal and its future is bleak, people find an escape in a glorious past, one in which their putative ancestors were able to put the fear into their neighbours, in fact in the case of the Huns, Avars and Prince Árpád’s horsemen, most of Europe. With his dubious scholarship Kiszely seems to aim at restoring a sense of self-respect — even pride — into Hungarians by telling them that they had a glorious past or, at least, they had respected, even feared, ancestors.

Recently there have been revelations on the internet to the effect that during the Kádár Era in communist Hungary Kiszely had been an informer for the country’s political police — and that his activities in this regard negatively impacted the careers and lives of many of his compatriots, especially priests.¹⁴

Whether and to what extent this development will affect Kiszely's image as the messenger of a glorious Hungarian past, remains to be seen.

NOTES

¹ Stephen Oppenheimer, *The Origins of the British* (London: Robinson, 2007), especially 477-482.

² István Kiszely, *A magyarság őstörténete* (Budapest: Püski, 1996), p. 212. More precisely, 250,000 autochthonous people, 250,000 descendants of the Huns and Avars, and 250,000 conquerors. This actually means that in Kiszely's estimation the population of the conquerors had grown by 250,000 or 100% — in just 8 years. Quite a growth rate! At the same time according to him the number of the autochthonous people declined by 50% if we compare the figures he gave in 1996 and in 2004. Kiszely does not explain the changes in these demographic figures. It might be of interest that in a work Kiszely published in 1979 he estimated the pre-895 population of the Carpathian Basin to have been somewhere between 600 and 800 thousand, and the number of the conquerors, between 300 and 400 thousand. István Kiszely, *A föld népei: Európa* [The peoples of the world: Europe] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1979), 391-392. Kiszely's handling of population figures is a classic example of data being adjusted to suit the needs of a theory.

³ Elemér Mályusz, *Geschichte des ungarischen Volkstums...* (Budapest, 1940), 25, as cited by János Makkay, *A magyarság keletkezése* (Szolnok: Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Museums, 1994) 2nd revised and expanded edition, p. 47. Makkay himself, as well as the archaeologist István Erdélyi, give this number as "maximum 100,000." See Makkay, *A magyarság*, p. 46. Erdélyi's estimate came from him directly, in an e-mail to me in early 2010.

⁴ Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 19.

⁵ See his *Magyar őstörténet – Magyar honfoglalás* [Hungarian prehistory – Hungarian conquest] (Budapest: Nap Kiadó, 2002), 219.

⁶ *Ibid.*, especially pp. 213-215. The fact that a people, numbering into the tens of thousands could, in the course of a few centuries, populate a part of Europe such as the Middle Danube Basin, is not at all unimaginable. We know that in about 1760 French-speakers in New France (Québec) numbered about 60,000. Only two centuries later they numbered about five million, despite the fact that in the intervening time there was no immigration of French-speakers to supplement their numbers, and in fact there was massive emigration from Québec — to other parts of Canada and to New England — in the 19th century. True, in early medieval times mortality rates throughout Central Europe must have been much higher than they were in 19th and 20th century Québec.

⁷ Bálint Hóman and Gyula Szekfü, *Magyar történet* [Hungarian history] (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1935), vol. 1, pp. 123-124. The list of Hungarian scholars who believe that the ancestors of the Hungarians settled in the Carpathian Basin long before the “Hungarian conquest” of 895 is considerable and includes — in addition to the above-mentioned Makkay and Vékony — Gyula László, Pál Lipták and Péter Király. See Gyula László, *A „kettős honfoglalás”* (Budapest: Magvető, 1978); Pál Lipták, *Avars and Ancient Hungarians* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983); and Péter Király, *A honalapítás vitás eseményei* [The disputed events of the establishment of a homeland] (Nyíregyháza: Nyíregyházi Főiskola, 2006).

⁸ Kiszely's reference for these maps is a book published by István Kniezsa in 1942. The fact that these three maps are identical might be a printer's error — which should have been caught by the book's author during the reading of the manuscript's proofs. These maps, or more precisely the one map that is printed three times, sharply contrasts with the map that is printed in Kiszely's 1979 book (*op. cit.* pp. 516-517) which quite correctly shows that much of modern northern European Russia, and all of Finland, was populated by Finnic-speaking peoples rather than Slavs.

⁹ If there had been interbreeding between Homo Sapiens and Neanderthals, it was on a very limited scale. See Richard E. Green *et al.*, “A Draft Sequence of the Neanderthal Genome,” *Science*, vol. 328 (7 May 2010) pp. 710-722 (available at www.sciencemag.org accessed on July 26, 2010).

¹⁰ That common marker might be the Z280 SNP (single nucleotide polymorphism) that can be found in certain members of the R1a1a1 y-chromosomal DNA group. In fact Tibor Fehér, the coordinator of the Hungarian y-DNA project for the familytreeDNA company of Texas, is quite certain that the Z280 will prove to be one of the common markers of the Finno-Ugric peoples. According to Mr. Fehér, roughly one in eight Hungarian man whose y-DNA is known, has this marker. E-mail from Tibor Fehér to a group of genomists (including the writer of these lines) 14 Feb. 2012 — as well as other internet communications from Mr. Fehér in 2011.

