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Special Volume:

## **Gender and Nation in Hungary Since 1919**

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## **Editors' Introduction: Gender and Nation in Hungary since 1919**

**The articles** of the present volume investigate the intersections of gender and nation in Hungary since the end of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. They reflect on the political, social, and cultural developments of the last hundred years in Hungary that resulted in a wide range of definitions and discourses concerning the content and boundaries of the nation. The seven contributions occupy a broad range of disciplines, from political, cultural, and gender history to literary studies and political science. They explore the ways in which gender has been used — and abused — in the construction of the nation under the various regimes that governed Hungary since 1919. Through an intersectional analysis that takes into account the interplay of gender, class, and ethnicity, the articles address the following questions: How were notions and specific definitions of femininity and masculinity mobilized through various political ideologies in Hungarian history? Who was included in the nation and who, when and why was left out or excluded from it?

Few terms have generated more studies and debates in the last few decades in the humanities than nation/nationalism and gender. This introduction is not the place to provide even a cursory overview of the vast scholarship prompted by the renewed interest in nationalism during the last couple of decades, especially pertinent in post-Communist East-Central Europe that has seen a shocking revival of ethnic nationalisms. Similarly, we cannot possibly do justice to gender studies and women's history as they relate to Hungarian studies. Here we can merely point to some of the main influences and lacunae that inspired the editors and authors of this volume in their own work.

Benedict Anderson's analysis of the nation as "an imagined political community" has transformed the study of nationalism.<sup>1</sup> It cast a critical eye on the nation-building process of modern nations, and on the discourses that determine the place of individuals and groups within the nation as well as the roles attributed to them along the lines of gender, class, ethnicity, race, and sexuality. Anderson and others' emphasis on the

role of cultural developments, in particular the intellectual movements of the Enlightenment and Romanticism as well as print culture, in the nation-building process offered a highly fruitful vantage point in the East-Central European context, whose nationalisms, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were grounded in these cultural and intellectual movements. The connection Ernest Gellner made between emerging nationalisms and modernization has been equally important, and helped to draw out the common threads in the region's contested national narratives, traditionally pitted — and articulated — against one another.<sup>2</sup> This transnational perspective offered the frameworks of the Enlightenment and Romanticism for the study of emerging nationalisms of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and those of modernization and anti-modernity for an interpretation of the radical nationalisms of the early twentieth century and the interwar period, respectively. The influence of these foundational works can be clearly detected in the, to date, perhaps most important contribution to East-Central European nationalism studies, the four-volume reader aptly titled *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945)*.<sup>3</sup>

Coinciding with the rise of new scholarship on nationalism, in the last two decades women's and gender history have gained prominence and uncovered "the relationships between gender and nationalism. Studies of women's participation in national movements and of women's history writing have considerably enriched our knowledge of the role of women in national pasts."<sup>4</sup> Hungarian scholars were largely cut off from women's and gender history and studies until the late 1980s but have made great strides since 1989. As a result, we can now refer to a sizeable body of scholarship, mapping out the history of the Hungarian women's movements and women's increasing participation in higher education and the professions, rediscovering female artists, and re-evaluating the literary canon by including "forgotten" woman writers. We can also rely on a small number of studies exploring sexualities and masculinities in the last two hundred years of Hungarian history and culture.<sup>5</sup> Women's and gender studies, however, have failed to breach the walls of mainstream Hungarian scholarship and academia and, not unlike in other parts of the region, remained "quarantined." Likewise, such well-studied topics, pertinent to the history of Hungarian national consciousness and nationalism, as the history of Hungarian nationalist and racial ideologies and movements, the Jewish question, and the right-wing and racist movements and ideologies of the interwar period, have rarely been studied from a gender perspective. This is a phenomenon not unique to Hungary: as a Czech historian of gen-

der and nationalism remarks, “women/gender history throughout Europe largely has been developing parallel to mainstream national history, rather than as its integral part.”<sup>6</sup> Not even the rise of nationalism in Eastern Europe after 1989 resulted in the incorporation of women in mainstream national histories.<sup>7</sup>

Such pessimistic assessment is not universally accepted: no lesser authority than Benedict Anderson questions it while pointing to signs of progress. In his introduction to a 1995 collection of essays surveying the field of nationalities studies, Anderson states that while “[u]p until recently theoretical writing on nationalism ignored, overlooked, or marginalized the issue of gender (...) this ‘silence’ has been irreversibly ended by a vast corpus of feminist scholarship and theorizing.”<sup>8</sup> He adds that most of this scholarship has focused on Western/European societies and the ambiguous role women played in various nationalist projects, the way increasing access to the suffrage and citizenship has transformed (undermined but also strengthened in new ways) patriarchal gender relations, including the nation state’s control or attempted control over women’s fertility.<sup>9</sup>

Writing in the same volume, Sylvia Walby reiterates that “most texts on nationalism do not take gender as a significant issue”<sup>10</sup> yet she cites the highly influential volume of Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias as an exception.<sup>11</sup> Since its publication in 1989 the volume has inspired countless studies in a wide range of geographical and historical contexts, exploring the ways in which gender and gender relations influence national/ethnic practices and projects.

Examples pertinent to the East-Central European context include the edited volumes and studies by Maria Bucur, Nancy Wingfield, Karen Hagemann, Pieter Judson, Marsha Rozenblit, and Melissa Feinberg, among others.<sup>12</sup> A recent volume edited by Agatha Schwartz connects modernity, one of the key concepts shown to spur on the emergence of the nation state, to notions and definitions of gender roles.<sup>13</sup> A handful of recent studies explore aspects of Hungarian history and culture under the lens of gender and nation — and come from scholars working outside of Hungary, highlighting the reluctance of Hungarian scholars to engage with gender and theory in general.<sup>14</sup>

By setting the chronological limits of this volume, we intended to highlight the break between the liberal prewar period and the anti-liberal post-1919 period in Hungarian history. The liberal achievements of the 1848-49 revolution and War of Independence and the 1867 Compromise had brought Hungary into the European mainstream and guaranteed Jewish emancipation as well as linguistic and cultural rights for the ethnic

minorities. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century women's education rights were enshrined in legislation. But these developments were also contested: in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century growing intolerance against the cultural and political rights of the nationalities and emerging anti-liberal political parties brought the principles — and practice — of liberal citizenship into question. By the first decade of the twentieth century the limitations of citizenship/electoral rights were vehemently contested by the Social Democratic Party and its trade unions, a strong women's rights movement, and the political movements of the nationalities; and at the end of the WWI the last of these brought down the Monarchy.

In the aftermath of the revolutions and the Trianon Treaty, the conservative regime of the interwar period articulated a new definition of citizenship and indeed the Hungarian nation by rejecting the liberal principles of the prewar period. The dominant Christian-nationalist ideology of the interwar era, especially in its radical representatives, came to rely on an openly racist and exclusionary rhetoric and political practices. Universal suffrage, including women, was granted in 1918 and practiced for the first time in 1920 but would be gradually limited during the interwar period. The dominant conservative discourse also reversed the liberal model of women's emancipation and reinforced women's traditional roles of women in both public and private life. A series of anti-Semitic legislation, from the 1920 *numerus clausus* law to the so-called Jewish laws between 1938 and 1941, gradually limited the educational, civil, professional and economic rights of Hungarian Jews, and eventually stripped Hungarian Jews of their citizenship on racial grounds.

After 1945 racial and gender discrimination was outlawed and women finally achieved full citizenship — however, during the Stalinist period, citizenship would be restricted on social grounds, and members of the old elite excluded from the nation. Although during the state socialist period — commonly known as the Kádár regime — these restrictions would cease to apply, the lack of political democracy and the limits placed on civil society made a mockery of citizenship rights. The governing ideology declared discrimination against women and ethnic and racial minorities (in and outside Hungary) solved, and any form of nationalism obsolete and superseded by a fictitious, homogenous “socialist nation.”

One of the unexpected and most disappointing developments of the post-Communist period in Hungary has been the downward turn in gender equality; the token political representation of women during the state socialist era was replaced not by genuine political participation but, quite the opposite, women's unprecedented under-representation in poli-



tical life. Despite the commitments for gender parity, undertaken by recent Hungarian governments and underwritten by the European Union, Hungary lags far behind not only Western European but other post-Communist countries when it comes to women representatives and leadership positions in political and economic life. In addition, patriarchal gender discourses with a decidedly anti-feminist bent have become an accepted part of public life, including the media. Expressions of racism, sexism, and homophobia, often by officials of parties represented in parliament, have become tolerated elements of public discourse. In official celebrations and rhetoric, highly conservative and Christian gender hierarchies are promoted as the carriers of traditional Hungarian values, reviving a definition of national identity reminiscent of the dominant discourses of the interwar period.

It is particularly fitting then that the interwar years are the setting for four contributions in this volume. In “Nationality, Sexuality, and Gender in Literary Representations of Ilona Zrínyi” Tímea Jablonczay explores the interplay between gender and nation-building in Hungary of the 1920s based on the figure of Ilona Zrínyi. Jablonczay demonstrates how this 17<sup>th</sup>-century historical female figure became a captive of the web of nationalist narratives of the Horthy-era and its homogenizing discourses about gender identities for the sake of the “imagined community” of the Hungarian nation, discourses that reinforced patriarchal constructions of femininity and masculinity.

Fiona Stewart in “‘The Parting of Ways:’ The Shifting Relationship between Anna Lesznai and Emma Ritoók, and the Restructuring of Hungarian Cultural and Political Life in the Early 1920s,” narrates the friendship between the two Hungarian women writers. She describes the breakdown of their personal relationship caused by Emma Ritoók’s engagement with a racially grounded anti-Semitism. Through this case study, Stewart offers a picture of the political and cultural atmosphere of post-Trianon Hungary, an atmosphere increasingly characterized by a narrow definition of who belonged to the Hungarian nation and who was to be excluded from it.

In his analysis of the recent Karády renaissance, in “Mata Hari or the Body of the Nation? Interpretations of Katalin Karády” David S. Frey dissects the multitude of symbolic meanings that were cast upon the popular screen star of interwar Hungary. Frey is particularly interested in how the interwar discourses of gender and nation played out in the numerous images that Karády embodied in the eyes of many of her contemporaries and how these images have been re-evaluated and re-contextualized in post-communist Hungary.

Róbert Kerepeszki in “Nationalist Masculinity and Right-Wing Radical Student Movements in Interwar Hungary: The Case of the Turul Association” describes the development of the leading radical right-wing student association in interwar Hungary, paying special attention to its gender aspects. Kerepeszki analyzes the mixture of anti-modernism, anti-feminism, anti-Semitism, nationalism, and militarism that shaped Turul’s ideology. Although mentioned only in passing, it is significant that Katalin Karády and the femininity she represented (the independent, sensual “femme fatale,” the exact opposite of Turul’s domestic, motherly and subordinate feminine ideal) was seen by Turul as a threat to Hungarian youth and her films were boycotted by Turul’s leadership.

Andrea Pető in “Gendered Exclusions and Inclusions in Hungary’s Right-Radical Arrow Cross Party (1939-1945): A Case Study of Three Female Party Members” uses material from the so-called People’s Tribunals that took place in the immediate post-WWII period. She analyzes the perspective of three women who found a space for political agency either through membership in and work for the Arrow Cross Party or via association with high-ranking Arrow Cross officials. She demonstrates that, despite the party’s overall anti-modernist gender rhetoric, some women aligned themselves with its right-wing, anti-Semitic ideology and embraced an anti-modernist emancipation model so as to give their “feminine” contribution to what they had considered as the healing of the dismembered post-Trianon national body.

Katalin Fábíán and Tanya Watson both address the gender politics of the contemporary period. In “Naming Rights: Nation, Family, and Women’s Rights in the Debates on Domestic Violence in Contemporary Hungary,” Fábíán describes the reluctance to tackle the issue of domestic violence that pervades Hungarian politics to this day, thus making Hungary one of the last countries in the European Union without legislation against domestic violence. Through an intersectional analysis, she presents the various activists of the debate surrounding domestic violence and, more broadly, violence against women in Hungary against the background of the new wave of conservative nationalist rhetoric.

In “Hungarian Motherhood and *Nők Lapja Café*” Tanya Watson examines the representations of women and motherhood in contemporary Hungary based on the most popular, mainstream online women’s magazine. In her analysis of a selection of articles, she detects an emphasis on definitions of motherhood embedded in a strictly heterosexual model of motherhood, along with a rejection of “foreign” models of motherhood and parenting in favour of the “true” Hungarian ways of mothering.

With this special volume we intend to provide a forum for young and established researchers, from both Hungary and North America, to present their research and thus establish links of communication between scholars working within and outside Hungary. While the fields and themes covered in the volume are by no means exhaustive, we are hopeful that this forum will encourage young scholars to engage with or continue their work on these pertinent topics and that the studies published here will inspire further discussion.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition (London, New York: Verso, 1991), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalisms* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

<sup>3</sup> Ahmet Ersoy, Maciej Gorny, Vangelis Kchriotis, Michal Kopeček, Boyan Manchev, Balázs Trencsényi, Marius Turda, eds., *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945)*, vols. 1-3 (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006-2010). Incidentally, the series was edited and published under the aegis of Central European University in Budapest whose graduate programs, including its Nationalities and Gender Studies, underline the crucial importance of the study of these fields in the Central and Southeastern European region.

<sup>4</sup> Jitka Malečková, "Where Are Women in National Histories?" in Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz, eds., *The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, 171.

<sup>5</sup> For recent overviews of the achievements and lacunae of women's and gender studies in Hungary, see Andrea Pető and Judith Szapor, "The state of women's and gender studies in Eastern Europe – The case of Hungary," *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 19, no. 1 (Spring 2007), 160-166 and Éva Fodor and Eszter Varsa, "At the Crossroads of East and West: Gender Studies in Hungary" in Christine Bose and Minjeong Kim, eds., *Global Perspectives on Gender Research: Transnational Perspectives* (New York, London: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Malečková, op. cit., 195.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Gopal Balakrishnan, ed., with an introduction by Benedict Anderson, *Mapping the Nation* (London: Verso, 1996), 12.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Sylvia Walby, "Woman and Nation," in Balakrishnan, *Mapping the Nation*, 235.

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<sup>11</sup> Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, eds. *Woman-Nation-State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield, *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2006), Pieter Judson and Marsha M. Rozenblit, eds., *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, Catherine Hall, eds., *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and Anna Clark, eds., *Representing Masculinity: Male Citizenship in Modern Western Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), K. Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert, eds., *Gendering Modern German History: Themes, Debates, Revisions* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), and Melissa Feinberg, *Elusive equality: gender, citizenship, and the limits of democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1950* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Agatha Schwartz, ed., *Gender and Modernity in Central Europe: The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Its Legacy* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Robert Nemes, *The Once and Future Budapest* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 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, 2008).

## **Nation, Sexuality and Gender in Literary Representations of Ilona Zrínyi**

**Tímea Jablonczay**

**An interest** in women writers is not entirely new to contemporary Hungarian literary criticism. However, interpretations related to issues of gender, sexuality and nation have been largely left out of literary scholarship. In my paper I will examine literary representations of Ilona Zrínyi (Jelena Zrinska). Rather than focusing on the biography of this historical personality, the subject of my analysis will be her representations in selected narratives that feature her as the main protagonist, with an emphasis on Mária Szentmihályi Szabó's novel *Zrínyi Ilona*.<sup>1</sup>

Ilona Zrínyi is one of the few women in Hungarian collective memory that have not been “forgotten” and neither was her inclusion in Hungarian history ever banned or suppressed by changing regimes. Her figure has been constantly evoked and re-imagined in historical literary narratives and visual representations and as such, she is deeply embedded in national cultural memory. Nevertheless, one question immediately arises: which collective memory casts her story into a particular narrative? In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, her figure became mythical, her portrait woven into a nation-building ideology. Historians, literary scholars, and writers tended to depict her figure as a symbol of national freedom and her story often became an allegory of nationalistic ideas. I will examine how Ilona Zrínyi's historical figure was appropriated by nationalist discourse particularly between the two World Wars. In discussing this particular example of Hungarian nationalism, I will pay particular attention to the role of gender in nation-building discursive practices. I will be asking the following two questions: which line of rhetoric identifies Ilona Zrínyi with the role of the mother of the nation; and what historical, cultural and political context was able to cast her in that role? My arguments are based on works in social history of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the period of 1920-1945.

Two sets of national narratives about Ilona Zrínyi seem to have emerged. In one concept of the nation, the one in which gender is homogenized and totalised by rhetorical strategies, she repeatedly became the symbol of national coherence: the warrior woman, the wife of Ferenc Rákóczi I, the mother of national hero Ferenc Rákóczi II, the loving wife of Imre Thököly, the niece of the famous Hungarian poet and commander Miklós Zrínyi, the daughter of Péter Zrínyi, Ban of Croatia. We can see from this list that she appears as belonging to men, her personality takes up meaning and significance mostly in relation to them. The historian of the period, Ágnes R. Várkonyi, who attempted to understand the role of this historical figure in its cultural and historical context, constructs another narrative about her. In it, Ilona Zrínyi is a modern landowner, the plenipotentiary mistress of the Rákóczi estate, the “lord lieutenant” of the county of Sáros; she makes history during the siege of Munkács<sup>2</sup> but not so much as a revolutionary as an outstanding diplomat and politician.<sup>3</sup> I will investigate how social consciousness has shaped narratives about Ilona Zrínyi’s life, deeds and personality — especially during the interwar period — and attempted to present her according to the dominant images of femininity and women’s social roles. Ilona Zrínyi as a national heroine is a metaphorical figure in national ideology and as such it offers an example to follow. It is also inextricably linked to the image of the “dowager,” which has a particular significance in Hungarian social history.<sup>4</sup>

I will be using the example of Mária Szentmihályi-Szabó’s novel titled *Ilona Zrínyi*<sup>5</sup> in order to demonstrate how to work female national identity as a discursive strategy within a national narrative. For my analysis of the historical context, I will be relying on Jürgen Habermas’s theory of the public sphere.<sup>6</sup> I will argue that the historical figure Ilona Zrínyi was appropriated under the Horthy-era for ideological purposes. It was a contradictory appropriation as her image of the “mother of the nation” was based on both feminine and masculine aspects, but because of her secondary position in relation to her male counterparts, sexual and national identity completely merged in this representation.

### **Gender, sexuality and nation**

There are numerous examples in theories about nationalistic discourse that are related to female identity patterns, roles and figures.<sup>7</sup> I wish to explore some junctions that are pertinent to critical discourse analysis. If we look at nationalist discourse in relation to female identities, we will be able to

understand, on the one hand, the social and cognitive processes that allowed one social group privileged access to and control over other groups and, on the other, the relationship between nationalism and gender, particularly in the historical periods under scrutiny.

Recently, feminist scholars have drawn attention to the fact that “all nations depend on powerful constructions of gender.”<sup>8</sup> Masculine and feminine roles in nation-building have been subject to both historical and rhetorical analysis. Historically, the concept of the nation has been tied to the construction of gender identities.<sup>9</sup> The nation as an “imagined community”<sup>10</sup> not only constructs identities but also defines gender roles designated for its citizens. Femininity and masculinity and the construction of normative sexuality have evolved in various forms of nationalism; in turn, the nation is linked to gender by these very same discursive practices. Nationalism and gender as linked to hierarchical relations run through all systems of cultural representation. In the constitution and control of national cultural representation leadership is a privilege of men. Men and women do not share the same right of access to national resources since the preferred gender identity in relation to the nation is masculine.<sup>11</sup> In this discourse women are ascribed a symbolic and metaphorical role. The role of women and the family is, first and foremost, tied to national symbols. Women’s role in nationalist discourse can be considered as one of submission because, as symbolic carriers of the nation, they represent a metaphorical liminality without being given any space as agents of the nation in the public sphere. That is to say, the national discourse offers a mute position for women; women cannot have their own identity since they have no national identity (“the nation remains the property of men”). Thus women’s identity lacks both a collective and a subjective dimension.<sup>12</sup> According to Nira Yuval Davis and Floya Anthias, the participation of women in the national project does not seem to be a passive one because their symbolic status is connected to their reproductive role: in the nationalist rhetoric they can produce the “pure” nation which is both a biological and an ideological reproduction (culturally and symbolically defending the borders of the nation, therefore the nation is reproduced through their role as a symbolic border guard).<sup>13</sup>

Women’s participation in nation-building and the development of the modern bourgeois public sphere reveals complicated intersections and crossings between the private and the public spheres. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, social and economical changes in Hungary had shifted the structure of both the private sphere and that of the traditional family. Women’s access to higher education and their increased professional and

employment opportunities along with their organizing in various associations encouraged women to take on a more public role. After 1919, pre-World War I feminism that had dared to openly challenge patriarchy encountered a conservative and right-wing discourse within the women's movement itself, along with an anti-feminist backlash in the public arena. Christian political (including women's) organisations with a conservative agenda began to negate women's emancipation using essentialist arguments.

During the interwar period, the horizontal private-public polarization was masked by nationalist strategies attempting to demonstrate that women were equal subjects in the public sphere. Both women and men had been given the right to vote, but behind this apparent equality, women continued to be controlled both in the public and the private spheres. National consciousness (as dictated by the conservative Horthy-regime) with regard to political reform — along with a Christian nationalist ideology — tried to preserve traditional female roles and family models. This was supported by the existing social systems (educational, political, legal, family, media, cultural, etc). However, parallel to attempts to revert to a conservative family model and gender roles, the fact that the modern way of life gradually gained more and more ground (through the media and improved educational opportunities) could neither be halted nor ignored.<sup>14</sup>

Political and regional revisionism — the period's dominant agenda, aiming to restore the "historical," pre-war territories taken away from Hungary in the Trianon Treaty — offered women a symbolic place in the program of nation-building through the rhetoric of cultural nationalism.<sup>15</sup> Women's traditional roles in the family were expanded into the role of the mother of the nation. The trope for the family as nation and for the nation as family works in a discursive way in the stabilization of the nation state.<sup>16</sup> The agenda of political revision of Hungary's borders had tied women to the frame of motherhood and the frame of nationhood. Thus it is understandable why feminism was a thorn in the eye of nationalist rhetoric. Feminism was often — wrongly — perceived as an attack on motherhood and — rightly — as challenging traditional gender values; therefore, because of the metaphorical identification of the nation with motherhood, women's emancipation was seen as dangerous for the nation. Thus liberal feminism, along with all other activism or organization not in agreement with the national framework, had to be stifled.



**“What can Ilona Zrínyi teach us today?”<sup>17</sup>**

Nationalism has to operate political myths such as the “invention of tradition” in order to sustain the idea of the powerful, substantial nation.<sup>18</sup> The invented traditions are based on either symbolic or ritualistic rules, revising certain behaviour patterns and stressing the continuity of the past so as to maintain the constructed coherence of the nation. Invented traditions have significant social and political functions and none of these traditions would come into existence nor establish themselves if they were not able to acquire these functions.<sup>19</sup> Many woman writers from the interwar period, among them Mária Szentmihályi-Szabó, took on important roles in this process through their historical and biographical novels. Significant historical events and heroines or transformed orders of historical events and turning points are at the centre of these narratives. These texts also work in the collective memory by producing continuity between the past and the present; that way collective cohesion, an “us”-consciousness is reinforced and the process of exclusion established. Szentmihályi-Szabó’s novel about Ilona Zrínyi not only portrays a female historical figure’s life but it also serves as a good example of collective identity formation and of how collective memory operates.

Other, male authors, such as Sándor Takáts in his study *Régi magyar nagyasszonyok* (Hungarian dowagers of the past) attempted to reinvent the role of the dowager as a socially constructed concept.<sup>20</sup> Takáts only depicts Kata Zrínyi and Dorica Zrínyi while Ilona Zrínyi is left out both in this book and a later one, *Magyar nagyasszonyok* (Hungarian dowagers) published in 1926. Although he does include Ilona Zrínyi in some other texts, she is represented as a woman whose political judgment becomes emphasized once she is forced into the role of the dowager. Takáts emphasizes her “masculine spirit” with a didactical message, but her representation (or rather lack of it) is produced through her political relation with the Habsburgs (and/or with the Germans).<sup>21</sup> Takáts’s texts extol women’s symbolic role as guardians of the nation. Thus in *Magyar nagyasszonyok* women can surpass men by selflessly living for the nation and by being capable of dying for their ideals. In the author’s words, women “are the most faithful guardians of national traditions, customs and of the national language;” “they are the biggest enemies of foreign fashion and morals,” and they learned what it means “to blaze for national glory, to yearn for national goals; “they cannot be persuaded to leave their homeland” and they lure their husbands back home from Vienna when

“the Viennese wind blows the memory of their Hungarian homes out of their [the husbands’] heads.”<sup>22</sup>

The anti-Habsburg resistance is a constitutive element in the construction of Ilona Zrínyi’s role as a dowager in the works of Miklós Asztalos and József Vértés. They emphasize her marriage to Rákóczi and her role as a mother while Thököly, her second husband, is marginalised. In these representations, Ilona’s marriage to Rákóczi gains significance not for its romantic dimension but for its decisive impact on the national cause. What matters is the strategic element contained in the maintenance of property, the building of family connections, and the Wesselényi conspiracy: “glory was waving at Rákóczi and the road to St. Steven’s crown was free.”<sup>23</sup> These are just some examples of the numerous Ilona Zrínyi representations in the first half of the 20th century. Her 1906 reburial — along with Thököly and Rákóczi — provoked a renewed literary interest in her figure. Regarding her cult, 1943 became a really important year as this was the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her birth. During this period, it was particularly important to reinvent historical personalities and events and to celebrate them as a vital part of collective memory.

It is highly significant that Ilona Zrínyi appears as the central figure in Ágnes R. Várkonyi’s recent research.<sup>24</sup> Here Ilona Zrínyi has become recontextualized and revalued as she is interpreted as a sovereign personality, a politician and diplomat without the attributes of the dowager. In Várkonyi’s interpretation, Zrínyi’s marriage to Rákóczi made her the richest woman in Hungary. Widowed at thirty-three, she had the decision-making power of an autonomous leader. Thanks to her outstanding diplomatic skills, she negotiated that her son (Ferenc Rákóczi II) not be put under the guardianship of Emperor Leopold. She became the lord lieutenant of Sáros county and managed her domains. She supported her people, listened to their complaints and helped them regardless of their religious affiliation. Her subject status, her autonomy and decision-making power cannot, however, solely be regarded as a Zrínyi inheritance. On the one hand, in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Hungary, women were more equal to men than they were 100 years later; on the other hand, Ilona Zrínyi was probably also driven by the pressure of circumstances. Várkonyi emphasizes that she did not have many relatives and that she led a very secluded life.

According to Várkonyi, Munkács became the centre of the modern estates Ilona Zrínyi headed. In Munkács, she introduced trading activities and established diplomatic relations. She corresponded with Poland and Transylvania and kept the international political publics informed as much as she kept herself informed. Várkonyi calls her a “diplomatic bridgehead”

with the main function to manage foreign politics and to keep Europe's interest in Hungarian matters alive in times of the Ottoman invasion so as to ensure the country's political self-determination, religious freedom and economic growth.<sup>25</sup> According to historical research and in reference to Habermas's theory, the public sphere began to form as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century through the expression of a public opinion on foreign and domestic policy.<sup>26</sup> Information in newsletters, leaflets and weeklies reached the public pointing to the existence of an information network. The Ottoman invasion was followed with great interest all over Western Europe. In this respect, Munkács was a strategic centre. Ilona Zrínyi was featured in "headlines" in Italian, German, English, French, and Dutch newspapers and leaflets. People worried about her, admired her, protested on her behalf and she was considered the most courageous woman in Europe. One French magazine depicted her covered in armour from head to toe in front of burning bastions. In a Spanish drama, she was featured in the collapsing great hall of her castle surrounded by clouds of gunpowder smoke.<sup>27</sup> It was unprecedented in 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe "that a woman would be compared to the ruler of the Habsburg Empire, Leopold I., King of Germany and Hungary and Roman Emperor."<sup>28</sup>

As Várkonyi has pointed out, for centuries the evaluation of Ilona Zrínyi's historical figure was constructed through a romantic-national ideology. Her character had been endowed with stereotypes that fit the ideology of a given period. In the interwar period, Ilona Zrínyi became a nationalist symbol through the role of the dowager constructed by nationalist ideology. The figures of the representative public sphere (not interpreted by history) are able to lend themselves to national symbolization because they do not resist the work of symbols; they embody the possibility of identification and identity as in the representative public sphere the lord, the crown coincides with the total state (nation). Aspects of gender have to be taken into consideration as well since female figures from the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries appeared as agents in certain historical situations: they participated actively in political life and thus shaped historical events. Nationalist ideology from the romantic to the interwar periods exploited these illusory identities centred in the representative public sphere where its gender aspects transgressed the binary opposition of hierarchic feudalism.

In the interwar years, with a weakening of patriarchy's privileged positions discussed above, the structures of power and submission were yet again reinforced. The hierarchy had to be strengthened and masculinity and femininity redefined according to their traditional attributes.

Ilona Zrínyi thus becomes the defender of national culture, a mythical figure. She is passive, subverted (too feminine) because she is a supporting actor to her son, her father, her uncle and her two husbands. Thus her heterosexual female identity becomes constructed by and through men. The national–gender–sexual identity becomes linked to the role of the dowager and socially accepted as a representation that reflects the values and interests of the community and contributes to the constitution of social consciousness.

### **The genre of Mária Szentmihályi-Szabó's novel**

This novel fits into the Hungarian historical and biographical narratives of the 1920s and 1930s. We could define it with the term “historical-biographical novel”<sup>29</sup> because of its focus on biographical events and the private life of the main protagonist. This “historical-biographical novel” based on a historical narrative around a female protagonist adds a gender aspect to the national discourse. A national allegory operates with a totalizing homogenisation in the surface structure by concealing the discontinuities in the text.<sup>30</sup> However, the splits and fractures are fixed in the unconscious of the text. Thus the figure of Ilona Zrínyi becomes transformed into a national symbol, but the ambivalence of the signification system as symbolism and the operation of the ideological discourse are revealed by her very representations as a national symbol.

In the 1930s Hungarian literature tended to search for topics in the past that could serve as an analogy for the present while also projecting the future. A representation of the historically authentic — the factual — was therefore given preference. The actual series of events were written as a pattern using a romantic template to make it look like an illusion of reality. The narrative of the “imagined community,” however, cannot conceal the tension that arises from the instability of the pursuit of an idealised uniformity. The presence of arbitrary symbols is used to create the narrative of the nation; in other words, the narrative is a cultural construct attempting to set up meanings regarding the origins of the nation. The nation appears as the signified in this allegory, but the process of representation produces a slippage and repetition of the metonymic signification.<sup>31</sup> The homogeneous time of national stability prefers to be presented as simultaneity by abolishing diversity so that the temporal shift in historical time can be manifested. The metonymic slippage happens through the gender aspects of discursive practices. In Szentmihályi-Szabó's novel, wo-

men's subjectivity is part of a national narrative, built on the pattern of an assumed past and the construction of a 17<sup>th</sup>-century gender role that, is, again, considered socially acceptable in the public mind of the 1920s and 1930s.

This constructed role must be read as the product of a retrograde history that dominates the thought of the official national discourse under the Horthy-era with its claim of a linear historical narrative and a fixed horizontal nation-space. Inasmuch as the past was regarded as meaningful for the present, the selection of a past relevant to the construction of the present became limited, including alternative roles for women; thus the story of Ilona Zrínyi's life did not allow the casting of a different kind of female figure. Such reading of the past and of accepted roles for women were deeply entrenched in the collective memory of Szentmihályiné's times and its institutional norms and practices. Although a patriarchal construct, the "dowager" gender construction became transmitted by both male and female writers to female readers through such historical-biographical narratives.

In this respect, it is important to consider the process of this novel's reception and its use of genre. On the one hand, the novel demonstrates the process of constructing the nation as an eternal albeit imaginary form. On the other hand, the historical novel was a popular genre and thus shaped readers' attitudes by catering to large audiences and simultaneously exerting an integrative function; the readers could understand themselves as members of one nation rather than isolated individuals. National-historical narratives thus contributed in an important way to the construction of a national identity in the 1930s. According to historians, ethnicity did not actually play an integral part in the construction of collective identity in feudal societies. Regional aspects, religious and possibly professional status could be constitutive in the construction of collective identities.<sup>32</sup> The official view of history in the 1930s, which is represented in the novel, however, held the common language and common origin to be the main forces of cohesion. The novel is built on such "fictional ethnicity" as it emphasizes national identity in Ilona Zrínyi's self-definition. Every feature of her character is submitted to national principles; thus information about her Croatian background is withheld and so to speak bracketed from the readers. The following quote shows how a common Hungarian origin is created through the use of rhetoric: "The mother, Katalin Frankopan, also came from a family that was proud of its past. Although Croatians in origin, the Frankopans were Hungarian through and through and stood out with their power and prowess as far back as the

reign of the Árpád dynasty.”<sup>33</sup> The protagonist Mózes Gaál knows that he cannot lie about the discrepancy in the family’s background; therefore he recurs to a rhetorical strategy to justify the attachment of Hungarianness to the house of Árpád.

If we regard this novel through the lens of a *Bildungsroman*, we can examine how a national narrative about a woman can establish the heroine’s subject position. Such a narrative illustrates how the ideology of male domination operates: the subordinates are influenced into accepting their subordination without questioning it and they themselves create a female representation based on homogenizing essentialism. The biographical genre is interesting for the ways in which this particular novel embeds a woman’s life story in a traditionally patriarchal narrative genre as a narrative of development (*Bildungsroman*). The heroine is void of contradictions; her character and habits do not change. Instead of a self-reflecting subjectivity accompanying a fragmented career path — which would have been allowed in the historical context — her identity, from the first moment on, seems to be coherent and embedded in a pre-narrative frame. The plot of the narrative follows a pre-modern literary pattern as it is motivated by predestination. The destiny of the female protagonist is indicated from the beginning of her life story and the relationships between the protagonists can be regarded as framed by a predetermined national destiny. Being a subject of history as a female *Bildungsroman* protagonist is interesting given that traditionally this genre was reserved for the subject development of a male protagonist. The main ambivalence of the narrative form in this case lies in the fact that the heroine does not need to enter the social sphere because she is already placed there from birth, but she does have to take on an identity only accessible to men in patriarchal discourse. For the narrative the identity of the heroine is accounted for as given and coherent, her subject position in the socio-symbolic order is identified with a position of power. In this sense the conventional linear narrative form frames the metaphorical identification of the family story (the woman’s life story) and the national (pre-modern) history: Ilona Zrínyi’s life story and identity become the (hi)story of the nation’s own identity. The heroine acquires a subject position through the pre-given metaphor of the mother of the nation.

She does not only identify with a position offered by the nation, but her sexual identity is also determined by the national principle. The designated role of women in the family, motherhood as the sole female function and value is elaborated along with the ideology of the biological function and nature. When the family becomes the trope of the nation, the

analogy of the story of the family and the history of the country (the nation) appear in the narratives. Besides the designated women's stories and the marriages in favour of the stabilization of the nation, the interlocked feminine and masculine roles come to light, but instead of the possibility of self-representation for men, Ilona does not become the subject of her own story because that was possible for men only.

### **Properties of the text**

What specific devices does this narrative use in order to construct and interchange causal relationships in a manipulative way? As outlined above, Zrínyi Ilona has to take a fixed position regarding her gender roles, her sexual identity is swallowed up by the nation, and every aspect of her identity (ethnic, class, gender) becomes dissolved in the national identity. The national ideology extends itself into the subject's body. How does Ilona Zrínyi become a national symbol, how does a national ideology monopolize the body of the female subject?

Controlling sexuality and reproduction is important to nation-building and to maintaining national identity. The expression of sexual desire and practice is also defined by the development of coherent gender norms in the regulatory practices of power. The fictional Ilona Zrínyi becomes controlled by power in that her sexual desire is determined by the active or passive roles men play in nation-building. The narrative about her private life becomes intertwined with the public sphere of the nation, the public takes over the private. The woman's social and sexual identity is subordinated to the national identity. Her desire grows with her readiness to be of service to her homeland. Ferenc Rákóczi II is represented as subordinate to his mother and as unable to separate from her, thus she is represented only in her role as mother, nurse, and shelter. She can desire Thököly only because he positions himself as a leader, his life being determined by his fight against the Emperor and for his country. Ilona Zrínyi is aware of why she needs him: their encounter is defined by a sense of belonging and the physical experience of love. Thököly, the leader, smites the armies of the Emperor and recaptures castles; he thus perfectly embodies the man she needs, he almost acts out her intentions. However, her desire makes her the servant of the man (the nation): she follows and serves him by wanting nothing else. The discursive practice puts the biological sex in the service of a national gender construction and does not allow the woman to be the subject of a different desire. At this

point the desires are not only oriented by the patriarchal discourse, but the structure of institutionalization extends to a combination of national tenets and sexual desires. When the anti-Turkish Zrínyis' daughter becomes aware of Thököly's pro-Turkish feelings, her desire for him abates.<sup>34</sup> This rhetorical practice is by no means limited to Szentmihályi-Szabó's novel; we can also find it in Vértes's representation of Ilona Zrínyi: "Amidst love's pleasures, in passionate embraces, during sweet, intoxicating teasing, Ilona never failed to mention the great idea of Hungarian freedom."<sup>35</sup>

The body becomes monopolized by the national ideal in that a causal relation is established between sexual identity and national identity: the carrier of sexual desire becomes nationalized. In the interchange of cause and effect sexual desire is subordinated not only to the masculine but both become engulfed by the national and thus made normative.<sup>36</sup> The identification of sexual identity with national ideology is a performative act: both femininity and masculinity are tied to the biological sex. The metaphorical protection of national borders is imposed upon the body; thus the control of the personal physical aspect also becomes essential to national security. Guarding the borders becomes synonymous with keeping to acceptable sexual boundaries, and through this "border guarding" the techniques of power can reinforce and homogenize the national community.

Such examples might seem to point to the national appropriation of sex, but what is of equal interest is the historical construction created by discursive practice. Here we might recall, as per Habermas's account that the public and the private are not separated in the representative public sphere, that the reigning prince/princess represents his/her status and also him-/herself. To choose Ilona Zrínyi as a reigning princess (*fejedelem-asszony*) within the feudal representative public sphere is problematic and also provocative because already as a historical figure she resists this cliché. In Várkonyi's portrait, on the other hand — which could offer an alternative representation as a basis for a different kind of collective memory — she is a politician who actively shapes her own image, a subject who resists the roles imposed upon her and challenges the meanings of the prescribed national narrative. It is obvious, though, how in the Hungarian context of the Horthy-era the national public and private spheres become interlocked: the reproductive practices of sexual desires come under state control and they wrap around the given figure (here Ilona Zrínyi) the construct of a public representation that the power structures can identify with.



**National framework — maternal framework**

Given that Ilona Zrínyi resists the strategies of patriarchal power, she becomes an ambivalent patriarchal symbol at the intersection of mirroring representations and of a historical narrative. The realization of national totality through language can be caught in the arbitrarily created symbol of maternity. As seen above, social separation of gender roles is important within nationalist ideology. Through national discourse, biological and gender roles overlap with metaphorical identification. The protection of national territory becomes gendered: the military has masculine connotations — courage, force, heroism — whereas the feminine equals weakness and submission. As such it is linked to peace and must be protected.

In order to consider the protection of the nation (of women) as men's undertaking, at the level of discourse, weakness must be demonstrated as a biological given. If borders were to be violated, it would immediately have to be proclaimed as an anomaly. Therefore the heroines represented as national and patriarchal symbols must be dethroned and domesticated. Motherhood as an institutional practice falls into the hands of the power of the state. Maternal characteristics of femininity have to be emphasized and subordinated to the service of the nation. Ilona Zrínyi hardly fits the ideal of a conservative man — the pure, virtuous, passive woman — as, being an active politician and decision-maker, she does not need his protection. In order to maintain the feminine ideal, the national pantheon had to prove that she defended the nation through her maternal abilities — otherwise she would become a threat to the symbol of the nation. The patriarchal and national representations of motherhood turn her into a mythical ideal of maternity and the apparent contradictions are resolved through her subordination. Her place is fixed in traditional roles, she becomes a guardian of tradition who already as a young woman demonstrates maternal feelings toward her younger sister.<sup>37</sup> She is constructed as a mother that her son will be able to identify with. In Munkács, she only protects the rights of her children; rather than being “a swaggering woman who dresses in an armour and puts herself on display, she was a princely-proud woman, a heroine through her maternal love and spousal fidelity.”<sup>38</sup> In her young son Ferenc Rákóczi, she reinforces the value of fighting for and belonging to the nation through imaginary mediation by singing him songs and telling him fables about valiant heroes who fight the Turkish invader. Despite her ambiguities, her only merit to Hungarians becomes having given birth to and nurtured Ferenc Rákóczi II.