¹¹ Pál Engel, “The House of Árpád and its Times,” *The Hungarian Quarterly* 41, 1 (Spring 2000): 2. According to Engel twenty-one hundred such skeletal remains are known. Engel's paper is excerpted online and can be found on the website <http://www.hungarianquarterly.com/no157/074.shtml>

¹² Lipták, *Avars and Ancient Hungarians*, p. 161. For other writings by this same author see his essays “A finnugor népek antropológiája [The anthropology of the Finno-Ugric peoples] in *Uráli népek: nyelvrokonaink kultúrája és hagyományai* [Uralic peoples: the culture and traditions of our linguistic relatives], ed. Péter Hajdú (Budapest: Corvina 1975): 129-137; and “A Magyar őstörténet kérdései az antropológiai kutatások alapján,” *Magyar Mult.* 10 (Sydney, Australia): 81-96. Lipták believes that the ancestors of Hungarians settled in the Carpathian Basin at various times from the 5th to the 9th centuries. See his book *Avars and Ancient Hungarians*, especially p. 160. A more recent work that places the first settlement of the ancestors of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin centuries before the so-called “Hungarian Conquest” is Király, *A honalapítás vitás eseményei, cit.* (see note 7). In this monograph

Professor Király argues that a study mainly of written sources related to the arrival of the ancestors of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin suggests that their first settlement there took place at the end of the 6th century. See especially p. 214 of his book.

¹³ E-mail from the above mentioned Tibor Fehér, 14 Feb. 2012 (see note 10). The ratio of men with Asian y-DNA among Romanians seems to be even higher, no doubt reflecting Romania's more eastern geographical position.

¹⁴ See the website <http://internetfigyelo.wordpress.com/2009/08/15/ujabb-jelentesek-kiszely-istvan-besugo-...>

Other Book Reviews

The 1956 Revolution: Hungarian and Canadian Perspectives. Edited by Christopher Adam, Tibor Egervari, Leslie Laczko, and Judy Young. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010. 304 pages. ISBN 978-077660705-4. Paper. \$39.00; e-book edition, \$19.00.

The volume is based on selected papers presented at the international conference “The 1956 Hungarian Revolution 50 Years Later: Canadian and International Perspectives” held at the University of Ottawa between October 12 and 14 in 2006, on the occasion of the revolution’s 50th anniversary. The anniversary was celebrated the world over remembering this watershed event in Hungarian, European and world history. In Canada, it marked a new appreciation and recognition of the numerous and multiple contributions that the 37,000-38,000 (some sources mention “37,000,” some “38,000” or “over 38,000” as the total figure, some offer an approximation such as “almost 40,000”). Hungarian refugees Canada had welcomed following the crushing of the uprising have since made to Canadian society and culture. In the editors’ words: “This would be the first time Canada would accept so many refugees of a single origin, setting a precedent for later refugee initiatives” (p. 1). This collection of selected and expanded papers from the conference complements two other Canadian publications, both special issues of the *Hungarian Studies Review* edited by Nándor Dreisziger, *1956 in Hungary: Precedents, Events and Consequences* (Spring-Fall 2007) and *1956 in Hungary and in Canada* (2008).

The 1956 Revolution: Hungarian and Canadian Perspectives begins with a preface and a brief introduction that includes the editors’ acknowledgments. This is followed by twelve chapters that present recent research about the 1956 Revolution from the point of view of history, political science, sociology, economics, gender, and oral history. The contributors are Canadian, US, Hungarian, and Finnish scholars and researchers, most of them established, some more junior. The twelve chapters are divided into two sections. Part I, entitled “The Revolution, Hungary, and the World,” comprises seven chapters that examine various political and economic factors that had led to the outbreak of the revolution, reasons for

its failure, the multi-party system that was briefly put into place, the role of women in the revolution, its perception by Shoah survivors, reactions to it in Argentina, and its place within the new, post-1989 political debates in Hungary. Part II, entitled “The Canadian Context,” looks at the reception of the refugees in Canada and its historical and political context, the place of this wave of Hungarian immigration within the history of Hungarian immigration to Canada since the 19th century, and, finally, how 1956 was portrayed in the Canadian-Hungarian press, most notably the *Kanadai Magyar Munkás*. In the following, I will briefly summarize Part I and Part II, respectively, while focussing on one chapter from each part in more detail.

The two opening chapters were written by János M. Rainer and Csaba Békés, respectively, two researchers from the recently (sadly) dismantled Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution in Budapest. Both Rainer and Békés use recent research data to shed a new light on the revolution’s causes and goals as well as commonly held misconceptions about its demise. In chapter 3, Susan Glanz examines the economic platforms of the various political parties that briefly re-emerged in 1956 and the legacy of this short period of a multi-party system in the ensuing Kádár-era.

Chapter 4, by Mária Palasik, offers a fascinating gender analysis of the revolution by taking into account mainly photographic sources and it is this chapter that I wish to present in more detail for its particularly original approach. Palasik uses a selection of photographs along with some court documents and memoirs of participants in the revolution in an attempt to illuminate the role women played in it. Despite the fact that not many pictures were taken that represent women in the various revolutionary activities (only about 10% of the 4,000 photos she examined had women in them), Palasik manages to group their participation along four themes: women taking part in the demonstrations on October 23 and 25, women in armed rebel groups, women in traditional roles, and, finally, women in atypical gender roles. We can thus see that women took part in the various phases and moments of the revolution, sometimes respecting their traditional roles (such as nursing the wounded or providing food), but also going beyond them, particularly the younger ones who can be seen carrying arms and marching in the crowds. In court documents about various sentences that were issued for participation in revolutionary activities, Palasik has found that only 2.1% of the people sentenced to death were female; however, women made up between 0.6% and 18.3% of various other indictments, ranging from participation in armed clashes

(14.8%), hiding weapons (3%) to participating in the women's demonstration (4.1%). The latter data does not, however, reflect women's real participation in this demonstration, as Palasik later states that "*several thousand women* placed their flowers on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier" (p. 113, my emphasis) during a silent demonstration on December 4, 1956, thus a month after the Soviet invasion. In this sense, the sentences that were issued to women for participation in various revolutionary (or "contra-revolutionary" in the Communist jargon) activities may not actually be a realistic measurement for the scope of their participation in the revolution. Palasik makes an important point when she asks questions regarding the veracity and reliability of historical documents: "what can be regarded as a historical source, and what may be missing from this 'source'? [...] In the end, if we aren't careful, a hundred years after the events, the day-to-day life during the revolution might be written based only on indictments and verdicts" (p. 112). Along the same lines, I would come to a different conclusion than the author herself who concludes that only "relatively few women participated in armed conflicts" (p. 114) and that most women who did participate in the revolution did so in their traditional roles. The various sources (photographs, court documents, memoirs) may instead be pointing to the need to examine women's role in the revolution in a more nuanced way, not solely based on some percentages in comparison to men. Such research, however, still remains to be done.

Chapter 5 by Júlia Vajda follows an oral history approach in that the author uses interviews with two Hungarian Shoah survivors and their respective experiences with 1956. Vajda comes to the conclusion that for these Shoah survivors, given the trauma they had lived through as teenagers, the revolution did not have the same meaning as it did for most Hungarians. In chapter 6, Judith Kesserű Némethy examines responses to and support for the revolution in Argentina heralded by Hungarian émigré circles but helped by many other Argentines as well. Chapter 7 by Heino Nyssönen concludes Part I with his analysis of how 1956 has fared in Hungary's recent (post-1989) political memory in comparison to other important historical events from the country's past.

Part II is written entirely by Canadian scholars and they deal with various aspects of the reception of the 1956-57 Hungarian refugee wave in Canada. In chapter 8, Harold Troper examines the arrival of the Hungarian refugees in Canada within the context of contemporaneous immigration policies shaped by a combination of Cold War rhetoric, racially and ethnically biased immigration practices and a labour shortage, and how it set a

precedent for Canadian immigration policies in the next decades. Troper concludes that the impact of this refugee wave was even felt in the drafting of the new Canadian immigration legislation in 1976, “which, for the first time, officially committed Canada, through its routine immigration procedures, to work to ease the distress of refugees, the displaced, and the persecuted” (p. 191).

Chapter 9 by Nándor Dreisziger looks at the profile of this unprecedented wave of Hungarian immigration to Canada, its reception in and impact on Canada and its Hungarian communities in the historical context of several, though smaller waves of pre-1956 immigration, concluding that the following decades “were the ‘golden age’ of Hungarian ethnic life in Canada” (p. 213). Peter Hidas, in chapter 10, examines the details of the arrival and reception of the Hungarian refugees in Canada, their “allocation” across the provinces, a “secret operation” (p. 227) ordered by then minister of immigration, Jack Pickersgill. Hidas includes several tables that illustrate the immigrants’ age and gender, their professional and religious background as well as an overview of the refugees’ numbers in countries across the globe. In chapter 11, Greg Donaghy analyses how the acceptance of the Hungarian refugees by Canada has to be interpreted within the larger context of its foreign policy and its relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Like Troper, Donaghy stresses the vital importance of the “Hungarian model” (p. 269) in the liberalization of Canada’s immigration and refugee policies.

The concluding chapter by Christopher Adam examines the response to 1956 and the Hungarian newcomers in *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* (Canadian-Hungarian Worker), which was, at the time, the second-largest Hungarian weekly in Canada. This chapter is very interesting in the context of the volume as it is the only one dealing with the reception of the new Hungarian immigrants by already established Canadian-Hungarians. Adam analyses the paper and its editorial policy from the background of how the Canadian-Hungarian press reflected and incited political infighting within the Hungarian immigrant communities. He chose this weekly as it was openly pro-Communist and supported post-1947 political developments in Hungary and was, thus, rather unsure as to how to respond to the revolution. The initial response was to brand it a “fascist reactionary” episode (p. 277) and to encourage the newcomers to return to Hungary, but soon this gave way to embarrassment in an atmosphere of a general condemnation of the Soviet clampdown. After some apologetic articles for the imperfections on the road to a perfect society under the new Kádár government, the paper began to highlight the allegedly negative

experiences the new immigrants were facing and claiming that many of them wanted to go back to Hungary. To this end, anonymous letters and statements were published that all reiterated the same disappointment in Canada, the regret to have left the homeland, and an ardent desire to return there as soon as possible. Moreover, the *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* presented the new Hungarian immigrants as a cheaper competition on the Canadian labour market and thus unwanted by Canadian workers, all within an ultimate plot scheme by the capitalist Canadian government against trade unions and the Soviet Union. Adam considers the unwillingness on the part of *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* and its editor to take on a more moderate stand and reach out to potentially left-leaning but not necessarily Communist Hungarian immigrants the main reason that would eventually lead to the paper's downfall.