**The level of specificity and the degree of completeness: an ideological point of view**

Like Szentmihályi-Szabó's biographical novel, other national narratives about women were also written for a wide though predominantly female audience. We can track the propaganda, the intention to influence public opinion through various narrative devices such as in what kind of logical order the events appear, what parts of the events are withheld, what kind of "facts" are overemphasized, and how the ideological viewpoint and the characters' use of language are activated. The hidden discursive processes not only convey to the readers group values and norms but they also inform about the creation of social consciousness and public opinion so that the reader makes his/her own conclusions as per the implied power interest.

Szentmihályi-Szabó's novel about Ilona Zrínyi is a rhetorical construct that puts into representational practice women's fixation within the space and homogenous time of the nation thus legitimizing it. We have seen that this narrative constitutes Ilona Zrínyi as a national symbol, her figure is identified with the nation both at the synecdochical and metaphorical levels. The synecdoche stands for the part of the whole, while this part also becomes identical with the whole as in a metaphor: the private and public, the family and the nation all merge into one. The nation monopolizes the female subject through its biological and sexual identity, it directs her desires so as to submit it to the idea of the national community. How does the ideology expressed in the narrative viewpoint serve this discursive practice?

The narrator's speech from a privileged, omniscient position does not only describe the characters' inner lives. The thoughts, emotions and memories of the protagonist are told through narrative descriptions, but it is worth examining the ideological position of the narration and how the represented world is ideologically mediated. Although the novel is first and foremost written according to the principles of realism, the relationship between the story and the narration is characterized by multiple perspectives and a frequent shift in points of view. True, the narrator relates the events in close succession, but the division of the narrative is not achieved by breaking it up into chapters but rather through a change in space, time and point of view. However, despite this multiplicity in perspectives, there are no different worldviews; instead, one dominant ideological point of view transpires and the events and characters are evaluated according to a

single value system. The other points of view are subordinate to the dominant point of view and the characters are also subjected to this ideological viewpoint.

There is an emphasis in the narrative on everybody presenting themselves, and this self-presentation usually goes against how others view them. The character of Ferenc I Rákóczi, for example, is represented from Ilona Zrínyi's perspective and value system. Ferenc is thus seen as weak and unprotected, as someone who needs protection. He has only a few chances to speak, but the psycho-narrative insertion makes it obvious that he is aware of Ilona's desire not being directed at him. In the following course of the narration, the multiple perspectives become subordinated to the national ideological point of view: the national identity gobbles up every other identity of the subject. When young Ilona feels that Rákóczi is able to reconcile the Protestants and to wield power, she looks at him "with the gentle bashfulness of nascent love" and sees him as "superior to others". Ferenc's reaction is conveyed through an internal narrative perspective: "As if his woman's desire called out for him, Ferenc made a move."<sup>39</sup> But when his mother's servant enters, Ilona's desire subsides, and we can see from Ferenc's perspective that he feels he has been caught in a net. He had signed a contract, and if he does not obey, Peter Zrínyi will take Ilona away from him.<sup>40</sup> Ferenc might appear as a national hero from his own perspective, but the interspersed narrative voices and the image transpiring through Ilona Zrínyi's perspective create an image of him as that of a cowardly anti-hero who leaves the battlefield and seeks refuge at his mother's so as to escape execution. When the Wesselényi conspiracy is unveiled, Ilona begins to see Rákóczi's cowardice and his weakness: "conscious of her helplessness, she would have liked to shout out into the world how disappointed she was by all living men! She only ever found strength, endurance, and pride amongst women!"<sup>41</sup> Other elements of this ideological point of view can be found in other terms, phrases, and symbols, which directly belong to the authorial voice. The worldviews of the characters are thus constructed and linked with their discourse.

## **Conclusion**

Representations of Ilona Zrínyi as a symbolic Hungarian border guard are geared toward ideologically maintaining the Hungarian national community in separation from others. The cultural codes of masculinity and

femininity — in customs, religion, literature, art production, language, clothing, behaviour — are inscribed in the operation of a national discourse as a power tenet. The intersectionality of nation–gender–sex within the national sphere evolves as the national discourse and/or the discourses of gender and sexuality are changing in a given society. That is to say that these structures and discourses are in an interdependent relation. These are not fixed categories but rather cultural and historical constructions and competing political and symbolic areas where groups struggle with each other for control over their meanings.<sup>42</sup> When a society's institutional cultural discourses form the surface of a nation's space and time through its symbols' totalizing representations, gender is dichotomized through discourse into social production (male identity) and reproduction (female identity) thus tying masculinity and femininity to biological gender roles.

We cannot understand the concept of nation and nationalism without analyzing the integration of gender and sexuality in the concept of nation. The analysis of the discursive practices of power, control and hegemony in the representations of Ilona Zrínyi can be understood if we examine the relationship between gender, sexuality and nation. Her historical figure became easily appropriated by a representational practice rooted in a romantic historiographic tradition, which incorporated a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century national model of femininity into its own image without any reflection and through the exclusion of a critical historical consciousness, and made it into its national symbol based on the idea of sameness. Such 1920s' and 1903s' representations of the 17<sup>th</sup> century not only meant a strengthening of patriarchal roles, but they also attached fixed gender identities to a homogenizing and totalizing nation-construct and thus reinforced governing power structures.

Meanwhile, another narrative about Ilona Zrínyi could also be told. Its heterogeneities would disturb the homogenizing processes and its third space would deconstruct the essentialism of the imagined community.<sup>43</sup> Its subject would resist the nationalist calling and it would evoke the trope of an alternative national allegory. But such a narrative would create a very different past and also a very different present.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Countess Ilona Zrínyi (Jelena Zrinska), 1643-1703, was born in the famous Croatian Zrinski family in Osalj, Croatia. Her mother was Katarina Frankopan. Her father, Petar Zrinski (Peter Zrínyi), Ban of Croatia was executed

by the Habsburgs for high treason. Her first husband was Ferenc (Francis) Rákóczi I, the elector prince of Transylvania whom she married in 1666. Their son was Ferenc Rákóczi II, the leader of the Hungarian uprising against the Habsburgs. As a widow, she inherited and controlled the vast Rákóczi estates and married Imre Thököly, the leader of the so-called Kuruc rebellion against the Habsburgs in the 1680s. Ilona defended the family castle in Munkács, Ruthenia - Mukachevo in present-day Ukraine — against the Habsburgs for 3 years. Finally overpowered, she was taken to Vienna. Her children were taken from her and educated under the auspices of Leopold I. Eventually Ilona Zrínyi and Thököly went into exile in the Ottoman Empire and later died in Nikomedia (Izmit).

<sup>2</sup> Today Mukachevo in Ukraine.

<sup>3</sup> Ágnes R. Várkonyi's historical research serves as inspiration for my interpretation based on critical discourse analysis. Ágnes R. Várkonyi, *Zrínyi Ilona, „Európa legbátrabb asszonya”* [Ilona Zrínyi, Europe's most courageous woman] (Budapest: Magyar-Török Baráti Társaság, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> On the “dowager role” see more in László Kürti's article in Hungarian „A nemek képei” [Images of gender], in Andrea Pető, ed. *Társadalmi nemek képe és emlékezete Magyarországon a 19-20. században*. [Image and memory of gender in 19-20th-century Hungary] (Budapest: Nők a Valódi Esélyegyenlőségért Alapítvány, 2004), 113-131. In English see László Kürti, “Eroticism, Sexuality and Gender Reversal in Hungarian Culture,” in Sabrina Petra Ramet, ed., *Gender Reversals and Gender Cultures: Antropological and Historical Perspectives* (Routledge, London, New York, 1996), 148-163.

<sup>5</sup> The first edition of the novel was published in 1939. I will be quoting from the following edition: Szentmihályiné-Szabó Mária, *Zrínyi Ilona*. (Bukarest: Kriterion, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Boston: MIT Press, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> See George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage, 1997); Sidonie Smith and Gisela Brinker-Gabler, *Writing New Identities. Gender, Nation and Immigration in Contemporary Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Tamar Mayer, “Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Setting the Stage” in *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 1-24.

<sup>8</sup> Anne McClintock, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family,” in *Feminist Review* 44 (Summer 1993): 61.

<sup>9</sup> Rada Ivekovic and Julie Mostov, “Introduction,” in *From Gender to Nation* (Ravenna: Longo, 2002), 9-27.

<sup>10</sup> A term coined by Benedict Anderson.

<sup>11</sup> McClintock, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family,” 61.

<sup>12</sup> Ivekovic and Mostov: “For women cannot claim identity with(in) the nation, or when they do so, they risk disloyalty to the higher gender/national principle which proscribes roles and hierarchies.” *From Gender to Nation*, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, 60-61.

<sup>14</sup> At this time woman’s sexuality had already been thematized in literature. Renée Erdős’s poems and narratives were significant in this respect. On Erdős, see 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, 2008), 173-182.

<sup>15</sup> Andrea Pető, *Napasszonyok és holdkisasszonyok : a mai magyar konzervatív női politizálás alakitana* [Women of Sun and girls of Moon: A morphology of contemporary conservative Hungarian women doing politics] (Budapest: Balassi, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann and Catherine Hall, eds., *Gendered Nations. Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> Szentmihályi-Szabó wrote an essay entitled “Mire tanít ma bennünket Zrínyi Ilona?” [What can Ilona Zrínyi teach us today?] (Budapest, Athenaeum, 1943), in order to illustrate and comment on her novel. Here and further, translations from the Hungarian original are by the author.

<sup>18</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, “Mass-production Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914,” in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 263-307.

<sup>19</sup> Hobsbawm, “Introduction,” in Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1-14.

<sup>20</sup> Sándor Takáts, *Régi magyar nagyasszonyok* [Hungarian dowagers of the past] (Budapest: Élet, 1914).

<sup>21</sup> Gyula Szekfű’s *Száműzött Rákóczi* [The exiled Rákóczi] (Budapest, 1913) provoked a substantial debate. Takáts wanted to be loyal to Szekfű. However, Takáts ignored Ilona Zrínyi in his later significant book about the Hungarian dowagers, *Magyar Nagyasszonyok I* [Hungarian dowagers I] (Budapest, 1926). Narrative images between the two World Wars were largely based on the tenets established by Takáts. Magda Kállay produced a summary of the literary representations of Ilona Zrínyi from Kálmán Thaly to Ferenc Herczeg (*Zrínyi Ilona a magyar szépirodalomban* [Ilona Zrínyi in Hungarian literature], (Budapest: Városi nyomda, 1942), in her introduction heavily relying on Takáts’s work. She stressed that all of Ilona Zrínyi’s acts and thoughts were a manifestation of the specific Hungarian national soul; she seems to have been a patriotic devotee of nationalist politics.

<sup>22</sup> Takáts, “Nagyasszonyainkról,” in *Magyar Nagyasszonyok I*, 10 and 40.

<sup>23</sup> József Vértess, *Zrínyi Ilona ura, I. Rákóczy Ferenc. Történeti regény*. [Ilona Zrínyi’s husband, Ferenc Rákóczi I; A historical novel] (Budapest: Légrády, 1922), 71.

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- <sup>24</sup> Várkonyi,, *Zrínyi Ilona*, 182-184.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Nóra G. Etényi, “A 17. századi közvéleményformálás és propaganda Érsekújvár 1663-as ostromának tükrében, 1663” [Shaping public opinion and propaganda in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in relation to the siege of Érsekújvár in 1663] *Aetas*, 1995/1: 97.
- <sup>27</sup> Várkonyi, *Zrínyi Ilona*, 184.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> This literary terminology was based on the concept of the “French novel” created by Zsigmond Kemény in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. See Zsigmond Kemény, *Élet és irodalom* [Life and literature], ed. Gyula Tóth (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1971).
- <sup>30</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, “DissemiNations: Time, Narrative and Margins of the Modern Nation,” in ed. Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990). 291-322.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., 292-294.
- <sup>32</sup> György Csepeli, „Versenyben az identitásért” [Competing for identity], *Valóság* 1991, no. 12: 18.
- <sup>33</sup> Mózes Gaál, *I. Rákóczy Ferencné, Zrínyi Ilona* (Budapest: Franklin, 1899), 8.
- <sup>34</sup> Szentmihályi-Szabó, *Zrínyi Ilona*, 214.
- <sup>35</sup> Vértes, *Zrínyi Ilona ura*, 69.
- <sup>36</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 25-34.
- <sup>37</sup> Szentmihályi-Szabó, *Zrínyi Ilona*, 6.
- <sup>38</sup> Gaál, *I. Rákóczi Ferencné*, 62.
- <sup>39</sup> Szentmihályi-Szabó, *Zrínyi Ilona*, 94.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.. 95-96.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., 103.
- <sup>42</sup> Tamar Mayer, “Gender Ironies of Nationalism,” 1-2.
- <sup>43</sup> Bhabha, ”DissemiNations”, 305.

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**“The Parting of Ways:” The Shifting  
Relationship between Anna Lesznai and Emma  
Ritoók, and the Restructuring of Hungarian  
Cultural and Political Life in the Early 1920s**

**Fiona Stewart**

**In the early 1920s**, the failure of the bourgeois and communist revolutions of 1918-19, coupled with the traumatic territorial losses imposed by the Trianon peace agreement, left the Hungarian nation reeling and searching for new ideological directions and symbolic definitions. The decimation of the political left by the counter-revolutionary backlash of the new regime under Miklós Horthy<sup>1</sup> gave more clout to conservative parties, among them the Independent Smallholder Party and the Christian National Unity Party,<sup>2</sup> who consolidated their power and influence by appealing to a population desperate to protect the nation from further trauma and loss. Crucially, the disproportionately high representation of Jews amongst the left-leaning, radical intelligentsia, whose willing participation in revolutionary action had (in the eyes of the counter-revolutionaries) steered the nation to the brink of total destruction, instigated the re-definition of the nation along ethno-religious lines and authorized the resurgence of virulent strands of anti-Semitism in the social and political arena. Powerful rhetoric of ‘us’ and ‘them’ shaped public opinion, and laid the groundwork for the dangerous political trajectories that would gain strength throughout subsequent decades.

The anti-Semitic rhetoric that emerged in Hungary in the 1920s was not new, but rather the recapitulation of debates that had gripped the social and political life of the nation for decades, now augmented by grief, blame and fear. Despite the Jewish population’s patriotic assimilation and active participation in national culture and politics throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, anti-Semitic sentiment continued to bubble under the surface, overflowing during times of national crisis.<sup>3</sup> By the 1920s, how-

ever, the liberal spirit that had tempered the debates over the so-called ‘Jewish question’ throughout previous decades had largely been eroded by the turmoil of war and revolution. From their exile, many of the artists and intellectuals, who had been involved in liberal, leftist and radical movements, could no longer exert an influence on Hungarian social, cultural and political life. This gaping void left a conservative, right-wing majority to determine *who* and *what* constituted the Hungarian nation.

The intellectual life of the nation was also forced to adapt to this new social and political climate, stripped of its primary actors. Priorities shifted and new patterns of affiliation and exchange were established, leaving former peers standing on opposite sides of an irreconcilable divide determined by tenuous bloodlines, and perpetuated by popular stereotypes and reactionary politics. Among those whose relationship was irrevocably affected by these shifts were Anna Lesznai<sup>4</sup> and Emma Ritoók, two of the most prominent female participants in Hungarian cultural and intellectual life at that time. This paper will examine the nature of the division between the two women and the extent to which it is indicative of the reactionary patriotism and accompanying anti-Semitic rhetoric restructuring Hungarian cultural and political life in the early 1920s, the repercussions of which are still being felt today.

Both Lesznai and Ritoók were accomplished writers whose work earned the respect of their (mostly male) peers. In 1905, Ritoók’s first novel, *Egyenes úton, egyedül* (On the Straight Path Alone) won the annual literary prize of the conservative literary weekly, *Új idők* (New Times). From 1908 onwards, Lesznai regularly published her poetry in the liberal literary journal, *Nyugat* (West). Lesznai was also active in many other aspects of Hungarian cultural life, designing book covers and exhibiting her embroidery with a prominent group of avant-garde painters, *Nyolcak* (The Eight). Ritoók focused on her intellectual career, writing scholarly articles and translating literature from French and Norwegian. While their academic backgrounds differed dramatically (Lesznai was home-schooled, while Ritoók had earned a doctorate in Hungarian literature), they both gravitated towards the intellectual circle developing around the philosopher György Lukács. Like Lukács, Ritoók studied with the German sociologists Ernst Bloch, Georg Simmel and Max Weber, while Lesznai, too, grappled with their core philosophical concepts throughout her diaries.<sup>5</sup> Alongside Lukács, Béla Balázs, Arnold Hauser, Károly Mannheim and Lajos Fülep, Ritoók and Lesznai became core members of the so-called ‘Sunday Circle’, an informal gathering of intellectuals that began meeting

every Sunday in 1915, in order to discuss the pressing philosophical and political issues of the day.

As prominent female members of a male-dominated intellectual milieu, Ritoók and Lesznai shared many common experiences that should have formed the basis for greater solidarity between the two women. But in the aftermath of the war, Ritoók could no longer overlook Lesznai's Jewish roots and, on those grounds, severed all ties between them. This rejection was not sudden or unexpected. For years, Ritoók had made it clear that her Christian upbringing and conservative political leanings distanced her from the rest of the Sunday Circle.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, with the notable exceptions of Lajos Fülep and Béla Zalai, the core members were largely the offspring of (often wealthy and/or ennobled) liberal, assimilated Jewish parents. Lesznai, herself, came from the prosperous Hatvany family on one side, and the influential Moscovitz family on the other.<sup>7</sup> In a diary entry from 1920, Ritoók acknowledges that Lesznai and her family had indeed made a sincere attempt at assimilation: "Amazingly [Lesznai] was also able to adopt Hungarianness within her spirit; their whole house resembled that of the rich, Magyar gentry... In her verses, she poured Körtvélyes<sup>8</sup> into her rhymes... the love of the earth. Even after her appearance, I still wouldn't have believed her to be Jewish."<sup>9</sup> But for Ritoók, such an attempt at assimilation could only be successful on a superficial level. Under the surface, the plain fact remained. By the end of the war, she had conflated that Jewishness with an inherent radicalism and hostility towards the nation, eliciting a more hard-line, essentialist stance.

The foundations of the conceptual rift between Lesznai and Ritoók can already be seen in 1917 in their individual contributions to a special double issue of the sociological journal *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth Century) that sought to explore the subject of the 'Jewish question' from multiple perspectives. Throughout subsequent years, the questions raised and conclusions drawn in those brief articles are re-articulated in their diaries and personal correspondence, as well as in each of their respective *roman-á clef* — Ritoók's, *A szellem kalandorai* [Spiritual adventurers], 1921 and Lesznai's, *Kezdetben volt a kert* [In the Beginning Was the Garden], 1966 — characterizing the social and political climate of this period. An examination of these writings reveals that Lesznai betrays an ambivalent attitude towards how her identity is shaped by her Jewish roots, combined with a sense of disillusionment over the increasingly powerful social forces defining her as 'other'. Ritoók's initial critique and eventual total rejection on the basis of Lesznai's Jewishness was a painful indicator of the impotence of political idealism in the face of historically rooted and

emotionally fuelled social divisions. Ritoók, on the other hand, sees the ‘rootlessness’ and ‘foreignness’ of her Jewish peers as a danger to the cultural and political life of the nation, as a concrete obstacle to reconciliation and regeneration. Instead, she establishes new personal and professional bonds, consolidating new patterns of affiliation along ethno-religious lines.

While politically, socially and economically the status of Jews in Hungary followed the general historical trajectory of the region,<sup>10</sup> the initial flowering and subsequent transformations of Magyar nationalism had a decisive ideological impact on the ways in which Jewish identities developed throughout the 19th century. The commitment of the ‘first reform generation’<sup>11</sup> to liberal political and economic reform, and the establishment of a modern nation, encouraged the initial move towards Jewish emancipation. Though Jews did not achieve full political rights and equality before the law until the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, Law 29 of the 1840 Diet removed some restrictions on native-born and naturalized Jews. Significantly, they were granted the right to settle in any of the cities in the land (excluding mining towns).<sup>12</sup> While the upper house of the Diet did not grant all of the proposals of the liberal reformers, at the very least this concession represented a symbolic step forward, allowing Jews greater social and economic mobility. As a result, many Jews were drawn into the revolutionary spirit of reform, pledging allegiance to a vision of nationhood in which they could hope to be included and protected. The nation came to be the primary touchstone of identity for emancipated Jews, and their new-found freedom to participate in the building of that nation fuelled a patriotic impulse towards magyarization<sup>13</sup> and assimilation.

Like for many members of her generation, it was extremely difficult for Lesznai to identify with her Jewishness, having been raised in an assimilated Jewish household where the Hungarian nation was the primary source of identification and commitment, yet growing up in an environment that was increasingly hostile towards the participation of Jews in the cultural and political life of that very nation. This tension was a source of anxiety for Lesznai and her peers, eliciting a variety of responses. Lesznai’s situation was further complicated by the fact that as a child she was christened as a Calvinist. The details of this conversion are vague and given very little voice by Lesznai, herself. As Petra Török explains, following a childhood illness, she was christened, but it is not clear whether this was her mother’s decision or at the urging of the local minister.<sup>14</sup> In 1923, Lesznai emphasizes that she is a “converted Calvinist

with no religious affiliation.”<sup>15</sup> Whatever the circumstances, prior to World War I, neither religious identification seems to have had a significant impact on her outlook beyond a theoretical interest in Jewish mysticism occasioned by Lukács. The reality was, however, that in spite of her own ambivalence in respect to her Jewish roots and her early conversion to Christianity, external forces continued to define her as Jewish amidst a growing tide of anti-Semitism.

Where Lesznai remained relatively silent on the subject of this growing tension, her close friend, the writer Béla Balázs, acutely felt the fundamental incompatibility between his fervent Magyar patriotism and his Jewish/German heritage. Like Lesznai’s conversion to Calvinism, his choice of Catholic conversion did little to ensure his inclusion in the national community. Around the same time that Lukács began exploring the philosophical possibilities of Jewish mysticism,<sup>16</sup> Balázs confesses in his diary, “I am Jewish and I can’t find peace within myself, I can’t see my ultimate purpose”.<sup>17</sup> Just over a year later, in 1912, his sense of alienation appears to be even more intense, as he conveys a hostility towards the circumstances of his birth:

But what will become of me? I hate the contemporary Jewish literature more than them, I feel more distanced from it than they do — but neither do I find any community with them. They do not accept me. My name is German, my blood is Jewish and my writings will never reflect the special character of the Magyar race.<sup>18</sup>

In light of this problematic position, Balázs made the choice that he felt might resolve some of these tensions. In 1913, around the time of his marriage to Edit Hajós,<sup>19</sup> Balázs converted to Catholicism and officially changed his name from Herbert Bauer to Béla Balázs. While Balázs hoped that his choice of values would allow him to be fully accepted as *Magyar*, he grossly underestimated the growing resentment against those ‘rootless’ Magyars who attempted to find ‘roots’ in the Magyar nation. It was within this context that Lesznai began to re-assess her relationship to her Jewishness, not as a matter of religious practice or abstract philosophy, but as a matter of identification and affiliation.

In her novel, *Kezdetben volt a kert*, Lesznai reflects the shifting moods and attitudes amongst the Jewish and non-Jewish populations throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The protagonist Lizó’s (Lesznai’s) father is a quintessential representative of the upwardly mobile, assimilating Jews of Lesznai’s parents’ generation. He fervently believes that his identity can become coherent through a total identification with the

nation, effectively negating his 'otherness'. Pledging allegiance to the 'spirit of '48', reciting the poetry of Petőfi, entering into public life, adopting the lifestyle of the Magyar nobility, trusting in the legislative fruits of liberalism, István Berkovics (Geyza Moscovitz) was able to identify himself as Magyar first and foremost. As he emphatically asserts, "István Berkovics is neither Jewish, nor Catholic, but a Magyar gentleman, period."<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, it is Lizó's older brother, János (Iván), who first begins to recognize the tenuousness of this Jewish-Magyar amalgam and the fundamental incompatibility between this patriotic commitment and the persistent ways in which their 'otherness' was continually reinforced by reactionary forces in their homeland. As he expresses, "There is too much of a flagellating duality within me, like this, my unlucky half-Jewish, half-gentry condition. János Berkovics Rozgonyi. I don't trust in this amalgam. My father did, but today it is difficult to do the same, and tomorrow it will be impossible."<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, János was right. Yet, Lizó must come to terms with this reality for herself. There are several points throughout the novel where she is confronted with the fact that she is Jewish, shattering the illusion of her assimilation. Each time, her 'difference' is exposed to her by someone she is close to, highlighting the growing divisions between members of the cultural and intellectual avant-garde over the 'Jewish question'. While, in the real world, such divisions crystallized in the rift between herself and Ritoók, in the novel, this plight is effectively illustrated in a conversation with one of her brother's friends, whom she had assumed to be a peer in both a social and intellectual capacity. In discussing whether or not her brother will be elected to the National Casino<sup>22</sup> like her father before him, the cracks begin to show between their positions. The conversation is worth quoting in its entirety for it outlines the dominant arguments being wielded on both sides:

[Hudák]: "When your grandfather was selected [to the Casino] a liberal current flowed through Hungary, István was still able to follow in its footsteps at that time. Since then, the world has become more conservative. It's understandable too, they have to protect against the emergence of strengthening left-wing factions. And another thing... There is still the fact that even those inclined towards moderate liberal ideas are today leaning in an anti-Semitic direction. And not without good reason..."

Lizó pulled her hand away from Hudák's grasp. She couldn't believe her ears that János's best friend, and her former suitor, was trying to reason that it is the domineering nature of Jewish spirit that meets its 'rightful opposition'.



“The Jews are running everything,” Hudák became more heated in his arguments, “in the banks, in industry, in the press. The large estates, too, are slowly coming into their hands.”

“And in medical science,” broke in Lizó, “but that is so they can help; and in literature and social sciences! Everywhere where they are struggling for regeneration, we are there and taking our places!”

[Hudák]: “Ady and Móricz<sup>23</sup>, your own demi-gods, they aren’t Jewish.”

[Lizó]: “But the Új szó [Nyugat] editors, who paved their road and a bunch of the wonderful writers around them, and their public who buy their journal and their books, those are also Jewish! Don’t you think we are serving the Hungarian nation in this?”

[Hudák]: “I don’t think so, Lizó. Every people wants to draw their own intellectual leaders from their own blood. If they are presented with fanatics, like Ákos Faludi [Jászi], whom you unfortunately greatly esteem and love, who want to ravage the foundations of the old Magyar world, then naturally...”

Lizó interrupted with indignation, “Ákos wants to help the Magyar peasants!”

“Yes, but meanwhile he is bringing the nationalities down on us with his extreme principles. There is no way he could understand our roots.”<sup>24</sup>

Here, Hudák’s main argument is two-fold, revolving around the disproportionate involvement of Jews in the professions and cultural life,<sup>25</sup> and their perceived penchant for radicalism, foreign to the ideals of both the conservative and liberal factions of the Magyar gentry. Hudák’s arguments were by no means exceptional at the time. Ritoók, herself, wields very similar arguments throughout her writings. Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of the ‘Jewish question’ throughout the first two decades of the 20th century was an anxiety over the growing influence of Jews in the professional and cultural life of the nation. This anxiety forced the ‘Jewish question’ into a position of prominence alongside the ‘nationalities question’ as one of the most pressing domestic issues facing the integrity of the nation. But, what exactly was this ‘Jewish question’? Where the ‘nationalities question’ could be centered on linguistic and cultural difference, and enacted through debates over political rights and/or independence, the ‘Jewish question’ was far more vague and complex. The patriotic commitment to the nation by assimilated Jews, and the existence of legislative and legal equality, suggested that there should be no ‘question’ about the status of Jews in Hungary. At the same time, the persistence of anti-Semitism, the emergence of a more prominent non-assimilated

Jewish community<sup>26</sup> and the ‘anti-Magyar’ radicalism of the ‘second reform generation’ suggested that there were pressing questions about the ideological divisions being drawn along religious lines and forcing people into increasingly polarized positions.

In 1917 Oszkár Jászi<sup>27</sup> decided to launch an investigation into the complexity of this ‘question’. He recognized that the intensifying climate of anti-Semitism, compounded by the failure to come to any agreement about the nature and scope of the problem, was destructive and anti-productive, and hindered the establishment of the modern nation. Jászi felt that only through thoughtful debate and discussion could the nation come to any sort of agreement as to what this ‘question’ actually was and generate concrete solutions to this divisive and alienating issue. In order to accomplish this, Jászi sent three questions to a cross-section of professors, writers, politicians, editors, lawyers and other professionals who were invited to add their voice to the debate. He then compiled the responses into a special double issue of *Huszadik Század*. While certainly this ‘cross-section’ was largely restricted to middle-class, urban, male intellectuals and professionals, effectively silencing many of the most virulent strands of anti-Semitism emerging in rural areas and in the women’s movement, Jászi did attempt to survey the political and religious spectrum, “in the hopes that, in inviting opposing opinions, we should be able to reflect the existent, certainly disparate, opinions and moods regarding the issue of Jewishness”<sup>28</sup>.

Of the sixty respondents, only two were women: Anna Lesznai and Emma Ritoók. These responses represent the first real attempt by both women to concisely and comprehensively express their views on the subject. Up until that point, neither woman had stated her position so plainly. For Lesznai, her silence had been partly due to her philosophical outlook that did not allow her to forge an identity based on ‘difference’, and partly due to the fact that, like her father, she believed a patriotic commitment made such questions irrelevant. Ritoók, on the other hand, had genuinely wanted to participate in a community founded on intellectual principles, regardless of religious affiliation. But, when those intellectual principles began diverging from her own in the form of concrete political action, Ritoók was forced to re-evaluate her priorities. In *Huszadik Század*, she struck the first blow, irrevocably cleaving her from her former peers. Interestingly, the two women’s responses bear some similarities in how they seek to approach the subject both from a personal and seemingly ‘objective’ perspective. Both women attempt to identify certain ‘special’ characteristics that position Jews as outsiders within the

Hungarian nation. The big difference is that where Lesznai judges these distinguishing features to be positive attributes capable of contributing to the continual regeneration of the nation, Ritoók concludes that the Jew's 'difference' is fundamentally hostile to the nation.

Each contributor was asked the same three questions:

1. Is there a 'Jewish question' in Hungary, and if so, what do you see to be its essence?
2. What are the causes for the Hungarian 'Jewish question'? Is it symptomatic of Hungarian society; the societal relations, institutions, characteristics, customs of Hungarian Jewish, as well as non-Jewish populations, that play a role in bringing about this question?
3. Wherein lies the solution to the 'Jewish question' in Hungary, and what social or legislative reforms do you feel are necessary?<sup>29</sup>

The sixty responses were then divided into two categories: those who did not think there was a 'Jewish question' and those who thought there was. Notably, many of those included in the first category were assimilated Jews who felt that if the 'question' was about political or legal rights, then the achievements of the 19th century meant that there was no 'question'. If the 'question', however, was about the position of the Jews within the daily life of the nation, then the patriotic commitment of the assimilated Jews also suggested that there was no 'question'. Like Geyza Moscovitz, the belief in the compatibility between their commitment to the nation and their Jewishness essentially negated the 'question'. Through this lens, the 'Jewish question' appeared to be a one-sided question, as expressed by Lajos Szabolcsi, the editor of the journal *Egyenlőség* (Equality).<sup>30</sup> In his response, he argues:

This is only a question for those who cannot resign themselves to the fact that we, Hungarian Jews, believe this land to be our home as much as Hungarians of other faiths. It is only a question for those who believe that our presence, our existence, our merits, our resilience, our progress are not facts, not positives, but domestic unrest and unsettling irresolution, in a word: questions.<sup>31</sup>

Others, however, suggested that the existence of these questions challenged the very basis of their identity and therefore an analysis of the reasons for those questions was necessary, in order to come to any sort of resolution on both a national and personal/psychological level. From this perspective, the professor Bernát Alexander and many of the cultural/

intellectual avant-garde, including Lesznai, believed that there was a 'Jewish question'. While Alexander agreed with Szabolcsi's assessment that a large part of the 'Jewish question' had to do with external judgments beyond the control of the Jewish population, the existence of those who considered it "a very serious problem what they should do with the Jews"<sup>32</sup> added a more complex dimension to the problem. In effect, the questioning of the very basis of assimilation as a valid identity was the source of another deep 'question' for the Jewish-Hungarian population. As Iván Moscovitz acknowledges in *Kezdetben volt a kert*, the emergence of a 'Jewish question' served to erode their feeling of belonging within their home and create an alienating duality within the 'self'. Thus, a big part of this 'Jewish question' was how to negotiate the resultant identity-crisis and discover a productive basis for new identities.

Following Bernát Alexander, Lesznai reinforces the internal dimension of the 'Jewish question'. "The Jewish question does exist," she argues, "even if the Jew is sitting alone in his/her room behind closed doors."<sup>33</sup> With this as her starting point, she attempts to discover how her Jewishness has shaped her identity despite her assimilation. Was there a discernible 'difference' defining her as a Jew? She reflects on the experience of growing up in a noble, Magyar household. Through the privileging of national and class affiliations, Lesznai's father had effectively dissolved any traces of their Jewish heritage. At the same time, she had spent a lot of time with her grandparents in Pest who maintained the religious and cultural practices of their faith. Meanwhile, she was drawn to the sights and sounds of the Catholic rituals of the village peasants, yet she, herself, felt the 'foreignness' of the orthodox Jewish merchants. Pulled between these poles, she began to sense her own 'difference', giving rise to the 'Jewish question' within herself.

For her, this 'difference' was determined by a lack — the lack of a true home and more human community within which she would no longer feel alienated. As she reflects: "Sometimes I joyfully believed 'I am home', when I surrounded myself with those Jews and those Christians with whom I felt a special community according to my memories and my inclinations. But never, in no circle, have I seen that synthesis of remembrance, culture and temperament in which I can fully be immersed."<sup>34</sup> She concludes that it is this feeling of 'homelessness' that is particularly characteristic of the Jew, rooted in the historical experience of ghetto life. Characteristically, however, Lesznai wants to ascertain how this 'lack', this sense of alienation, might be translated into a positive, constructive attribute. She suggests that, "The Jew's feeling of belonging nowhere

gives rise to an impatient, restless desire for belonging somewhere.”<sup>35</sup> It is this characteristic restless impulse that had authorized a variety of divergent responses across time and place. In this way, Lesznai is able to forge crucial ideological links between the patriotic desire of her parents’ generation towards assimilation, the emphasis of the non-assimilated community on the preservation of language and tradition, and the utopian vision of Theodor Herzl’s Zion.

In light of this analysis, the problem of ‘homelessness’ and alienation at the root of the internal ‘Jewish question’ could only be solved through a complete transformation of the social, political, economic and cultural conditions defining that ‘difference’ as ‘otherness’. It was this desire for transformation that inclined Lesznai and her peers towards revolutionary action, despite widespread skepticism over the methodologies and aims of Communism. Yet, in the absence of such transformation, temporary strategies of community-building could help foster understanding. Lesznai proposes more inter-marriage as one possible strategy.<sup>36</sup> This suggestion, however, exposes the flaw in her analysis—her underestimation of the ‘external’ ‘Jewish question’ and the conscious effort by people like Ritoók to determine and maintain the ‘otherness’ of the Jew.

In her response, Ritoók articulates arguments similar to Hudák’s in *Kezdetben volt a kert*, expressing concerns over the prominence of Jews in influential positions. She argues that the resentment towards Jews is ‘justifiable’ because their sudden success in finance and culture meant that young Magyars at the beginning of their careers had to take low-ranking positions with little possibility of upward mobility. More worrying is Ritoók’s evaluation of the ‘culturelessness’ (*kulturátlanság*) of Jews. She argues that, in abandoning their roots and traditions, they had severed their ties to the past. With no responsibility to the past, they had no responsibility for the future and were thus only concerned with the present. This disconnected way of being allowed for the overvaluation of money and financial gain. Additionally, their lack of tradition led them to grasp towards the ‘new’, giving rise to the ‘bastardized’ Magyar language of the urban, assimilated Jew and the ‘unprincipled’ art of the new avant-garde. Ironically, Ritoók’s judgments on modern art, as expressed in her 1916 work *A rút a művészetben* (The Ugly in Art), are very similar to those of Lukács, whose 1910 article *Az utak elváltak* (The Parting of Ways) praises monumentality and Classicism in art.

Thus, Ritoók’s comments in *Huszedik Század* do not necessarily reflect the reality of her adopted intellectual milieu, but rather rest on

common, divisive stereotypes about the ‘nature’ of the Hungarian Jew. As such, they expose the deep ideological divides amongst the avant-garde and the persistent weight of dominant ideologies framing the scope of thought and action. Like Lizó facing Hudák, the Jewish members of the Sunday Circle were deeply pained to hear Ritoók reiterate the growing anti-Semitism of their social and political environment, re-casting their genuine goals of regeneration as the desperate, unprincipled strivings of ‘uncultured’, detached individuals. In the face of this hostility, the theoretical interest in Judaism as a redemptive philosophy (Lukács), or the decisive attempt to erase that ‘difference’ (Balázs), could not counteract the very real anti-Semitism that thrived on ‘difference’ and sought to make that ‘difference’ the basis of a new politics.

By the following year, the conceptual rift that was revealed in *Huszadik Század* culminated in Ritoók’s total rejection of her former peers. Instead, as previously mentioned, she sought out like-minded individuals and forged new alliances. Unlike in the Sunday Circle, where common intellectual and philosophical principles formed the basis of discussion and exchange, in the years following World War I, Ritoók privileged ethno-religious affiliation above else as the basis of new patterns of interaction and solidarity. Active in both literary circles and the right-wing women’s movement, Ritoók fought to re-define the ideological basis and aims of those programs. Primarily, she wanted to distance Hungarian cultural and political life from ‘foreign’ Jewish influence, and was able to cast this as a positive, productive approach serving the best interests of the nation. The new direction of Hungarian culture and political life had to be *Magyar*, and for Ritoók that meant, in no uncertain terms, that it needed to be rid of Jewish participation.

It is a great tragedy that a large proportion of the (for the most part) assimilated Jewish intelligentsia who participated in the production and reception of a new Magyar culture in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also participated in, or at least supported, the revolutions of 1918-19. Thus, following the collapse of the short-lived Communist Republic, the aesthetic and intellectual endeavours of the Hungarian avant-garde came to be seen (albeit mistakenly) as a critical cause for the Trianon peace treaty. The reality of the situation was that no governing body would have been able to alter or reverse the outcome of Trianon, but the knee-jerk reaction was to find a scapegoat on which to pin the losses. And a conservative public could not help but judge the socially and politically active Jewish-Magyar culture as ‘foreign’ (a word that Ritoók repeats often) and hostile to the ‘true’ interests of the Magyar nation. Tragically,

forced into exile by the counter-revolutionary backlash, many of those artists and intellectuals had indeed become ‘foreigners’ in a real, physical sense.