An appendix and a list of contributors follow the concluding chapter. The appendix is a welcome addition as it mentions papers presented at the conference that, for various reasons, were not included in this volume. These papers, for the most part, highlighted the artistic and literary contributions of the Hungarian refugees, and it is, from the point of view of a literary scholar, a true pity that none of them made it into the present volume. However, the appendix represents an attempt to integrate this missing aspect somewhat. An index would have been another welcome addition to the book and, moreover, would have made its scholarly profile stronger. Yet on the whole, *The 1956 Revolution: Hungarian and Canadian Perspectives* presents original and recent scholarly work in an attractive and informative form that will no doubt be of interest to researchers and the general public alike.

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Minority Hungarian Communities in the Twentieth Century. Edited by Nándor Bárdi, Csilla Fedinec and László Szarka, Translated by Brian McLean. Boulder, Colorado: Atlantic Research and Publications Inc, Institute for Ethnic and National Minority Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Social Sciences Monographs, 2011. 859 pages.

The studies in this volume offer a comprehensive overview of the history of Hungarian communities beyond Hungary's borders since those communities were created following the dissolution of Austria-Hungary in 1920.

It is an outstanding work of scholarship, shedding light on distinct communities and regions of Europe neglected for many decades. Most importantly, it is published in English as a part of the series published in the *Atlantic Studies on Society in Change*. The editors are distinguished scholars of the Institute for Ethnic and National Minority Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The preface to the volume is written by eminent scholar and historian Ignác Romsics who served as the volume's editor-in-chief.

Since 1920 in Hungary the study of Hungarian communities beyond the country's borders has gone from one extreme to the other. During the inter-war era, the subject was thoroughly studied, while, later, during the communist era, this area of scholarship was completely ignored. During the 1920s several institutions were established to gather data and to conduct analyses of these minority communities, eventually to support Hungary's ambitions for territorial revision. The issues of minority communities were widely studied by Hungarian researchers and historians, many of them members of academic institutions including the Institute of Governance and Public Policy, founded in 1926. (p. 22) Three years after the end of the Second World War at the time of the Communists' accession to power all of the institutions that focused on the study of Hungarians beyond Hungary's borders were disbanded and for several decades afterwards the issue of these Hungarian minority communities was shrouded in silence, as dictated by communist policy. This policy only softened towards the end of the 1980's, when research on Hungarian minorities abroad became once again acceptable, initially, however, only focusing on ethnographic, sociological and anthropological aspects of those communities.

In the introduction to the book under review the editors outline the volume's theoretical framework and provide clear definitions of national minorities in the European Union and throughout the world. Their definitions of national minorities are based on five criteria: historical emergence, geographical location, characteristics of language use, legal status and group identity. The distinguished editors, authors and writers from around the world have gone to great length to document the histories of these Hungarian minority communities through examining such issues as: the questions of autonomy, culture, art, science and scholarship, demography, education, language retention, assimilation, as well as comparing and contrasting the policies of successive governments in Budapest towards Hungarian communities beyond their borders. The volume also has a separate section examining the issues of Hungarian-speaking Jews in the

Carpathian Basin, the Csángos of Moldavia, Hungarian-speaking Gypsies, and the Hungarian Diaspora living in the West.

To produce such a comprehensive volume on these disparate communities was a formidable task. Hungarians are defined as “involuntary minorities,” i.e. those separated from their ethno-cultural kin living in another country by border changes based on externally imposed political decisions. At the time of the break-up of historical Hungary, from one day to the next, 2.7 million Hungarians simply found themselves living as minorities in a different country. Some were transferred to completely new countries as Czechoslovakia or the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom (later Yugoslavia), while others were attached to existing countries such as Austria (in the case of Burgenland) or the greatly enlarged Romania (in the case of Transylvania and adjacent territories). These minority communities represented 27.4 percent of the entire population of Hungarians in Central Europe.

This volume pays meticulous attention to the fact that these Hungarian communities were allocated to countries that, through the past ninety years, have undergone further dramatic border and socio-political changes and traces the effects that these changes have had on these minority communities. All these changes are illustrated with case studies for each minority community. For instance, the creation of the new state of Czechoslovakia involved over 800,000-850,000 Hungarians living in regions contiguous to Hungary, but separated by the newly imposed border of 1920. During World War II, Hitler demanded the return of the Sudetenland to Germany and backed a plan for the partial revision of the 1920 border between Czechoslovakia and Hungary. After the so-called Munich agreement and the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, Slovakia became a separate Nazi puppet state. Following the war, the borders reverted to their pre-war status and Hungarians in the re-established Czechoslovakia were subjected to state ordered deportations and the Benes Decrees that declared their “collective guilt” and empowered Czechoslovak authorities to confiscate their property. More recently, in 1993, the Czech and Slovak people decided, via a referendum, to separate, and Czechoslovakia again two distinct countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The easternmost territories of interwar Czechoslovakia also included the Rusyn and Hungarian regions of Transcarpathia. After the Second World War Transcarpathia was ceded to the Soviet Union, after which time it became an artificially isolated region with its Hungarian communities literally sealed off from any contacts with Hungary. Since the

break-up of the Soviet Union, the region of Transcarpathia has become part of newly independent Ukraine.

The complicated fate of Hungarians living in Voivodina is also clearly outlined in this volume, from the time when it was transferred to the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom in 1920, through the country's metamorphosis into Yugoslavia, the mass killings of Hungarians following World War II and finally, to Yugoslavia's complete disintegration into much smaller countries in the early 1990's. The volume sheds light on how the Hungarian communities survived the political and social upheavals. Government policies in dealing with minority issues and minority rights are examined in depth, as are the many attempts at forced assimilation.

The chapters are organized chronologically, starting with two historical surveys entitled the "Dissolution of Historical Hungary" and "Hungary at the Peace Talks in Paris" — both written by historian Laszlo Szarka. These are followed by a comprehensive survey of the creation of Hungarian minority groups in Romania (by Nándor Bárdi), Czechoslovakia, i.e. Slovakia (by Attila Simon), Czechoslovakian Transcarpathia (by Csilla Fedinec), the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom (by Enikő A. Sajti), and Austria (by Gerhard Baumgartner).

The section of the volume entitled "Between the Two World Wars (1921-1938)," examines the issues of the "National States and Minorities in Central Europe," the "League of Nations and its Role in Defending International Minorities," "Disputes and Proposals for Handling the Minority Question," and "the Effect of Territorial Revision on Minority Protection," "Minority Hungarians and their role in Central European Land Reform," "Minority Hungarian Societies and their role in Culture, Art, Science and Scholarship." The ten ground-breaking articles in this section written or jointly co-written by historians László Szarka, Ferenc Eiler, Nándor Bárdi, Attila Simon and Attila Kovács, Tamás Gusztáv Filep, Csilla Fedinec, Enikő A. Sajti and Gerhard Baumgartner.

The section entitled the "World War II Years (1939-1944)" deals with issues that arose following the restoration of the pre-World War II territorial status quo, such as the issues surrounding the "Returnee Hungarians" (by Tamás Gusztáv Filep). The autonomy promises made to Hungarians and further, by the Hungarians to the Rusyn minorities in Transcarpathia, are examined in depth by Csilla Fedinec. Case studies in this chapter explore the effects of territorial revisions on the Hungarian minority community, on those communities that were re-annexed to Hungary, as well as those that were not in the areas of revision. For instance in

the case of Romania, while northern Transylvania was re-annexed to Hungary, the Hungarian communities of southern Transylvania suffered further isolation and were subjected to outright ethnic persecution by the fascist Ion Antonescu regime. This study was written by Béni L. Balogh and Nándor Bárdi. The case study on war-time Slovakia is written by Árpád Popely, and that on Vojvodina by Enikő A. Sajti. The case of Burgenland as part of the German Reich, where Hungarians were forcefully “Germanized,” is examined by Gerhard Baumgartner.

The section entitled, “from the End of World War II to the Communist Takeover (1944-1948)” consists of two main articles, “Hungary” and the “Situation of the Hungarian Minorities in 1945.” Both of these are by László Szarka. The subject of the “Losses of Hungarian Minorities” is examined by Mihály Zoltán Nagy. These articles as well as the case studies provide a comprehensive look at the politics of retribution in Europe following the end of the war. Despite the attempt of the Horthy regime to switch sides late in the war, similar to what Romania had accomplished two months earlier, this attempt was thwarted by Nazi Germany, which had occupied the country by March of 1944. At the end of the Second World War the pre-war borders were reinstated by the Allies. Hungarian minorities in each of these countries were dealt with harshly — with deportations, confiscation of property, internment and outright killings (as in the case of Yugoslavia and Romania). The alleged “crime” of some of the victims was “being of Hungarian ethnicity”.

The volume’s next section is on “Eastern European Single-Party States (1948-1989).” In this period the issues of the Hungarian minorities were largely silenced by communist regimes. Contact was forbidden between Hungarians in Hungary and members of the Hungarian minority communities beyond Hungary’s borders. Communist dictators, such as Nicolae Ceaucescu of Romania, built heavy industry and apartment blocks and settled hundreds of thousands of Romanian workers into solidly Hungarian regions of Transylvania, thereby dramatically changing the region’s demographic landscape. The articles in this section include “Models for Communist Minority Policy” (by Stefano Bottoni and Zoltan Novak), “Hungary and Hungarians Beyond its Borders” (by Nándor Bárdi), “Demographic Features” (by Patrik Tatrai), “Collectivization and Rural Change” (Nándor Bárdi and Márton László), “The Education Question” (Csilla Fedinec) and the “Development of Cultural, Artistic and Scientific Institutions” (Tamás Gusztáv Filep).

The section of the volume with the title “From the Change of Regime to the Recent Past (1989-2005),” examines these communities and

their cultural survival since the end of Communism in east-central Europe. This era represented a tumultuous time, wherein Hungarian minority communities watched and waited as the countries, political entities they had lived in for several generations fell apart, such as Czechoslovakia (via a referendum in 1993) and Yugoslavia (via war) and dissolved into smaller countries. This section contains articles such as “Minority Rights in International Relations” (by Balázs Vizi), “Hungarian Minorities and the Change of Systems” (László Szarka), “The Policy of Budapest Governments towards Hungarian Communities Abroad” (by Nándor Bárdi), “The Demographic Processes in Minority Hungarian Communities” (by László Gyurgyik), the “Education Issue” (by Attila Papp Z.), the “Position of the Hungarian Language” (by Orsolya Nádor), “Cultural and Scientific Activity” (Nándor Bárdi, Csilla Fedinec and Attila Papp Z.). The case studies in this section also include insightful pieces written on Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia, all by János Vékás.