Meanwhile, the consolidation of a reactionary, xenophobic patriotism concretized their positions as ‘outsiders’ in a symbolic sense. The old, reactionary rhetoric touting the dangers of Jewish dominance in the professions and in cultural life regained currency. Ritoók, herself, complains vehemently about the dominance of Jews in cultural and intellectual circles, pointing to the relative success of *Nyugat* and the influence of the Sunday Circle in intellectual and political circles as living proof of the dangers of collaboration and co-operation. As she expresses: “If I were to begin a cultural society with Jews then a year later 90% would be Jewish, just as it was everywhere before the war; suddenly we saw that whatever we started ended up in the hands of Jews, and was turned into something completely different than what we wanted.”<sup>37</sup>

With this in mind, Ritoók looked to build her own cultural/literary society free of Jewish influence. She turned to her friend, the writer Cécile Tormay to establish the conservative *Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége* (MANSz; The National Association of Hungarian Women). Ritoók also contributed to Tormay’s new literary journal, *Napkelet* (Orient).<sup>38</sup> Despite personal issues between the two women,<sup>39</sup> from Tormay’s diaries and other writings it is clear that she and Ritoók shared the same convictions about Hungarian cultural and political life and its aims. Both women naturally supported the introduction of the *numerus clausus* of 1920 that capped the percentage of Jews able to enroll in universities. The widespread support of the *numerus clausus* was a clear sign of the extent to which reactionary and xenophobic ideals of nationalism had triumphed in the public sphere. As Tormay argued: “We demand the enforcing of the *numerus clausus* law not in order to oppress the alien race but in order to promote our own race, because we think it would be insane and suicidal on the part of the nation not to want to recruit its intelligentsia from among its own, native race.”<sup>40</sup>

Needless to say, membership in MANSz was not open to Jewish women. Furthermore, Ritoók and Tormay consciously sought to distance their organization from the pre-World War I feminist movement that had owed much of its success to the work of radical Jewish women.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the emergence of MANSz as an influential force in the women’s movement, as well as in national politics, was indicative of the broader shifts taking place in cultural and political life, as networks of affiliation were re-structured along ethno-religious lines.

In a letter written to her friends Kálmán Rozsnyai and his wife<sup>42</sup> on June 17, 1924, Ritoók outlines the conceptual arguments directing the restructuring of Hungarian cultural life along these lines. The tone and content of the letter reveals a far more frank expression of her anti-Semitism than her response in *Huszadik Század*, perhaps owing both to the personal nature of the letter and the experience of the intervening years that had served to strengthen her convictions. Crucially, Ritoók does not consider her attitude to be anti-Semitic. She attempts to distance herself from anti-Semitic attitudes based on hatred by justifying her stance as being motivated by patriotism, and aimed at the protection and regeneration of the nation. “I want [a new cultural society] to be Magyar,” she states, “Or I won’t do it. Just so there is no misunderstanding: not anti-Semitic, but Magyar.”<sup>43</sup> The fact that Ritoók could even make such a conceptual distinction speaks volumes about the nature of the social and political climate in the early 1920s. The revanchist attitude unleashed by Trianon allowed the public to promote anti-Semitic rhetoric in the guise of patriotism, as something both positive and *necessary* to the survival of the nation. It is on the basis of this kind of protective stance that Ritoók must reject her former peers as those who would endanger the nation with their intellectual and political ambitions.

Re-iterating the sentiments expressed in *Huszadik Század*, she discovers the root of this divide in cultural and psychological, rather than religious, differences. “It is not about the fact that we pray at different churches, but about the fact that our whole spirit and their whole mentality are different.”<sup>44</sup> Emphasizing this difference in ‘mentality’, Ritoók believes that it was the ‘foreignness’ and ‘rootlessness’ of her former friends and colleagues that made it easier for them to choose a revolutionary path that would put the very survival of the nation at risk. As she expresses elsewhere:

Only a degenerate race could search for renewal through destruction. Furthermore, if they want to create anew a world severed from its past, it is not enough to eliminate the last statue, the last book, the last violin, but they would also have to destroy the last person who remembers... At this point we are not talking about philosophy, but about my Hungarianness. And it is this that separates me from them.<sup>45</sup>

Ritoók judges the behaviour of Lesznai and Balázs to be a direct product of their Jewishness and their ultimate lack of commitment to the future of the nation. And it is this perceived betrayal that she cannot forgive.

It is bitterly ironic that the patriotic fervour and deep conviction



with which Ritoók explains the need for new patterns of affiliation and networks of participation mirrors the cries of her Jewish peers decades earlier as they yearned for the development of a *Magyar* culture that could rival the best intellectual and aesthetic products of Europe. As Balázs writes in his diary in 1905:

I was speaking with him [Zoltán Kodály]<sup>46</sup> about my secret, most sacred dreams, which I have never put into words, neither in conversation nor in writing — about a great Hungarian culture, which we need to make, which shall leap into European development, such that we should lead, just as each one of them has led — English, French, German — just as now, the little Norwegian, who before now no one knew anything about, has leapt in — why not the Hungarian?<sup>47</sup>

Given the patriotic commitment of Lesznai, Balázs, Jászi and most of their peers, Ritoók's claims about their 'rootlessness' and flagrant irresponsibility sound hollow. Furthermore, while Lesznai supported the communist revolution in principle, she did not approve of the trajectories taken by the revolution in practice. She was active in the Writer's Directorate, producing and disseminating fairytales to the general population, but she did not follow Lukács blindly into battle. Lesznai was also skeptical of the destructive and authoritarian nature of Béla Kun's administration as a viable path towards the establishment of new social and political structures, and a stronger foundation for democracy.

In the years following the collapse of the revolutionary government and her subsequent flight to Vienna, Lesznai fills pages of her diary reflecting upon the mistakes of the revolution, the ethics of political action and the very possibility of putting the ideal of democracy into practice. She believes that the institutionalization of the revolution ultimately mired it in authoritarian structures of power and control and that stagnation was antithetical to the goals of regeneration through dynamic forms of community and politics. She maintains, however, that despite its practical flaws, the concept of revolution, itself, should not be abandoned. She argues that, "The revolution becomes a crime as it becomes institutionalized, but the revolutionary attitude of the spirit, the destruction of formulae in the interest of the establishment of more dynamic structures must be a constant factor of ethical behaviour."<sup>48</sup>

Given the social and political rhetoric of counter-revolutionaries like Ritoók, Lesznai recognizes the impossibility of establishing a dynamic, inclusive democracy within a context where people yearn for the

certainty of essentialisms. Such a context could only usher in totalitarian forms of government. As she laments:

The weakness of democracy is that it is rational. There are no either-or codes, it is free of superstition and it is dynamic. The spirits of most people, however, do not know faith without superstition. This is why mass democracy is unbelievable and impotent. Most people want a dogmatic and static image of the world. The ever-perfecting god was an esoteric concept, and those who live in that faith are few.<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, Lesznai feels that one cannot abandon the road towards democracy in its ideal form, despite the fact that that road may be impassable under given conditions. Is it then better to sit and wait? Or is it still better to act in hopes of transforming those conditions and clearing the impasse? Can one then judge someone for making the best possible choice from amongst bad choices? Reflecting on these questions, Lesznai suggests:

The ethics of politics is not either-or; everything is a question of degree. The question of right and wrong is also determined by many co-existent layers: the validity, the value of the goal (ideological and material) from the point of view of human progress (towards perfection). This already allows for a great deal of relativity. Furthermore, the level of conviction with which we believe in the goal and its path, and how much we will do in service of it, is entirely subjective. This is the subjective ethical layer, I believe, according to which one can do good even on a bad path.<sup>50</sup>

With these comments, she seems to be assessing her own involvement in the revolution — her own ‘level of conviction’ and ‘service’. Though she did not believe in the outcomes, she continues to grapple with the question of whether the path, itself, was in vain.

Ritoók certainly does not share Lesznai’s acceptance of the fact that, in the absence of ideal forms, sometimes there can be a grey ethical area when it comes to political action. Nor can she view Lesznai’s actions as ‘doing good on a bad path’. Instead, Ritoók wants her former peers to be held accountable for their actions. Her novel *A szellem kalandorai* culminates in a scene that betrays her bitter disappointment in the ideological and political choices made by her peers, and her uncompromising rejection of their Jewishness. At the end of the novel, the male protagonist, Ervin Donáth (thought to be an amalgam of György Lukács and Ernst Bloch),<sup>51</sup> is shot and killed by his childhood friend and long-time devotee,

Gyula Weber. Ervin's friendship with Gyula occasions his first confrontation with the realities of cultural and class difference at a very young age. It is initially on the grounds of the Weber family's relative poverty that Ervin rejects his friend. Later it is Gyula's weakness and subservient nature that Ervin finds distasteful. Throughout the novel, these traits become irrevocably tied to Gyula's Jewishness, creating a fundamental difference between the two men in Ervin's mind—the difference between his spirit and Gyula's mentality. When Ervin discovers that he is, in fact, half-Jewish, the product of an illicit love affair, he must struggle to come to terms with that difference within himself, the reality that somewhere deep within him lay a Gyula Weber. Right before he is shot, Ervin finally expresses his disdain for Gyula, for that part of himself: "I have always hated you," he says to his childhood friend, "Your lack of courage... your lack of talent..."<sup>52</sup> Clearly, as Agatha Schwartz argues, Ervin's rejection of Gyula can be read as a self-rejection.<sup>53</sup> But Gyula's act also raises issues of accountability and responsibility for the nation, and reflects Ritoók's conviction that her Jewish peers had betrayed the nation with their radical action.

Ritoók's portrayal of Ervin's identity crisis reveals an intimate, and often sympathetic, knowledge of the anxiety experienced by many of her former peers as they confronted their Jewishness. Ervin faces a similar 'flagellating duality' as János Berkovics in *Kezdetben volt a kert*, or Béla Balázs in his hatred of contemporary Jewish literature, or Lesznai with her persistent feelings of 'homelessness'. But unlike Lesznai, who sees her Jewishness as the source of special insight and creativity, Ritoók casts Ervin's Jewish half as his weakness and ultimate downfall. Rather than a slave rising up against its master, Gyula's action is symbolic of the 'master's own weakness and selfishness betraying him in the end. Gyula pleads with Ervin that he should return and finish what he started, instead of abandoning those who had followed him into the revolution and leaving the nation in turmoil. Confronted with this choice, Ervin chooses to save himself rather than to fight (albeit hopelessly) for the nation. Ritoók seems to suggest that, in making this choice, he displays the same weakness that he loathes in Gyula. Ultimately, his 'rootlessness' allows him to walk away from the nation in a time of crisis, and for that he pays with his life.

Examining these writings, it becomes clear that Ritoók's complete rejection of Lesznai illustrates the dramatic failure of the 'second reform generation' to consolidate a coherent opposition in the face of deeply ingrained historical divisions. From her exile in Vienna, Lesznai is left to analyze those failures and come to terms with her (now very real) aliena-

tion from her homeland. This alienation is the source of anxiety for her, like many of her peers, as she has to come to terms with the ‘difference’ cleaving her from her former nation, a ‘difference’ that she, herself, had never identified with on any significant level. By 1923 Lesznai presents a dramatically different view of her Jewish identity. Rather than the abstract interest in mysticism as an alternative experiential realm, or an attempt to subsume ‘difference’ to a commitment to nationhood, Lesznai expresses an awareness of how her persistent ‘otherness’ informs and elicits important patterns of identification and affiliation that could not be erased by her conversion. Perhaps, the experience of exile and the complete erosion of assimilation as a viable identity finally led her to identify with her Jewish ‘self’:

Today, Jesus himself would go to the synagogue, not to pray with them, but to be stoned along with them. So I have no right to sit in a Catholic church but should be in the synagogue along with my people. My people, to whose faith, language, traditions, culture — probably even racial stock—I have no binding connections, but who are, nevertheless, I know today, my people, whom I choose above all others (but not against all others).<sup>54</sup>

It is this final statement that most sharply distinguishes Lesznai’s position from Ritoók’s, who chooses her Christian-Magyar peers ‘against all others’. In choosing a community based on ethnic, or one could argue, racial affiliation rather than intellectual/philosophical principles, Ritoók signifies the impossibility of restructuring Hungarian national cultural and political life based on principles of inclusion and broad solidarity. The rejection of her former peers, however, is obviously not without its pain and disappointment. As she expresses:

I have lived amongst only the most intelligent Jews. Sometimes Béla Balázs and Anna Lesznai would put me to shame with their Hungarianness — in their words, and when it came time that they had to make a choice... believe me, with the revolution a whole world fell apart within me when I confronted my horrifying disappointment in these people.<sup>55</sup>

But, she feels that just as they made a deliberate choice, she must also do the same. In doing so, she denies the possibility of broader reconciliation based on gender, class or patriotic commitment. In final analysis, the fact that the relationship between the two women was ultimately destroyed by

the privileging of ethnic affiliation above all other concerns and the return to reactionary, xenophobic ideals of nationhood mirrors one of the greatest tragedies in Hungarian cultural life, the effects of which are still being felt today.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Horthy was an admiral in the imperial navy and was appointed regent on March 1, 1920, serving as head of state until October 1944. Horthy was a prime candidate for the role, enjoying strong support from the military, as well as the great powers, and expressing strong anti-Bolshevik, anti-revolutionary, conservative convictions.

<sup>2</sup> In January 1920, elections were held to fill a 218-member assembly. With the introduction of universal secret ballot, the Smallholders won 91 seats, while the Christian Nationals won 59. The liberals only won 6 seats, while the Social Democrats boycotted the elections. (Tibor Hajdú, Zsuzsa L. Nagy, "Revolution, Counterrevolution, Consolidation," in *A History of Hungary*, ed. Peter F. Sugar et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 312.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the murder of a young girl, Eszter Solymosi, in the small town of Tiszaeszlár in 1882, became a national affair, as 13 Jews were accused of a ritual killing. The accused were brought to trial based on the testimony of unreliable witnesses and unsubstantiated evidence, and were eventually acquitted. Yet, the case provided the opportunity for prominent individuals to fan the flames of growing anti-Semitic sentiments throughout the country. The intensifying climate surrounding the Tiszaeszlár affair gave the politician Győző Istóczy, along with the local governmental representative Géza Ónody, the opportunity to strengthen their anti-Semitic movement. Two years earlier, Istóczy had founded the *Nemzsidók szövetsége* (Alliance of Non-Jews) and had begun the publication of his anti-Semitic pamphlet, *12 Rőpirat* (12 Tracts). While the liberal government of Kálmán Tisza attempted to contain the inflammatory rhetoric of Istóczy and Ónody, the politicians found strong allies in the Catholic Church, and used their power in rural areas to agitate for the repeal of Jewish emancipation. In Hungary, equal citizenship and political rights were granted to Jews in 1867 amidst sweeping liberal reforms and the establishment of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary.

<sup>4</sup> Lesznai was born Amália Moscovitz, and took her pen name from the name of the neighbouring village of Leszna. Though she lived and worked as Anna Lesznai for the majority of her life, she remained "Máli" to her closest friends and family.

<sup>5</sup> *Lesznai Anna, Sorsával tetováltan önmaga: Válogatás Lesznai Anna naplójegyzeteiből* [Tattooed by her own destiny, herself: Selection from Anna

Lesznai's diaries]. ed. Petra Török (Budapest: Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, 2010); *Napló* [Diary] (V.3670/43/1-20), 1912-1945, manuscript, *Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum Kézirattára*.

<sup>6</sup> When she presented the first draft of her roman-à-clef, *A szellem kalandorai* [Spiritual adventurers] to Béla Balázs in 1916, Balázs noted his disappointment over Ritoók's often hostile characterization of their generation, their goals and ideals, and her depiction of the Jew as a "foreign" entity within the nation (Agatha Schwartz, "Emma Ritoók's Novel 'Spiritual Adventurers': A Intellectual Document of the Fin-de-Siècle," *Hungarian Studies* 16/2 (2002): 298-299).

<sup>7</sup> Lesznai's mother, Hermina Deutsch was a member of the powerful Hatvany-Deutsch family, who were leading industrialists in Hungary, working in produce, construction, banking and eventually sugar production, commanding a large share of the Hungarian and Austrian markets throughout the late 19th/early 20th century. Due to their prominent land ownership and commercial enterprise in the Hatvan region, the Deutsch family was ennobled in 1897 with the name Hatvany. On Lesznai's father's side, the Moscovitz family was ennobled in 1867, owing to her grandfather Mór Moscovitz's medical services during the cholera epidemic of 1831 and his services to the influential, aristocratic Andrassy family. Her father, Geyza Moscovitz, practiced law and was one of the few Jews to be elected to the National Casino. Erzsébet Vezér, *Lesznai Anna élete* [Anna Lesznai's life] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1979).

<sup>8</sup> Alsókörtvélyes was a small town in the Zemplén province of North-Eastern Hungary, in present-day Slovakia. Lesznai grew up there on the Moscovitz family's sizeable estate. The garden and surroundings of the estate provided the primary motives running through her aesthetic output.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in, Csilla Markója, "Három kulcsregény és három sorsába zárt 'vasárnapos': Lesznai Anna, Ritoók Emma és Kaffka Margit találkozása a választúton" [Three romans-à-clef and three Sunday-Circle members locked into their destinies] *Enigma* 52 (2007): 90. All translations from Hungarian are my own, unless quoted from an English text.

<sup>10</sup> William O. McCagg, *A History of the Habsburg Jews, 1670-1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

<sup>11</sup> At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup>/beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a group of young intellectuals sought to introduce liberal ideals into Hungarian political life, seeking the radical transformation of the deeply ingrained feudal system that hindered much needed social and economic reforms. Language reform occasioned a renewal of literary and cultural life, while social and political reforms led by Count István Széchenyi established new cultural and educational institutions. The primary actors spearheading the reform movement (Széchenyi, Ferenc Kazinczy, József Eötvös, Lajos Kossuth, Mihály Vörösmarty) became known as the "first reform generation," while the radical reformers of Lesznai's generation became known as the "second reform generation."

<sup>12</sup> George Barany, "The Age of Royal Absolutism, 1790-1848," in *A History of Hungary*, eds. Peter F. Sugar, et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 198.

<sup>13</sup> In an attempt to secure the Hungarian position in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungary's dominant factions promoted the Magyar language and culture, encouraging the assimilation of non-Magyar minorities through the learning of the Magyar language, taking Magyar names, and adopting the values and lifestyle of the Magyar nobility.

<sup>14</sup> Petra Török, "Mindenképpen úgy érzem, ez lenne a fő könyv: Lesznai Anna naplójegyzeteiről" [I feel this is the major book: On Anna Lesznai's diaries] in *Sorsával tetováltan önmaga: Válogatás Lesznai Anna naplójegyzeteiből*, 54.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Mary Gluck, *Georg Lukács and his Generation, 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 71.

<sup>16</sup> In 1911, Lukács first met Martin Buber and was inspired by Buber's interest in the critical significance of Jewish mysticism within the context of Western philosophy. Like Buber, Lukács felt that the tenets of mysticism were capable of counter-acting the rationalism and alienation of modern life.

<sup>17</sup> Béla Balázs, *Napló I* [Diary I], ed. Anna Fábri (Budapest: Magvető, 1982), 483.

<sup>18</sup> Balázs, *Napló I*, 541.

<sup>19</sup> Edit Hajós studied medicine in France and Switzerland, and took part in the Sunday Circle discussions alongside her husband. Török, "Mindenképpen," 507.

<sup>20</sup> Anna Lesznai, *Kezdetben volt a kert I* [In the beginning was the garden I], (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1966), 138.

<sup>21</sup> Lesznai, *Kezdetben volt a kert I*, 355.

<sup>22</sup> The National Casino was founded in 1827 at the urging of Count István Széchenyi, in order to facilitate progress through the exchange of ideas and cultural development amongst the upper classes. Despite its liberal roots, the Casino became a restricted and segregated institution reserved for the Magyar nobility. Geyza Moscovitz, however, was one of its few Jewish members.

<sup>23</sup> Endre Ady and Zsigmond Móricz were prominent writers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The publication of Ady's first book of poetry, *Új versek* [New poems] in 1906 catalyzed a new generation of artists and intellectuals who called for the democratization of Hungarian politics.

<sup>24</sup> Lesznai, *Kezdetben volt a kert II*, 245-6.

<sup>25</sup> In 1910, around 5% of Hungary's population (approximately 1 million) was Jewish, around 75% of whom were assimilated (to be distinguished from those Jews maintaining their religious and cultural practices). At the same time, this small percentage of the population represented 12% of industrialists, 54% of merchants, 43% of employers at credit institutions, 42% of journalists, 45% of lawyers and 49% of doctors (Géza Jeszenszky, "Hungary through World War I

and the End of the Dual Monarchy,” in *A History of Hungary*, ed. Peter F. Sugar, et al., 275).

<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that while still a vast majority, not all Hungarian Jews chose assimilation as a viable option. A significant faction strove to maintain their languages, and religious practices. Beyond the orthodox community the publication of Theodor Herzl’s work, *Der Judenstaat: Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage*, published in Leipzig and Vienna in 1896, gave rise to a relatively small Zionist movement within Hungary.

<sup>27</sup> Jászi founded the Sociological Society in 1901 with Ágost Pulszky, Gyula Pikler, Bódog Somló and Ervin Szabó, among others. He sought to bring the scientific rigour of Herbert Spencer to the intellectual and political life of Hungary. He became the editor of their journal, *Huszadik Század* that served as a crucial forum for the exchange of social and political ideas. Jászi and Lesznai were married from 1913 to 1920, and while their marriage did not last, they maintained a close friendship throughout their lives, both in Vienna and later in the United States.

<sup>28</sup> Oszkár Jászi, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon: A Huszadik Század körkérdése* [The Jewish question in Hungary: The survey of the Twentieth Century], (Budapest: Társadalomtudományi Társaság, 1917), 2.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> *Egyenlőség* was launched in 1882 as a response to the rise of anti-Semitism, and represented the neolog branch of Hungarian Jews.

<sup>31</sup> Lajos Szabolcsi, in *A zsidókérdés*, 30.

<sup>32</sup> Bernát Alexander, in *A zsidókérdés*, 36.

<sup>33</sup> Lesznai, in *A zsidókérdés*, 105.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>36</sup> For which she was criticized by Szabolcsi, Török, “Mindenképpen,” 54.

<sup>37</sup> Emma Ritoók, “‘Nil’-hez 1924. június 17.” *Budapesti Negyed* 8 (1995). Par. 2. *Elektronikus Periodika Adatbázis Archívum* <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00003/00007/ritook.htm>. Accessed March 2012.

<sup>38</sup> Founded in 1923 with Gyula Szekfű and Ákos Pauler.

<sup>39</sup> Csilla, Markója, “Három kulcsregény,” *Enigma* 52 (2007): 67-108.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Mária M. Kovács, “Hungary”, in *Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919-1945*, ed. Kevin Passmore. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 87.

<sup>41</sup> In 1904, the founding of the *Feministák Egyesülete* (Feminist Association) by Rosa Schwimmer and Vilma Glücklich represented a more politically charged, mostly middle-class voice although women of other walks of life, including aristocratic and working-class women, were also among their members.

<sup>42</sup> Kálmán Rózsnai was an actor and journalist. His second wife, Gizella Dapsy, was also a writer.



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<sup>43</sup> Ritoók, “Nil-hez”, par. 2. *Elektronikus Periodika Adatbázis Archívum* <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00003/00007/ritook.htm>. Accessed March 2012.

<sup>44</sup> Ritoók, “Nil-hez”, par. 2. *Elektronikus Periodika Adatbázis Archívum* <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00003/00007/ritook.htm>. Accessed March 2012.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Markója, “Három kulcsregény,” 91.

<sup>46</sup> Zoltán Kodály was a composer and ethnomusicologist. He and Balázs were roommates at university. It is important to note that Kodály was not Jewish, but by the 1930s and 1940s, his ties to the progressive movements of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century resulted in the dissemination of his work restricted under new censorship laws.

<sup>47</sup> Balázs, *Napló I*, 219.

<sup>48</sup> Anna Lesznai, *Sorsával*, 174.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 262-3.

<sup>51</sup> Agatha Schwartz, “Emma Ritoók’s Novel,” 298; Markója, “Három kulcsregény”, 85; György Lukács, “Beszélgetés Lukács Györggyel” [Conversation with György Lukács] in Erzsébet Vezér, *Megőrzött öreg hangok. Válogatott interjúk* [Preserved old voices. Selected interviews], (Budapest: Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, 2004), 34.

<sup>52</sup> Emma Ritoók, *A szellem kalandorai* (Budapest: Pesti Szalon Könyvkiadó, 1993), 508.

<sup>53</sup> Schwartz, “Emma Ritoók’s Novel”, 300.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Gluck, *Georg Lukács and his Generation*, 71.

<sup>55</sup> Ritoók, “Nil-hez”, par. 8. *Elektronikus Periodika Adatbázis Archívum* <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00003/00007/ritook.htm>. Accessed March 2012.

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## **Nationalist Masculinity and Right-Wing Radical Student Movements in Interwar Hungary: The Case of the Turul Association**

**Róbert Kerepeszki**

**Turul** was the most significant Hungarian student association during the interwar period. In the origin myth of the Magyars (the Hungarian people) the *turul* was a divine messenger in the body of a great bird-of-prey that symbolized power, strength and nobility.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the 1930s, Turul had more than hundred branches throughout the country, representing a predominant majority among the youth organizations, with a membership exceeding forty thousand. The Turul Association was established in 1919, following the collapse of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, and it was dissolved after the end of the World War II.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, Turul was able to affect significantly the ideological development of the majority of students in Hungary for over a quarter of a century. The role of this organization was important not only for regular university students, but also for Hungarian society at large, as many members retained their membership following their graduation and continued to participate in the association's activities. In this sense, Turul succeeded in extending the association's ideology into everyday life.

Recent historical studies have revealed a number of important aspects, clarified significant issues in the role of this organization, and have led to the revision of the biased views prevailing in the preceding Marxist historiography. Although the available sources explored before 1989 reveal a wealth of information about Turul, these earlier studies have characterized the association as mainly a "fascist", anti-Semitic, and irredentist organization.<sup>3</sup> New aspects in the characterization of the Turul have emerged only from the early 1990s, when the previously closed archives became freely accessible. During this short period, the number of valuable studies has increased, however this interest has not yet extended into the

ranks of foreign researchers or translated into studies in foreign languages. The available Hungarian studies have discussed the motives, organizational form, customary order, features, and motivations of anti-Semitic actions of Turul and its sub-societies, as well as explored their wider social role and activities reaching beyond the walls of universities. Recent exploratory works have also pointed out the ideological inclusivity of fraternal organizations similar to Turul, reflected by the fact that they had members with left-wing and democratic orientation besides the right-wing radicals.<sup>4</sup>

Considerably less is known about the gender aspect and rate of the membership in Turul.<sup>5</sup> Thus, it is worthwhile to examine the association from this point of view. Female students were a significant minority in interwar Hungarian higher education and, as a consequence, in Turul. At this time, women were allowed to enroll only in the faculties of arts and medicine (both of which they had been admitted to since 1895). As well, job opportunities in the professions were limited for women, and especially so during the years of the Great Depression.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, due to its official ideology, Turul was highly conservative when it came to the social role of women and rejected women's emancipation. Nevertheless, numerous sources, including archival documents, articles, and newsreel reports, demonstrate that many women did join the Turul Association, especially in the second half of the 1930s.<sup>7</sup>

This paper attempts to examine this paradox by approaching its topic from two points of view. It will first present the development of Turul and its "masculine" ideology as it is essential for understanding the views officially represented by the Association in relation to the gender question. Then, the paper will examine the ways in which women participated in Turul's activities. This approach aims to reveal an interesting aspect in the history of Hungarian right-wing radicalism and university movements in the interwar period.

### **The Turul Association's Development and Main Features**

The origins and ideology of Hungarian right-wing radical youth movements can be traced back to the distressed conditions that followed the Great War (World War I). The intellectual youth and vast number of the so called "student-soldiers" returning from the trenches witnessed the defeat and collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the imminent loss of territories constituting a major part of the "historical" greater Hungary. In addition, owing to the dire social and economic conditions, the returning

demobilized soldiers could not continue their studies at universities, nor were they able to find employment. The Hungarian Soviet Republic between March and August 1919 further strengthened the animosity of right-leaning university students and intellectual youths towards leftist movements and Communism. In 1919-1920, these political and social circumstances crystallized the right-wing radical orientation of this generation. The massive protest against the Trianon Treaty, their view of the “Jewish question,” and a general anti-communist position thus became a cohesive force among these youths.<sup>8</sup> It is necessary to mention that the post-war strengthening of right-wing radicalism was not only a Hungarian phenomenon. At the end of the 1910s and the beginning of the 1920s, radical paramilitary, right-wing organizations were formed in many European countries, including the defeated Germany as well as a victor power, Italy. This phenomenon was partly caused by the effect of the Great War and the Versailles peace treaties. Their influence was felt not only among the young intelligentsia, but in society at large. Eventually, this came to be seen as a symptom of the crisis of liberal modernity which led to the development of fascist movements and right-wing university organizations across Europe. For example, the French *Jeunesses Patriotes*, the Spanish *Sindicato Español Universitario*, the Romanian *Asociația Studenților Creștini*, the Italian *Gruppi Universitari Fascisti*. These political parties and associations all represented a radically conservative view on gender hierarchy and they all refused liberal women’s emancipation and feminism; their radical rejection of modernity was closely related to their “nationalist masculinity.”<sup>9</sup>

After the collapse of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in August 1919, new student associations were established at universities throughout the country. The first among them, the Turul Association (*Turul Szövetség*) was brought into existence in August 1919. The rapid development of Turul was mainly due to the vacuum that arose in the social and associational life of the youths. Leftist or liberal university organizations such as the Galileo Circle, were banned after the revolutions, while old-style, traditional student societies such as the University Circles (*Egyetemi Körök*) were unable to represent the spirit of the emerging new era, as well as the interests and views of radical, right-wing students.<sup>10</sup> The growth and expansion of Turul further accelerated after 1928, when the government of Count István Bethlen modified the anti-Semitic Act, the so-called “*numerus clausus*.”<sup>11</sup> Already in the next year, the association counted nearly 9,000 members among university students and 48 branches throughout the country.<sup>12</sup> The membership and the number of branches continued to rise

throughout the 1930s as well. In addition to regular university students (named *daru* for freshman or *levente* for higher level students) and the above-mentioned graduates (*dominus*), many external supporters of the organization, called *patronus* according to the Turul terminology, became honorary members of the Turul. These included well-known politicians, for example, the future Prime Minister Gyula Gömbös as well as university professors, and their formal participation legitimized the association's activity to a great extent.<sup>13</sup>

Turul was officially considered to be politically neutral, but had an important position among the youth movements (such as the Boy Scouts and the Hungarian *Levente* movement) because of its ideology, the so-called Christian-national spirit, and the many personal relationships it shared with the establishment. The association also had close ties to some of the infamous militant Hungarian right-wing organizations of this period, including the Hungarian National Defense Association (*Magyar Országos Véderő Egyesület, MOVE*), the Association of Awakening Hungarians (*Ébredő Magyarok Egyesülete, ÉME*), the National Association of Hungarian Women, (*Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége, MANSz*), as well as the Federation of Social Associations (*Társadalmi Egyesületek Szövetsége, TESz*).<sup>14</sup>

An important feature of Turul's membership was that first-year students enrolling at any university were advised to apply into its ranks, especially if they came from less wealthy families. When joining an association or political party, a new member identifies himself or herself with the governing ideology and social and political views of the organization. However, it is rather difficult to observe this in the case of the Turul Association. In accordance with the rules of Turul, the association often provided its members in need with financial aid or a loan, and the association leadership helped them to obtain scholarships and accommodation in student residences. It is not surprising that many students who did not sympathize with right-wing ideas became Turul members, and the minutes of meetings of local branches indeed revealed political-ideological debates and conflicts among the members.<sup>15</sup>

By the end of the 1930s Turul had more than hundred branches throughout the country (112 in 1938, and 165 five years later).<sup>16</sup> The local branches were divided into ten regional chapters, with headquarters in the largest cities of Hungary, among them Debrecen, Pécs, Szeged, Miskolc, in addition to Budapest. Nevertheless, there were many disputes between these regional chapters and Turul's national headquarters in Budapest;



these disputes concerned socio-political issues and internal affairs, such as the election of national leaders.<sup>17</sup>

Because of the many disputes and differences of opinion, it can be stated that the association had never been consistent in its program. This inconsistency was also reflected in generational issues and conflicts. In the 1920s, the mentality of Turul's membership was quite different from that of members joining the organization in the next decade. The association's founders and initial members were radicalized mainly by the defeat in the war and the shock caused by the Trianon Peace Treaty. For the following generation of Turul members, these determining experiences were amplified or modified by increasing economic problems associated with the Great Depression. Previous studies have demonstrated that the distress caused by the Trianon Treaty and expressed in revisionism was artificially generated and maintained in the collective national consciousness by the ruling political elite.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, the younger members were discontented with the inefficiency and inactivity of their association, as well as with the political system and the establishment in general. They demanded radical changes, among others, in the Turul leadership and demonstrated signs of orientation toward even more extremist political movements.<sup>19</sup> This is an important point to emphasize in our context, as most of the female members joined the association during the 1930s. However, before examining the role of women in the Turul Association, as well as the association's view of the gender question and women's emancipation, it is necessary to give an overview of the "masculine" features in Turul's ideology and activities.

### **Masculinity in Turul: "Racial Defense," Nationalism, and Militarism**

The ideology of Turul consisted of many components. The most significant part was the anti-Semitism and the so-called "racial preservation" or "racial defense." While these ideas were grounded in the popular contemporary notion that Jews were responsible for the Hungarian Soviet Republic and the Trianon Treaty, they also had roots in the pre-war period.<sup>20</sup> In addition, an anti-royalist attitude also played an important role in shaping Turul's ideology. In the view of Turul's leaders, the liberalism of the Habsburg era was greatly responsible for encouraging the assimilation of Jewry and for expanding Jewish influence into Hungarian public life, at the expense of the "Christian" middle class.<sup>21</sup>

Student activism and demonstrations can be considered to be among the most significant expressions of Turul's anti-Semitism that materialized in similar types of incidents at nearly every Hungarian university town: Budapest, Debrecen, Pécs, and Szeged. At the beginning of the academic years, "Turulist" students would prevent Jewish students from entering the university building or classrooms. They also organized demonstrations in the street, and held assemblies where they called for further anti-Semitic restrictions, even a *numerus nullus*, a total ban of the admission of Jewish students. By the end of the 1930s, they also demanded the marking of their Jewish classmates with the yellow star.<sup>22</sup> On the occasion of such incidents, Jewish students were attacked and beaten, yet Turul members took precautions when organizing the attacks: they were careful to go to a faculty different from their own: for example, Turulist law students "visited" the Faculty of Arts and they attacked the Jewish students there, who would not know and thus be unable to identify them. For their contemporaries, perhaps the most repulsive and shocking feature of these attacks was that female Jewish students were occasionally assaulted alongside their male colleagues, in acts of violence against the female body previously unprecedented and unaccepted in any social setting. These events show the disappearing ideals of chivalry and the emergence of masculine violence in the self-definition of Turul. It is important to point out that in the post-war period, anti-Semitic student demonstrations and atrocities at universities were not limited to Hungary. The contemporary press reported widely about such atrocities almost every month in other European countries, such as Poland and Romania.<sup>23</sup>

However, anti-Semitism was not the sole element of Turul's ideology of "racial preservation." The association propagated the protection of the Hungarian "race" from every alien race, especially from Jews, Slavs, and Germans. The last is a surprising notion: while many Turul members were admirers of Nazi Germany or joined Hungarian National Socialist parties, the official leadership of the organization was often pronouncing against the increasing influence of the German ethnic minority living in Hungary, which they regarded as a threat to the "Hungarian race." This served as an explanation for the riots Turul members staged against ethnic German organizations, politicians, and university professors, just as they did against Jews.<sup>24</sup> The protection of race — an extreme version of nationalism — can be considered as an important masculine feature, because the protection of the homeland was traditionally the fundamental responsibility of males.

The other important “masculine” element of Turul ideology was nationalism. The association’s leaders and members persistently demanded the territorial revision of the Trianon Peace Treaty. Turul *revanchism* (or “revisionism” in Hungarian) proposed the re-annexation of all lost territories, in some cases along with advancing a “Hungarian Imperial Idea.” This expansionist ideology emerged and developed in the later decades of the Austro-Hungarian era; its first representatives yearned for greater power and waxed nostalgic about the return to the glory of the Árpád dynasty or the empire of king Matthias Corvinus.<sup>25</sup> By the 1940s, this idea became one of the cornerstones of Turul’s ideology. According to a Turul propaganda brochure published in 1940, one of the most important objectives of the association was the “awakening of a Hungarian racial consciousness”, which “prepares the realization of the Hungarian Empire together with the upholding of Hungarian military ideals and the maintenance of discipline.”<sup>26</sup>

This quotation clearly reflects the most obvious masculinity feature of the Turul ideology, namely militarism. This militaristic character was manifested in several of Turul’s activities, and could be traced back to the formation of the association. After the collapse of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919, the right-wing radical university students formed “university battalions” whose main purpose was to maintain the new order and “to cleanse” universities of leftist students and professors. Armed, paramilitary groups played a significant role in the strengthening of the counter-revolutionary, so-called “Christian-national” regime and their representatives constituted the initial membership of Turul and its local chapters. Later on, they provided important services for the government, especially in October 1921, when the last Habsburg emperor and Hungarian king, Charles IV attempted to regain the Hungarian throne for the second time. These battalions, with a number of Turul members within their ranks, took a prominent part in the battle of Budaörs, which ended with the defeat of the king’s troops.<sup>27</sup>

Turul’s founders were thus “soldier-students,” and it is not surprising that militarism and military attitude proved to be an important factor both in the shaping of the association’s organizational structure and in the development of its ideology and activities.<sup>28</sup> Turul could also be considered as a group of students associated for common purposes, a fraternity, a type of organization that had otherwise no tradition in the history of Hungarian university movements.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to Turul, there existed other student associations at Hungarian universities. In the same year Turul was established, the stu-

dents at the Faculty of Engineering and Technology (*Műegyetem*) founded their own association, Hungaria Society (*Hungária Egyesület*). Shortly after that, in 1920, the short-lived Christian-Socialist Centrum Association (*Centrum Szövetség*) was called into existence. Next in line was the Catholic and monarchist-leaning *Foederatio Emericana* in the next year, and the last one was the expressly monarchist St. Stephen Fraternal Association (*Szent István Bajtársi Szövetség*), formed in 1927. These associations became the leading student organizations at Hungarian universities, and though they shared many similar tenets in their ideological foundation (the “Christian-national” idea, the militarist, anti-Semitic and irredentist character), they had their own distinct main features, and they were often hostile towards each other. Among the associations of right-wing radical Hungarian university students, Turul enjoyed the greatest influence and played the most significant role. Its dominance was due to a number of factors. First of all, Turul was not restricted to a single institution of higher education, unlike *Hungária*, for instance, whose members were recruited exclusively from the engineering students of Budapest. In addition, Turul recruited members on a non-denominational basis, whereas *Emericana* was open only to Catholic students. In contrast with certain organizations’ confessed monarchism, members of Turul were not restricted when it came to their position on the potential return of the Habsburgs. Besides, popular contemporary opinion held that the liberalism of the Habsburgs was greatly responsible for the territorial losses of Hungary after the Great War, an opinion shared by many university students, in contrast to the Habsburg-loyalty of the St. Stephen Fraternal Association. The significance of Turul was further increased by its great influence on other university associations, including religious and relief organizations, because in many cases, their leadership was in the hands of Turul members. It follows from this that Turul was responsible for much of the student opinion at universities and had a great influence over the life of students at large.<sup>30</sup>

The military character of Turul was also supported by its core ideology known as the “fraternal spirit” or “fraternal life.”<sup>31</sup> Discipline constituted a fundamental element of Turul mentality, and the association’s leaders prescribed obligatory military training to the members as early as the founding of the first local chapters of the association.<sup>32</sup> In a country that suffered military defeat in the war, this approach could also be considered a manifestation of the popular will that accepted the aim of the restoration of “Greater,” that is prewar Hungary, as a consensus demand.

Another paramount objective of the Turul membership was the education of Hungarian youth in military morale and spirit, leading to the introduction of the “general mandatory national labour service”.<sup>33</sup> The idea of university labour camps and service was raised by Ödön Mikecz, later Minister of Justice, in April 1921. Mikecz suggested that financial aid to university students should be conditional on their participation in a university labour battalion, providing assistance in rebuilding the country, particularly in agriculture, industry, forestation, and road construction.<sup>34</sup> Turul labour camps would be established only a decade and a half later of this announcement. Their organizational structure was mainly modeled on the German Voluntary Labour Services (*Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst*) but traces of English, Swiss, Austrian, Swedish, and Norwegian influence could also be observed. During the second half of the 1930s, Turul member students organized labour camps in underdeveloped and backward regions of the country, providing assistance in public works.<sup>35</sup> In addition, the participants of these summer camps received theoretical and practical military (so-called “national defense”) education, which consisted of “modern military knowledge,” military exercises, technical military training (for example, anti-aircraft training), disciplinary exercises, as well as religious, moral, and ideological training.<sup>36</sup> The purpose of this complex “national defense” education was the strengthening of the “racial (national) consciousness” of the Hungarian student body. The importance of this Turul initiative, labour service, cannot be overestimated and is demonstrated by the fact that the government provided significant financial support for it in the second half of 1930s, shortly after the Great Depression.<sup>37</sup>

### **Turul’s View of Women and the Participation of Women in the Association**

The above example clearly demonstrates that Turul was a typical “masculine” organization; this makes an examination of the association’s perspective on women and the gender question all the more important. Turul regarded the liberalism of the 19th century as anathema, for it allowed not only the assimilation of Jews but also the emancipation of women, including women’s university enrollment. This was an important feature of Hungarian higher education during the years of the World War I, when high numbers of “soldier-students” marched to the front, leaving the admission numbers of universities to be filled by female students.<sup>38</sup>

After the Great War, the right-wing radical intellectual youth represented the widely shared opinion that women forcibly took professional job opportunities away from “Christian-national” men, and therefore, they protested against women’s access to higher education. This anti-emancipatory thinking had been further amplified by the economic strife during the Great Depression.<sup>39</sup> At that time, the most radical Turul members strongly demanded the revision of the gender question and educational situation because — as it was explained in an article of the newspaper *Harc! Előre!* (Fight! Forward!), representing the Turul press — if not for women’s participation in the professions, “many men would find a job and many families would get bread.”<sup>40</sup> Of course, the author of this article did not take into consideration that the dismissal of women would not solve the unemployment problem, but would merely result in changes in its gender ratio. While the article refers to working women in general, its recommendations also include women’s university enrollment and degrees.

In its views regarding women’s social role, the association remained staunchly conservative in later years as well, which was presumably associated with the context of the Great Depression and the broader contemporary neo-conservative approach to femininity. For example, in 1931, the Turul chapter in Debrecen issued a statement against the national beauty contests, and “proclaimed social boycott against the young women who participated in these commercial competitions.” They claimed that such beauty pageants went against the traditional ideal of the woman, whose main roles were as the faithful and modest spouse and the caring mother. According to the right-wing press of Debrecen, this action “generated the wide approval of Debrecen’s Christian-national society,” and it was followed by the active attention of the national public opinion. This is very well demonstrated by the fact that many right-wing national organizations, for example, the Association of Awakening Hungarians (*Ébredő Magyarok Egyesülete, ÉME*), the National Association of Hungarian Women (*Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége, MANSz*), and the Federation of Social Associations (*Társadalmi Egyesületek Szövetsége, TESz*) “took notice of the movement of the youth with the highest approval,” and joined the boycott against “the improper beauty contests,” as they intoned, “in the interest of the consolidation of national morals.”<sup>41</sup> What underscored their enthusiasm was the fact that it was often young Jewish girls who won the beauty queen titles, such as in the case of the future, famous actress Zsazsa Gábor.<sup>42</sup>

Two years later, in 1933, the Szeged chapter of Turul launched a national movement against the “liberal trend,” which “tried to put every-

thing in the service of eroticism” and “infected society.” According to the initiators of this movement, “fashion and the modern lifestyle endanger the social esteem of women,” therefore they plan to “launch a fight and will demand the ban of plays and films that serve eroticism.” Members of Turul then decided to contact the leaders of social associations, and made every effort to gain the approval and support of the Christian churches and their press.<sup>43</sup> In this light, it is not surprising that during the years of World War II, particular actresses came to be regarded as the “enemy of the nation” in the view of Turul, for example Katalin Karády, who often played “the femme fatale” in contemporary Hungarian films. In 1943, Turul members demonstrated against her, and demanded her banishment from the Hungarian film industry.<sup>44</sup>

These events reflect the association's view according to which the conservative female image was the only suitable female ideal for a “Christian-national” Hungary. At the same time it is interesting to note that the organization did not essentially reject the admission of women but, rather, expected a suitably conservative mentality from them. The association's official position was that “the fraternal idea, the fraternal objective is equally compulsory for young women,” but “on the other hand, it is also clear that physical and psychological differences between the two genders need to be taken into consideration in the assessment of women's fraternal life.”<sup>45</sup> Admission to the organization was allowed only for those women who represented “the religious, educated Hungarian woman [who] is being proud of her home, fights assertively and represents a high moral standard,” as it was articulated at the first assembly of Turul women in 1935.<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately, there is no reliable data about the number and proportion of women in the association, because most of Turul's official documents perished in World War II.<sup>47</sup> However, available sources reveal that there was a woman elected to be a member of Turul's leadership at the end of the 1930s. Her name was Anna Rigó, and she became one of the so-called under-chiefs or deputy chiefs, (*alvezér*) of the Association, hinting at the significant role of women in Turul's life. In addition, there is also evidence of well-known politicians' wives becoming Turul's honorary supporter members (so-called *patrona*), as for example the wife of Mihály Kolosváry-Borcsa, a leading right-wing politician.<sup>48</sup>

Regarding the actual activities of Turul women, there is a similar dearth of sources. The very limited sources do indicate, however, that following their first general assembly in 1935, women members organized their own work camp in Kapuvár and an autumn congress in Budapest in

the next year.<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately, the minutes and other documents detailing these events did not survive. Only the titles of some presentations (“The role of woman in the family,” “The social tasks of young Hungarian girls,” “The woman as a university graduate,” “The university graduate wife”) and a brief extract of a memorandum to the Hungarian cabinet are known from the daily reports of the Hungarian News Agency (MTI). The topics of these fragmental sources give an indication of female Turul members’ nationalist stance and social views: in the memorandum, they demanded the initiation and implementation of increased family protection measures, for example, tax allowances for families with many children and a tax on bachelors.<sup>50</sup> These measures, if introduced, would have echoed similar policies already in effect in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The essence of this mentality is even more obviously expressed by the words of Anna Rigó, who declared at Turul’s annual general assembly in 1939 that “the women in the Turul need not fight for emancipation but rather for the goal of young Hungarian women to become better Hungarians and outstanding Hungarian mothers who stand at the top of their vocation and who are faithful helpers of their men.” [a Turul bajtársnőinek nem az emancipáció érdekében kell dolgozniuk, hanem azon, hogy minél jobb és tökéletesebb magyar anyák váljanak a magyar leányokból, akik hivatásuk magaslatán állva, hűséges segítőtársai a férfiaknak.]<sup>51</sup>

## **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that the main objectives and activities of the Turul Association were intended to make young Hungarian intellectuals loyal to the “Christian-national” Horthy regime and form their worldview through militarist, revanchist, and racist ideas. Turul’s ideology was motivated and shaped by young people who were not trained as political ideologists. Rather, the social and political circumstances of Hungary, their military service and experiences in World War I, the loss of two-thirds of their homeland in the Trianon Treaty and their dissatisfaction with the political leadership of their country made the youths bitter and keen on creating an organization through which they could establish a new spirit for the country. Turul was a student organization initially exclusively male, but one that also accepted women from the mid-1930s onward. In addition, the participation of women in the Turul movement demonstrates that the mentality of women was affected by the contemporary right-wing radical ideology as much as that of men. The Association’s “masculinity” deeply



influenced the attitude of women as well. The intention of this study was to open new avenues for research into the little-explored notions and practices of gender, race, militarism, and youth culture on all society levels within right-wing nationalist groups in interwar Hungary.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Julien Papp, “L’oiseau turul. Du totem des anciens Magyars aux héritages controversés de la Seconde Guerre mondiale,” in *Öt kontinens*, (Budapest: ELTE, 2009), 385–406.

<sup>2</sup> Ernő Erdélyi, *A mi utunk. A Turul Szövetség története, útja, célkitűzései* [Our path. The history, path, and objectives of the Turul Association] (Pécs: Turul, 1940), 5; Az Ideiglenes Nemzeti Kormány 529/1945. ME számú rendelete a fasiszta politikai és katonai jellegű szervezetek feloszlásáról [Decree no. 529/1945 ME of the Interim National Government about the dissolution of fascist political and military organizations], February 26, 1945, in *Magyarországi rendeletek tára* [Collection of Hungarian decrees] (Budapest: M. Kir. Belügyminisztérium, 1945), 49–50.

<sup>3</sup> For example, see Ferenc Bárány, *Az antiszemitizmus szerepe a szélső-jobboldali diákmozgalomban (1919–1921)* [The role of anti-Semitism in the right-wing radical youth movement] (Budapest: Művelődésügyi Minisztérium Marxizmus-Leninizmus Oktatási Főosztálya, 1971); *A haladó egyetemi ifjúság mozgalmi Magyarországon, 1918–1945* [The movements of progressive university youth in Hungary], edited by Henrik Vass (Budapest: Kossuth, 1978).

<sup>4</sup> For recent literature see András Szécsényi, “A Turul Szövetség felépítése és szerepe a két világháború közötti ifjúsági mozgalomban” [The organization and role of the Turul Association in the interwar youth movement], in *Fejezetek a tegnap világából* [Chapters from yesterday’s world], edited by Jenő Gergely (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 2009), 214–232; Gábor Ujváry, “Egyetemi ifjúság és katolicizmus a ‘neobarokk társadalomban’. A Foederatio Emericánáról” [University youth and Catholicism in the ‘neo-Baroque society.’ About the Foederatio Emericana], in *A harmincharmadik nemzedék. Politika, kultúra és történettudomány a “neobarokk társadalomban”* [The thirty-third generation. Politics, culture and historical scholarship in the “neo-Baroque society”] (Budapest: Ráció, 2010), 413–493; Róbert Kerepeszki, “A Turul Szövetség” [The Turul Association], in *A magyar jobboldali hagyomány, 1900–1948* [The Hungarian right-wing legacy, 1900–1948], edited by Ignác Romsics (Budapest: Osiris, 2009), 341–376; Róbert Kerepeszki, *A Turul Szövetség 1919–1945. Egyetemi ifjúság és jobboldali radikalizmus a Horthy-korszakban* [The Turul Association 1919–1945. University youth and right-wing radicalism in the Horthy era] (Máriabesnyő: Attraktor, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Kerepeszki, *A Turul Szövetség 1919–1945*, 57–58.

<sup>6</sup> On the opportunities of women in Hungarian higher education, see Katalin N. Szegvári, *Numerus clausus rendelkezések az ellenforradalmi Magyarországon. A zsidó és nőhallgatók főiskolai felvételéről* [Numerus clausus decrees in counterrevolutionary Hungary. About the admission of Jews and women into higher education] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1988); Katalin Fenyves, “When Sexism Meets Radicalism: the 1920 Numerus Clausus Law in Hungary,” *AHEA: E-Journal of the American Hungarian Educators Association* 4 (2011): <http://ahea.net/e-journal/volume-4-2011/12>; Dániel Bolgár, “Sleeping with the Political Enemy: Woman’s Place in Discourses of Race and Class Struggle in 20th Century Central Europe,” *AHEA: E-Journal of the American Hungarian Educators Association* 4 (2011): <http://ahea.net/e-journal/volume-4-2011/11>; Victor Karády, “The Restructuring of the Academic Market Place in Hungary,” in *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, edited by Victor Karády and Péter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Pasts Inc. Centre for Historical Research, History Department of the Central European University, 2012), 112–135; Katalin Fenyves, “A Successful Battle for Symbolic Space: The Numerus Clausus Law in Hungary,” in *The numerus clausus in Hungary*, eds. V. Karády and Péter T. Nagy, 151–164.

<sup>7</sup> For example, the official Hungarian newsreel reported briefly on the Turul’s annual general assembly in November, 1937, and many women with Turulist cap and badge could be seen at this event. See *Magyar Világhíradó* [Hungarian World Newsreel], scene 718/1, Nov. 1937 <http://filmhíradok.nava.hu/watch.php?id=2562>, accessed on February 12, 2012. See also notes 46–52.

<sup>8</sup> Jenő Gergely, ed., *Gömbös Gyula hatalomra kerülése és kormányzása 1932–1936. Antal István sajtófőnök emlékiratai* [The coming to power and governance of Gyula Gömbös. The memoirs of press secretary István Antal] (Budapest: Palatinus, 2004), 369–370.

<sup>9</sup> On the general theoretical approach, see Christopher A. Rootes, “Student Radicalism: Politics of Moral Protest and Legitimation Problems of the Modern Capitalist State,” *Theory and Society* 9, no. 3 (1980): 473–502; Roger Griffin, ed., *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). On the German organizations and circumstances, see Helma Brunck, *Die Deutsche Burschenschaft in der Weimarer Republik und im Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Universitas, 1999); Konrad H. Jarausch, “The Crisis of German Professions 1918–1933,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 20, no. 3 (1985): 379–398; Wolfgang Zorn, “Student Politics in the Weimar Republic,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 5, no. 1 (1970): 128–143. On the Italian Gruppi Universitari Fascisti (GUF), see Michael A. Ledeen, “Italian Fascism and Youth,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 4, no. 3 (1969): 137–154; Bruno Wanrooij, “The Rise and Fall of Italian Fascism as a Generational Revolt,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 22, no. 3 (1987): 401–418; Luca La Rovere, “Fascist Groups in Italian Universities: An Organization at the Service of the Totalitarian State,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 3 (1999): 457–475; Ruth Ben-Ghiat, “Italian Universities Under

Fascism,” in *Universities Under Dictatorship*, edited by John Connelly and Michael Grüttner (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 45–74. On other European examples, see Robert Soucy, “Centrist Fascism. The Jeunesses Patriotes,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 16, no. 2 (1981): 349–368; Samuel Kalman, *The Extreme Right in Interwar France. The Faisceau and the Croix de Feu* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, “Spanish Universities Under Franco,” in *Universities Under Dictatorship*, edited by John Connelly and Michael Grüttner, 113–138; Raphael Vago, “Eastern Europe,” in *The Social Basis of European Fascist Movements*, edited by Detlef Mühlberger (Kent: Mackays of Chatham, 1987), 281–319; John T. Lauridsen, *Nazism and the Radical Right in Austria 1918–1934* (Copenhagen: The Royal Library Museum Tusulanum Press, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> On the traditional Hungarian student associations and the Galileo Circle, see János Viczián, *Diákélet és diákegyesületek a budapesti egyetemeken 1914–1919* [Student life and student associations at the universities of Budapest 1914–1919], (Budapest: ELTE Levéltár, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> The original proposal for the *numerus clausus* bill limited the enrollment of minorities and also restricted the number of women at Hungarian universities. This legislation was introduced by Pál Teleki's cabinet in September 1920. The modification was mainly due to international protests against the original law in the League of Nations (especially by a British journalist, Lucien Wolf), but it was also recognized that the legislation did not contribute to alleviating the difficulties of the Christian middle class in finding employment. On the Hungarian act of *numerus clausus* and its modification, see Gergely Egressy, “A statistical overview of the Hungarian Numerus Clausus Law of 1920. – A historical necessity or the first step toward the Holocaust,” *East European Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (2001): 447–464; Róbert Kerepeszki, “A numerus clausus 1928. évi módosításának hatása Debrecenben” [The effect of the 1928 amendment of the numerus clausus in Debrecen], *Múltunk*, 2005, no. 4: 42–75; Andor Ladányi, “A numerus clausustól a numerus nullusig” [From the numerus clausus to the numerus nullus], *Múlt és Jövő*, no. 1 (2005): 56–74; Andor Ladányi, “A numerus clausus-törvény 1928. évi módosításáról” [About the modification of the numerus clausus act in 1928], *Századok*, no. 6 (1996): 1117–1148; Róbert Barta, “A numerus clausus törvény módosítása 1928-ban” [The modification of the numerus clausus act in 1928], in *Történeti Tanulmányok I* (Debrecen: KLTE, 1992), 113–125. On the contemporary international reaction to the bill, see “The Numerus Clausus and Hungary,” *The Canadian Jewish Chronicle* (Montreal, QC), Nov. 6, 1925.

<sup>12</sup> Zoltán Magyary, *Emlékirat az egyetemi ifjúság szociális gondozásának megszervezése tárgyában* [Memorandum on the organization of the social care of university students] (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1929), 133; Róbert Kerepeszki, “A numerus clausus és a Turul Szövetség” [The numerus clausus and the Turul Association], in *Jogfosztás – 90 éve. Tanulmányok a*

*numerus claususról* [Deprivation of rights – 90 years ago. Studies about the numerus clausus], edited by Judit Molnár (Budapest: Nonprofit Társadalomkutató Egyesület, 2011), 247–266.

<sup>13</sup> On the obligations and names of the Turul-membership, see *A Turul Szövetség Alapszabályzata* [Statutes of the Turul Association] (Budapest: Turul, 1927), 5–20. Gömbös as prime minister of Hungary explicitly and proudly proclaimed that he was the “protagonist of the same world view” as Turul members. “Gömbös Gyula miniszterelnök beszéde a Turul Szövetség dísztáborán,” Budapest, 1934. március 11. [Speech of Prime Minister Gyula Gömbös on the festive general assembly of the Turul Association], in *Gömbös Gyula. Válogatott politikai beszédek és írások* [Gyula Gömbös. Selected political speeches and writings], edited by József Vonyó (Budapest: Osiris, 2004), 596–600. While a significant number of Turul members abandoned Gömbös because of the failure of his policy in the mid-1930s, a special cult was formed around him after his death in 1936. See *Magyar Világhíradó* [Hungarian World Newsreel], scene 682/1, March 1937, Online: <http://filmhiradok.nava.hu/watch.php?id=2232>, accessed on February 12, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Miklós Kozma, *Az összeomlás 1918–1919* [The collapse 1918–1919] (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1933), 69. The Association of Awakening Hungarians was the most notorious right-wing radical organization during the first decade of the Horthy era. According to some sources, university students played an important role in the formation of this association. On the interwar Hungarian social associations, see Róbert Kerepeszki, “A politikai és társadalmi élet határán. A Társadalmi Egyesületek Szövetsége a Horthy-korszakban” [Between political and social life. The Federation of Social Associations in the Horthy era] in “...nem leleplezni, hanem megismerni és megérteni.” *Tanulmányok a 60 éves Romsics Ignác tiszteletére* [“...not to slander but to learn and understand.” Studies in honour of 60-year-old Ignác Romsics], edited by Sándor Gebei, Iván Bertényi, Jr., and János Rainer M. (Eger: Liceum, 2011), 373–388.

<sup>15</sup> András Szécsényi and Róbert Kerepeszki, “Ellenzék a Turulban. A Turul Szövetségről” [Opposition in the Turul. About the Turul Association], *Századok*, no. 1 (2012): 171–204.

<sup>16</sup> “A Turul Szövetség tisztviselőinek és tageszerveleteinek jegyzékei, 1936–1943” [Lists of officials and chapters of the Turul Association, 1936–1943], Documents of Turul Association, Record Group P 1364, Box 1, Magyar Országos Levéltár [National Archives of Hungary], hereafter MOL).

<sup>17</sup> “A Turul Szövetség XVII. Országos Követtáborának jegyzőkönyve” [Minutes of the Turul Association’s 17th National Assembly], Miskolc, November 5–8, 1936, Documents of Turul Association, Record Group P 1364, Box 1, MOL.

<sup>18</sup> Steven B. Vardy, “The Impact of Trianon upon Hungary and the Hungarian Mind: The Nature of Interwar Hungarian Irredentism,” *Hungarian Studies Review*, no 1 (1983): 21–42; Miklós Zeidler, “Irredentism in Everyday

Life in Hungary during the Inter-War Period,” *Regio – Minorities, Politics, Society*, no 1 (2002): 71–88.

<sup>19</sup> This is well demonstrated by many careers. The leading members of the first Turul-generation were the followers of Gyula Gömbös: György Bánsághy (former medical student, Turul-leader between 1920 and 1929) became an MP of Gömbös’s governing party (Nemzeti Egység Pártja – Party of National Unity) and Béla Béldi (former student of economics who founded chapters of Turul in 1921) was appointed as the propaganda chief of the party. In contrast, many members of the second Turul-generation of the next decade were drawn to extreme radical movements. For example, János Salló (Turul’s press secretary and general editor of *Bajtárs* in the 1930s) and Imre Kémeri Nagy (Transylvanian refugee, leader of the chapter of law students) became active members of Hungarian national socialist movements. Salló founded a right-wing radical party, the National Front (Nemzeti Front) while Kémeri Nagy became the follower of Ferenc Szálasi, leader of the Arrow Cross. Some others (Sándor Zöld, Géza Losonczy, Szilárd Újhelyi) joined the illegal Communist Party. About these careers, see Kerepeszki, “A Turul Szövetség” [The Turul Association]; and Rudolf Paksa, “Szélsőjobboldali mozgalmak az 1930-as években” [Right-wing radical movements in the 1930s], in *A magyar jobboldali hagyomány*, 297.

<sup>20</sup> János Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon* [The Jewish question in Hungary] (Budapest: Osiris, 2001), 102–109. The most significant movement of the pre-war period that mobilized university students around anti-Semitism was the so-called “Cross movement.” In May 1900, unknown perpetrators broke the cross off of the Hungarian coat of arms in the building of University of Budapest: this event had become the symbol of the movement. Jews were accused of commissioning the act, leading to an open anti-Semitic atmosphere at the university, and shaping many Christian students’ worldview. For reference, see Miklós Szabó, *Az újkonzervativizmus és a jobboldali radikalizmus története 1867–1918* [The history of neo-conservatism and right-wing radicalism 1867–1918] (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2003), 184–213, 265–270; István Kornai, “Magyar ifjúsági mozgalmak 1849–1919” [Hungarian youth movements 1849–1919], in *“Werbőczy” Évkönyv 1928* [“Werbőczy” Almanach 1928], edited by Béla Lendvai (Budapest: Turul, 1928), 7–11.

<sup>21</sup> Róbert Kerepeszki, “A budaörsi csata emlékezete és a királykérdés a két világháború közötti egyetemi ifjúsági mozgalmak politikai gondolkodásában” [Remembrance of the Battle of Budaörs and the issue of monarchy in the political thought of interwar university student movements], *Múltunk*, no. 3 (2011): 49–58.

<sup>22</sup> András Szécsényi, “Hogy ki a magyar, azt mindig csak maguk a magyarok dönthetik el – A Turul Szövetség a közgazdasági egyetemen 1941-ben” [Who is Hungarian will always be decided by Hungarians – The Turul Association at the University of Economics in 1941], *Kommentár*, no. 3 (2009): 69–78; Bernard Klein, “Anti-Jewish Demonstrations in Hungarian Universities, 1932–

1936. István Bethlen vs Gyula Gömbös,” *Jewish Social Studies* 44, no. 2 (1982): 113–124.

<sup>23</sup> On the Hungarian demonstrations and actions, see Róbert Kerepeszki, “The racial defense in practice. The activity of the Turul Association at Hungarian universities between the two world wars”, in *The numerus clausus in Hungary*, edited by V. Karády and Péter T. Nagy, 138–151; “A főiskolai ifjúság tüntetése” [The demonstration of university youth], *Nemzeti Újság* (Budapest), Mar. 3, 1920; “A keresztény diákok elhagyják a pécsi egyetemet” [Christian students leave the University of Pécs], *Új Élet* (Budapest), Dec. 20, 1923, 1–2.; “Zu den anti-semitischen Studentenkrallen [About the anti-Semitic student riots], *Pester Lloyd* (Budapest), Nov. 23, 1932; Report of the Police Office of Szeged about the student demonstrations, Szeged, December 4, 1933, Record Group K 149, no. 1933–4–9121, MOL. On anti-Semitic student riots elsewhere in Europe, see “Anti-Semitism Laid to Poultry Abroad,” *New York Times* (New York), Dec. 22, 1929; “Polish Jewry Fears Pogroms as Anti-Semite Riots Sweep Country,” *The Canadian Jewish Chronicle* (Montreal), Nov. 22, 1935; Lucian Nastasă, “Anti-Semitism at Universities in Romania (1919–1939),” in *The numerus clausus in Hungary*, edited by Karády and Nagy, 219–243.

<sup>24</sup> For example, one of the Turul newspapers wrote the following warning: “our race (is) threatened by two dangers: the Jews and the Germans.” Report of the Police Office of Pécs about the regional German ethnic movements and the extreme-right parties, Pécs, September 5, 1942, Record Group K 149, no. 1942–7–6006, MOL.

<sup>25</sup> Ignác Romsics, “A magyar birodalmi gondolat” [The Hungarian imperial idea], in *Nem élhetek birodalom nélkül* [I cannot live without an empire], edited by Csaba Gombár and Hédi Volosin (Budapest: Helicon, 2002), 41–81.

<sup>26</sup> Erdélyi, *A mi utunk* [Our path], 9–12.

<sup>27</sup> The university battalions were officially disbanded by the Bethlen government in 1921. Vilmos Dér, ed., *Egyetemi zászlóaljok* [University battalions] (Budapest: Vilmos Dér, 1938); Béla Igaly, *Egy műegyetemi zászlóaljtag naplója 1919–1921* [Diary of a member of the battalion of the Technical University 1919–1921] (Budapest, 1942); Andor Ladányi, *Az egyetemi ifjúság az ellenforradalom első éveiben 1919–1921* [University youth in the early years of counterrevolution 1919–1921] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1979), 73–93; Kerepeszki, “A budaörsi csata,” 38–48.

<sup>28</sup> Turul’s organizational structure was mainly based on the German model, especially on the traditional *Burschenschaften*. Hans-Georg Balder, *Geschichte der Deutschen Burschenschaft* (Hilden: WJK-Verlag, 2006).

<sup>29</sup> Róbert Kerepeszki, “A Turul Szövetség,” 350–352.

<sup>30</sup> Fraternal associations of university students were not exclusive to Hungary. After the Great War, this type of social organizations could be found in many countries. For the Czechoslovak example, see John Haag, “Knights of the

Spirit: The Kameradschaftsbund,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 5, no. 3 (1970): 133–153.

<sup>31</sup> In the 1930s, the leadership of Turul published ideological “guidelines” explaining the “fraternal idea” to younger members. For example, see *Bevezetés a bajtársi életbe* [Introduction to fraternal life] (Debrecen: Méhely Bajtársi Egyesület, 1934); *A Turul világnézet irányelvei és bajtársi útmutató* [Guidelines of the Turul worldview and fraternal instructions] (Budapest: Turul, 1937).

<sup>32</sup> *Bevezetés a bajtársi életbe*, 4–9.

<sup>33</sup> “Mit kíván a Turul ifjúság március 15-én?” [What does the Turul youth want on March 15th?] *Bajtárs*, 2 March 1938. It is important to mention that Turul’s labour service had no connection to the notoriously inhuman compulsory labour service, established by the Hungarian government during World War II, for unarmed Jewish men.

<sup>34</sup> Ödön Mikecz, “Az egyetemi munkaszázadok” [The university labour battalions], *Ifjak Szava* (Budapest), Jun. 4, 1921.

<sup>35</sup> The activity of Turul’s labour camps is demonstrated by a number of contemporary newsreel reports. For examples, see *Magyar Világhíradó*, scene 599/1, August 1935. <http://filmhiradok.nava.hu/watch.php?id=1553>; Ibid, scene 650/2, August 1936. <http://filmhiradok.nava.hu/watch.php?id=1973>; Ibid, scene 1014/9, July 1943. <http://filmhiradok.nava.hu/watch.php?id=5109>, accessed Feb. 12, 2012.

<sup>36</sup> Imre Kovács, “A munkatábor” [The labour camp], *Magyar Szemle* 30, no. 4 (1937): 320–328; László Tarnói, *Magyar munkaszolgálat. Munkatáborok a magyar nép és föld szolgálatában* [The Hungarian labour service. Labour camps in the service of the Hungarian people and land]. (Budapest: Turul, 1939); András Szécsényi, “Egyetemi és főiskolai munkatáborok Magyarországon, 1935–39” [University labour camps in Hungary, 1935–39] in *Visszatekintés a 19–20. századra* [A Look at the 19th and 20th centuries], edited by Gábor Erdődy (Budapest: ELTE, 2011), 149–164; Ákos Bartha, “Magyarország első Nemzeti Munkatábora — a sárospataki diákok útépítése” [The first national labour camp in Hungary — road construction of students at Sárospatak], *Sárospataki Füzetek*, no. 4 (2010): 59–79.

<sup>37</sup> Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 25 February 1938, Record Group K 27, MOL.

<sup>38</sup> Péter Bihari, *Lövészárkok a háttérben. Középosztály, zsidókérdés, antiszemitizmus az első világháború Magyarországon* [Trenches in the hinterland. Middle-class, Jewish question, anti-Semitism in Hungary during World War I], (Budapest: Napvilág, 2008), 150–164.

<sup>39</sup> The dire financial straits of Hungarian young intellectuals were demonstrated in many contemporary sources. For example, Carlile Aylmer Macartney, who was in charge of the Hungarian section of the British Foreign Office Research Department in the second half of the 1930s, wrote the following about the influence of the Great Depression on the Hungarian intellectual youth: “Most

important of all, perhaps, spiritually, although numerically far weaker than the urban or rural proletariat, is the growing host of impoverished intellectuals. Up to a comparatively recent period, the greater part of the university-trained youth was accommodated without great difficulty in the Government service, while the free professions, not yet overcrowded, absorbed the remainder. Today the situation is entirely different. Year after year the Universities and High Schools turn out thousands of young men and women for whom there is literally no place in the economic system. Although the Government makes every effort to find places for as many as it can, yet the economic state of the country is such as absolutely to forbid the old elastic system which could always find one job more for a youth of good connections and reliable opinions. The professions are overcrowded and the rewards which they offer are miserable in the extreme." Carlile Aylmer Macartney, *Hungary* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1934), 362–363.

<sup>40</sup> István Németh, "Fogyasztási egységek és a női munkaerő" [Consumer units and the female labour force], *Harc Előre*, April 1935., 4–5.

<sup>41</sup> Miklós Kozma, *Az összeomlás 1918–1919* [The collapse 1918–1919] (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1933), 69; *Debreceni Újság Hajdúföld*, Feb. 1, 1931, Mar. 3, 1931; *Debreczen*, Mar. 1, 1931.

<sup>42</sup> Zsazsa Gabor (born Sári Gábor) was born in Budapest in February, 1917. She began her stage career at the age of 15, and was elected Miss Hungary in 1936. Because of her Jewish origins she immigrated to the United States in 1941, and was featured in more than forty Hollywood films. She is perhaps best known for her colourful private life, including her nine marriages, among them to the hotel magnate Conrad Hilton. In 1991 she published her memoirs, *One Lifetime is not Enough* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1991).

<sup>43</sup> "Magyar Távirati Iroda napi hírei" [Daily news of the Hungarian News Agency], 8 April 1933, Record Group K 428, series A, MOL. – "Harc az erotika ellen. A Turul Szövetség országos megmozdulása" [The fight against eroticism. The national action of the Turul Association], *Bajtárs*, April 1933, 3–4.

<sup>44</sup> Daily News of the Hungarian News Agency, 1 May 1943, Record Group K 428, series T, MOL. See also the article of David S. Frey, "Mata Hari or the Body of the Nation? Interpretations of Katalin Karády" in this volume.

<sup>45</sup> *Bevezetés a bajtársi életbe*, 28–32.

<sup>46</sup> *Gyula Regős*, Dec. 1935, 3–4.

<sup>47</sup> There is, however, some data about the local chapters of Turul. For example, the organization of the medical students in Debrecen (Csaba Bajtársi Egyesület) had 175 members in 1936, 23 of whom were women. We know that in the same year, 43 women were enrolled at the Faculty of Medicine so more than half of the female students joined Turul. List of Csaba Bajtársi Egyesület, Debrecen, 19 May 1936, Record Group VIII.1/b, Box 53, No. 1271–1935/36, Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Levéltár (Archives of Hajdú-Bihar County).

<sup>48</sup> *Új Vetés*, Apr. 1933, 9. Mihály Kolosváry-Borcsa was the press secretary of Béla Imrédy's cabinet in 1938, president of the Press Chamber and an MP



of the governing party (Magyar Élet Pártja – Party of Hungarian Life) in the next year. He kept his functions after the German occupation of Hungary in 1944. He was executed as a war criminal in 1946. Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés*, 401–411.

<sup>49</sup> Béla Giczy, “Nyilatkozat az első Turul Női Nemzeti Munkaszolgálatról” [Communiqué about the first Turul female national labour service], *Új Ezerév*, August–September, 1936, 2.

<sup>50</sup> Record Group K 612, 23 November 1936, MOL.

<sup>51</sup> Record Group K 612, 21 January 1939, MOL.

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Gyula Regős

Harc Előre

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Nemzeti Újság

New York Times

Pester Lloyd

Új Élet

Új Ezerév

Új Vetés.





## **Mata Hari or the Body of the Nation? Interpretations of Katalin Karády**

**David S. Frey**

**Fame** has a strange way of making individuals more opaque. Audiences assume they know the stars whose faces they see and whose personal lives they follow in popular media. However, the process of creating public personas can significantly alter the individual. Stars both make themselves and are made through media, sometimes in a symbiotic manner, other times in an adversarial one. Such is the case with the Hungarian songstress and actress Katalin Karády. This analysis of the characterizations of Karády, which emerges from a myriad of disjointed descriptions and biographic confusion about the actress, is case in point. There is much we do not know, and thus much legend, surrounding the woman who dominated the Hungarian box office and whose voice reigned over popular music during the Second World War. It is precisely this contradiction — this dominant public personality with multiple semi-private and private personas — that make Karády a superb subject for a brief study of symbolism, nation and gender in the context of a changing Hungary.

Who was this Katalin Karády? This is not an easy question to answer. The story of Katalin Karády, née Kanczler, could have been dreamed up in Hollywood. Karády was born in the Kőbánya section of Budapest in early December 1910, the youngest of seven children born to Ferenc Kanczler and Rozália Lőrinc. The household was “despotic”; her shoemaker father prohibited reading the newspaper, visiting the theatre, and going to the movies. As an adolescent, she received scholarships which allowed her to study abroad, mainly in Switzerland, and briefly escape her repressive home life.<sup>1</sup> Drawn to the stage, she enrolled in acting classes in 1936, when she was 25, but made little progress until the film and theater journalist Zoltán Egyed discovered her singing in a Budapest café in 1938. Convinced of her talent, and the need for new non-Jewish talent due to the stultifying effects of the First Jewish Law, Egyed took Karády’s career into his hands. At his suggestion, she worked with Ilona

Aczél, one of Hungary's most renowned acting coaches, whose greatest pupil prior to Karády was Zita Perczel, the star of one of the most well-known 1930s Hungarian films, *The Dream Car [A meseautó]*. Egyed also suggested that Katalin change her name to Karády, and he helped arrange her debut in 1939 at the Pest Theater in the Somerset Maugham play, "The Lady and the Devil." Her beauty and her voice, from that point on displayed on several of Budapest's most prominent stages, launched her into the world of motion pictures. Between 1939 and 1948, she starred in twenty features and several short films, making her, according to Jenő Király, "the greatest star in Hungarian film history, the first and last of [Hungary's] great divas, our film goddess."<sup>2</sup> Yet her activities and roles also earned the disdain of the radical right, who blamed the actress for spreading the "Jewish pestilence."<sup>3</sup> Her film career was greatly hindered by her 1944 arrests by the Gestapo, for her pro-Allied leanings, and then by the Arrow Cross for her supposed "defeatism" and lack of patriotism.<sup>4</sup> When the tide of war turned and the Red Army occupied Budapest in 1945, Karády again found herself detained, this time by the Communist secret police. Though she returned to the stage and starred in a handful of films after the war, authorities heavily restricted her professional activities. From the late 1940s on, Communist apparatchiks refused her roles in Budapest's top theaters, condemning her for having become a star during the Horthy era and for the types of roles and politics she chose. In 1949, they would forbid reprises of her films. Humiliated, Karády fled Hungary with the renowned singer Oliver Lantos in February 1951, settling temporarily in Salzburg in 1951.<sup>5</sup> Eventually, she emigrated to the US in 1968 after years as a peripatetic in Western Europe (Austria, Switzerland, Belgium) and South America (Brazil).<sup>6</sup> She rarely appeared on stage thereafter, working in relative obscurity in a Madison Avenue hat shop. Her short but storied career in Hungary has made her the object of great affection and admiration, not to mention substantial gendered mythologizing.<sup>7</sup> This Hungarian brunette was, as András Csont asserts, "just as much emblematic of her times" as was Marilyn Monroe for post-war America.<sup>8</sup>

This article will consider various perspectives on Karády and in the process discuss the symbolism of these separate narratives, the ways in which Karády was and was not exemplary of her times. As a film giant in a small country, a *femme fatale* rumoured to be a lesbian, a spy, an émigré, a subject of historical analysis, and even one of the "Righteous among the Nations," Karády inscribed upon herself — and was ascribed by others — a range of meanings. Karády's complexities and the dilemmas she posed, I suggest, help explain how the body of the actress became the canvas upon

which she and other Hungarians painted various narratives of nation and gendered behavior.

The first, and the least complicated, portrayal of Karády was as movie star. The youngest of seven children, Karády arrived on stage and screen at a time when the Hungarian cultural industries were in a state of crisis. In the midst of the application of the Second Jewish Law and the purges of creative Jewish talent this entailed, Hungarian film and theater were desperate for new, attractive potential.<sup>9</sup> “This type of actress, which she is capable of becoming, is greatly needed on stage,” wrote Aladár Schöpflin in *Nyugat*.<sup>10</sup> Karády, whose husky voice drew comparisons with Greta Garbo, quickly became a box office winner, and like the stars of her day, a vehicle for defining gendered fashions, patterns of consumption, and behavioral norms.<sup>11</sup> What distinguished Karády was that she transcended and subverted norms, displaying a willingness to tackle roles rarely seen in Hungarian productions, becoming Hungary’s first full-fledged vamp, sex symbol, and liberated woman. Her breakthrough role came in the Lajos Zilahy-written *Halálos tavasz* [Deadly Spring], in which she starred opposite Pál Jávor, the Hungarian Errol Flynn facsimile with whom she frequently found herself paired.<sup>12</sup> In *Deadly Spring*, which premiered in December 1939, Karády played the empowered and uncontrollable *femme fatale* role she would often reprise, driving her co-star Jávor to commit suicide by refusing to commit her love to him alone. In 1940, Karády played Queen Elizabeth, the title character in Félix Podmaniczky’s film *Erzsébet királyné* [Queen Elizabeth] by the same title. In this fictionalized historical film, the daughter of a Hungarian revolutionary convinces Karády’s Elizabeth to learn Hungarian and to back Hungary’s desire for autonomy from Vienna. Karády’s busiest years were 1942-43, when she starred in 14 films. In no less than 9 roles, she played the seductress or dangerous love interest: *Deceived* [Csalódás] (1942); *A Heart Stops* [Egy szív megáll] (1942); *Deadly Kiss* [Halálos csók] (1942); *Guard-post in the Suburbs* [Külvárosi őrszoba] (1942); *Opium Waltz* [Ópiumkeringő] (1942); *Sirius* [Szíriusz] (1942); *Machita* (1943); *Szováthy Éva* [Eva Szováthy] (1943); *Something Adrift in the Water* [Valamit visz a víz] (1943).