The final section of this outstanding compendium of articles features studies on “Other Hungarian-Speaking Communities In and Beyond Hungary’s Neighboring Countries,” including Jews and Jewish communities (by Viktoria Bányai), “The Csangos of Moldavia” (Zoltán Ilyés), “Hungarian Speaking Gypsies in the Carpathian Basin” (Péter Szuhay), the “Hungarian Diaspora Beyond the Carpathian Basin” (by Ilona Kovács), “Some Social and Demographic Features of the Hungarian Diaspora in the West” (Attila Papp Z.), a very interesting article on the “Contact Dialects of Hungarian” (by Miklós Kontra) and “Population Movements in the Carpathian Basin” (by Tamás Stark). Viktoria Bányai also delivers a comprehensive article on the issues of assimilated Hungarian Jews and their fate, while Tamás Stark sheds particular light on the continued in-migration of Hungarians living in these minority communities to Hungary, particularly from October 1989, when Hungary acceded to the Geneva Convention which granted refugee status to those who could show that they were persecuted on national, political religious or racial grounds.

The editors state that the historiography of the Hungarian minorities presented in this volume “has been shaped to a great extent by an urge to record and document the numerous serious political, economic and social grievances that these communities have indubitably suffered, and the dominant historical narratives that have emerged in the course of the past nine decades reflect the centrality of those grievances and react to them. This volume shifts the focus from a discourse based on grievances and focuses instead on strategies of survival and interest-promotion, as it

was largely these that were predominantly responsible for shaping the evolution of minority communities during the twentieth century.” (p. 24)

This reviewer has worked with students from these minority communities for the past two decades through a program called Students Without Boundaries. Based on the oral testimony of hundreds of these young people, the most critical, most painful issue they have to face on an ongoing basis, is, as they say, “being ignored, marginalized by the country they live in as well as the country (in this case Hungary) with which they share cultural and linguistic ties.” As one young woman from Serbia stated: “I belong to two countries, but neither country wants to accept me.”

The volume being reviewed here has made a significant contribution towards documenting and publicising not just the past history, but also the present evolving history of these communities that have struggled quietly for their ethnocultural and linguistic survival for over nine decades. The editors have ensured that the articles are written in a clear, unbiased style. The volume is rich with references to the works of authors and historians from the surrounding countries themselves, in effect the authors and editors of this volume try to build bridges of understanding between Hungarian minority communities and the countries in which they live. It is a welcome, fresh perspective in the field of historiography, a volume shedding light on communities and peoples that have, until the past few decades, been denied the telling of their own history.

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Comparative Hungarian Cultural Studies. Edited by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Louise O. Vasvári. West Lafayette, Indiana, Purdue University Press, 2011. 376 pages. (Comparative Cultural Studies series.)

In the Western world, the modernization of social studies and liberal arts studies (including literary studies) and their expansion into cultural studies has been an ongoing process since the 1970's, inspiring hope that after half a century of devaluation, the humanities may regain their lost prestige as they adapt to the circumstances. In Hungary, however, such survival-oriented adaptation has only started to surface in the last decade, which might explain why this volume of articles promoting such a paradigm shift, titled *Comparative Hungarian Cultural Studies*, was first published

by Purdue University Press in Indiana, USA, in the series “Comparative Cultural Studies”, rather than in Hungary.

Although the number of cultural studies courses offered at Hungarian universities rises with each passing semester, this field of study is relatively unknown, and so editors Steven Tötösy and Louise O. Vasvári deemed it necessary to contribute an extensive and detailed theoretical and methodological paper to the volume as an addendum to the twenty-six cultural studies articles, the majority of which was written by scholars living abroad. Their paper, titled “The Study of Hungarian Culture as Comparative Central European Cultural Studies”, has reached the level of manifesto in certain circles, and is perhaps the most important article in the volume as it not only serves to introduce this new field and the branches of science that comprise it, but also seeks to explore the reasons behind the delayed realization of historical and cultural change in Hungary.

Based on a large body of literature, Tötösy and Vasvári discuss the definition of the term ‘cultural studies’ in extensive detail in their paper, and according to their definition, this new field rejects the traditional aesthetic, textual and hierarchical concepts of culture and aims to expose the relationship between diverse forms of culture, culture and society, and culture and politics by any given theoretical approach and methodology, rather than within the bounds of a uniform theoretical framework. When leftist British scholars introduced cultural studies in the middle of the last century, their approach took a clear ideological stance as their aim was not only analysis, but also the facilitation of social change. Although some current approaches are less politically charged than those before them, these, too, oppose the elitism and hegemonic structures of power that dominate in traditional fields of study (12). Cultural studies hold democratic views of culture, allowing them to study marginalized and popular cultures, and can be combined with several established (or newly established) fields in liberal arts and social studies, such as literary studies, literary theory, social theory, cultural sociology, media studies, communication studies, cultural anthropology, cultural history, geography, ethnography, sociolinguistics, translation studies, philosophy, law, pedagogy, history, museum studies, art history and criticism, political studies, gender studies and so on (12–13). Cultural studies can be used to examine, among other things, sexuality, national identity, minorities, colonialism and post-colonialism, consumer culture, the relationship between science and ecology, postmodern global culture, cultural institutions, urban life, (e)migration, immigration and diasporas as well — which means that it

could, for instance, intersect with Jewish Studies, another field that had been just as poorly received in Hungary until recent years.