In the 1943 film *Machita*, Karády plays a spy from an unknown enemy country dispatched to Budapest in search of plans for a new anti-aircraft gun. Performing as a nightclub dancer under the name Machita, she must use her perfect Hungarian and her other charms to seduce three engineers. Naturally, two of the three are putty in her hands, but the third, company director György Szávody, proves more difficult. As he resists,

her desire for him grows, and she soon is unable to suppress the feelings she has for him. The always competent police inform Szávody of Machita's real identity. Despite this, his love for her appears to trump his love for country, and they flee to the countryside to deliver the blueprints to Machita's handlers. However, in the decisive scene, the world turns right again, both in terms of gendered and national norms. It is Machita who gives in to her heart, abetted by a true Hungarian who, when rubber meets the road, would never betray *his* country. She refuses to turn over the designs for the gun, is shot by the other spies, and dies in György's arms. Thus, the love of country triumphs through the stronger, male, sex, whereas the foreign and female "other" is erased as a potential threat to the national body, but only after she herself is seduced by Hungary's intrinsic allure.

It is, perhaps, this role that defined the myth of Karády more than any other; perhaps because it did, to an extent, accurately reflect a portion of her private life. As she was filming *Machita*, Karády was, in fact, involved in the world of real espionage. Numerous accounts of the activities of Colonel General István Ujszászy, the chief of the Hungarian General Staff's domestic counter-espionage department [*Vkf-2*] from 1939 to 1942 and from 1942 to 1944, the head of the larger internal security apparatus subordinate to the Interior Minister known as the State Protection Center [*Államvédelmi Központ*], confirm that Karády and Ujszászy were engaged in a public love affair that Karády assumed would lead to marriage after the war.<sup>13</sup> Ujszászy, who had contacts with *Abwehr* Chief Admiral Wilhelm Canaris dating back to the late 1930s, with the OSS, and with a highly secretive American intelligence unit known as "the Pond," was, if not an outright opponent of the Nazis, someone who believed that the Allies would ultimately triumph.<sup>14</sup> Ujszászy protected jailed Communists and opponents of the government from execution; and despite numerous opportunities to flee, remained in Hungary, playing a significant role in the attempted negotiations with the Allies to extricate Hungary from the war. Specifically, Ujszászy was the crucial contact in *Operation Sparrow*, the early March 1944 airdrop of American intelligence officers into Hungary to meet with government officials to discuss Hungary's potential withdrawal from the Second World War.<sup>15</sup> This plan, devised by the Office of Strategic Services, the precursor to the CIA, and overseen by OSS head Allen Dulles, was the mission depicted in Péter Bacsó's 2001 film, *The Smouldering Cigarette* [*A hamvadó cigarettavég*].<sup>16</sup> I will discuss this film momentarily, but first I wish to concentrate on Karády's role in *Operation Sparrow*. OSS records indicate that the meeting between

American intelligence and Ujzászy might have occurred in Karády's home.<sup>17</sup> While this report's claim that the Nazis discovered three supposedly English parachutists, executed them, and may have shot Karády as well are patently false, certain facts are less dubious.<sup>18</sup> Karády took an active part in *Operation Sparrow* and likely had a continued role in espionage through contacts with American military intelligence.<sup>19</sup>

Was there a division between the real and the screen versions of Karády, the personas of Machita and the actress who did have a confirmed role in the behind-the-scenes drama of the war? Imre Hecht, a Hungarian émigré film distributor who knew Karády personally, told me that he assumed Karády to be a spy.<sup>20</sup> That Karády had an affair with General Ujzászy, as I mentioned, was an open secret. In a recently declassified narrative in the possession of the CIA, the author identified as Tibor Revay alleges this affair was far more than one of love. Public opinion at the time, according to the journalist András Korom and the historian Szabolcs Szita, held that Karády "converted" Ujzászy into an anti-fascist, although Szita dismisses this as myth. Both Korom and Szita agree that Karády was responsible for arranging some of Ujzászy's liaisons with leftists, including meetings with László Rajk and the Smallholder Party leader István Kovács.<sup>21</sup> Revay leaps well beyond these assertions, suggesting it was Karády's covert life, particularly her facilitation of contacts between powerful men, that advanced not only her acting career, but Allied peace efforts and even the Stalinist show trials. While these charges beggar belief, it is worth tracing the logic of Revay's fanciful notions.

Revay speculates that Karády's affair with Ujzászy began before her career took off, and it was in fact Ujzászy's connections that propelled her to prominence, incorporating her into the right circles, finding her appropriate promoters.<sup>22</sup> Further, Revay suggests it was Karády who facilitated contacts between the pro-Allied camp among the Hungarian leadership and the United States OSS through her connections in Switzerland, where she had attended school before her family returned to Budapest.<sup>23</sup> She became, Revay charges, "one of the chief string-pullers of the underground," a woman who had connections not only with Ujzászy, but Miklós Horthy Jr., the son of the Hungarian Regent, Noel Field, the infamous American double agent, and László Rajk, the renowned Hungarian Communist who later became the victim in Hungary's most notorious show trial.<sup>24</sup> She must have been a spy for the Communists, alleges Revay, as the only way she could possibly have fled Hungary in 1951, crossing "unharméd six kilometers of mined and guarded territory of the no man's land between Hungary and Austria...[with the] help of Soviet Russian

officers.”<sup>25</sup>

Numerous errors in the Revay manuscript convince the reader that the text is clearly fiction. The author describes Béla Kun as the Hungarian communist dictator of 1920 (rather than 1919), charges Hungarian Communists of “crimes” against the general population in 1924, and quotes private conversations between Ujszászy and Karády verbatim. Yet for all of its inventiveness, the document reveals a gendered trope, a Mata Hari-esque mindset that is indicative of a pervasive strain of post-war Hungarian thought. Written in late 1951 and early 1952, Revay’s work may have been an early draft of a historical thriller in a Red Scare series that never came to fruition. However, the work also came at a time during which Hungarians, particularly émigrés in the United States, sought scapegoats, people to blame for the perceived disaster of the war and the Communist takeover. Scapegoating, as Attila Pók has shown, involves the desire to assuage one’s own guilt, often for political reasons, and takes typical forms.<sup>26</sup> One form Pók does not consider is the fallen female, the siren/seductress who betrays her nation. Like the Great War’s Mata Hari, Revay constructs an image of a cunningly manipulative woman, a puppeteer of love, who uses her “feminine wiles” to tie together all of the evils that have destroyed Hungary. From her association with film industry Jews, the greedy exploiters who, as many Hungarian authors had argued in the 1930s and 40s, helped to weaken Hungary; to her ties to the well-meaning, misled patriots of the Horthy era; to her links with the party of surrender to the Communist hordes; to her friendships with those of the Left themselves — it is as if Karády is the focal point, the axis around which the vortex of Hungary’s wartime collapse revolves. She is, as Slavoj Žižek has detailed in reference to Ingrid Bergman and Roberto Rossellini, a “woman-symptom”; woman as the cause of and the embodiment of the fall of man.<sup>27</sup>

She wore no scarlet letter, but Karády’s sexuality, her primary identifier in film, became her marker during her film heyday and in early post-war narratives. Most of her roles were “grown up women” with an overt erotic flair. In his text about the myth and magic of Karády, Jenő Király comments extensively on the “wonder” of Karády’s body and screen sexuality.<sup>28</sup> But unlike Count Michael Andrassy, who criticized Karády in the early 1950s as a communist collaborator who was known to be the “biggest whore in Budapest” during the Nazi period, Király does not believe the actress to be restricted to a single so-called feminine identity.<sup>29</sup> Király points out that Karády frequently played the “active, clever, successful working woman” who was not always at the mercy of a

man. Of course, audiences did not always respond positively to these characteristics, interpreting Karády pejoratively as a lesbian man-hater.<sup>30</sup> On this point, Király and Žižek fundamentally agree: whether Karády was liberated from predominant heterosexual mores or the strictures of traditional feminine identity, her liberation was a mortal threat to man. “Carefully educated as fairies,” writes Király, “[the women Karády played] received their top-notch diplomas, and took them straight to hell,” men in tow.<sup>31</sup>

The comments of Andrásy and Király make it appear that, during the wartime and immediate post-war eras, there was an even greater congruence between the Karády of the spy narrative and Karády the film star, than in the fictional Revay account. Combined, these sources present an image of a woman who, whether loved or hated, wrecked havoc on the patriarchal and national institutions of wartime Hungary, even as she became the nation’s most desirable box office consumable. Nevertheless, as Hungary’s image makers changed, particularly after 1989, representations of Karády and her place in the nation also transitioned.

Karády has become so much a part of the Hungarian “memory” and nostalgia that her songs and films have experienced a revival in the past decades, and numerous websites devoted to her have appeared, constituting what Péter Bacsó has called a “Karády renaissance.”<sup>32</sup> Perhaps even more indicative of her continued presence was a story and doctored picture published in a 2000 issue of the daily *Magyar Nemzet* which placed the chanteuse at the side of Winston Churchill, ostensibly as his mistress on the shores of the Balaton during the summer of 1929.<sup>33</sup> The picture, which we know was fabricated (Karády would have been 18 and Churchill never visited Hungary), is a window into the pre-existing myth of Karády as singer, seductress, and spy. But something new is also implicit in this image: Karády as the social conscience of the nation, the mistress who knew which side was in the right well before the war.<sup>34</sup>

The most significant contribution to this new image was the popular 2001 feature about her titled *The Smoldering Cigarette* by Péter Bacsó. This film foregrounds an enormous part of Karády’s life that the previous spy narratives had diminished, that of Karády’s work to save Jews. While stories of Karády’s actions protecting Jews circulated even during the war and caused her to run afoul of the radical right, one did not publicize one’s pro-Jewish activities in late-1940s and early-1950s Hungary. It has taken two generations and the fall of Communism for her contributions to come to light. This film, made with significant state support, focused on the relationship between Karády and György G.

Dénes, her Jewish lyricist. Dénes' character, known in the film as Miklós Sutberger (Suti úr), is sent to do labour service on the snowy Eastern Front, likely somewhere along the Don. The film intertwines numerous well-connected figures, such as the editor of *Magyar Nemzet* and General Ujszászy, who realize the war to be lost even before the Soviet demolition of the Hungarian Second Army (after the Stalingrad breakout), and contrive to act. The plot of the movie hinges on pro-Allied and pro-Jewish themes, although the film white-washes neither Hungarian anti-Semitism (which Ujszászy shares) nor the aloofness and isolation of Hungary's aristocratic elite. Ultimately, the efforts of a spoiled but well-intentioned diva, Karády, save the life of her inspiration, the songwriter Suti, rescuing him from the Soviet advance through Ukraine. As the plot develops, the affair between Karády and Ujszászy takes center stage, paralleled by a narrative line leading toward *Operation Sparrow*. To tie the entire film together, director Bacsó gives the lyricist Suti a key role in the spy drama. At Ujszászy's behest, Suti, an idealized composite of the cosmopolitan "culture" Jews of interwar Budapest, acts as a Hungarian patriot. Ujszászy, knowing that the Germans are aware of *Operation Sparrow*, realizes that to save the Americans and himself, he needs to devise a cover story. Because Suti speaks both English and German, Ujszászy's epiphany is that Suti should act as the American Colonel who was dropped into Hungary to negotiate with Horthy. Despite his mistreatment by his countrymen — having been forced to do labour service and at one point nearly killed — Suti consents to the charade and does a great service to his country.

I view the *The Smouldering Cigarette* as a transition point, a drama that coincides with the revival of interest in Jews, Judaism, and the Jewish role in Hungarian history that characterizes the last 20 years. Karády's story is central to this transformation. Once again, she is the canvas for Hungarian national identity, in this case Hungary's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, its coming to terms with the treatment of its Jews. Through the medium of Karády, Bacsó's feature restores the Jew both as patriot and as central to the culture of interwar and wartime Hungary. The film does not, however, fully detail Karády's relationship with the Jewish community during the years of the war. Nowhere are we shown that Karády's efforts depicted in the film to have her Jewish muse recalled from labour service in 1942, resulted in her being hauled before a court and chastised for violation of the Jewish laws. Due to this action and other outspoken efforts, filmmakers began to deny Karády roles. By 1944, she eventually quit acting, in part to protest the industry's offensive treatment of its Jews.<sup>35</sup>



These contemporary accounts of Karády's actions have recently been augmented through the initiatives of the historian Szabolcs Szita. Based on Szita's research, Yad Vashem posthumously honoured Karády as one of the "Righteous among the Nations," primarily for saving Jewish children and sheltering them through the winter of 1945 until the liberation of Hungary by Red Army troops. According to István Domonkos, who had personal interactions with the actress, Karády also assisted the Jewish actor Imre Ráday and his wife, enabling them to survive the Holocaust.<sup>36</sup> János Gömöri, one of the several Jewish youths saved by Karády, described a separate act of salvation in the early winter of 1944. Gömöri was taken from his Wesselényi Street ghetto home by the Arrow Cross, and dragged to the banks of the Danube, along with other Jewish children. Accounts indicate that Karády, possibly accompanied by Ujzászy, pulled up in a large black vehicle and managed to convince or bribe the Arrow Cross militia men not to take the freezing children on a death march or toss the children into the river, which they apparently intended to do.<sup>37</sup> Gömöri and a number of other Jewish children were sheltered in the basement of villas owned by Karády, on Városmajor út and Pasaréti út, for the duration of the war.<sup>38</sup> All of these actions were taken at great risk to her own life and property. The Gestapo arrested Karády on 18 April 1944. Whether the charge was "defeatism"; "liberalism," a code word for any purported pro-Jewish sentiment; or treason — a charge repeated, incidentally, by the Russians less than a year later — Karády languished in jail for somewhere between a week and three months.<sup>39</sup> While holding her in custody, the Germans allegedly starved her, beat her, robbed her apartment, and ultimately accused her of being a spy.<sup>40</sup> She was interred again during the Arrow Cross interregnum, in the fall of 1944, and eventually gained release through the intervention of higher authorities. Struggling through the Siege of Budapest, she survived, but like Hungary, emerged from the war psychologically scarred.

This new evaluation of Karády, based less on her appearance or screen personas and more on her actual acts, began in the early 1980s with a series of interviews and texts, and took off in 1989 with the republication of Karády's biography *How I became an actress* [Hogyan lettem színésznő], and a series of obituaries published after her February 1990 death, accelerated further with her selection as "Righteous among the Nations" in 2003.<sup>41</sup> This current iteration of Karády makes her simultaneously a symbol of what was attractive about, and right with, old Hungary and what present day, influential image-makers, including those of the post-communist state, hope new Hungary would be.<sup>42</sup> When con-

textualized this way, Karády the deadly seductress morphs into Karády the liberating angel, the saviour ascribed with traditionally masculine fighting qualities as she salvages a usable, albeit flawed, past.<sup>43</sup> Thus mythologized, and only after the fall of the communist regime she fled, she embodies a cosmopolitan, inclusive, European, progressive, and economically successful Hungary, a Hungary with agency — the ability to act positively and thrive.

My brief attempt to situate, historicize, and provide new empirical evidence concerning the mythology of Katalin Karády demonstrates that as concepts of gendered practice and Hungarian identity changed, so did interpretations of the roles, life and actions of Karády. Changing historical contexts allow us to re-read the famous figures we thought we knew and as a result, to ascribe to them new personas. Not only, we find, was Karády representative of her time, but because we want her to be, she is also reflective of the present, and even a model for the future.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> István Takács, “Karády Katalin életrajza” [The life of Katalin Karády], Színészkönyvtár, <http://www.szineszkonyvtar.hu/contents/k-o/karadyelet.htm> accessed January 5, 2010, Karády’s actual birth date is subject to debate, as this website explains. Karády also studied in Holland before returning to Hungary. A recent biography estimates, however, that she spent only about three total months studying abroad. László Pusztaszeri, *Karády és Ujszászy. Párhuzamos életrajz történelmi háttérrel* [Karády and Ujszászy, Parallel biographies against a historical backdrop] (Budapest: Kairosz Kiadó, 2008), 35.

<sup>2</sup> Jenő Király, *Karády, mítosza és mágiája* [Karády, her myth and her magic] (Budapest: Háttér Lap- és Könyvkiadó, 1989), 5.

<sup>3</sup> András Korom, “Karády, a legendák kémje” [Karády, the spy of legends], *Délmagyarország*, April 26, 2008, [http://www.delmagyar.hu/szines\\_hirek/karady\\_a\\_legendak\\_kemje/2055370/](http://www.delmagyar.hu/szines_hirek/karady_a_legendak_kemje/2055370/).

<sup>4</sup> John Cunningham, *Hungarian Cinema from Coffee House to Multiplex* (London: Wallflower Press, 2004), 42.

<sup>5</sup> The details of Karády’s flight were recently brought to light by Csaba Szabó using trial records related to Karády’s exfiltration. Csaba Szabó, “Meghalt Karády Katalinért. Adalék a Rákosi-kor ‘igazság’ szolgáltatásához” [Died for Katalin Karády. To the history of “justice” in the Rákosi era], in *Megértő történelem: Tanulmányok a hatvanéves Gyarmati György tiszteletére* [Empathic history; Studies in homage of the sixty-year-old György Gyarmati], ed. Magdolna Baráth, Gábor Bánkúti, and János M. Rainer (Budapest: L’Harmattan kiadó, 2011), 113-123.

<sup>6</sup> According to István Takács, Karády was tainted in both the eyes of the right and the left (including representative émigré communities), which was one of the reasons it took as long as it did for her to obtain an entry visa to the United States. Her family, not surprisingly, was punished for her flight. Several family members were jailed for 13 months and forced to do hard labour. They remained under police observation for over 20 years. See Takács, “Karády Katalin Életrajza.”

<sup>7</sup> In Karády’s heyday, her popularity was so great that fans formed numerous “Katalin Karády circles” throughout Hungary, see Cunningham, *Hungarian Cinema from Coffee House to Multiplex*, 44; “Smouldering Cigarette — Interview with Péter Bacsó,” *Filmhu*, January 25, 2002, <http://www.magyar.film.hu/object.5520F252-2B5F-4573-A63F-34D9FDCA8EF0.ivy>.

<sup>8</sup> András Csont, “Hamvadó cigarettavég, a múltak ütemén” [Smoldering cigarette], *Filmvilág* 2002/1, accessed October 27, 2007, <http://www.c3.hu/scripta/filmvilag/0201/csont.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> For a description of the trauma wrought by the application of the Jewish laws in film, see David Frey, “National Cinema, World Stage: A History of Hungary’s Sound Film Industry, 1929-44.” PhD diss., Columbia University, 2003, chap. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Cited in Takács, “Karády Katalin Életrajza.”

<sup>11</sup> For more on Karády as star and commercial object, see Cunningham, *Hungarian Cinema from Coffee House to Multiplex*, 44. For the star system and its ambivalence, see Jana F. Burns, *Nazi Cinema’s New Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 284-335.

<sup>12</sup> Approximately one-third of Karády’s films also featured Jávor.

<sup>13</sup> Pusztaszeri, *Karády és Ujszászy*, 272. See also the well-researched Wikipedia.com entry on Ujszászy. In a 1970s interview given in New York and rebroadcast during the December 2005 RTL Klub *XXI. Század* program, Karády made this claim as part of an explanation of Ujszászy’s disappearance at the hands of the Soviets. “Ujszászy István,” *Wikipedia*, accessed September 11, 2012, [http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ujsz%C3%A1szy\\_Istv%C3%A1n#cite\\_ref-0](http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ujsz%C3%A1szy_Istv%C3%A1n#cite_ref-0).

<sup>14</sup> According to a report by the head of “the Pond,” his agents had a “direct pipeline” to Hungary’s leadership via the General Staff and Hungary’s military attaché system, overseen by Ujszászy. See John V. Grombach, Chief, Coverage and Indoctrination Branch (Former Chief, Special Services Branch), “For the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2” Subject: Coverage and Indoctrination Branch (Special Service Section, formerly Special Service Branch), 4 December 1945. TAB A: Initiation, Development, and Specific Accomplishments of the Coverage and Indoctrination Branch, p. 6. National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA), RG 263, Entry P 12, Series 1, Box 1.

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<sup>15</sup> Douglas Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), 195-98.

<sup>16</sup> Document 2-93, Telegram 1309-11, 14 December 1943; Document 2-112, Telegram 205-7, to Algiers, 6 January 1944; and Document 3-37, Telegram 2288-92, 3 March 1944. In Allen W. Dulles and Neal H. Petersen, *From Hitler's Doorstep: The Wartime Intelligence Reports of Allen Dulles, 1942-1945* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1996), 178, 194, 233-34.

<sup>17</sup> Document 3-114, Telegram 3320, 4 May 1944. In Dulles and Petersen, *From Hitler's Doorstep*, 283. The telegram indicates that the meeting between the Americans and Aramis (Ujszászy's OSS code name) occurred in the home of his mistress.

<sup>18</sup> *Operation Sparrow* failed because two of the key Hungarian go-betweens were double agents. See Agostino von Hassell, Sigrid MacRae, and Simone Ameskamp, *Alliance of Enemies: The Untold Story of the Secret American and German Collaboration to End World War II* (New York: Macmillan, 2006), 181-182. See also the account of one of the OSS officers involved, Colonel Florimund Duke, recounted in Russell Miller, *Behind Enemy Lines. The Oral History of Special Operations in World War II* (New York: Macmillan, 2002), 212-218.

<sup>19</sup> Memorandum dated 9 June 1944. Subject: Secret Intelligence – Turkey and Hungary. This memorandum discusses the arrest of a “COL Kadar” who is “a trusted friend of the Regent” and his girlfriend, “a popular Hungarian actress”, who is hiding “a portable wireless transmitter” delivered to her by American intelligence. Kadah or Kádár were OSS references to the chief of the 2nd Bureau (Counter-espionage), which likely was Ujszászy's successor in the Vkf-2, Gyula Kádár. Ujszászy and Kádár shared responsibilities for contacts with the OSS. The references could have confused Ujszászy and Kádár, mistakenly identifying Kádár's girlfriend as Karády. In the same folder, soon after this memorandum, appears an article on Karády and Ujszászy from the post-war period, suggesting a link between the two documents. NARA, RG 263, Entry P 12, Series 1, Box 1, Folder “Hungary.” See also Szabolcs Szita, “Ujszászy István tábornok playafutása” [The career of General István Ujszászy], *Múltunk* 2 (2006): 19-21.

<sup>20</sup> David S. Frey interview with Imre Hecht, June 18, 2007. Hecht's claim, specifically that Karády spied for the US, is supported not only by evidence cited above, but also by other circumstantial archival evidence. Tens of State Department files related to Karády are classified, and have been removed from State Department files at the National Archives and Records Administration. I made several FOIA requests and the National Archives and State Department are convinced that the files have been destroyed, while the CIA claims not to have material related to the starlet, despite the fact that I have discovered documents like the one cited in note 22.

<sup>21</sup> Korom, “Karády, a legendák kémje.”; [http://www.delmagyar.hu/szines\\_hirek/karady\\_a\\_legendak\\_kemje\\_/2055370/](http://www.delmagyar.hu/szines_hirek/karady_a_legendak_kemje_/2055370/); Szabolcs Szita, “Ujszászy

István tábornok pályafutása” [The career of General István Ujszászy], *Múltunk* 2 (2006),” 21. Szita quotes Gyula Kádár.

<sup>22</sup> Tibor Revay, “Partisan der Liebe/Partisan of Love,” dated 20 January 1952, part one, 5-6, 9-10. CREST, CIA-RDP80R01731R000500110014-4. Revay’s writings were apparently a serialized set of articles meant to be published outside of the United States. There is no evidence that Karády met Ujszászy prior to beginning acting.

<sup>23</sup> Revay, “Partisan der Liebe/Partisan of Love,” dated 27 January 1952, part two, section one, 1-2.

<sup>24</sup> Revay, “Partisan der Liebe/Partisan of Love,” dated 27 January 1952, part one, section two, 5ff.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, part one, 6 caption one. As Csaba Szabó shows, her escape was made possible not by connections with the Communists, but with the aid of an American intelligence organization. Szabó identifies it as the Counter Intelligence Corps, an espionage unit linked to US Army Military Intelligence, and as Igor Lukes has recently written, very active in Czechoslovakia and Austria in the late 1940s. I believe the CIC may have had connections to “the Pond,” the rogue US spy agency described in footnote 14 which had extensive practice extracting dissidents from Hungary, or with former Pond agents working with the CIA. See Igor Lukes, *On the Edge of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Szabó, “Meghalt Karády Katalinért. Adalék a Rákosi-kor ‘igazság’ szolgáltatásához,” 114; Christopher Felix [James McCargar], *A Short Course in the Secret War*, 4th ed. (Lanham & New York: Madison Books, 2001), 262; Mark Stout, “The Hazards of Private Spy Operations. The Pond: Running Agents for State, War, and the CIA,” *Studies in Intelligence* 48, no. 3 (2007): 69-82. See esp. page 75, <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kentcsi/vol48no3/html/v48i3a07p.htm>

<sup>26</sup> Attila Pók, “Atonement and Sacrifice. Scapegoats in Modern Eastern and Central Europe,” *East European Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (Winter, 1998): 531-48.

<sup>27</sup> Slavoj Žižek, “Rossellini: Woman as Symptom of Man,” *October* 54 (Autumn, 1990): 20. Žižek goes on to discuss woman as the suicide impulse, the negation of man, an allusion extremely apt in reference to Karády. In several of her films, (*Halálos tavasz*, *Egy szív megáll*, *Hazajáró lélek*) Karády drives her co-star to contemplate suicide, take his own life, or make a decision that causes his own death.

<sup>28</sup> Király, *Karády, mítosza és mágiája*, 10-11, 17-18ff.

<sup>29</sup> NARA, RG 59, Dept of State Decimal File 1950-1954, Entry: Europe, File designation 940.40/6-451. “Catherine Karadi,” dated 4 June 1951.

<sup>30</sup> Recent accounts of Karády’s life indicate that her sexual proclivities were the subject of endless gossip, a point confirmed by the historian Peter Pastor, in conversation with the author, November 2008. See also “Katalin Karády, the Hungarian ‘femme fatale’, was born one hundred years ago,” *Hungarian Ambiance*, December 8, 2010, <http://www.hungarianambiance.com/> 2010/12/

katalin-karady-hungarian-femme-fatale.html accessed December 9, 2010.

<sup>31</sup> Király, *Karády, mítosza és mágiája*, 10.

<sup>32</sup> “*Smouldering Cigarette* - Interview with Péter Bacsó.” *Filmhu* (25 January 2002), [http://www.magyar.film.hu/object.5520F252-2B5F-4573-A63F-34D9FD\\_CA8EF0.ivy](http://www.magyar.film.hu/object.5520F252-2B5F-4573-A63F-34D9FD_CA8EF0.ivy) For examples of websites devoted to Karády, see <http://karadykatalin.lap.hu/#b19342222> and [http://www.mommo.hu/media/Karady\\_Katalin\\_4](http://www.mommo.hu/media/Karady_Katalin_4). Numerous websites contain clips of her movies or her songs.

<sup>33</sup> I could not locate the original article, but John Lukács discusses it in a 13 June 2001 *Budapest Sun* article titled “New Insight on Churchill’s View of Hungary,” *Budapest Sun*, June 13, 2001. Lukács declares the picture a forgery. See also Gabriel Ronay, “Hungarians go to war over legacy of Winston Churchill,” *Sunday Tribune [Ireland]* August 3, 2003, accessed July 9, 2008, <http://www.tribune.ie/archive/article/2003/aug/03/hungarians-go-to-war-over-legacy-of-winston-church/>.

<sup>34</sup> Her flight from Hungary adds to this lore, as she also knew what was right during the Rákosi era. Szabó, “Meghalt Karády Katalinért. Adalék a Rákosi-kor ‘igazság’ szolgáltatásához,” 122-23.

<sup>35</sup> Karády claimed to have kept her Jewish lawyer, hid Jews, spoken out against the Germans, and even to have walked out of a film in the middle of the production because Jewish colleagues had been fired. She was also closely connected with Pál Jávör, the film industry’s leading man from 1931 through 1943, who was married to a Jewish woman. Jávör was kicked out of the Film Chamber and banned from production ostensibly for his leftist leanings and his long-running feud with former Film Chamber President Ferenc Kiss. Undoubtedly, part of the feud and part of the reason for his expulsion from the Chamber traced to Jávör’s defense of the Jews, particularly his wife. Jávör was eventually jailed by the Arrow Cross and ultimately sent to Germany in early 1945. Karády was one of his most steadfast defenders, and she certainly suffered for it. See the 1989 edition of Katalin Karády’s autobiography, *Hogyan lettem színésznő* [How I became an actress] (Budapest: Kentaur könyvek, 1989), 193. See also Tibor Sándor, *Őrségváltás után. Zsidókérdés és filmpolitika 1938-1944* [Following the changing of the guards. The Jewish question and the politics of film 1938-1944] (Budapest: Magyar Filmintézet, 1997), 212.; László Kelecsényi, *Karády Katalin* (Budapest, 1982), 40.

<sup>36</sup> István Domonkos letter to Hungarian Auschwitz Foundation Holocaust Documentation Center, Budapest 24 February 2003. Yad Vashem Karády Dossier. I thank Irena Steinfeldt for providing me with these documents.

<sup>37</sup> János Gömöri letter to Holocaust Documentation Center, Budapest 30 September 2003, pages 1-2. Yad Vashem Karády Dossier.

<sup>38</sup> Gömöri may have meant Lepke utca (near Pasaréti).

<sup>39</sup> András Mezei, “Beszélgetés Karády Katalinnal” [Conversation with Katalin Karády] in Katalin Karády, *Hogyan lettem színésznő* [How I became an actress], 192-93. Mezei indicates the reason for Karády’s arrest was that she sang

“defeatist” songs on Hungarian Radio on 19 March. See also Gömöri, letter to Holocaust Documentation Center, 2, see esp. concerning the charge of treason.

<sup>40</sup> Korom, “Karády, a legendák kémje.” [http://www.delmagyar.hu/szines\\_hirek/karady\\_a\\_legendak\\_kemje\\_/2055370/](http://www.delmagyar.hu/szines_hirek/karady_a_legendak_kemje_/2055370/) See also the testimony of István Domonkos, who claims Karády endured a beating at the hands of the Gestapo yet did not betray the children whom she protected.

<sup>41</sup> Karády first spoke of being a “human opposed to inhumanity” in an interview with András Mezei in 1980, but the positive mythologizing took off after publication of her autobiography. András Mezei, “Megkérdeztük Karády Katalint...” [We asked Katalin Karády...], *Élet és Irodalom*, February 2, 1980.

<sup>42</sup> In 2012 alone, for example, Karády was further mythologized by a short biographical drama performed by Emese Fay titled “Budapesti epizód – monodráma Karády Katalin életéről” as part of the summer Jewish Festival, and her inclusion in an government-supported exhibit at Budapest’s Metró Galéria on “Righteous among the Nations” in Hungary titled “Emberségről példát...” Numerous singers has been remaking her music as well.

<sup>43</sup> Part of the reconsideration of Karády includes acknowledgement of her selfish “diva” side, her representation of capitalist materialism as a high-earning, high-living, hard-to-control star. See, for example, the catalogue associated with the 2003 Ernst Museum [Budapest] exhibit *Dívák, primadonnák, színésznők*, [Divas, primadonnas, actresses], edited by Tamás Gajdó.

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**Interview**

Author's interview with Imre Hecht, 18 June 2007.

## **Gendered Exclusions and Inclusions in Hungary's Right-Radical Arrow Cross Party (1939-1945): A Case Study of Three Female Party Members**

**Andrea Pető**

**World War II** is not exactly known as a time when many women broke through the glass ceiling to become visible in public life.<sup>1</sup> In interwar Hungary political citizenship was determined by growing restrictions on women's suffrage. These restrictions were opposed by social democrats and communists, but also by the increasingly powerful far right.<sup>2</sup> In this paper I look at four women on the far right who managed to break through the glass ceiling. In doing so, I seek to determine how they represented the far right's image of women.<sup>3</sup> How was political citizenship defined by the far right and how did the individual women involved in politics fit this definition? Who were the women on the extreme right and what can we learn from their life stories? These questions are poignant if our aim is to analyze female mobilization on the far right in terms of women's agency. In line with Saba Mahmood, I understand agency to mean the ability of the social agent to question existing social norms.<sup>4</sup> It was, in part, this factor that mobilized the far-right women under investigation, for, in addition to promoting the general far-right political agenda, the women were also seeking to gain acceptance for their own goals. In my paper I firstly examine what we know about these women and the sources available for studying their lives. I then analyze how historical role-models were used by the far right to define political citizenship. Finally, in an analysis of three life stories, I show how far-right women maneuvered themselves in the face of conflicting political pressures.

*Women on the far right: sources and facts*

Before addressing the facts, we should clarify the extent to which the three stories under consideration are representative. In Hungary, gendered

analysis of the history of the far right is still in its infancy.<sup>5</sup> The records of the People's Tribunal (that were set up immediately after the war) represent a point of departure for a systematic examination of the subject.<sup>6</sup> This material can be used to reconstruct the types of women that were attracted to the far right and the reasons for their attraction.

The following question should be asked: Who were the women tried by the People's Tribunal as war criminals? Ildikó Barna and I undertook an analysis of the social backgrounds of women defendants at the trials.<sup>7</sup> In our paper, which appeared in the magazine *Élet és Irodalom* [Life and Literature], we showed, based on the database of the Budapest City Archives, that women accounted for 10 percent of all of war crime prosecutions.<sup>8</sup> This percentage roughly corresponds to the current female-male ratio in Hungarian public life and politics. Prior to 1945, however, women were rarely active in public life, and so the 10 percent figure seems rather high.<sup>9</sup> One should note, however, that in the aftermath of World War II the reinvigorated Communist Party used the juridical process both to stigmatize the Horthy regime and to suppress the "matriarchy born in need."<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, we also know that in some party branch organizations as many as 30 percent of members were women, which suggests that the figure of 10 percent was less than women's overall share of party membership.

In 1939, when a number of Hungary's right-radical movements coalesced into the Arrow Cross Party,<sup>11</sup> the official discourse of the Horthy regime was hostile to women. In higher education, the rights of women to university study (granted in 1895) were severely restricted in the immediate aftermath of World War I.<sup>12</sup> These restrictions seem to have been made in reaction to the increased political presence of women,<sup>13</sup> which threatened the positions of the pre-1918 political elite. Around this time, the National Association of Hungarian Women [*Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége*, MANSZ] — founded by Cécile Tormay in 1918 — became the umbrella women's organization. It mobilized middle and upper-middle class women and it also functioned to limit the spread of left-wing and right-wing radicalism.<sup>14</sup>

During the parliamentary debate of the electoral law in 1938, it became clear that far-right groups — who shared with the left wing a desire to extend suffrage — were gaining ground.<sup>15</sup> Among Hungary's politicians, Gyula Gömbös — who drew many of his organizational ideas from the Italian fascist state — paid special attention to women's political mobilization: he even set up a separate women's party.<sup>16</sup> Subsequently, the far right also gave increased attention to the mobilization of women. The

Arrow Cross Party itself was formed from many divided and marginalized small groups and parties under the leadership of Ferenc Szálasi. The Arrow Cross Party first ran in the 1939 elections.

The Arrow Cross Party organization was based on a sexually divided and hierarchical order. Its women's organization was at the same level as the youth section. Its function was to promote mass membership. However, the Arrow Cross leadership recognized the political value of its female members. Various types of membership were made available to women: they could be members, supportive members or even secret supporters. The all-male party leadership wanted female party members to be active primarily in the social field. We know from press articles that the party's women members were not satisfied with this status: they too wanted to play an active role in politics.<sup>17</sup> However, if the Arrow Cross Party's female members "had taken themselves seriously" — that is, if they had behaved as men's political equals — they would have been immediately dismissed from party headquarters. In the party's top leadership and decision-making bodies there was no place for women. The case of Mrs. Dücső, the leader of the women's section of the Arrow Cross Party, demonstrates this form of treatment. At the same time, in the official Arrow Cross rhetoric, women were defined as strong and active. The Arrow Cross movement was a so-called counter-movement; under the Horthy regime it was denied official recognition and many of its members were imprisoned as the Horthy regime tried to navigate between the extreme left (the communists) and the extreme right (the Arrow Cross Party and its predecessor groups). The movement may also be seen as a socialization movement as it prepared its members for a series of events that were to take place sometime in the future. This moment came on October 15, 1944, when, in the aftermath of Regent Horthy's failed attempt to pull out of the war, the Arrow Cross came to power in Hungary, forming a Quisling-like government.

The women associated with the Arrow Cross Party formed four separate yet heterogeneous groups.<sup>18</sup> The first group consisted of women who had joined other far-right parties already in the 1920s. They were disillusioned white-collar women (such as typists and bookkeepers). Many of them had come to "truncated Hungary" (as the country was referred to following the Treaty of Trianon according to which Hungary lost two thirds of its pre-WWI territories) as ethnic Hungarian refugees from areas ceded to the successor states of Austria-Hungary after 1919. For these women, the newly-founded Arrow Cross Party offered a framework for their social integration in their chosen country. Often single, these working

women believed that their professional and social mobility had been hindered by a conservative political regime with its emphasis on a woman's place in the home. For this reason, they supported radical political solutions, in particular those offered by the far right.

The second group comprised women from lower-middle class or working class backgrounds who had committed criminal acts during the war. These women formed the largest group of defendants at the People's Tribunal. Specific (financial or personal) motives seem to have been behind their actions. They exploited the Shoah to take revenge and to "redistribute" social goods. Such women included the mentally ill as well as others who clearly suffered from psychological problems.

The third group consisted of rebellious and revolutionary women from middle-class or upper-middle class backgrounds. They were educated, wore men's clothing, and rode horses — just like men. Although these women had gained access to areas formerly closed to them, appeared emancipated and rejected patriarchy as the primary markers of their identity, they were marked by anti-modernism as their identity had been formed against European modernity and the enlightened interpretation of progress.

The fourth group is the best known and most visible in the public discourse. Here, we find family members of Arrow Cross leaders. Most of these women were from middle-class or upper-middle class backgrounds, but unlike the third group, they had no professional aspirations. They were the wives or relatives of men (husbands, brothers, and fathers) who had joined the Arrow Cross Party. Such relationships explained their actions. The public identity was that of "wife" or "supporter" to the husband or relative. Further below, I will present live stories of women that belonged to one of these groups; however, not all four groups will be represented.

The Arrow Cross Party had been formed in the misogynistic political milieu of interwar Hungary, in which "women" (especially the "new women" — i.e., working independent single women) were regarded as a threat and as unreliable by the male economic, political and cultural hegemony. A noticeable trend was the squeezing out of women from public life, achieved in part by restricting women's suffrage. In the aftermath of World War I, attempts were also made to restrict women from taking part in higher education.<sup>19</sup> The reformulation of political citizenship also meant determining which women belonged to the nation and which did not. It was against this backdrop that the Arrow Cross Party broke onto the scene. In spite of its anti-modernist rhetoric, the party nevertheless provided space for the realization of female autonomy. The reconstructed

stories present women who corresponded with (or adapted in line with their own needs) the normative far-right image of femininity, an image based on motherhood.

*Defining role models and femininity*

Before we examine — based on the life stories revealed in the courtroom — the normative definition of gender on the far right, it is worth looking at the manner in which the Arrow Cross Party made use of historical role models to define normative femininity. We can do so by comparing the Hungarian far-right movement with other major rightist movements in Europe at the time. If we look at countries other than Nazi Germany, we find some very interesting parallels.