After defining the newly emerging studies, the two authors argue against self-referential and thus potentially exclusionist single-culture studies, and in favor of comparative cultural studies — however, such an expansion does not exclude an ideological approach regardless of the fact that it is based on knowledge of several languages and cultures. Calling attention to other cultures creates inclusive, intercultural and interdisciplinary dialogue, and entails the analysis of all others, as well as all that is marginal, peripheral, or pertaining to minorities. The results of such research are then published in English, due to the fact that it has become the *lingua franca* of science, rather than due to a US-centric or Eurocentric approach (based on the presumed superiority of European culture). Tötösy and Vasvári argue that the decline and marginalization of liberal arts and social sciences may be reversed by the emergence of comparative cultural studies that are intra-disciplinary (within the humanities), multidisciplinary (intersecting with other studies), and pluri-disciplinary (done by consulting scholars of diverse disciplines) in their approach (16–17).

The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, founded in Birmingham by literature professor Richard Hoggart in 1964, managed to spread the new hybrid discipline inspired by Marxist cultural criticism in most English-speaking countries within a few decades, while in certain European countries such as France and Germany, cultural studies remained relatively unknown. Vasvári and Tötösy argue that the reason lies in a Eurocentric view, suspicion regarding US-American scientific research, and the growing popularity of theoretical schools with different approaches to culture, at least on German-speaking soil. (The authors avoid using the term ‘American’, arguing that it implies the hegemonic role of the United States on the American continent, and instead introduce the term ‘US-American’ when referring to the USA.) They argue that, in addition to Eurocentrism, aversion towards the USA, and the impact of the *Kulturwissenschaft* and then the Frankfurt School in surrounding countries, the negligence of cultural studies in Hungary and in Central and Eastern Europe in general is also due to an aversion to ideological approaches as a result of Soviet oppression and a history of living under party-state rule. Tötösy and Vasvári also posit that there are several additional factors aside from those mentioned above that impede cultural studies from gaining ground in Hungary. For instance, the US PhD system may have been imported to postgraduate education in Hungary, but requirements regarding publishing research results have not yet been met.

Although it is not explicitly discussed, one may assume that they were hinting at the small number of foreign publications, which is likely due to another obstacle discussed in the paper, namely the lack of high-level foreign language skills. They also mention other obstructive factors such as lack of funds for importing foreign literature, and argue that one of the most fundamental problems is that the older generation of professors, appointed in the era of socialism, holding traditional and often old-fashioned views, and granted too much power over the student body, is still firmly in place (18–19). This somber picture is then contrasted with the achievements of the past few years – however, since they only offer a glimpse of the precedents of cultural studies before 1989 (although one of the papers in the volume, written by New York scholar András Kiséry, does discuss the groundbreaking merits of Tivadar Thienemann and István Hajnal with regard to comparative literary studies, a field related to cultural studies), they do not mention that, in 1981, Béla G. Németh had established a workshop at Eötvös Lóránd University (ELTE), the soon-to-be Cultural History Department, where historian Péter Hanák attempted to introduce cultural studies, which was still new and practically unknown in Hungary at that time. In the introduction to his volume of articles published in 1988 by Gondolat Press and titled *A kert és a műhely* (The garden and the yard), written in 1986 in Princeton (unsurprisingly), Péter Hanák offers his own definition of what he means by “cultural history” as a discipline, and his approach is similar to that of the editors of the volume discussed here: “...with regard to the limits of this discipline, I do not differentiate between ‘high’ culture and urban ‘mass culture’, or what is considered to be rural ‘folk’ culture. I believe that cultural history does not measure the value of art in terms of artistic merit and aesthetics, but rather in terms of its representative value and relevance to reality in a community’s life and way of thinking. Secondly, I would not exclude politics from this discipline either... Not just because of the rational and empirical consideration that political events, political decisions and cultural politics have always had a strong influence on the development of culture, ...but also because the different ways in which society is organized, sustained and renewed are the manifestations of unified human creative (and destructive) activities, which are closely interrelated and pervasive, and can only be separated in terms of thinking and process ecology.” (“Introductory thoughts on cultural history”). The English edition of the book is also listed in the last chapter of the volume edited by Tötösy and Vasvári, titled “Selected Bibliography for Work in Comparative Hungarian Cultural Studies”.) Although university reforms fol-

Following the collapse of socialism had seen the end of the Cultural History Department, the first Hungarian results in cultural research are now awaiting publication, as Tötösy and Vasvári note in reference to József Takáts's paper, published in 2004 in the journal *Jelenkor*, in which Takáts discusses the "shift in international literary studies" and its ties to Hungary. At ELTE, both the Hungarian Literary and Cultural Studies Institute, established from merging former literature departments, and its Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies Department (both headed by Ernő Kulcsár-Szabó) have undertaken cultural studies research – although, according to the outline of the founding professor's course on "The Definition of Culture and Trends in Cultural Theory," culture is still defined as "the relationship between language and the mediation of experiences of the world." As for other universities, the University of Debrecen also established a Hungarian Literary and Cultural Studies Institute from former Hungarian literature departments, the University of Szeged has a Visual Culture and Literary Theory Department within the Hungarian Language and Literature Institute, offering a Masters degree in Literary and Cultural Studies, and the Doctoral School of the University of Pécs runs a Cultural Studies Doctorate Program that aims to analyze the cultural representational systems of modern societies.

However, such a transformation does not guarantee the complete renewal of the discipline promoted by Tötösy and Vasvári. Their conclusion is that, while the issue of identity and 'Hungarianness' have once again become an issue of fundamental importance in Hungarian culture and politics after 1989, scientific research has yet to encompass the vast variety of ethnicities in Hungary, and the role of the Hungarian Jewish community is still largely ignored in discussions of Hungarian culture and history (22).

The editors divided the articles into six primary themes, the structure seemingly serving to highlight the view that cultural studies is by no means centered around literature analyzed from current perspectives using the most current methods. The six themes are as follows: history, theory and methodology for comparative Hungarian cultural studies (CHCS), CHCS and literature and culture, CHCS and the other arts, CHCS and gender studies, CHCS and contemporary Hungary, and the final chapter containing the bibliography mentioned above. The observations of the editors in the introduction are supplemented by Györgyi Horváth's paper titled "Contemporary Hungarian Literary Criticism and the Memory of the Socialist Past", which can be found in the section devoted to the relationship between literature and culture. According to Horváth, current

literary discourse on the role of literature is still influenced by an apolitical perspective that was formulated to ward off the pressure of pre-1989 socialist party politics. In reality, the world of literature is thoroughly permeated by politics, and while both sides attribute different social and political aims to this artistic field (the solidification of national identity, and safeguarding autonomy), the consensus on favoring an apolitical approach prevents the redefinition of the relationship between the aesthetic and the political. Moreover, the lack of reflexivity and the pretence of staying apolitical has also led to the poor reception of politically and ideologically motivated theories by academia, such as postcolonial studies, gender studies and cultural studies (92–93).

The volume contains several papers of interest. A few honorary mentions include Peter Sherwood's analysis of the German and English translations of Sándor Márai's novel *A gyertyák csonkig égnek* (The candles burn down to the stump), Megan Brandow-Faller's paper on the relationship between Art Nouveau and Hungarian cultural nationalism, and David Mandler's study of the acculturation of openly Russophobe Ármín Vámbéry (who even discussed his views with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office) in the course of his career.

Judit Kádár
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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

GEORG B. MICHELS is Professor of History at the University of California, Riverside. His articles on Hungary include a forthcoming study (in *Történelmi Szemle*) that re-examines the expulsion of the Protestant clergy during the early 1670s. Michels' current research on the impact of the Habsburg Counter-Reformation on late seventeenth-century Hungarian society emerged from comparative studies of Russian and Hungarian popular resistance against a centralizing imperial power. Trained as a Russian historian and Slavic linguist at the University of Göttingen (Germany), UCLA, and Harvard (Ph.D. 1991), he has written *At War with the Church: Religion and Dissent in Seventeenth Century Russia* (Stanford, 1999) and co-edited *Russia's Dissident Old Believers (1650-1950)* (Minneapolis, 2009).

GÁBOR VERMES is Professor Emeritus of History at Rutgers University, in New Brunswick, NJ. He is the author of a political biography of the Hungarian statesman István Tisza: *István Tisza: The Liberal Vision and Conservative Statecraft of a Magyar Nationalist* (Boulder, CO, 1985). His most recent book is *Kulturális változások sodrában: Magyarország 1711 és 1848 között* [In the current of cultural changes: Hungary between 1711 and 1848] (Budapest: Balassi, 2011) which is about to be published in an English edition. Professor Vermes had been an active member and for some time President of the American Association for the Study of Hungarian History, later re-named as the Hungarian Studies Association. His first article in our journal appeared in 1975.

Educated in England (his doctorate is from Durham University), ALAN WALKER's best-known publication is his three-volume biography of Franz Liszt, two of them published by Alfred A. Knopf and Cornell University Press. He also published on the life and music of other composers including Robert Schumann and Frédéric Chopin. He is Professor Emeritus of Music at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. He also taught at the Guildhall School of Music and the University of London. Dr. Walker is the recipient of numerous medals and other distinctions and is a

member of the Royal Society of Canada. He last published in our journal in 2003.

AGATHA SCHWARTZ is Professor and Department Chair at the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, University of Ottawa. Her research areas are the Austro-Hungarian *fin de siècle* and women's and gender studies. She has published on Robert Musil and utopia, on violence and patriarchy, and on *fin-de-siècle* and contemporary women writers from East Central Europe. Her recent publications include *Shifting Voices: Feminist Thought and Women's Writing in Fin-de-Siècle Austria and Hungary* (McGill – Queen's University Press, 2008) and *Gender and Modernity in Central Europe: The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and its Legacy* (editor; University of Ottawa Press, 2010). Professor Schwartz is the current President of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada.

DEBORAGH S. CORNELIUS, a historian of East Central Europe, is the author of *Hungary in World War II: Caught in the Cauldron* (Fordham University Press, 2011). Using previously untapped sources and interviews conducted for this book, Cornelius provides a clear account of Hungary's attempt to reclaim the territory lost after World War I by joining forces with Nazi Germany. Cornelius formerly taught at Rutgers University and Franklin and Marshall College. She is also the author of *In Search of the Nation: The New Generation of Hungarian Youth in Czechoslovakia 1925-1934* (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs, distributed by Columbia University Press, 1999).

MÁRIA PALASIK is a senior researcher at the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security in Budapest. Previous to this posting she had taught for two decades at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics where she became Jean Monnet professor for European Studies in 2004. Dr. Palasik's interests include women's scientific education in Hungary and women's role in Hungarian technology and industry. Her most recent major publication is *Chess Game for Democracy: Hungary between East and West, 1944-1947* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill – Queen's University Press, 2011). She has been an occasional contributor to our journal.