Similarly to the women's organization of the Spanish Falangists, the women's section of the Arrow Cross Party strove to redefine femininity at a time when an increasing number of women were in paid employment.<sup>20</sup> Whereas the Falangists provided women, by means of education, with opportunities to integrate into Francoist public life (universities in Spain would only open to women in 1940), the same was not true for women who were employees or members of the Arrow Cross Party.<sup>21</sup> Just like the Arrow Cross, the Falangist women's organization defined the new female role with the help of historical female figures. However, whereas the Falangists propagated the cult of Isabella I (unifier of Spain) and the cult of St. Teresa of Avila (founder of the Discalced Carmelites), thereby demonstrating that religious beliefs and an active public role are not contradictory aims and aspirations, the Arrow Cross Party considered the women's ideal to be the charity work of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. And whereas the Falangists respected Nobel-prize winner Marie Curie for being an outstanding scientist, the Arrow Cross press praised her for being both an excellent scientist and a good mother:

If a woman wishes to achieve something in the intellectual field that is of real worth in absolute terms, she must have a rich and unimpaired emotional life. That is to say, she must be fully a woman. An excellent example of this is Marie Curie who was both a caring mother and an outstanding wife. By recognizing this, one will see the error of those who strove for women's emancipation in the bygone era. Women were made to compete with men in the intellectual field. This distorted their souls and diminished their emotions, thereby causing great harm to their intellectual abilities. It drove them into a purposeless and fruitless struggle in which they

were constantly made to feel the exhausting character of competition.<sup>22</sup>

The goal of the Falangists was the inclusion of women in public life. This led women to believe that the organization would assist them if they decided to discard the housewife's role that belonged to old-fashioned and conservative Spain. Now that the Spanish Civil War was over, the Falangists were required to respond to the Republican side's successes in the field of women's emancipation.<sup>23</sup>

On the issue of women's employment, views similar to those of the Falangists were held by women members of Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF). Mosley promised equality particularly in the field of employment, and he planned to eliminate gender-based discrimination.<sup>24</sup> As a consequence, a fair number of former suffragettes joined the British Union of Fascists, and this led the party to claim that feminism and fascism were not antagonistic.<sup>25</sup> The Croatian pro-Nazi Ustasha — irrespective of the movement's nature and the combat situation — chose historical and mythical bellicose queens as historical role models. Still, the role models featured in their press included the first female conductress as well as female artists and sometimes even university students. Indeed, even the life of a warlike Amazonian was portrayed as a potential pathway for women; in this way the Ustasha movement could set as its ultimate goal the turning of its female members into men. This was considered to resolve once and for all the political and rhetorical problem arising from women's difference.<sup>26</sup>

This type of approach to gender inequality was quite alien to the ideology of the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party. One of the Arrow Cross movement's greatest internal debates (a debate nevertheless played out in public) concerned the very issue of the role of Arrow Cross women in politics. The official policy defined citizenship through motherhood: "The object of the women's movement is to make women conscious of the maternal heart and its inherent power and to encourage them to put it to the service of the family and thus of our nation."<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, women political activists formulated their goals rather differently:

In this one aspect we, Hungarian women, may seem to be feminists. We demand for ourselves equal rights with men in the field of honour. We are aware that this means equal obligations and duties. May we refuse to accept a separation between male honour and



female honour! We protest when people say that a woman's lies can be forgiven and are 'endearing', [...] and we protest when the word 'lady-speech' is pronounced with a wave of the hand.<sup>28</sup>

In the Arrow Cross women's educational material, we can read that consciousness-raising groups were set up in the women's organization, a move related to attempts to define some kind of equality.

By contrast, the Falangists determined the spaces in which women could abandon the so-called feminine, biologically determined roles: military affairs (at the time of the Civil War), government, religion and education.<sup>29</sup> In the case of the Ustasha, the areas were medicine, writing and education.<sup>30</sup> These were spaces where there was a possibility of giving recognition to women in a manner that did not compel them to abandon their "feminine attributes." For their part the Arrow Cross leaders remained unaffected by the gender dilemma, and they could not resolve the paradox. For them a woman who failed to conduct herself in accordance with her biologically determined "feminine" attributes, had lost her "femininity" — defined in a hegemonic and normative way. There was only one objection: the historical roles played by women. In this frame, they supported the cult of "ancient Hungarian mothers"<sup>31</sup> emphasizing that "it is characteristic of our ancient culture that our women live at the side of their men as equal partners."<sup>32</sup> They placed the demands of modernization in an anti-modernist evaluation framework, claiming that the loss of this "ancient Hungarian value" was the source of all problems.<sup>33</sup> This definition of womanhood corresponds to Karen Offen's definition of relational feminism, which — unlike individualist feminism (which emphasizes individual autonomy and human rights) — seeks to equalize power relations between women and men yet without questioning existing gender divisions and women's role as part of a heterosexual couple and as mothers.<sup>34</sup>

In the far-right press of the period, we find only a few articles relating to female role models, which is indicative of the Arrow Cross Party's rhetorical difficulty to define the role of women. The Arrow Cross struggled to cope with the fact that its mainstream gender policy was rejected by many women who otherwise sympathized with party ideology.<sup>35</sup> The rhetorical difficulties were, however, overcome in a report by Ica Ruszin, who had gone to the Russian front as a volunteer nurse and SS member. Ruszin returned from the front with a military decoration, but having lost her legs and with a shrapnel in her belly. On the train, she gave a soldier who was teasing her "such a healthy punch with her young war-

trained hand [...] that, in the future, the man will think twice before making jokes about the self-sacrifices of nurses at the height of their profession.”<sup>36</sup> This story also served to show how a woman could use physical force, which was later an important requirement of mobilizing far-right women and also a means of extending militarized citizenship to women.

### *The three stories*

In the following three life stories, I show how three women, selected on the basis of the aforementioned typology although not in the same order, were mobilized into supporting the far-right movement. More broadly, I examine how these women could enter the social space and what factors determined their political citizenship in this period. Through the life stories of such prominent figures as Gizella Lutz, Mrs. Dücső, Mrs. Gönczi (Erzsébet Madarász), and Mária Kozma, we can gain insights into the dilemmas faced by Arrow Cross women in the process of exclusion and inclusion by which political citizenship was established.

## **1. The wives of Arrow Cross leaders: Gizella Lutz (wife of Ferenc Szálasi)**

An important aspect of my research is to look at the wives of Arrow Cross leaders as well as female party members.<sup>37</sup> In the aftermath of World War II, historians of Nazism and fascism were quick to write down the life stories of the wives and lovers of prominent Nazi and fascist leaders, often portraying them as foolish puppets. In recent decades, more nuanced analyses of these women have been published, and we now also know more about the activities of the many women who became members or supporters of the Nazi and fascist movements.<sup>38</sup>

In the Arrow Cross, the wives of party leaders ran an important network, which played a significant role in the distribution of jobs. Women in this group were the best known and visible in the public discourse: they were family members of the Arrow Cross leaders. They came from middle-class or upper-middle class backgrounds and lacked professional aspirations. They were the wives or relatives of men (husbands, brothers or fathers) who had joined the Arrow Cross Party. Family relations influenced their decisions and behaviour. Their public identity was that of “wife” or “supporter” to a husband or male relative.

On February 7, 1946, Ferenc Szálasi, on the third day of his trial before the People's Tribunal, told the court about the roles he assigned to women in his movement and to Gizella Lutz. When the prosecutor, László Frank, asked — in a manner replete with misogyny — whether women active in politics (and particularly in the Arrow Cross) were necessarily of loose morals, Szálasi replied that the women had been knitting stockings and woollens, and when a “real situation” had arisen — a sudden snowfall — they had helped clear snow. Through this statement Szálasi sought once more to make the female Arrow Cross activists invisible (those that had participated in the movement, but had not been wives or lovers). Many of the women had suffered because of their commitment to the movement. For instance, the English teacher Mária Hunyadi had been interned in 1939 as a punishment for supporting the Arrow Cross; Szálasi had subsequently awarded her a medal for her activities.<sup>39</sup>

In his private life Ferenc Szálasi very much followed Hitler's model.<sup>40</sup> After the collapse of Austria-Hungary, he moved from Kassa (today Košice, Slovakia) to Budapest in 1919. The man for whom military life was a vocation and mission formed a relationship with the public servant Gizella Lutz in 1927. From 1936 onwards, he spent much time at her apartment, but he only married her after the couple's flight to Austria in 1945. They were married in Mattsee on April 29, 1945 and taken into American captivity on May 5, 1945. Lutz, who was Szálasi's wife for such a short time, paid a high price for the relationship. The wives of other Arrow Cross leaders captured by the Americans and returned to the Hungarian authorities — the wife of Zoltán Bagossy (who prepared the ground for the Arrow Cross takeover and was assigned by the party to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) or the wife of Péter Hain (a police inspector who became head of the Hungarian Gestapo) — were “merely” sent to internment camps.

Gábor Péter, the Communists' first secret service chief — who was notoriously sensitive to publicity and who played a key role in securing the return to Hungary of people suspected of war crimes — , arranged for the interrogation of Gizella Lutz and of Sári Fedák to be documented.<sup>41</sup> Fedák had returned to Hungary wearing a worn wolf-skin coat. Lutz, a slim middle-aged woman who wore her hair in the style of the famous film star Katalin Karády, was unable to reveal much information about the Arrow Cross movement to her secret police interrogators, for Szálasi had intentionally kept her away from politics. While Lutz had regularly invited the wives of other Arrow Cross leaders to her home for tea, the women were unlikely to have made ground-breaking policy

decisions. When asked by the People's Tribunal about these tea parties, the wife of Ferenc Kassai — the minister without portfolio responsible for national defense and propaganda in Szálasi's government — stated: "We women gathered at the invitation of Gizella Lutz. We discussed a variety of problems, also addressing political topics. We spoke in particular about the coming victory of the Arrow Cross Party."<sup>42</sup> This group of women — the wives and lovers' group — recruited many female members for the party. One of them was Mária Januj who became the wife and accomplice of the head of the House of Loyalty — an elite Arrow Cross body comprising party members who had been imprisoned or interned for their views — because she was living in the same house as László Baký's<sup>43</sup> mother-in-law and, as a single seamstress, hoped to gain social status and a husband by joining the party.<sup>44</sup> We know from documentary material produced in the course of the People's Tribunal trials that this social network was used to distribute well-paid and secure jobs to people working in the party apparatus. Amid the wartime uncertainty, finding a "good partner" was important; even the aging Jenő Andreánszky, who later became minister of foreign affairs in the Arrow Cross administration, managed to attract a much younger woman as his partner.<sup>45</sup> But against the backdrop of a Horthy regime obsessed with social differences and hierarchies, these groups of women were light years away from the other female Arrow Cross members who will be analyzed below. This was not a moral problem for Lutz, as she was playing the role of invisible background assistant. It was defeat in war that made her dream come true when she finally married Ferenc Szálasi.

Szálasi and seven of his accomplices were sentenced to death and executed on March 12, 1946. After her return to Hungary, Lutz received sentences from the People's Tribunal on two occasions: November 22, 1945 and June 19, 1946. The People's Prosecutor interpreted various items found in her apartment (such as her husband's photo) as Arrow Cross symbols, and so she was found guilty of disseminating Arrow Cross propaganda. She was then held at an internment camp in South Buda. She spent many years in prison, sharing a cell with Júlia Rajk for a while.<sup>46</sup> She was freed at the time of the 1956 revolution, thereafter living a quiet life in her apartment on Mester Street, Budapest, until her death in 1992. There was no place for Lutz at Szálasi's public hearth before the war, as she did not fit into the Arrow Cross canon; she was single and childless and, in addition, a public servant. Accordingly, it was only after 1945 that she was included in the far-right canon. Today, on the Internet, she is the object of

a vibrant cult, whereby she is remembered as the wife of Szálasi rather than as the woman who was his unmarried partner for decades.<sup>47</sup>

## **2. The female physician who “only wanted to heal the body of the nation”<sup>48</sup>**

The role played by intellectual women in the far-right movements should not be underestimated, and yet the list of individuals convicted by the People’s Tribunal does not include the Arrow Cross women who published in such party newspapers as *Egyedül vagyunk* [We Are Alone] and *Magyarság* [Hungarians] from the 1930s onwards. With the approach of the Red Army, these women fled to the West. As they were not considered important, the Hungarian authorities never requested their extradition, and so they have been left out of history. Apart from the head of the national Arrow Cross women’s organization, the only other woman in this category to be found on the list is an Arrow Cross district leader. Also absent from the list of defendants are members of the women’s branch of the National Association of Hungarian Physicians [*Magyar Orvosnők Országos Szövetsége*], a body that played a crucial role in preparing the ground intellectually for the far-right movement. However, the chairwoman of the women’s branch, Dr. Erzsébet Madarász (Mrs. Gönczi), is included on the list. In what follows, I seek to give context to her life story.

The Arrow Cross women who had graduated from university at great individual cost had been confronted — as the first generation of women intellectuals — with discrimination in the workplace. They, along with single women who, in search of work, had migrated to Hungary from areas ceded under the Treaty of Trianon and now belonging to other nation states, were profoundly hostile to the patronage and nepotism of the Arrow Cross Party and to the acquiescence of wives and lovers to the “patriarchal bargain,” to use Deniz Kandiyoti’s term.<sup>49</sup> These women believed in an anti-modernist emancipation, which excluded, in a moral sense, the option of a woman depending financially on her male partner.

Hungary as a nation state was a result of the Treaty of Trianon. People in Hungary regarded their country as a truncated national body. This was an opportunity for women to redefine themselves as healers. The Horthy regime did not establish “a new canon of knowledge”<sup>50</sup> but rather invoked the metaphor of disease to explain events. According to its rhetoric, while the limbs of the national body had been severed, the trunk had remained.<sup>51</sup> This rhetorical framework represented a particular

opportunity for female physicians. The interwar period saw the first generation of practicing women physicians. Despite the officially granted educational rights prior to World War I, they had to face social prejudice on a daily basis. Faced with such problems, some of the women turned to new disciplines, such as psychoanalysis, or became involved in the radical social movements. Others, however, chose a different path. The example of Erzsébet Madarász shows that employment and a traditional definition of femininity are incompatible in a rhetorical sense or are compatible only at the cost of a compromise with racism.

Reinhart Koselleck has shown how “linguistic communities are organized around specific concepts ... and they also have a temporal aspect.”<sup>52</sup> Within this framework, the women physicians were those who could be at the forefront of healing the national body in those exceptional or peculiar times. The “peculiarity” was the temporal aspect, as women physicians strove to resolve the conflict between a woman’s traditional role and employment as a physician.<sup>53</sup> By 1942 there were as many as 679 women physicians in Budapest, out of a total of 1,207 physicians. 54 percent of these women were married, while this was true for 61.7 percent of male physicians.<sup>54</sup> The female physician’s work was considered a “noble” profession, which women practiced until they got married. To resolve this situation, in 1927 Eszter Kokas founded the National Association of Hungarian Women Physicians, a body organized on the Italian fascist model but which did not exclude Jewish members.<sup>55</sup> In their rhetoric they made no mention of the exceptional times and the demands of the nation. The women’s branch of the National Association of Hungarian Physicians, on the other hand, was founded in 1929 and headed by Erzsébet Madarász (Mrs. Gönczi, born in 1898), an experienced female politician. Their rhetoric was very different in that Jews were excluded from membership and support was given to the state-run eugenics program.<sup>56</sup> With World War II, an increasing number of women physicians was given a professional chance but only because of the “exceptional circumstances.” The concept of citizenship was coupled with usefulness to the nation; moreover, it was a citizenship based on race. During her trial by the People’s Tribunal, Madarász (Mrs. Gönczi), who was one of the few women physicians to have adopted the name of her husband, stated: “Because by profession I am a physician but I am also sensitive to social questions ... I was convinced that I could only realize my social ideas through politics.”<sup>57</sup>

Sensitivity to social issues was on the rise. In 1938, for instance, a survey conducted by the National Association of Women University

Graduates [*Diplomás Nők Országos Egyesülete*] found that 60 percent of respondents reported that they had suffered discrimination in the workplace.<sup>58</sup> In many cases, such statements concerning discrimination experienced by professional women often led to membership in the Arrow Cross Party as it, as mentioned above, opposed discrimination.

On July 28, 1945, the People's Tribunal sentenced the best-known Arrow Cross woman, Mrs. János Dücső, to ten years imprisonment. This woman had been a member of various far-right groups since the 1920s and had quite a reputation for punching people rather than arguing with them. She suffered from cervical cancer and died as a prisoner on November 27, 1948.<sup>59</sup> But this did not stop her from maligning Erzsébet Madarász (Mrs. Gönczi) who had been chair of the women's section of previous extreme right wing formations such as the United Women's Camp, and a member of the Meskó political party. The prosecution did not spend much time on compiling an indictment; it was thought that an unusually detailed statement would suffice.<sup>60</sup> On June 27, 1945, after a fruitless defense, Mrs. Gönczi received a six-month prison term because "she had been persuaded to join the party by an influential male relative."<sup>61</sup> Mrs. Dücső claimed that Mrs. Gönczi "served all the far-right parties throughout the period."<sup>62</sup> Indeed, Mrs. Gönczi had been a member of the Awakening Hungarians [*Ébredő Magyarok*], of the Race Defense Party [*Fajvédők*],<sup>63</sup> and finally of the Arrow Cross Party. It did not matter that Mrs. Dücső had stated that Mrs. Gönczi was an "excellent and experienced voice of the people, who with her actor's voice and passionate performances seized the attention of her listeners and threw them into ecstasy, whereby some of the women were inclined to weep as she spoke."<sup>64</sup> Concerning her life, one should note that she received a certificate of good conduct on July 20, 1971. Unlike German and Austrian female war criminals, who — if they were jailed at all — were freed in the early 1950s, it was not until the 1970s that most of the Hungarian female war criminals were released. After her release, Mrs. Gönczi became supervising chief physician at the Central Child Dentistry Clinic in Budapest and qualified for a pension at the age of seventy-three.

### **3. The life of Mária Kozma**

The women belonging to the third group (as explained above) were often ignored when it came to speaking about war criminals. These women were activists in the Arrow Cross Party without, however, ever occupying

leading roles. In a 1938 article, Ferenc Bécsi formulated what was expected of women: “The National Socialist Hungarist social movement respects in women the idea of motherhood. Their vocation is fulfilled within the family and at the hearth rather than in taking away men’s bread and butter as men are supposed to found families by becoming public servants or workers.”<sup>65</sup> Of course, the female ideologues and fanatics within the Arrow Cross Party envisaged a rather different role for women, which resulted in a conflict between the party’s male and female members. The leading Arrow Cross women who had earlier been interned on account of their views and who had become members of the House of Loyalty did not take part in the exercise of power after the Arrow Cross’s takeover on October 15, 1944. There were two reasons for this: first, the limited perspectives of the Arrow Cross party leadership, which did not consider women to be the intellectual or political partners of men; and second, the approach of the Red Army and the chaos this soon generated. At the People’s Tribunal, the fact that leading Arrow Cross women were not included in the leadership of the Hungarian Quisling government was portrayed, in almost all cases, as having been their own decision. This is hardly surprising given that such a stance was likely to result in a much lighter sentence. Given the lack of other sources, we must draw our conclusions from the trial data.

In 1945, eight percent of the defendants facing the People’s Tribunal were concierges or assistant concierges. They came from lower middle-class or working-class backgrounds and their crime had been that they sought to get hold of Jewish property. The authorities were relatively well acquainted with them. Those who did not escape in good time were the first to be reported to the authorities by the residents of their buildings. In this way, they were rapidly included in the justice process.<sup>66</sup> When questioned on April 5, 1945, Mária Kozma stated that she had been taken to court for verbal abuse and that she had been sentenced to three months’ detention for disruption of peace. She had served her sentence in the city of Győr. Other than that, she had been punished (fined) on just one other occasion for slander and libel. She had been released from Győr prison in April 1941, whereupon she returned to Budapest where she found work as a cashier at the Metropol Hotel. After her return to Budapest, she often went to the Arrow Cross offices and visited Arrow Cross families and attended lectures. Her main area of interest had been social work, and the party leadership supported this “feminine” interest. Her activities in the Party had been in this field. In 1943, she took part in a retraining course, as this was a requirement for becoming a party official. She stated that she



would have gladly played a leading role in the Party, as the Arrow Cross ideas appealed to her and she wanted to serve the Party. In 1941, she had been granted membership in the House of Loyalty, but the Horthy regime subsequently banned this body, although its operations were reauthorized in January 1944. At this time, Kozma had become leader of the District IV branch. In the summer of 1944, she submitted a request for a Jewish shop, but instead of being awarded a bookshop, she was chosen as director of the Arrow Cross Book and Newspaper Publishing Company [*Nyilas Könyv és Lapkiadó Rt.*]. In the course of her activity in the party, she spoke to Szálasi on several occasions and she also wrote him a letter stating, according to the minutes of the interrogation: “I, the most diligent visitor to the District IV [Budapest A.P.] party offices.” She also met with Ödön Málnási, chief ideologue of the Arrow Cross Party, who, after her release from prison, asked her whether she wished to submit a compensation claim. On several occasions she contributed to the newspaper *Solidarity* [*Összetartás*]. In her articles she praised the Arrow Cross ideas and spread party propaganda. She concluded her statement as follows: “I acted as a convinced Arrow Cross supporter, I made the Arrow Cross ideas my own, and I still support them and where possible, disseminate them.”<sup>67</sup> It comes as no surprise that she was convicted. She might have been treated more leniently had she stated something similar to what another woman — one of the few district party heads to be tried by the People’s Tribunal — stated: “I visited the members, collected membership dues, and distributed tickets for cultural events. I did not do anything else. ... I know no more than the others because we women were not involved [in the decision-making process].”<sup>68</sup>

Still, Kozma’s resume, attached to the trial papers for October 13, 1952, reveals something else, a typical turn of events at the time: not only had she been involved in politics, but at the end of the war she had occupied an apartment so as to “guard” it; however, she subsequently refused to return it to the rightful tenants once they reappeared. The latter reported her to the authorities and she was imprisoned. After her release, she offered her services to the State Protection Authority [*Államvédelmi Hatóság, ÁVH*], who gladly employed her as an informer as she was a member of the Trade Union for Concierges and of the Hungarian-Soviet Society.

### *Conclusions*

Based on the typical life stories of these three far-right women, we can draw some conclusions about the gender policy of the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party and its definition of political citizenship. The first conclusion

is about the great variety of the forms of women's political activity; such activity was not limited to party politics but was also manifest at informal gatherings, such as tea parties and "alternative public spaces."<sup>69</sup> The arenas in which political citizenship was exercised are also definable in terms of class: only exceptionally did women get close to the decision-making level. Other women were left with the "politics of motherhood" as a means of exercising pressure or a space for the expression of political power.

The second conclusion is about the ways in which political and economic motives merged. It is difficult to separate politics from economic motives when discussing how women managed to get into positions where they could contribute to definitions of citizenship. The statements made by far-right women at the People's Tribunal often reveal individual needs as a motive for stealing Jewish property.

Thirdly, the women's stories are often characterized by a political radicalism that was a reaction to society's rigidity and to discrimination. These women became supporters of the far right based on their professional experiences. This political force offered them a form of political citizenship that guaranteed their place in a political regime founded on exclusion. And, finally, politically active women on the far right sought forms of organization that corresponded to their own views, and it was during the post-war decades of communist rule that they finally found such forms of organization. The female concierges who had supported the Arrow Cross willingly became communists. In the post-World War II "new order" the forms of subordination remained the same as they had been under Arrow Cross rule.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was published as "Három háborús bűnös nő élettörténetének tanulsága" [What can we learn from the life stories of three female war criminals] in *Határonkon túl. Tanulmánykötet Mark Pittaway emlékére* [A book of studies in memory of Mark Pittaway] ed. Eszter Bartha and Zsuzsanna Varga (Budapest, L'Harmattan, 2012), 248-264.

<sup>2</sup> Andrea Pető and Judith Szapor, "Women and the 'Alternative Public Sphere': Towards a New Definition of Women's Activism and the Separate Spheres in East-Central Europe," *NORA The Nordic Journal of Women's Studies* 12/4 (2004): 172-182.

<sup>3</sup> Andrea Pető, *Women in Hungarian Politics, 1945-1951* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2003).

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<sup>4</sup> Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005), 5.

<sup>5</sup> For some of the reasons see Andrea Pető, “Who is Afraid of the ‘Ugly Women’? Problems of Writing Biographies of Nazi and Fascist Women in Countries of the Former Soviet Block?” *Journal of Women’s History* 21/4 (2009): 147–151.

<sup>6</sup> I am considering the process of People’s Tribunals as a legal process and I am using their material accordingly. See more on this in Ildikó Barna and Andrea Pető, *A politikai igazságszolgáltatás a II. világháború utáni Budapesten* [Political justice in post-World War II Budapest] (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 2012).

<sup>7</sup> Ildikó Barna and Andrea Pető, “A csúnya asszonyok. Kik voltak a női háborús bűnösök Magyarországon” [Ugly women: Who were the female war criminals in Hungary], *Élet és irodalom*, October 26, 2007, 10.

<sup>8</sup> A recent representative quantitative study found that 18 percent of the defendants were women. In Barna and Pető, *A politikai igazságszolgáltatás a II. világháború utáni Budapesten*, esp. pp. 101–116.

<sup>9</sup> See more: Andrea Pető, “Problems of Transitional Justice in Hungary: An Analysis of the People’s Tribunals in Post-War Hungary and the Treatment of Female Perpetrators” *Zeitgeschichte* 34/3–4 (2007): 335–349.

<sup>10</sup> Andrea Pető, “Women’s Associations in Hungary: Mobilisation and Demobilisation, 1945–1951,” in *When the War Was Over: Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1940–1956*, ed. Claire Duchon and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (London: Leicester UP, 2000), 132–146.

<sup>11</sup> The Arrow Cross Party was formed from different far right groups in 1939. In 1942 its name was changed to Arrow Cross Party-Hungarist Movement. About the Arrow Cross Party see: Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others. The History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1970).

<sup>12</sup> Pető and Szapor, “Women and the ‘Alternative Public Sphere’.”

<sup>13</sup> After the disintegration in the late autumn of 1918 of the Austro-

Hungarian Empire, the democratic Károlyi government introduced universal suffrage for men over the age of 21 and women over the age of 24. These efforts were then thwarted because of the political takeover by the communist Kun government. Hungarian women were given the right to vote in 1920 as a result of the pressure by the Allied powers. However, with Miklós Horthy’s conservative regime, this right was repeatedly restricted, first in 1921 and then in 1924, to women over the age of 30 who had to fulfil certain economic and educational conditions. With the emergence of a conservative women’s movement in the interwar years, women’s rights only become part of the political agenda again after 1945.

<sup>14</sup> About the history of women’s political mobilisation before WWI see Pető and Szapor, “Women and the ‘Alternative Public Sphere’,” introducing the

colorful world of women's associations from professional, religious and charitable organisations to the progressive Feminist Association.

<sup>15</sup> Andrea Pető, "Kontinuität und Wandel in der ungarischen Frauenbewegung der Zwischenkriegperiode" [Continuity and change in the Hungarian women's movement in the interwar years], in *Feminismus und Demokratie: Europäische Frauenbewegung der 1920er Jahre*, edited by Ute Gerhard (Königstein: Ulrike Helmer, 2001), 138–159.

<sup>16</sup> József Vonyó, "Women in Hungary in the 1930s: The Role of Women in the Party of National Unity," in *Women and Power in East Central Europe—Medieval and Modern*, ed. Marianne Sághy, vol. 20–23/1 of *East Central Europe—L'Europe du centre-est* (1993–1996): 201–218.

<sup>17</sup> *A Nép*, February 25, 1943, 4.

<sup>18</sup> See more: Zonneke Matthée and Andrea Pető, "A 'kameraadskes' és a 'testvérnők': Nők a holland és a magyar nemzeti szocialista mozgalomban: motiváció és akarat" ["Kameraadskes" and "sisters": Women in the Dutch and Hungarian National Socialist movements: motivation and agency], in *Határtalan nők: Kizártak és befogadottak a női társadalomban*, edited by Eszter Zsófia Tóth and Boglárka Bakó (Budapest: Nyitott Műhely, 2008), 285–303.

<sup>19</sup> Pető and Szapor, "Women and the 'Alternative Public Sphere'."

<sup>20</sup> Mary Nash, "Pronatalism and Motherhood in Franco's Spain," in *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States 1880s–1950s*, edited by Gisela Bock and Patricia Thane (London: Routledge, 1994), 160–177.

<sup>21</sup> Inban Ofer, "Historical Models—Contemporary Identities: The Sección Fememina of the Spanish Falange and its Redefinition of the Term 'Femininity'," *Journal of Contemporary History* 40/4 (2005): 663–674.

<sup>22</sup> "A nő a mozgalomban: Érzelem az értelemhez" [Women in the movement: emotions in rationality], *A Nép*, January 2, 1943, 4.

<sup>23</sup> See more: Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: The Experience of Civil War 1936–1939* (London: Penguin, 1979); and Aurora G. Morcillo, *The Catholic Womanhood: Gender Ideology in Franco's Spain* (Illinois: Northern Illinois UP, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Martin Durham, "The Home and the Homeland: Gender and the British Extreme Right," *Contemporary British History* 17/1 (2003): 69; Robert Benewick, *The Fascist Movement in Britain* (London: Allen Lane, 1969); Robert Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley* (London: Papermal, 1975). On the Italian case see: Perry R. Willson, *The Clockwork Factory: Women and Work in Fascist Italy* (New York: Oxford UP, 1993) and Perry R. Willson, "Cooking the Patriotic Omelette: Women and the Italian Fascist Ruralisation Campaign," *European History Quarterly* 27/4 (1997): 531–547.

<sup>25</sup> Durham, "The Home and the Homeland," 71.

<sup>26</sup> Rory Yeomans, "Militant Women, Warrior Men and Revolutionary Personae," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 83/4 (2005): 712–730.

<sup>27</sup> Budapesti és vidéki női főcsoport vezetője, “Köszöntjük a Nagyasszonyt!” [Greetings to the Great Lady!], *A Nép*, November 19, 1942.

<sup>28</sup> Józsefné Thoma, *A hungarista nő hármass feladatköre* [The three duties of Hungarist women] (Manuscript. Archives of the Institute for Political History, 685. f. 1/4.), 14.

<sup>29</sup> Ofer, “Historical Models—Contemporary Identities,” 673.

<sup>30</sup> Yeomans, “Militant Women, Warrior Men and Revolutionary Personae,” 718.

<sup>31</sup> Mária Katona, “A nő a fegyveres nemzetben” [Woman in the armed nation], *A Nép*, September 14, 1944, 3.

<sup>32</sup> “A turáni nő” [The woman of Turan], *A Nép*, April 8, 1943, 5.

<sup>33</sup> On its presence in contemporary Hungary see: Andrea Pető, “Anti-Modernist Utopia in ‘New Europe’: Protest, Gender and Well-Being,” in *Transforming Gendered Well-Being in Europe: The Impact of Social Movements*, edited by Alison Woodward, Jean-Michel Bovin and Mercé Renom (Ashgate, 2011), 83–96.

<sup>34</sup> Karen Offen, “Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach,” *Signs* 14/1 (1988): 136.

<sup>35</sup> Maria Fraddosio, “The Fallen Hero: The Myth of Mussolini and the Fascist Women in the Italian Social Republic 1943–45,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 31 (1996): 99–124.

<sup>36</sup> Lili Fabinyi, “Nagy idők, apró esetek” [Great times, small cases], *A Nép*, March 28, 1944, 4.

<sup>37</sup> About the wives of Arrow Cross Functionaries see Andrea Pető, “Who is Afraid of the Ugly Women,” 147–151, and Andrea Pető, “Arrow Cross Women and Female Informants,” *Baltic Worlds* 2/3–4 (2009): 48–52.

<sup>38</sup> On Nazi Germany see Karin Fontaine, *Nationalsozialistische Aktivistinnen (1933–1945): Hausfrauen, Mütter, Berufstätige, Akademikerinnen: so sahen sie sich und ihre Rolle im „tausendjährigen Reich“* [National-Socialist activists [1933–1945]: Housewives, mothers, employed and professional women: how they saw themselves and their role in the Third Reich] (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003).

<sup>39</sup> Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára [ÁBTL, Historical Archive of State Security Services], V 102649.

<sup>40</sup> See more: Andrea Pető, “A ‘rossz asszonyok’: Eva Braun, Carla Petacci, Lutz Gizella” [The ‘bad women’: Eva Braun, Carla Petacci, Gizella Lutz] *Rubicon* 8 (2007): 24–32.

<sup>41</sup> Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Fotótára népbírói gyűjtemény [Photo collection on the People’s Tribunals at the Hungarian National Museum].

<sup>42</sup> ÁBTL V 92849, 24.

<sup>43</sup> A prominent member of the Hungarian far right, László Baky became state secretary in the Ministry of the Interior following the Nazi occupation of

Hungary in March 1944. He was one of the people directly responsible for the deportation of Hungarian Jews. He was tried and executed in 1946.

<sup>44</sup> ÁBTL V 88634, 5.

<sup>45</sup> ÁBTL, V 85316.

<sup>46</sup> Júlia Rajk (1914-1981), wife of the executed László Rajk (1909-1949) fiercely fought for the reburial of her husband in 1956. In 1948, after a decade's hiatus, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin resumed the show trials of prominent communists. Hungary's dictator Mátyás Rákosi was anxious to prove that he was a loyal follower of the Soviet model and decided on a show trial of an eminent Hungarian communist. His choice fell on Rajk who then was tricked into confessing to crimes against the new socialist order, was condemned to death, and was executed. See Andrea Pető, *Geschlecht, Politik und Stalinismus in Ungarn. Eine Biographie von Júlia Rajk* [Gender, politics and Stalinism: A biography of Júlia Rajk]. Studien zur Geschichte Ungarns, Bd. 12. (Herne, Gabriele Schäfer Verlag, 2007).

<sup>47</sup> See the interview with her in the film by Tamás Almási, *Ítéletlenül* [Without a verdict], 1991.

<sup>48</sup> See more: Andrea Pető, "The Rhetoric of Weaving and Healing: Women's Work in Interwar Hungary, a Failed Anti-Democratic Utopia," in *Rhetorics of Work*, edited by Yannis Yannitsiotis, Dimitra Lampropoulou and Carla Salvaterra (Pisa: University of Pisa Press, 2008), 63–83. The quote is from the testimony of Erzsébet Madarász (Mrs. Gönczi) at the People's Tribunal.

<sup>49</sup> Deniz Kandyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy" *Gender and Society*, 2 (1988): 274-290.

<sup>50</sup> Patrick Joyce, *The Historical Meanings of Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987), 19.

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<sup>53</sup> More on this strategy of appropriation in Andrea Pető, *Napasszonyok és Holdkisaszonyok: A mai magyar konzervatív női politizálás alaktana* [Sun women and moon girls: The morphology of contemporary conservative female politics] (Budapest: Balassi, 2003).

<sup>54</sup> Barbara Papp, *A diplomás nők Magyarországon: A Magyar Női Szemle (1935–1941)* [Women with a university degree in Hungary] (PhD thesis, Eötvös Loránd University, 2004), 132.

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<sup>56</sup> Kovács, *Hungary*.

<sup>57</sup> BFL 416/45 Dr. Gönczi Aladárné testimony June 17, 1945, 11.

<sup>58</sup> Papp, *A diplomás nők*, 75.

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<sup>61</sup>BFL 416 /45. p. 23.

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<sup>64</sup>Budapest Főváros Levéltára [BFL, Budapest Municipal Archive], 416/45, 34.

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<sup>66</sup>Barna and Pető, "A csúnya asszonyok," 10.

<sup>67</sup>ÁBTL V 87614, 79–80.

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## **Hungarian Motherhood and *Nők Lapja Café***

**Tanya Watson**

**In post-socialist** Hungarian society there has been an intensified, largely politically driven, emphasis on defining and ensuring women assume their “proper” social roles — typically limited to maternal and nurturing duties. These roles are often entwined with nationalist sentiments as Hungarian women’s social roles are imbued with social responsibility and defined in a context of what is “Hungarian”. In what follows, I first briefly discuss the development of the emphasis on women’s maternal roles in Hungarian society. I then focus on the Hungarian women’s website *Nők Lapja Café*, unpacking the ways in which this website plays a role in shaping and defining women’s roles and what characteristics “good mothers” should embody. I argue that the popular women’s website serves to position Hungarian motherhood as a means by which “Hungarianess” can be defined and compared to other nations.<sup>1</sup>

### **Social Roles Prescribed for Women in Hungary from the 1990s**

Beginning in the 1990s — following the fall of communism — dominant discourses promulgated by politicians and the media claimed that “real” Hungarian women want to have large families and make motherhood their main objective.<sup>2</sup> For example, Lynne Haney describes some of the posters during the first democratic elections post-socialism, and points to the highly pro-natal theme of pregnant women, smiling women with babies, or women tending happily to domestic duties.<sup>3</sup> More than just presenting images of women happy to be mothers and homemakers, a poster by the Magyar Demokrata Fórum (Hungarian Democratic Forum, MDF), the leading centre-right party, featured a woman and a baby with the text, “We

are so happy that we can finally go home.”<sup>4</sup> Importantly, it was not just one party concerned with women returning to the hearth, so to speak. Haney writes of the “excessive” talk of the first democratic leaders of the 1990s, who focused on “the sanctity of the family and the need for women to go home and guard it”.<sup>5</sup> She explains how, on March 18, 1990 a televised discussion among party representatives featured the topic: “Future Roles for Women”.<sup>6</sup> Party leaders debated ways to help women “choose” to withdraw from the workforce, providing little encouragement and support for women who wanted to remain employed. Although Hungarian women were obviously, not rejected from the workforce en masse and made to stay at home in the years that followed, many of the women who have been active in the workforce in the post-socialist period have experienced difficulty achieving a desirable work/life balance because women who work continue to experience a double burden — expected to assume the primary care-giving role in addition to working outside the home.<sup>7</sup>

The discouragement of women’s workforce participation was, and is, importantly shaped by the country’s political and social history. Specifically, dominant ideas of women’s roles have been strongly influenced by a desire to slough off foreign influence and return to a more “Hungarian” society. For example, Brigid Fowler explains that Hungarian nationhood is importantly shaped and defined by an intense desire to shed any aspects of life under socialism.<sup>8</sup> Post-1989 then, the “emancipation” of Hungarian women, thought to have been achieved largely by the employment of women in industrial settings under socialism, has been framed as unnatural and “alien” to Hungarian culture and tradition.<sup>9</sup> Public policy has been shaped in concert with discourses encouraging motherhood and discouraging women’s employment. For example, by July 1991 Hungarian women no longer had job protection following their maternity leave and many public childcare centres facilitating women’s work began to close.<sup>10</sup> This policy was changed only in 2004 when, anxious to join the European Union, Hungarian parliament enacted a law forbidding discrimination based on gender, motherhood or family.<sup>11</sup> However, in contemporary Hungarian society, the policy is barely enforced and employers have circumvented the law protecting women’s jobs while on maternity leave by “restructuring” and making redundant such positions during the woman’s maternity leave.<sup>12</sup> As Éva Fodor explains, a study of the literature concerning Hungarian women and policy reveals that, in general, post-1989 policies moved “in the direction of inhibiting, rather than

enabling, women's participation in an otherwise tight market".<sup>13</sup> Éva Fodor and Christy Glass contextualize this policy trend, explaining that

... state policies reflect and shape public opinions, which have been identified as exceptionally "traditional" in postsocialist Hungary. More so than in most European Union countries, Hungarian men and women support the notion that women's primary calling is in the household and motherhood is women's natural state.<sup>14</sup>

Complementing a social climate unsupportive of women's employment and concerned with "real" Hungarian women — carried through from the 1990s to contemporary Hungarian culture — is an emphasis on whose procreation is important and desirable. Continuing a long-existing stream in Hungarian political thought, there is in the 21<sup>st</sup> century an intense concern among some Hungarians that Hungarian ethnicity may disappear.<sup>15</sup> Concurrently, in the last ten years, "there has been a sharp rise in racism and hate crimes".<sup>16</sup> As a result, some Hungarian citizens — it has been approximated that about 50% of the population of Hungary is *overtly* racist<sup>17</sup> — and even acts of legislation are antagonistic to people deemed "un-Hungarian". It is important to note that antiracist activists have been working in Hungary, since the 1990s and currently, to eradicate racism and "hate speech" from Hungarian culture.<sup>18</sup> Roma citizens, however, are particularly targeted; the European Commission has found, overall, that legislation enacted to alleviate racism and discrimination in Hungary has been ineffective and, worse, parliamentary debates have been the site of many racist comments.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the Roma in Hungary face prejudice and segregation.<sup>20</sup> Further, the children of Roma in Hungary are often treated as less important — and less desirable — than ethnically Hungarian children. This is demonstrated by the low academic achievement of many Roma children, which Anna Kende and Mária Neményi argue is a result of the segregation of many Roma children who are placed in insufficient institutions, originally intended for children with mental disabilities, which contribute to their segregation and prevent or limit further education.<sup>21</sup> As Michelle Behr et al. explain, who is deemed "Hungarian" has become a question of importance in Hungary,<sup>22</sup> and the obligation to reproduce and raise more ethnic Hungarians, while maintaining the family's home life, has increasingly fallen on the shoulders of women, held responsible for maintaining the private domain.<sup>23</sup>

Tasked with forgoing employment and instead reproducing "Hungarian" children, Hungarian women have been assigned a role in nation building. Nationalism as a concept is hotly debated and defined

inconclusively<sup>24</sup> but that is not to say that there is not much to be written about the way in which the identity of a nation is shaped and who is expected to play a role. Fowler explains how Hungarian political elites have, since the early 1990s, struggled to define the Hungarian nation, its relationship to the Hungarian state, non-ethnic Hungarians within the country's geographical borders (although Hungary is fairly homogenous) and also its relationship to other nations.<sup>25</sup> In 1999, a program of national "revival" was announced by the then — and current — Prime Minister Viktor Orbán for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and he remarked (in an effort to ensure "concerned" Hungarians that joining the European Union would not dilute Hungarian culture) that worrying about one's culture and language was an important — and positive — concern.<sup>26</sup>

Nira Yuval-Davis argues that much theorizing about the nation, state and citizenship is too often limited to discussion of bureaucrats, policy makers and the intelligentsia, and that not enough attention is paid to the role of women. She argues that women contribute to nation building significantly by reproducing nations both culturally and symbolically.<sup>27</sup> In this essay I am concerned with the expectations for the roles Hungarian women are demanded to play in Hungarian nation-building through their reproduction — both in their roles as reproducers, generally, and also in the specific expectations demanded of them as mothers — and the ways of framing Hungarian motherhood as different (and, as I shall demonstrate, "better") than the parenting of other countries by the website *Nők Lapja Café*.

### **An Introduction to *Nők Lapja Café***

Discourses concerning who is Hungarian, what it means to be Hungarian and what women's roles should be in nation building are spread by many media sources, including media with a targeted female audience. It is important to examine these discourses because in post-socialist Hungary, as Éva Thun explains, women's identities are greatly shaped by popular media.<sup>28</sup> Further, the current Prime Minister Orbán and his government (dominated by Fidesz) created an unsettling Media Law Package, which came into effect July 2010 and ensured that the National Media and Info Communications Authority and its Media Council "has oversight over all forms of media" in Hungary, and their rule even extends to the ability to block internet service providers.<sup>29</sup> Given the limited freedom the media currently experience in Hungary, it is even more important to examine the

kinds of messages and representations that are disseminated by a website like *Nők Lapja Café*, to contribute to analysis of the ways in which messages of nation, nationhood and women's social roles are relayed in Hungarian society by the media (which are increasingly limited by the government), specifically to an audience of women.

*Nők Lapja* [Women's Journal] is a weekly Hungarian women's magazine that was launched in 1949, and originally funded by the ruling Hungarian Workers' Party.<sup>30</sup> After the fall of communism, the publication was renamed "*Magyar Nők Lapja*" and remained popular — it has become the nation's most read women's weekly magazine.<sup>31</sup> Currently, the magazine is known simply as *Nők Lapja*. Gabriella Molnár, the magazine's editor-in-chief, explains in a blurb on the website of the magazine's media representative, Sanoma Media, that

The great success of this brand — and of the journalists, editors and photographers of this magazine — is that it managed to remain credible and authentic through several generations. It is a great challenge to transmit constant values in a world characterized by constant change and lack of universal values: but this is the challenge that makes *Nők Lapja* stay alive.<sup>32</sup>

The magazine purports to offer Hungarian women traditional, yet stylish and contemporary content. The target market consists of independent, educated women, between the ages of 25 and 49, who have a high school or university education and are also family oriented.<sup>33</sup> In 2010, the magazine was read by 5,851,000 readers.<sup>34</sup> Importantly, of all of the Hungarian weekly women's magazines, *Nők Lapja* has the highest circulation and most subscribers. Indeed, as Sanoma Media explains (in English on its website), the magazine has the "strongest brand among weekly female magazines,"<sup>35</sup> as well as many spin-off publications: [Nők Lapja Psziché](#) (psyche), [Nők Lapja Konyha](#) (a quarterly gastronomy magazine, geared toward young men and women), [Nők Lapja Évszakok](#) (another quarterly publication with similar content as *Nők Lapja*, but designed to be kept, more like a book), [Nők Lapja Ezotéria](#) (astrology), and [Nők Lapja Egészség](#) (focused on mental and physical health).

*Nők Lapja Café* is the website of this print magazine. Much like the magazine, the website dominates the market and, according to Sanoma Media, has been the largest and most popular website for women in Hungary for the past ten years. In 2012, the website reached 1.2 million readers per month and had more than 45,000 unique visitors per day. Sanoma Media describes the content of the magazine as "feminine," and

“of high quality,” like the magazine, but explains that the website content differs from the magazine, because the online content “is more dynamic, creative and bolder than the weekly print magazine”. As a result, the target audience for the website is slightly different than that of the magazine, as the website is geared toward urban women who are between the ages of 18 and 39. However, like the print magazine, the target reader has a high school, or higher, education and is also family oriented (defined as in a heterosexual relationship, with a family or wishing to have one). Approximately 60 new articles are published online each day on the website, and are categorized thematically into one of fourteen sections: “stars, gastronomy, fashion, beauty care, family, health, lifestyle, relationships, home, free time, [and] esoterism”.<sup>36</sup> The popularity of this website and its connection to such a popular print magazine suggest it to be an excellent illustrative example of contemporary representations and definitions of Hungarian womanhood and motherhood.

### **Analysis of *Nők Lapja Café***

In the following, I will present the results of an analysis of the website *Nők Lapja Café* over the course of a month.<sup>37</sup> For the purpose of this essay, I studied only the “family” section of the website for the month of March 2012, and examined the thematic content of the typically anonymous articles.<sup>38</sup> I argue that *Nők Lapja Café* does ideological work,<sup>39</sup> promoting nationalism and contributing to definitions of what it means to be Hungarian — as well as making clear the obligations Hungarian women have in maintaining this national character. I argue that *Nők Lapja Café* accomplishes this ideological work by outlining parameters of “good” mothering, favorably comparing Hungarian parenting practices to those of other nations, promoting the advice of Hungarian nationals, and endorsing heteronormative ideals and large families. In the following, I will attempt to explore these narratives, discussing the significance of each.

Interestingly, the content of *Nők Lapja Café* is not concerned exclusively with the experience of Hungarian families, as I had initially assumed it to be. Instead, in the month under study, each week there were many international articles, drawn largely from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Australia, summarized in Hungarian for *Nők Lapja Café* readers. The content of these articles is telling, revealing what kinds of international news stories are deemed significant enough to the website’s editors and authors to translate and publish on the site,



suggesting these topics are thought to be of interest — or important to convey — to the website’s Hungarian readers.

Among these international news stories, a distinct theme is impossible to ignore: the typically favorable comparison of Hungarian policies and parenting practices with those of other countries. Each week, there were articles that critiqued some aspect of parenting in another country, clearly delineating between another country’s poor parenting practices and the supposedly better, safer, healthier practices of Hungarian parents — although normally mothers were the focus. Importantly, this comparison was generally supported by a Hungarian expert in the field.

For example, an article credited only to *Nők Lapja Café*, titled “They Ban Crying Children from Restaurants” addresses the alleged practice of some American restaurants asking patrons with crying children to leave the premises, even if they are mid-meal.<sup>40</sup> The article’s anonymous author denounces this practice as shocking and ridiculous. Although the author concedes that there are restaurants in Hungary, as elsewhere in the world, that do not allow children, the author is adamant that to banish only *crying* children is an unheard of practice in Hungary. In fact, the author mocks this restaurant policy, asking how a parent can possibly be expected to reason with a three year old — to ask the child to refrain from crying until the meal is consumed. Indeed, the author is outwardly critical of this practice and, by comparing Hungary and the United States on this point, implicitly suggests that Hungarian restaurants, and by extension the nation’s cultural norms, are more sympathetic to parents and children. The author frames the Hungarian dining experience — and by extension, the culture and nation — as more sensible and reasonable.

In another article, titled “Babyccino — Should a Two-Year Old Drink Coffee?” author Erika Szalma criticizes the “babyccino,” a supposedly popular Australian, and now American, beverage for toddlers, made of decaffeinated coffee, lots of sugar and frothy milk or whipped cream.<sup>41</sup> Szalma discusses the practice of acclimatizing young children to such a sweetened, frothy beverage. The tone of the article is disapproving and Szalma clearly distinguishes between the internationally trendy babyccino and Hungarian views on appropriate children’s beverages. In addition to simply describing, or even criticizing the practice in other countries, Szalma compares this trend with Hungarian children’s beverages. Specifically, she explains that this trendy beverage is not popular in Hungary, where mothers avoid plying their children with heavily sweetened, creamy beverages, because experts advise parents to avoid giving toddlers sweetened beverages or whipped cream. Szalma thus suggests that

Hungarian mothers, because they are acting on the advice of Hungarian experts and have not succumbed to the trendiness of this practice, are more vigilant in regards to providing their children healthy beverages. In this way, Hungarian parenting practices are framed as superior and more informed, and of more benefit to children's well-being, while international practices of the "babyccino" are presented as unhealthy, trendy and ridiculous.

Importantly, the advice of Hungarian experts is often cited in the context of analyzing international news stories. A baby yoga exercise that involves "spinning" a baby, advocated by Russian yoga teacher Lena Fokina, is the focus of an article titled "Yoga Teacher Spins Baby Head over Heels".<sup>42</sup> Fokina is paraphrased as having argued that the technique benefits the baby's health — she is also supported by a Russian obstetrician — but, upon consultation with a Hungarian expert, Edit Szabadi, a massage therapist with *Nők Lapja Café*, the practice is denounced because Szabadi claims it can potentially cause trauma and physical damage to the baby. Instead, she recommends a gentler yoga exercise for babies, contradicting the benefits and safeness Fokina promises. Regardless of whether the yoga practice is sound or not, what is interesting is that the author explains the technique, outlines the purported benefits but ultimately seeks the advice of a Hungarian expert, whose recommendation is deemed more sound and reason enough to denounce the practice. Once again, *Nők Lapja Café* does not just report on an international story, but compares Hungarian thoughts on parenting to an international practice, only to affirm that the Hungarian way is much more sensible. As with the views on babyccino, the website frames Hungarian parenting as more in tune with maintaining a child's health and wellbeing, while also implying motherhood as best practiced by following the advice of Hungarian experts.

The theme of relying on a Hungarian expert repeated itself many times throughout the month. An anonymously written article titled "Children on a Street Corner — Improved by Public Humiliation?" explains the story of an American father who made his son publicly wear a sandwich board that announced his poor grades and behavior.<sup>43</sup> The author chastises this man, but, once again, instead of simply reporting the story, cites a Hungarian psychologist who further denounces the parenting decision as one that is not only ineffective, but may potentially harm the child's psyche and cause depression or aggression. The inclusion of the Hungarian expert's testimony to examine an international case suggests that this kind of parental treatment is foreign to Hungarian parents.

In another article, titled “The Child Has the Right to Keep Silent Up to 3 Years of Age,” the author cites an American study that outlines what twenty-five words toddlers should understand, know and use.<sup>44</sup> The *Nők Lapja Café* author cites Éva Tóth, a Hungarian speech therapist, who criticizes the American study and says it is a mistake to measure the development of children in this way. Instead, she argues parents should watch for speech development to ensure a child does not suffer from hearing problems but, other than this concern, they should not worry too much about ensuring that their child knows a certain number of words.

In each of the aforementioned illustrative examples, the validity of the experts’ opinions is not in question. What is relevant is the frequent measuring of Hungarian “truths” against those of other nations’ experts and practices. Consistently in these articles, an international parenting practice or study is reported, and each time it is not only discussed, but also criticized and compared to the ways these things are and ought to be done in Hungary. Importantly, the critique is often accompanied by a Hungarian expert’s testimonial or advice. Each time Hungarian and international parenting practices are unambiguously compared, the Hungarian practice is painted in a favorable light, and the Hungarian parenting wisdom framed as far superior and morally correct, when compared to those of other countries.

Because nations and nationhood are socially constructed, Yuval-Davis argues that any sign can be interpreted and used as a boundary signifier, used to divide groups into “us” and “them”.<sup>45</sup> Barbara Einhorn further argues that nations “tend to be imagined as communities of insiders defined less in terms of their distinctive identity than in contrast to putative “others” who do not share that identity”.<sup>46</sup> I argue that by comparing and contrasting parenting practices and policies, routinely measuring international stories against Hungarian ways, the authors of *Nők Lapja Café* contribute to discourses that define what it means to be Hungarian and how parenthood is deemed integral to illustrating and representing “Hungarianness”. Importantly, it is motherhood that is typically the focus of the stories and in cases where photos accompany the text, it is also motherhood that is visually represented in the aforementioned articles on parenting, which demonstrates how women, as mothers, are positioned as essential to constructing understandings of what it means to be Hungarian.

Complementing and overlapping the weighting of international experiences of parenthood against those of Hungarian parents, is the articulation and framing of motherhood and mothering practices perceived as superior. As Yuval-Davis argues, women often face the burden of

representation, tasked with representing and distributing the nation's identity, which can be expressed through "proper" attire, behavior, etc.<sup>47</sup> As mentioned above, the subject of most articles in the "family" section are mothers. In the website's articles, not only are Hungarian culture and practices compared to other countries, mothering — examples of "good" mothers and "bad" mothers — is also represented. Good mothers, the reader is told, do not give their children babyccinos and certainly do not practice certain kinds of baby yoga. With the use of these illustrative examples, the reader is informed that good mothers heed the advice of *Hungarian* experts and do not abandon Hungarian traditions or practices for trendy, i.e. international, parenting practices.

Even when not explicitly comparing Hungarian and international family practices, the website's authors openly express disappointment or disapproval of certain parenting decisions made by mothers around the world, further defining what a good or bad mother looks like for Hungarian readers. For example, Australian millionaire Gina Rinehart is criticized in the article, "Richest Mom Sends Children to Work," for convincing her children to sign legal documents that prevent them from accessing their trusts, keeping her in charge of the family money.<sup>48</sup> She explains she had done so to prevent them from leading a life of leisure, spoiled with luxuries and unmotivated to work. But *Nők Lapja Café* criticizes Rinehart's mothering and decision by asking, "has she not raised her children properly, that they cannot be trusted with their shares?"<sup>49</sup> The author implies that were Rinehart a good mother, she would not fear that her children will lack motivation if provided generous trust funds — her children's goodness as people is framed exclusively as her responsibility and it is assumed that any flaws in their character are due to her faults as a mother. This attitude recalls the aforementioned contemporary discourses of motherhood that suggest the nation's failings are the fault of working women.

In contrast, British mother Sophia Cahill, pregnant with her second child, found herself in the spotlight of many media outlets because of her decision to model nude late in her pregnancy. She was featured in a second story on *Nők Lapja Café*, in March, 2012, that clarifies her motives: she models not because she wants to show off, but because she is a single mother with a family to support and this is how she makes her income.<sup>50</sup> That she models because she has children to care for is of such central importance that this second article was written expressly to clarify her motivations and demonstrate the devotion she has to her children, while the first article had a much more incredulous tone. That she is

modeling for her children, and not for her own selfish reasons, is deemed acceptable to the *Nők Lapja Café* author, and she receives no criticism in the second story. Her selflessness and devotion as a mother are praised by the authors.

Indeed, commitment and sacrifice to children is framed as the predominant characteristic of mothers as each story that applauds a mother's actions is hinged on what she has given up or done for her children, such as the aforementioned model, Cahill, or the mothers I will discuss later in this paper, who have set aside their own dreams and ambitions to raise large families. However, too much devotion is discouraged, as an article titled "Mother, Understand This: I've Grown Up," written by Ágnes Csízi offers adult children coping strategies for dealing with mothers who smother their children.<sup>51</sup> The article explicitly defines what it means to be a good parent, with the first header of the article reading, "What Makes a Parent a Parent?" Although the article mentions "parents," the title and content refer almost exclusively to mothers who are unwilling to accept that their children have become adults. In fact, the article explains that women more often tend to have an inability to let their adult children move on from childhood than men, who are typically more distant as parents.<sup>52</sup> In this same vein, Angelina Jolie is likewise criticized for not allowing her children to watch her appearance at the Oscars, a show the website claims is a tame television program, not necessitating censorship, implying she, too, is too cautious and overbearing as a parent.<sup>53</sup> Thus, *Nők Lapja Café* narrowly constricts the definition of a good mother, providing boundaries around the concept: demanding devotion but warning against excessive attachment. In short, the implied message conveyed is that women can never be perfect mothers and should never stop trying to perfect their mothering skills.

Connected to themes of nationhood and socially constructed ideas of "good" or appropriate mothering is the fascination with "large families" demonstrated by *Nők Lapja Café*. Concerning international stories, celebrity stories and articles featuring Hungarian women, the website focuses intensely on large families, always striving to paint large families in a positive light. Importantly, the authors of articles concerning large families admit that having a large family can be difficult, but the reader is informed that a large family is worth the trouble and ultimately manageable.

For example, in an article titled "She Adopted her Deceased Friend's Five Children," the author chronicles the story of a British woman, Julie Jones, who adopted her friend's five children although, as a single mother, she already had three children of her own.<sup>54</sup> The woman

must work fulltime, although she also receives some government assistance, to support her large family. However, despite the difficulty in providing for such a large family on her own, the article affirms that her life with this large family is manageable. Further, the article expresses admiration for the woman's decision to raise a large family.

Katalin Dénes Szabó, a Hungarian mother of seven children of her own, was interviewed in a three-page story for the website, an unusually long article for the month, titled "It is Difficult to Bring All of My Children to the Movies at Once".<sup>55</sup> The author is clearly fascinated with Szabó's voluntarily large family and asks many personal questions. Specifically, the mother of seven is asked if her husband willingly agreed to such a large family, how she divides her attention between her children, how she keeps them in line, how much groceries her family consumes in a week, what limitations such a large family creates, how her body has fared after so many pregnancies, and what she has sacrificed for her large family. She admits to many sacrifices, such as not having enough time for her husband, finding it difficult to go out and still keep an eye on her large family and also giving up her dreams of graduating from university and becoming an economist — although she is currently pursuing her studies in another field. Despite the limitations, she confirms that as a mother of seven, she is very happy and having such a large family has always been her dream. Her story is represented in a positive light — not as something strange or deviant — but as an interesting and laudable life choice. Importantly, her career ambitions — only briefly mentioned — are framed as a secondary concern to her devotion to her family, recalling the emphasis on home life above employment for women that dominates contemporary discourses. That Szabó had to abandon her original career plans is barely addressed, signaling to the reader the unimportance of employment outside of the home for women and echoing popular ideas concerning Hungarian women's contemporary roles in the workforce as less important than preserving home life, addressed earlier in this essay.<sup>56</sup>

Of the celebrity families and mothers highlighted (mostly American film stars and famous musicians) those with larger families seem to garner the most attention. For example, Uma Thurman's fourth pregnancy is reported<sup>57</sup> and Jennifer Garner's third pregnancy — her first boy — is also deemed newsworthy. Angelina Jolie (with a family of seven) is a staple of the "celebrity" family features and in an article concerning her Oscar appearance, titled "Angelina Jolie Flashed Her Thigh—Maybe She is Pregnant?" the author joyously speculates she might be pregnant again because of her Oscar dress' revealingly sexy side slit and the supposed

tendency for women in their first trimester to feel sexier and more confident.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, Reese Witherspoon's third pregnancy, but the first one with husband Jim Toth — who is of Hungarian ancestry — is speculated about as well.<sup>59</sup> Rarely are celebrities with first pregnancies or small families — with one or two children — mentioned in the family section of *Nők Lapja Café*.<sup>60</sup>

I do not believe that the focus on large families is any way coincidental or unintended because, when Hungarian legislation affecting families is discussed, the *Nők Lapja Café* authors demonstrate a keen understanding of the nation's demographic and political concerns. The nation's decreasing population — it is reported that the birth rate decreased by 2.5% in 2011<sup>61</sup> — and problems with prematurely born babies<sup>62</sup> are both discussed by the website's authors, suggesting trepidation about the nation's declining population and concern over falling birth rates. Although *Nők Lapja Café* authors seem, at times, curious whether a large family is manageable, large families are a major focus of this part in the website's family section and each story affirms, as its conclusion, the manageability of a large family and also the central importance of children to one's life. Importantly, by only featuring the families of supposedly "ideal" — white, able bodied, working or middle class, heterosexual — women, the website provides a visual representation of who should have a large family, whose family is desirable and socially acceptable — precluding families who fail to meet these characteristics, such as Roma families or same-sex couples.

Not all of the articles and stories featured photographs but those that did featured only white, able-bodied, heterosexual women and families. Even among international stories and discussion of the "stars," only one woman of colour was mentioned: Beyoncé, the American singer and actress. Further, many stories discussed marriage, perpetuating conservative — but dominant — conceptions of motherhood as most suitable for married women and framing marriage as the norm.<sup>63</sup> Divorce was treated as a fact of life,<sup>64</sup> but an undesirable one. In fact, one article deemed of interest to *Nők Lapja Café* authors was a Swedish study that reported the discovery of a supposed "divorce gene" that apparently makes some women less able to form attachments and thus less able to maintain a relationship within a marriage or even remain committed to children.<sup>65</sup> In the article, aptly titled "They Discovered a Gene: Is Divorce Genetic?" women who get divorced are presented as somehow flawed, lacking a gene that would enable them to sustain a marriage or relationship.<sup>66</sup> Related to this article, Hungarian marriage statistics were of interest to *Nők Lapja*

*Café* and it was reported that in 2011 the number of marriages increased, albeit only by 0.5%, interpreted as an important and promising change by *Nők Lapja Café* authors nonetheless.

Women who deviate from “traditional” life choices, such as the 29-year old British woman married five times, or the 100-year old bride marrying for the fourth time, are positioned as spectacle on the website. Marriage is a choice taken for granted, demonstrated also by an article featuring the British actor Rob Pattinson, titled “Who Would We Most Like to Trade our Husbands For,”<sup>67</sup> a title that assumed that any woman who reads the site — especially the family section — is married or values marriage. The site is thus actively shaping appropriate roles for women, especially mothers, dictating heterosexual marriage as the norm.

The purpose of this essay is to complicate theorizing about nationalism, particularly the source of nationalistic sentiments. As Yuval-Davis argues, it is unhelpful to limit theorizing about the nation to bureaucrats and policy makers. I cannot speak to the objectives or goals of this website but, as I have demonstrated, *Nők Lapja Café* is also invested in the process: it defines what it means to be Hungarian by comparing Hungarian and international parenting practices to clearly illustrate Hungarianness, describes how “good” Hungarian mothers should parent, and supports dominant, nationalistic discourses by speaking positively about large families and de-prioritizing workforce participation in discussions of Hungarian motherhood and mothering. Additionally, the website serves to echo discourses that encourage women to have children by pointing out the manageability of large families, made easier by the more parent-friendly climate of Hungary, demonstrated by Hungarian restaurants that do not ban crying children and by an example of a Hungarian woman who has chosen, and been able to manage, a large family.

I do not purport to understand the intentions or the ambitions of the authors behind the articles on *Nők Lapja Café*, although it does seem evident that the website’s content is in keeping with the political objectives of reinforcing women’s social roles as mothers. However, the motivation can hardly be gleaned given the restrictions of media in Hungary. In any case, what is most important is to examine the results of their work: the representations of women and motherhood in what is Hungary’s most popular women’s website. In this essay, I aimed to examine and discuss the social constructions of parenthood, particularly motherhood, framed by *Nők Lapja Café*, and point out that certain characteristics and practices are considered to be embodied by “good” mothers — especially an adherence to guidelines and suggestions made by Hungarian experts — and how



these qualities are enforced and policed by *Nők Lapja Café*. It was further my goal to point out that the website does more than simply prioritize motherhood or outline parameters for good parenting. *Nők Lapja Café* consistently frames Hungarian motherhood as different, often if not always better, than the motherhood demonstrated by women internationally. In this way, the magazine positions motherhood as a way in which “Hungarianness” can be defined and compared. In addressing family oriented women, the website, instead of providing the bold and creative content it promises, supplies readers with discourses that support dominant post-socialist ideals of women as [good] mothers, bolstering their nation through their motherhood. A study of such a popular website helps to further illuminate the current expectations of Hungarian women and suggests the need for further study.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Although I aim to provide an overview, for the purposes of this paper the contextualization is very brief and, obviously, neglects to describe in detail the nuances and complexities of the experience of Hungarian women.

<sup>2</sup> Chris Corrin, *Magyar Women: Hungarian Women's Lives, 1960s-1990s* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 102.

<sup>3</sup> Lynne Haney, “From Proud Worker to Good Mother: Women, the State, and Regime Change in Hungary,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 14 (3): 113-150, 122.

<sup>4</sup> Haney, *From Proud Worker to Good Mother*, 137.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>7</sup> Herta Toth, “Gendered Dilemmas of Work-Life Balance in Hungary,” *Women in Management Review* 20 (2005): 361-375, 366-367.

<sup>8</sup> Brigid Fowler, “Nation, State, Europe and National Revival in Hungarian Party Politics: The Case of the Millennial Commemorations,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, 56 (2004): 57-83, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Krisztina Morvai, “Women and the Rule of Law in Hungary,” *Feminist Review* 76 (2004): 100-109, 100-101.

<sup>10</sup> Corrin, *Magyar Women*, 226.

<sup>11</sup> Christy Glass and Éva Fodor, “Public Maternalism Goes to Market,” *Gender and Society* 25 (2011): 5-26, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Glass and Fodor, “Public Maternalism,” 16.

<sup>13</sup> Éva Fodor, *Working Difference* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 133.

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- <sup>14</sup> Glass and Fodor, "Public Maternalism," 9
- <sup>15</sup> Marida Hollos and Regina Yando, "Social Strata Differences in Mothers' Conceptions of Children in Postsocialist Hungary: An Explanation of Fertility Decisions," *Ethos*, 34 (2006): 488-520, 490
- <sup>16</sup> Ellen Hinsey, "The New Opposition in Hungary," *New England Review*, 33 (2):126-142, 131.
- <sup>17</sup> Katalin Halasz, "The Rise of the Radical Right in Europe and the Case of Hungary: 'Gypsy crime' defines national identity?" *Development* 52 (2009): 490-494, 508.
- <sup>18</sup> David Boromisza-Habashi, "Dismantling the Antiracist "hate speech" Agenda in Hungary: an Ethno-rhetorical Analysis," *Text & Talk* 1 (2011): 1-19.
- <sup>19</sup> István Kemény and Béla Janky, "Roma Population of Hungary 1971-2003," in *Roma of Hungary*, ed. István Kemény (New York, Columbia University Press, 2005): 70-225, 294, 295.
- <sup>20</sup> Katalin Halasz, *The Rise of the Radical Right in Europe*, 492.
- <sup>21</sup> Anna Kende and Mária Neményi, "Selection in Education: The Case of Roma Children in Hungary," *Equal Opportunities International* 25 (2006): 506-522, 510.
- <sup>22</sup> Michelle Behr et al., "Who is Hungarian? Attitudes Toward Immigration, Ethnicity and Nationality in Rural Hungary," *Eastern European Quarterly* 36 (2002): 281-299, 292.
- <sup>23</sup> Corrin, *Magyar Women*; Joanna Goven, "Gender Politics in Hungary: Autonomy and Antifeminism," in Nanette Funk and Magda Mueller (ed.), *Gender Politics and Post Communism* (New York: Routledge, 1993): 224-240; Haney, *From Proud Worker to Good Mother*.
- <sup>24</sup> Stefan Auer, "Nationalism in Central Europe — A Chance or a Threat for the Emerging Liberal Democratic Order?" *East European Politics and Societies* 14 (2000): 213-245, 213.
- <sup>25</sup> Brigid Fowler, *Nation, State, Europe and National Revival*, 57, 58
- <sup>26</sup> Fowler, *Nation, State, Europe and National Revival*, 76.
- <sup>27</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 2.
- <sup>28</sup> Éva Thun, "Women in Hungary in Times of Social and Cultural Transition," *Hungarian Studies Review* 26 (1999): 39-58, 50.
- <sup>29</sup> Ellen Hinsey, *The New Opposition*, 127-128.
- <sup>30</sup> Katalin Medvedev, "The Cold War, Fashion and Resistance in 1950s Hungary," in Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Louise O. Vasvári (ed.), *Comparative Hungarian Cultural Studies*, (West Lafayette, Purdue University Press, 2011), 209-219, 209.
- <sup>31</sup> Unless otherwise specified, all of the following information concerning the readership and content of *Nők Lapja* magazine and the accompanying website, *Nők Lapja Café*, has been sourced from the media representative for the magazine and website, Sanoma Media (Sanomamedia.hu).

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.sanomamedia.hu/products/nok\\_lapja/6002/?fid=537](http://www.sanomamedia.hu/products/nok_lapja/6002/?fid=537), accessed September 30, 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggests that women younger than 25 and older than 49 also enjoy reading the magazine. Further, Sanoma Media suggests that there are few Hungarian households in which a mother or grandmother does not read the publication.

<sup>34</sup> Sanomamedia.hu. <http://www.sanomamedia.hu/sajtohirdetes/index.php?action=termek&site=3>, accessed September 30, 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Sanomamedia.hu, accessed September 30, 2012.

<sup>36</sup> All of the information about *Nők Lapja Café* came from <http://www.sanomamedia.hu/onlinehirdetes/products/9/>, accessed September 30, 2012.

<sup>37</sup> The website did not change content daily and so stories typically were left for a few days or weeks on the website, before being filed in the archives where they could not be accessed directly on the family section. This study thus includes some articles technically written in the last days of February 2012 that were featured on the site for the month of March.

<sup>38</sup> Titles have been translated, approximately, into English by the author.

<sup>39</sup> Patrice DiQuinzio, *The Impossibility of Motherhood. Feminism, Individualism and the Problem of Mothering* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 4.

<sup>40</sup> "Kitiltják a síro gyerekeket az étteremből" [They ban crying children from restaurants], *Nők Lapja Café*, February 23, 2012, accessed March 1, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/gasztro/20120223/kitiltjak\\_a\\_siro\\_gyerekeket\\_az\\_etterembo1/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/gasztro/20120223/kitiltjak_a_siro_gyerekeket_az_etterembo1/).

<sup>41</sup> Erika Szalma, "Babyccino — kávézzon egy 2 éves gyerek?" [Babyccino - should a two-year old drink coffee], *Nők Lapja Café*, Feb. 25, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/baba/20120225/babyccino\\_kavezzon\\_egy\\_2\\_eves\\_gyerek/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/baba/20120225/babyccino_kavezzon_egy_2_eves_gyerek/).

<sup>42</sup> "Feje felett pörgeti a csecsemőket a jógaoktató" [Yoga teacher spins babies above her head], *Nők Lapja Café*, February 27, 2012, accessed 5/3/2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/baba/20120227/feje\\_felett\\_porgeti\\_a\\_csecsemoket\\_a\\_jogao ktato/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/baba/20120227/feje_felett_porgeti_a_csecsemoket_a_jogao ktato/).

<sup>43</sup> "Gyerek az utcasarikon — megjavul a nyilvános megszégyenítéstől?" [Children on street corner — improved by public humiliation?], *Nők Lapja Café*, March 14, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120314/gyerek\\_az\\_utasarikon\\_megjavul\\_a\\_nyilvanos\\_megszegenitestol/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120314/gyerek_az_utasarikon_megjavul_a_nyilvanos_megszegenitestol/)

<sup>44</sup> "3 évig joga van hallgatni a gyerekeknek" [The child has the right to keep silent up to 3 years of age], *Nők Lapja Café*, February 20, 2012, accessed March 5, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120220/3\\_evig\\_joga\\_van\\_hallgatni/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120220/3_evig_joga_van_hallgatni/).

<sup>45</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, 47.

<sup>46</sup> Barbara Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender and Women's Movements in East Central Europe* (New York: Verso, 1993), 52.

<sup>47</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, 45-46.

<sup>48</sup> “Dolgozni küldi gyerekeit a leggazdagabb édesanya” [Richest mother sends her children to work], *Nők Lapja Café*, 13 March 2012, accessed 15/3/2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120313/dolgozni\\_kuldi\\_gyerekeit\\_a\\_dusgazdag\\_e\\_desanya/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120313/dolgozni_kuldi_gyerekeit_a_dusgazdag_e_desanya/).

<sup>49</sup> “Dolgozni küldi,” 1.

<sup>50</sup> “Családjáért pucérkodik a várandós modell” [For her family the pregnant model nudes], *Nők Lapja Café*, March 1, 2012, accessed March 3, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120302/csaladjaert\\_vetkozik\\_a\\_varandos\\_modell/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120302/csaladjaert_vetkozik_a_varandos_modell/).

<sup>51</sup> Ágnes Csízi, “Anya, értsd meg: felnőttem!” [Mother, understand this: I have grown up!], *Nők Lapja Café*, March 1, 2012, accessed March 5, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120301/anya\\_ertsd\\_meg\\_felnottem/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120301/anya_ertsd_meg_felnottem/).

<sup>52</sup> Csízi, “Anya, értsd meg,” 1.

<sup>53</sup> “Nem nézhettek meg az Oscart a Jolie-Pitt gyerekek” [The Jolie-Pitt children could not watch the Oscars], *Nők Lapja Café*, February 27, 2012, accessed March 2, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120228/a\\_jolie-pitt\\_gyerekek\\_nem\\_nezettek\\_az\\_oscar-galat/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120228/a_jolie-pitt_gyerekek_nem_nezettek_az_oscar-galat/).

<sup>54</sup> “Örökbe fogadta halott barátnője öt gyerekeit” [She adopted her deceased friend’s five children], *Nők Lapja Café*, 5 March 2012, accessed 7/3/2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120306/halott\\_baratnoje\\_ot\\_gyermeket\\_fogadta\\_orokbe/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120306/halott_baratnoje_ot_gyermeket_fogadta_orokbe/).

<sup>55</sup> Ágnes Csízi, “Nehéz egyszerre moziba vinni az összes gyerekeimet” [It is difficult to bring all of my children to the movies at once], *Nők Lapja Café*, March 5, 2012, accessed March 7, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120305/nehez\\_egyszerre\\_moziba\\_vinni\\_az\\_osszes\\_gyerekeimet/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120305/nehez_egyszerre_moziba_vinni_az_osszes_gyerekeimet/).

<sup>56</sup> In an article concerning proposed legislation to make parental leave (GYES, *gyermekgondozási segély*) mandatory for fathers, the author argues that it is a helpful idea to get Hungarian women to give birth to more and more children. “Menjenek gyesre az apák is” [Fathers should also take parental leave], *Nők Lapja Café*, March 12, 2012, accessed March 13, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120312/menjenek\\_gyes-re\\_az\\_apak\\_is/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120312/menjenek_gyes-re_az_apak_is/).

Interestingly, the author suggests that if fathers were more involved, perhaps Hungarian women would be more inclined to have larger families. The article is uncritical of new legislation, citing benefits such as men’s improved performance at work after maternity leave and also the bond strengthened between father and child, demonstrating an egalitarian view of parenthood that is overshadowed by the brevity of the article, which is much shorter than the article focused on the babyccino. However, it does suggest that perhaps some content of the website might be shifting toward a more critical view of contemporary social and gender roles in Hungary, although this remains to be seen.

<sup>57</sup> “Megvan az első terhesfotó Uma Thurmanról” [First photo of pregnant Uma Thurman], *Nők Lapja Café*, February 29, 2012, accessed March 1, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/baba/20120229/megvan\\_az\\_elso\\_terhesfoto\\_uma\\_thurmanrol/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/baba/20120229/megvan_az_elso_terhesfoto_uma_thurmanrol/).

<sup>58</sup> “Angelina Jolie combot villantott, tehát terhes?” [Angelina Jolie flashed her thigh — maybe she is pregnant?], *Nők Lapja Café*, February 28, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120229/angelina\\_jolie\\_leleplezte\\_terhesseget\\_a\\_dijatadon/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120229/angelina_jolie_leleplezte_terhesseget_a_dijatadon/).

<sup>59</sup> “Magyar férjétől vár gyermeket Dr. Szöszi” [Dr. Szöszi expects child from her Hungarian husband], *Nők Lapja Café*, March 21, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/sztarok/20120321/magyar\\_ferjetol\\_var\\_gyermeket\\_dr\\_szoszi/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/sztarok/20120321/magyar_ferjetol_var_gyermeket_dr_szoszi/).

<sup>60</sup> Jennifer Aniston is the exception and, although a childless woman, she is featured on the website. Her rumored pregnancy captivates *Nők Lapja Café* authors, just as her prolonged childlessness has been the focus of many women’s publications and tabloids in English-speaking countries.

<sup>61</sup> “Kicsivel többen szánjuk el magunkat a házasságra” [A little more people decide to marry], *Nők Lapja Café*, February 22, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120222/kicsivel\\_tobben\\_szanjuk\\_el\\_magunkat\\_a\\_hazassagra/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120222/kicsivel_tobben_szanjuk_el_magunkat_a_hazassagra/).

<sup>62</sup> “Kevesebb a koraszülött a dohánytilalom óta” [There are fewer prematurely born babies after tobacco ban], *Nők Lapja Café*, March 14, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/baba/20120314/kevesebb\\_a\\_koraszulott\\_a\\_dohanytilalom\\_ota/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/baba/20120314/kevesebb_a_koraszulott_a_dohanytilalom_ota/).

<sup>63</sup> Hungarian Parliament passed a new constitution in April, 2011, that includes distinctly pro-life language, even promising to guarantee the protection of a fetus from conception (see Raven Clabough, “Hungary’s Pro-Life Constitution Draws Ire of European Institutions,” *The New American*, June 14, 2011, accessed June 20, 2011, <http://www.thenewamerican.com/world-mainmenu-26/europe-mainmenu-35/7868-hungarys-pro-life-constitution-draws-ire-of-european-institutions>). The constitution also cements marriage as a union existing only between a man and a woman, because the heterosexual nuclear family unit is deemed crucial to the survival of the nation (see Margit Feher, “Hungary Passes New Constitution Amid Concerns” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 18, 2011, accessed June 20, 2011, <http://blogs.wsj.com/emerging europe/2011/04/18/hungary-passes-new-constitution-amid-concerns/>; Veronika Gulyas, “Hungary’s Government to Launch Anti-Abortion Campaign,” *The Wall Street Journal*, May 5, 2011, <http://blogs.wsj.com/emerging europe/2011/05/05/hungary%e2%80%99s-government-to-launch-anti-abortion-campaign/>).

<sup>64</sup> “Új anyu többé nem tud ráülni as örökségre” [New mother can no longer delay inheritance], *Nők Lapja Café*, March 19, 2012, accessed 20/3/2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120313/uj\\_anyu\\_miatt\\_fogunk\\_mashogy\\_orokolni/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120313/uj_anyu_miatt_fogunk_mashogy_orokolni/).

<sup>65</sup> This article was reported in February, 2012 but still featured on the website at the beginning of March before being filed in the archives.

<sup>66</sup> “Felfedezték a válógént: Öröklődik a szakítás?” [They discovered a divorce gene: is divorce genetic?], *Nők Lapja Café*, February 27, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120227/felfedeztek\\_a\\_valogent\\_oroklodik\\_a\\_szakitast/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120227/felfedeztek_a_valogent_oroklodik_a_szakitast/).

<sup>67</sup> “Kire cserélnék le legtöbben férjüket?” [Who would we most like to trade our husbands for?], *Nők Lapja Café*, February 27, 2012, [http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120225/pattinsonra\\_cserelne\\_a\\_legtobb\\_no\\_a\\_pasijat/](http://www.nlcafe.hu/csalad/20120225/pattinsonra_cserelne_a_legtobb_no_a_pasijat/).

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**Naming Rights:  
Nation, Family, and Women's Rights  
in the Debates on Domestic Violence  
in Contemporary Hungary**

**Katalin Fábrián**

**Violence** against women emerged as one of the prime topics in the international human rights discourse in the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> In an effort to circumvent the many culturally different interpretations of women's rights worldwide, activists began to focus on one common platform: the sanctity of bodily integrity. With the fall of the communist system, this human rights framework and associated policy recommendations — most notably the criminalization of domestic violence based on the “Duluth model” from Minnesota, USA — arrived in Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s.<sup>2</sup> Transnational norms and actors exerted pressure,<sup>3</sup> most often indirectly but on occasion directly and personally, on this region to deal with this problem that until then had been unrecognized to the point of not even being named.

The debates on naming domestic violence have been indicative of the continued unease confronting this problem including an outright rejection of its existence in many countries. Many post-communist governments eventually accepted some terminological and conceptual ambiguity to align themselves with values viewed as important for both sizeable (or at least vocal) local constituents and at the same time, symbolically signaling to behave as a ‘normal state’ to international actors abroad. Although no international or EU-specific legislation against domestic violence exists as of early 2013, there is widespread expectation that the problem be recognized and effectively addressed — to the extent that taking action has almost become a sign of belonging to the “club” of democratic nations.<sup>4</sup> Central and Eastern European women's groups routinely implied in their appeals to various local authorities that the degree to which post-communist countries were willing to respond to domestic vio-

lence could be used to measure their desire to honor their integration into the European community of democratic nations.<sup>5</sup>

In Hungary, however, women's and human rights NGOs' explicit alignment with international institutions and human rights norms for normative support has created a distance from the predominantly nationalist values that the contemporary conservative-nationalist Orbán government represents. Reflecting sharply differing value orientations regarding the role of women, the family, and the nation, the debate on how to call domestic violence continues unabated. Illustrative examples of the current, official nationalist discourse conflicting with recommendations and policies from abroad are numerous in both scholarly literature and mainstream news items, many of them indicating that external influence is seen as misguided and thus unwelcome in contemporary politics.<sup>6</sup> Given the conflicting normative orientations of women's NGOs and the various Hungarian governments in the past twenty years, it may not be surprising that Hungary remains beside Estonia and Latvia one of three post-communist EU member states that have not yet established a separate law on domestic violence.

Why this lack of progress? Why did negotiations break down in January 2013 between Hungarian women's/human rights NGOs and the government when the latter had publicly promised in October 2012, in a response to extensive and vocal protests that it would introduce a specific law against domestic violence?<sup>7</sup> The analysis of the Hungarian case especially merits our attention because during the early transition period this country was an early adopter of, rather than the exception to, signing up to human rights norms and international treaties. Building on a considerable social science literature analyzing why countries sign treaties, more analysis of outlier cases is needed.<sup>8</sup>

Demonstrating extensive continuity with previous Hungarian social movements mobilizing against domestic violence, references to international norms and related recommended practices were some of the central parts of a large protest in front of the Hungarian Parliament on 16 October 2012. Protesters gathered there the day after Parliament rejected, with a strikingly unabashed patriarchal rationale, domestic violence being made a separate criminal offense, despite over 100,000 signatures urging them to do so.<sup>9</sup> Participants also whole-heartedly rejected, in their speeches and posters, the nationalist and conservative perception of "women as baby-making machines." This protest presented a profound challenge to politicians' treating women's vulnerability to intimate partner violence as dismissible because it could all be avoided if "they gave birth to three, four

or five children.”<sup>10</sup> Adding further urgency to the protesters’ appeal was Hungary’s being the only Central European EU-member country with no specific law against domestic violence and very sparse services to help its victims.<sup>11</sup>

Although domestic violence is still a debated issue worldwide, there is an emerging transnational consensus that it is a widespread problem requiring consistent and sustained attention.<sup>12</sup> One notable example of this powerful international normative and legal trend was the 2011 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.<sup>13</sup> This Convention requires governments to act against all forms of inequality between men and women that produce violence in intimate settings and it firmly recommends establishing a distancing ordinance (also called a restraining or protection order) that, in case of immediate danger, removes the perpetrator from the home for a specified period. This 2011 Council of Europe Convention is just one, albeit a very notable example of how emerging norms, related local awareness-raising campaigns, and international organizations have put pressure on governments to stop violence against women, including domestic violence.

How and why governments respond to pressure to eliminate domestic violence varies widely. Some post-communist countries, like Slovenia and Croatia, responded quickly to international influences, enacting legislation and attempting to implement laws effectively.<sup>14</sup> Others, such as the Czech Republic, were also relatively quick, albeit rather more reluctant at least initially. Other East-Central European countries, such as Bulgaria and Romania, were non-committal, producing some legislation and relevant services, but resisting passing comprehensive legislation or not allocating sufficient funds for proper execution of programs. Finally, there are the three outlier countries: Hungary, Estonia, and Latvia which to date have ignored or outright rejected efforts to pass domestic violence legislations and create effective shelters for victims.<sup>15</sup>

Why does Hungary remain in this last category? How have social movements attempted to change this situation and what motivates their efforts? Since the early 1990s, Hungarian individuals, NGOs, and the social movements they organized have been extensively interacting with transnational partners to encourage the Hungarian government to produce specific legislation on domestic violence and establish services for its victims. The present article explores the three main processes that have contributed to this ongoing process: 1) bottom-up pressures such as NGO efforts, 2) top-down pressures such as deliberations among parties and

state legislation, and 3) interweave, or transnational pressures that combine with local NGOs and the government to create and enforce policies. I investigate how and why Hungarian movements continue to struggle by analyzing the actors, their self-described motivations, and the contemporary policy outcomes in the already two-decades-long extensive engagement between international and local actors regarding domestic violence. I also highlight the most notable perspectives of both political elites and the general public to explain how and why the new terms for and against certain policy recommendations regarding domestic violence have emerged.

### **Methods**

For nearly two decades, Hungary has resisted both passing a specific law against domestic violence and providing comprehensive services to its victims, and thus is an important example of a country resisting official recognition of domestic violence. Unfortunately, this long-standing refusal to recognize domestic violence as an important social problem means prevalence data on domestic violence are missing from state statistics. The Hungarian state does not collect data on domestic violence and the services it provides are not transparent,<sup>16</sup> so interviews with local NGOs, state bureaucrats, the police, and politicians were my only reliable sources of information about the long debates on what to call domestic violence, what kinds of services are most needed, and who should provide those services. I consulted various international documents and NGO websites to select my pool of potential interviewees. I also regularly asked my interviewees for recommendations on how to find the most important political participants in the discussion on domestic violence in Hungary. I prepared a set of central questions for my structured interviews and, depending on my interviewees' willingness or ability to provide information, adjusted them to uncover the most pertinent information and materials.

The research for this article dates back to the mid-1990s. I observed and interviewed representatives of women's groups that 1) produced news items about their events, such as conferences, petitions, and protests; and 2) provided services on behalf of Hungarian women. The interview sites and activists changed frequently as groups dissolved and new ones emerged. Some activists moved to a new NGO and a few particularly dedicated individuals remained active during the entire two decades. The most typical activists can be characterized as belonging to one of two main groups: 1) university students or recent graduates, and 2) middle-

aged, often professional activists. Budapest tended to be the most likely location for groups to form and coordinate activities with others both in Hungary and also internationally.

During the fall of 1994, I interviewed numerous activists of NANE (*Nők a Nőkért Együtt az Erőszak Ellen Egyesület*, Women for Women Together Against Violence [www.nane.hu](http://www.nane.hu)). NANE, established in January 1994, was the first Hungarian NGO to serve victims of domestic violence. A rarity among women's groups from the early transition period, NANE has survived political and economic upheavals and continues to offer its services today. Since 1994, I have added at least five new interviews, each with different individuals from Hungarian women's groups, to the original 42 transcribed and coded texts every summer.

The purpose of the interviews is to discover how and why international norms transpired in some countries and were resisted in others by the post-interview analysis showing the actions and interactions of NGOs, governments, and international organizations. Exclusively analyzing official documents, such as national plans to combat domestic violence — even if such plans were produced — would not offer the required insight. These documents eliminate or gloss over formative debates and negotiations taking place before such document appears in public and thus do not explain why certain terms and policies were chosen and why their implementation succeeded or failed. Interviews offer activists, government officials, and politicians the opportunity to interpret their own or their organizations' professed values, actions, and recommended policies. Their interpretations then allow me to increase scholarly and policy-relevant knowledge on the reception and adaptation to new, trans-nationally resonant norms. The subjectivity of the interviews offers crucial perspectives on why the local and international coalitions were successful in either producing or blocking legislative and governmental action. I always explain the aim of my research to my interviewees and offer full confidentiality and anonymity.

During my interviews in June and July 2012 in Hungary, I asked NGO representatives how they reached out to supporters, established a network of activists, and attempted to convince the government to pursue changes in norms and laws. However, I have found that state employees' freedom of expression was severely curtailed. Most of these interviewees explicitly mentioned such constraints. State employees can give interviews only with explicit permission from their boss. When I interviewed police officers and government representatives in 2012, I encountered many bureaucratically sanctioned obstacles despite the often explicit willingness

of my interviewees to share information. Understandably, few people are willing to risk their jobs for offering what could later be framed as potentially damaging or critical information on state institutions. Some state employees suggested I identify them by their membership in professional associations, such as lawyers or by their previous profession, because these NGO affiliations afforded the freedom to share information without government control.

Locating reliable police and crime statistics on how often police units were called to domestic disputes and how they responded to cases of intimate partner violence (I will discuss the choice of expression for domestic violence later in this text) proved equally challenging. I could collect such data from NGO activists and the police, but much of it is fragmented and very difficult to compare across time. Reliable and chronologically comparable data on the occurrence of and state response to domestic violence information is essential not only for scholarly research, but also as a basis for a meaningful public discussion and policy deliberation in Hungary. Nonetheless, public deliberation has started despite the lack of such comparative data, with NGOs asserting that the 72 women who are killed annually in domestic disputes in Hungary account for 39 percent of all homicides.<sup>17</sup>

I also gathered extensive amounts of archival information from newspapers, Internet sites of NGOs, and the Hungarian government. I juxtapose the interviews with this information to identify differences of interpretation between the various political actors. When I find overlaps and contradictions, I ask activists, government bureaucrats, and politicians for further information either by contacting them in writing or during the following year's interview because this short period allows interviewees to more accurately recall other actors and arguments.

### **Background: The power of a label**

Identifying obstacles to defining and establishing policies against domestic violence has particular contemporary significance in Hungary where political and economic problems, such as high unemployment, inflation, emigration, much-hyped demographic decline, and near state bankruptcy have shaken the previously unquestionable dominance of liberal norms, especially since the 2007 global financial crisis.<sup>18</sup> The increasingly inward-looking and nationalist trends in Hungary further contribute to decreasing

the chances of including international human rights and non-traditional gender issues in policy deliberations.

The most important finding of my research to date has been the renewed importance of naming domestic violence. Naming implies a normative frame and connects to particular policy instruments. In the late 1990s, women's NGOs translated "domestic violence" from English and interpreted it as "intimate partner violence" (*párkapcsolati erőszak*) that included past and present partners, married, engaged, living together, separated, heterosexual and homosexual alike. Because language and the construction of nation are intertwined, additions in the language reflect the changing standards, norms, beliefs of a nation, especially if we consider idioms. The term "violence against women" (*nők elleni erőszak*) was immediately rejected by the public and most politicians for focusing on adult women, and for implying victimhood and a need for feminist-inspired policy solutions in the form of shelters and quick, easily enforceable distancing ordinance against perpetrators. As the naming and consequent policy debate progressed, it stripped domestic violence of any feminist connotations, calling it "violence in the family" (*családon belüli erőszak*) to include — and eventually focus on — children and to a lesser degree, the elderly. Focus on the young generation, as the key to the future of the nation, is the long established rhetorical focus of conservative-nationalist forces that neither the liberal-socialist (2002–2010) nor the more explicitly populist recent governments (in power since 2010) wished to challenge. This comprehensive and inclusive, but entirely gender-neutral approach aims to reduce and eliminate violence within the general family setting but it also requires extensive services for a large and very diverse set of the population. Both the consequent considerable expansion of welfare services and their unfocused nature would have made such a proposal unlikely during times of increasing austerity. More importantly, conservative-nationalist forces, such as the Christian Democratic Party objected to the notion that the family could be a site of violence because they regard it as a sacred place where future generations of Hungarians are nurtured.

The naming debate is at risk of being dismissed as superficial or trivial, but it depicts a historical trajectory and serves as the public face of profound normative and political differences.<sup>19</sup> The most important line of differentiation concerns the interpretation of individual rights and the limits of state intervention in private life. This concern is especially notable against a backdrop of the relatively recent historical experience of communist-era invasive state intrusion in family life. This historical

heritage has also been identified as limiting the appeal of women's social movement activism.<sup>20</sup> Other important policy-relevant debate concerning domestic violence is the contemporary embrace of capitalist values and the related inviolability of private property, exemplified by the frequently raised concern that distancing ordinance would imply the perpetrator losing ownership of the apartment/house. A particularly controversial aspect of naming domestic violence and finding suitable policies to address it is homophobia, and more specifically the fear of including — and thus legitimating — gay partners by using the term “intimate partner” violence (*párkapcsolati erőszak*).<sup>21</sup> For conservatives and nationalists, including gay partners in the definition of partners amounts to nothing less than an overt threat against the role of the nation and the sanctity of procreation.

### **An emerging movement**

The Hungarian NGOs working to raise awareness of domestic violence have used many creative techniques rooted in their home environments, and also borrowed ideas and arguments from international experiences. Most local campaigns found inspiration from abroad but developed into localized, grassroots awareness-raising efforts. For example, volunteers at NANE, the first and thus far only NGO to have a hotline for victims of domestic violence in Hungary, mounted a persistent campaign of placing stickers displaying its hotline number on public transport vehicles. Initially assisted by a regional fund from the Open Society Institute,<sup>22</sup> NANE launched a traveling exposition of “red dolls,” life-sized red cutout images of “Silent Witnesses” that represented women killed by domestic violence, as a large-scale awareness-raising and political lobbying project. The red dolls had previously appeared in the United States and Western Europe as part of the annual Sixteen Days Against Violence campaign and their symbolism translated flawlessly across physical and linguistic borders.<sup>23</sup>

The initiation of a coordinated human rights campaign to criminalize domestic violence at the end of the first decade of the 21st century marked a sea change in Hungarian women's social movements. Earlier waves of contemporary women's activism in Hungary were barely — and very rarely — connected to international networks of feminist and human rights causes. Finding inspiration from and cooperating with transnational social movement activists and at the same time being constrained by such collaborations, Hungarian activism concerning domestic violence demon-



strates this double-sided nature of transnational flows. On the one hand, using a typical “boomerang pattern,”<sup>24</sup> trans-national social movements allowed women’s groups in Hungary to refer to and use the leverage of various international norms and organizations to advance their agenda at home. On the other hand, the predominantly Western, liberal democratic framework of human rights and women’s activism also narrowed the definition of domestic violence to exclude economic violence,<sup>25</sup> contrary to the hopes of many post-communist women’s groups.<sup>26</sup> The Western feminist interpretation of domestic violence as both gender specific and part of the broad notion of violence against women also conflicted with the Hungarian political environment which would only address this issue in a gender-neutral manner.

#### **NANE: An enduring force**

Established in 1994 with the active involvement of Antonia Burrows, an American feminist, NANE was the first organization in Hungary to raise awareness of the problem by effectively using the media. Eventually, NANE’s telephone number made its way into the general information section of the telephone books. NANE also extensively engaged in advocacy to establish laws against perpetrators.<sup>27</sup> In an initially fruitful cooperation between NANE and the Hungarian Policewomen’s Association, the police started to train some of its members to recognize and deal with domestic violence. In 2004, 240 police officers, followed by another 80 in 2005, were trained to recognize symptoms of domestic violence, but the police found it very difficult to obtain funding for this training.<sup>28</sup>

Along with the human rights advocacy group *Habeas Corpus Munkacsoport* (Habeas Corpus Working Group) and Krisztina Morvai’s *Női és Gyermekjogi Kutatási és Képzőközpont* (Women’s Rights and Children’s Rights Research and Training Center)<sup>29</sup>, NANE advocated for the recognition of “intimate partner violence” and the provision of services to battered women and children in the mid-1990s. The pinnacle of their collaboration was the 2003 Budapest police directive that compelled the police to intervene in all cases of domestic violence. Two tragic cases in September 2002 had created an unexpected political opportunity for the three NGOs to promote their case. One case involved Tomi Balogh, an eight-year-old boy who was killed by his father. The other was that of fourteen-year-old Kitti Simek, who shot her abusive stepfather. Myriad letters and calls followed an emotional appearance on television by Krisz-

tina Morvai, who asked Hungarians to demand that their parliamentary representatives pass legislation to eliminate domestic violence. The three NGOs gathered over 50,000 signatures on a petition showing Tomi's picture; and these signatures, as well as Hungary's then-pending EU admission, put extensive pressure on the broader public and politicians to produce parliamentary legislation. When the three NGOs accepted framing of domestic violence as child abuse, this de-gendered political message finally convinced two members of the Hungarian Parliament to draft a comprehensive proposal for state action to handle domestic violence. The bill was presented to Parliament in a revised form in March 2003 under number H/2483. During the formulation of the bill, the Hungarian Socialist Party female representative who submitted it insisted that men were equally victims of domestic violence and should therefore be protected, thus showing the enduring power of dominant gender hierarchies.<sup>30</sup> Between 5 March and 16 April 2003, the Parliament discussed and eventually passed a nonbinding policy-oriented document, "Decision on the Formulation of a National Strategy for Preventing and Efficiently Responding to Violence in the Family" that obliged the legislative body to formulate a law on domestic violence within a year. The governing coalition of the Hungarian Socialist Party and the Alliance of Free Democrats, totaling 203 representatives, voted in favor of the decision, whereas the conservatives, 160 representatives, abstained. However, this national strategy and the demand for a separate law against domestic violence have still not been fulfilled a decade on. Although in 2006 a distancing ordinance was established, both this and its slightly revised 2009 version were considered useless except in the most serious cases, when the police could intervene using other means.<sup>31</sup>

NANE found a dynamic and internationally recognized partner in Amnesty International (AI). By widely publicizing the unheard cries of women who do not enjoy even rudimentary protection from rape and sexual violence in the home,<sup>32</sup> AI's cooperation with NANE became part of a worldwide effort to draw attention to violence against women. With its direct involvement with NANE's "Silent Witnesses" campaign, AI became the first major international human rights NGO to engage, in a direct and sustained way, with advocacy related to the criminalization of domestic violence in Hungary.

Joining AI in exerting pressure on the Hungarian government and many of its neighbors, The Advocates for Human Rights invited fellow NGOs and government representatives to a February 2008 regional workshop to enhance legal reforms against domestic violence.<sup>33</sup> The

notable transnational involvements of AI and The Advocates for Human Rights signal the increasingly tangible impact of transnational forces in social movement activism to eradicate domestic violence.

NANE persisted in finding international partners, such as the EU's Daphne-supported trainings and major corporations — for example, in 2011–12 it collaborated with Vodafone, a mobile phone company — to support its cause. Vodafone was behind a successful project in Spain and Britain whereby women who were victims of domestic violence could be immediately connected with the local police in emergencies.<sup>34</sup> Vodafone's effective technical and monetary support for NANE was a central focus when the Hungarian government started to deliberate the definition of and policies against domestic violence in the fall and winter of 2012.<sup>35</sup>

While NANE quickly procured moral and financial support from abroad, its first major Hungarian state financial support arrived only in 2009 when the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour offered to fund a two-day training session for the police and social workers with a focus on protecting children from abuse. As the child-centric training indicates, the conceptual debate about who is the most likely victim of domestic violence has continued unabated between Hungarian state agencies and NANE.

The official Hungarian discourse on domestic violence has fundamentally erased the feminist and women-specific signifiers of domestic violence, calling it *háztartási* (household) violence. A woman activist bitterly joked about this new name, arguing that the adjective equated violence with cookies (*háztartási keksz* is a type of cookie), as both share a colloquial terminology. Such a popular association did not bother the Christian Democratic Party, the minority party in the governing coalition, which coined and heavily promoted the new term to avoid the negative association of violence with the family.<sup>36</sup> These trends were not unique to Hungary because gender-neutral arguments have gained ground internationally, erasing gender from policy debates concerning domestic violence at least in part due to neo-liberalism offloading government responsibilities and reducing public spending on welfare.<sup>37</sup>

A main reason why a small NGO such as NANE could maintain a decade-long and extensive record of engaging with public policy and maintain persistent contacts with the Hungarian police, the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs<sup>38</sup>, and major corporations is that it entered into and maintains, within the constraints of its limited resources, an extensive transnational network. NANE managed to establish an active connection to Western European and North American feminist women's advocacy

organizations that use human rights instruments, such as the UN's CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women), to combat violence against women. It is also using its connections with Western European organizations, such as WAVE (Women Against Violence Europe) to find partners. Although personal face-to-face meetings were infrequent among women activists in different countries, a transnational communication network operated effectively, mostly via the Internet.

Although NANE continues to be the single most persistent voice lobbying to establish legal recognition and treatment of domestic violence in Hungary, other national and transnational pressures have also emerged to exert an influence. The November 2012 "16 Days Against Violence" campaign ended with an official statement calling for the Hungarian government to follow the Polish example and sign The Council of Europe (CoE) binding "Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence."<sup>39</sup> Although Hungary — along with only a few other CoE member states — has not signed this convention, it is unlikely that it will be able to maintain its position for long owing to a combination of external and internal pressures.

### **A new wave of activism**

Two successive signature-collection campaigns in 2010 and 2011 signaled a newly strengthening wave of public debate on domestic violence. The 2011 signature drive gained the support of the international cosmetics company AVON, whose network of mostly female agents mobilized enough support to collect over 100,000 verifiable signatures. In July 2012, I interviewed government politicians, NGO activists, and Pálma Halász, the organizer of both signature-collection campaigns, and at that time it was becoming obvious that the Hungarian Parliament would have to discuss whether domestic violence merits a separate bill. These two signature-collection drives emerged after the 2003 extensive mobilization that also produced substantial pressure, but ultimately failed to produce legislative action and comprehensive services for victims of domestic violence.

However, even the 100,000 signatures collected in 2011 proved to be insufficient evidence of a mandate for the conservative-nationalist governing coalition and it scheduled the legally mandated debate on

domestic violence for 3 a.m. on 12 September 2012. The most frequently quoted intervention at this late and sparsely attended parliamentary debate was that of representative István Varga, from the ruling FIDESZ–*Magyar Polgári Szövetség* (the Federation of Young Democrats–Hungarian Civic Union). His argument that “women should give birth to two or three, preferably four or five children” to avoid domestic violence generated enough outrage both in Hungary and abroad that the ruling party decided to abruptly change course and establish a committee to review their legal options, promising to establish a separate domestic violence bill by the end of 2012.<sup>40</sup> The conservative position that István Varga represented in the parliamentary debate on domestic violence clearly demonstrated the firm and unchanged sexual hierarchies within the present government and their preference to give priority to nationalism in the form of promoting demographic growth versus (women’s) individual rights and desires. To the supporters of Varga, deliberations on domestic violence appear as a challenge to the nation, to (the exclusively heterosexual interpretation of) the family and, within it, women’s (assumed) subservience.

Comparative analysis on domestic violence has identified two main clusters of factors that most influence attitudes regarding violence against women at the individual, organizational, community, and societal levels: culture and gender.<sup>41</sup> These two meta-factors shape attitudes on multiple levels that then contribute to a fundamental and causal relationship to the perpetration of violence against women. For example, men with more traditional, rigid, and misogynistic gender-role attitudes are more likely to resort to marital violence. With nationalist-conservative values and a right-wing leaning centrist government enjoying broad popular support in Hungary, legislation against domestic violence will continue to encounter obstacles, even if its two-decades long history shows persistent signs of increasing appeal.

### **Two theoretical challenges and their relevance**

Two main theoretical venues directly contribute to explaining why the process to produce a separate domestic violence bill and establish services to its victims has been so long and difficult in Hungary: a) postmodern feminist theory on intersectionality, and b) recent reformulations of social movement theory, including transnational movements. The intersection of these two perspectives provides the most useful explanations of how and why women’s and human rights NGOs have added domestic violence to

their agendas and pursued related policy changes in the past twenty years in Hungary.

It may be tempting to assert that Hungary's increased transnational engagement has initiated and contributed to the changes in activism related to domestic violence. However, such a monocausal explanation would grossly underestimate both the effects of national political forces and the diversity of the women who participated in this social movement. Thus, the postmodern interpretation of the diversity of women's interests and the corresponding diversity of women activists is the first theoretical perspective to be discussed here.

### **Intersectionality: A postmodern perspective**

Post-modern feminist theory highlights the diversity among women and within women's movements. Data emerging from the research on Hungarian women's movements underscores the arguments of contemporary feminist theorizing on the multiple characteristics of women, also labeled as "intersectionality."<sup>42</sup> This postmodern line of thought rejects an essentialist notion of femininity and instead recognizes that the entity we call "woman" is a fluid construct of various facets, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic class, and religion, etc. Consequently, the Hungarian movement against domestic violence combines many of these facets in changing ways.

Recognizing diversity, however, does not negate that the social and political category of "women" can account for both the impressive political solidarity of women and their explicit differences.<sup>43</sup> While some men participated in the protests to call for a separate law on domestic violence and in the signature collection campaigns both as activists and supporters, the overwhelming majority of activists were women. My own observations and interviews have revealed that only women acted as the main spokespersons for the movement against domestic violence. Thus, while I keep the diversity of women in mind, I highlight when and how a sizeable group or combination thereof mobilized in support of what they considered an important shared interest concerning domestic violence in Hungary.

Ethnicity is one of the important perspectives of intersectionality in Hungarian women's movements. The country's largest ethnic minority — the approximately 10 percent of Gypsy/Roma ethnicity — has created and maintained women's groups separate from the other women's groups.

With a few exceptions, the pursuits of Roma women's groups have remained disconnected from the Hungarian movement's waves of actions, including domestic violence. Roma women's groups' focus has been mainly on job creation and anti-discrimination, both of which have encountered continuous and strong obstacles,<sup>44</sup> and both they and individual Roma women have been largely absent from mobilizations against domestic violence in Hungary. Their general absence may be explained by a strong anti-Roma sentiment that explicitly emerged in the form of the 17 percent electoral support for *Jobbik* — The Movement for a Better Hungary, an ultra-right and explicitly racist party, which entered Hungarian Parliament in the 2010 elections.<sup>45</sup>

*Jobbik* has a special relevance for Hungarian women's movements, because Krisztina Morvai became one of its best-known representatives and its presidential candidate in 2010. An internationally known feminist lawyer who served as a UN CEDAW Committee member between 2002 and 2006, Morvai, as described earlier, was one of the most notable activists fighting for legal changes regarding domestic violence in Hungary. However, her swift turn to the extreme Right, including her broadly publicized, vitriolic anti-Semitic comments caused a rift that halted women's and human rights groups' organizing against domestic violence.<sup>46</sup> Morvai's anti-Roma rhetoric entered national and international politics when she became a representative of the European Parliament.<sup>47</sup> Despite her long-established record of supporting a separate law on domestic violence, she remained silent in September 2012 when conservative-nationalist politicians questioned the credibility and mandate of the petition signed by over 100,000 people calling for such a bill.

My interviews were testament to the deep ethnic divide among Hungarian women activists, rooted in discrimination against both Roma and Jewish compatriots. The ethnic divide usually manifests not as outright hostility, but as organizational segregation. I have not encountered Roma women members in other women's groups, although I have seen a few ethnic Hungarians attend high-profile meetings of a few Roma women's gatherings. This ethnic segregation continues despite a much-publicized integration effort, called "Roma Decade 2005–15," which is supported by many European governments, the EU's various institutions, the Open Society Institute, and other notable international funders, and which has its secretariat in Budapest.<sup>48</sup> In part because most Jewish women activists refrain from publicly identifying as belonging to this long-discriminated-against minority in Hungary, anti-Semitic sentiments

have appeared latently or as comments in my interviews, but I have not yet observed them in the public actions of women's groups.

### **Reformulations of social movement theory**

Reacting against the new global neoliberal order and the related imposition of austerity measures, social movements in post-communist Europe seized on emerging transnational networks. The post-communist trans-national experience does not negate the global and international inquiries, but adds to them Foucauldian considerations of disciplining power structures and normative regulations of individuals and their groups.<sup>49</sup> When viewing globalization as a disciplining regime, a Foucauldian analysis reveals a form of govern-*mentality* built both with economic-political structures and deeply incorporated meta-norms, such as individuality and competition, and based on these, certain rights. Nationalist and traditionalist interpretations of community, such as family and nation, attempt to counter these influences.

Although often described as weak, illiberal, and ineffective in post-communist Europe,<sup>50</sup> social movements in Hungary have explicitly broadened the scope of political contestations. For example, especially during 2011 in Hungary, conservative-nationalist voices stated their own critique of neo-liberalism alongside what is usually seen as a “red-green” (social-democratic and environmentalist) protest. Domestic violence has fallen in between these two dominant and culturally resonant framings.

From the globally dominant neoliberal perspective, domestic violence is cast as an individual rights violation. At the same time, the neoliberal perspective also creates strong incentives for objectifying women and using their bodies to sell in the — purportedly free — marketplace. In Hungary and in post-communist Europe in general, naked or scantily clad women's bodies are pervasively used for economic gain both legally as advertisements and illegally, as prostitutes. These two normative constraints, simultaneously emerging from the neoliberal framework, leave Hungarian women's groups with precious few options for framing domestic violence in a way that could appear as an important problem their communities need to address both for international and national audiences.<sup>51</sup>

Thus far, Hungarian women's mobilizations chose to hybridize the arguments of individual human rights with national considerations to raise attention to domestic violence. The results have been strong signs of gender neutrality and a child-centered focus in national deliberations. The



combination of these arguments produced tensions both within and between women's groups, but in this regard they appear similar to other contexts, including Canada where activists against domestic violence recently adopted gender-neutral frames that de-emphasize feminist arguments.<sup>52</sup> This phenomenon highlights the difficult task of discursive framing inside a social movement. Benford and Snow argue that it is crucial to include social movement framing alongside political opportunity structures and resource mobilizations to understand the emergence and assess the effectiveness of movements.<sup>53</sup>

The major benefit of using the transnational framework is that its epistemology encourages the incorporation of various kinds of otherness. This flexibility allows for multiple opportunities that neo-liberalism enlivens. The transnational frame also invokes the necessity to include the long-neglected "Second World" experience to re-enter the already well-established North-South dialogue.<sup>54</sup> In order to accomplish this newly interpreted recognition and renewed incorporation of the contributions of the communist/post-communist period regarding women's movements, post-communist women's movements must overcome two major obstacles. First, Central and Eastern European women must reject being labeled persistently as "backwards, apolitical and full of apathy," which inflicts false consciousness.<sup>55</sup> Second, the whole region must overcome having been erased as an entity: "Eastern Europe itself (in its Cold War borders) has in any case probably ceased to exist."<sup>56</sup>

Unearthing, validating, and analyzing contemporary Hungarian women's movements reveals many shades of the seemingly two-fold process of women's empowerment and disempowerment. On the one hand, free association, increased travel opportunities, and new media offered by the Internet are emancipatory and afford self-expression. On the other hand, the example of Hungarian women's activism in the past twenty years demonstrates the rise of new forms of unequal power relations and conflicts between international and local interpretations of the "appropriate" gender-specificity in social movements and their claims about public policies. Due to the intermingling of these two contradictory effects of transnational forces, women's mobilizations had to — or chose to — creatively hybridize external and local expectations so that their claims could reach an audience. The process of hybridizing is ongoing and it is moderately successful in navigating the sensitivities of an increasingly anti-democratic national environment and a powerful neoliberal global regime.

**Conclusion: Domestic violence and contemporary Hungarian women's movements**

This paper has described and explored successive waves of Hungarian women's activism while defining and interpreting domestic violence as they interact with one another, national politics, the transnational environment, and the broader social issues of gender and nation. The terms defining domestic violence has changed from the initial "intimate partner violence" through various iterations to arrive at the same term, only slightly modified after nearly two decades of activism and awareness raising.<sup>57</sup> In an environment of economic crisis in Hungary, the focus of women's movements has shifted to a selection of gender-specific topics that already carried a seal of transnational resonance, such as domestic violence. The transnational socio-economic and cultural forces affecting Hungary produced not only more openness and diversity of voices in the public arena but also various limitations on women's activism. Although social movements tend to benefit from the increased opportunities for transnational networking, women's movements have also been constrained by the underlying norms and implementation of neo-liberalism.

The contemporary Hungarian case presents a challenge to a monolithic understanding of women's mobilizations by showing that when domestic violence emerges as a topic of public debate, successive waves of movements have tended to downplay the potentially women-specific arguments in favour of a more gender-neutral framework in hopes of attracting broader popular support. As Alena Heitlinger and Steven Saxonberg point out for the Czech case, despite the obstacles feminists face, it might be possible to mobilize more people around women's issues if social movements frame their arguments in a manner that takes into account the specific cultural sensitivities of the region.<sup>58</sup> The more successful Slovene, Croat, and Czech cases of recognizing and defining domestic violence and creating and implementing policies against it serve as evidence that such harmony between transnational, national, and local contexts is entirely possible in a post-communist context. In contrast, the current Hungarian discursive frames tend to portray the sexes as complementary, with women acting as the more docile figure, in part because of contemporary nationalist and conservative attitudes, and in part because of the historical legacy of communism and the contemporary economic crisis, which emphasize the need for solidarity within the private sphere.

There are at least three main points of significance in the notable shift from welfare to narrower, often gender-neutral but trans-nationally more resonant issues in Hungarian women's activism.

First, transnational support is becoming a requirement for sustained mobilization, and increasingly so even for partial policy success. At the same time, resource-dependence, co-optation by Western donors, and "NGO-ization" (i.e., professionalization) can be to the detriment of women's social movements focusing on local concerns.<sup>59</sup> It is important to note that even this otherwise seemingly simple hierarchical relationship has produced an ongoing and substantial exchange about interpretations of gender roles and differently lived realities — that is, the expression of intersectionality and difference between women and their various movements. For example, women's NGOs from the former communist bloc have emphasized the inclusion of economic violence, which women's NGOs promoted as a fundamental part of defining domestic violence, much to the chagrin of US-based activists.

Second, the much celebrated and seemingly open neoliberal system has brought a new set of structural constraints to social movement activism. These increasingly normalized (and thus, most often invisible), but powerful constraints cannot be explained by exclusively relying on the routine argument that Central and Eastern European movements are weak because the fear inherited from the communist past blocks activism or women's continued solidarity with men against the oppressive state.<sup>60</sup> The movements that Hungarian women have produced in the past twenty years are real-life examples of using the meager benefits of structural changes while creatively fighting against a political environment that does not want to take any notice of them. The mobilization against the government's position in the form of large, vocal protest in front of the Parliament the day after István Varga's now infamous speech shows how effectively women's and human rights NGOs can use this admittedly narrow structural opening.

Third, the activities of women's groups not only create political agency but also assist in creating heightened awareness of gender roles, the extent of gender inequalities, and conflicts with both national and international norms.<sup>61</sup> The price of continued engagement in national political affairs has been the toning down or complete elimination of gender-specific and feminist claims in public policies. The usefulness of transnational lens is evident in this respect because these women's movements would otherwise be barely visible from the traditional standpoint that focuses on governments and political parties.

By transferring norms, symbols, terms, best policy and mobilization practices that were useful in one setting to another context, transnational activism can bring up and help solve public policy problems.<sup>62</sup> Either on a temporary basis (as in the case of the 2011 campaign collecting over 100,000 signatures with the help of a one-time dedicated AVON network) or longer-term transnational coalitions (such as the network of NANE, AI, and WAVE), the women's and human rights NGOs have reached out to numerous potential partners to gain support for their definition of problems and then together lobby the public and authorities to implement favourable policies. To gain more visibility and resonance, Hungarian women's movements have frequently applied trans-nationally interpretable symbolic devices (such as the "red dolls" of domestic violence victims in the Silent Witnesses campaigns), regularly referred to the internationally used terms for domestic violence, and used the arguments and data collected abroad to challenge the existing order at home. As this set of evidence shows, a large selection of women's groups in Hungary have moved beyond their national confines, entered transnational networks, and applied the framework of human rights norms and international policy recommendations when lobbying to criminalize domestic violence. The increasing transnational engagement on their part during the past twenty years was in part due to necessity, given the persistently conservative interpretation of gender and the popular support for nationalism. Further exchanges between the local and transnational contexts may help eventually decrease the gap between interpretations of gender and nation in post-communist Hungary and lead to an effective legislation against domestic violence while meaningfully supporting its many victims.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Two of the best-known books that testify to this trend are Sally Engle Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006) and S. Laurel Weldon, *Protest, Policy, and the Problem of Violence against Women: A Cross-National Comparison* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> A domestic abuse intervention program, the Duluth model is a widely used inter-agency model. It was developed in the early 1980s in Duluth, Minnesota, USA; see <http://www.theduluthmodel.org/>. Although its effectiveness is contentious, this model has been adopted in more than 4,000 communities in all

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50 US states and at least 26 countries. A good review of the debates about the Duluth model can be found at <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2010/10/21/duluth-treatment-model/>.

<sup>3</sup> Susanne Zwingel, "How Do Norms Travel? Theorizing International Women's Rights in Transnational Perspective," *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2012): 115–130.

<sup>4</sup> Olga Avdeyeva, "When Do States Comply with International Treaties? Policies on Violence against Women in Post-Communist Countries," *International Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2007): 877–900.

<sup>5</sup> Katalin Fábián, ed., *Domestic Violence in Post-communist States: Local Activism, National Policies, and Global Forces* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 1–45.

<sup>6</sup> For example, in the 8 January 2013, issue of *The New Yorker*, Hanri Konzru argued that the new Hungarian constitution "recognizes the role of Christianity in preserving nationhood," and art that is deemed blasphemous or "anti-national" is now the target of a full-blown campaign of suppression.

<sup>7</sup> Dóra Matalin, "Családon belüli erőszak: kivonultak a nők" [Domestic violence: The women have marched out]. *Népszabadság*, 23 January 2013. [http://nol.hu/belfold/20130123-elakadt\\_a\\_jogalkotas](http://nol.hu/belfold/20130123-elakadt_a_jogalkotas)

<sup>8</sup> Diana Panke and Ulrich Peterson describe how international relations literature needs to move beyond norm creation and diffusion to cases of degeneration and substitutions in "Why international norms disappear sometimes," *European Journal of International Relations*, 18, no. 4 (2011): 719–742.

<sup>9</sup> MTI, "Száz ezer aláírás a családon belüli erőszak törvényi tiltásáért" [A hundred thousand signatures to criminalize violence in the family]. *Népszabadság*, 1 May 2012. The website <http://www.alairas.atw.hu/> informed supporters on the signature collection campaign and listed its press coverage.

<sup>10</sup> The statement by MP István Varga was: "we would need to busy ourselves that there be not only two or three children born [in each family] but three, four, or five children. In this case, they would appreciate each other more and violence would not even occur." MTI, "Varga István lemondását követeli az MSZP" [The Hungarian Socialist Party demands the resignation of István Varga]. *Népszabadság*, 16 Sept. 2012.

<sup>11</sup> In addition to Hungary, the two post-Soviet Baltic states of Estonia and Latvia are also EU-member post-communist countries that have not passed such legislation as of January 2013, but both of these countries provide more extensive services to victims of domestic violence than Hungary does. Passing a specific law against domestic violence in advance of applying for EU membership has become a trend among prospective candidates, even though the EU does not have the capacity to demand such a law.

<sup>12</sup> Jacqui True, *The Political Economy of Violence against Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) 10–35.

<sup>13</sup> As of January 2013, 25 of the Council's 47 members have signed and ratified the Convention, among them EU member post-communist states such as Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and aspirant countries, such as Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine, see [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/default_en.asp).

<sup>14</sup> The Advocates for Human Rights, Autonomous Women's House Zagreb, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, *Implementation of Croatia's Domestic Violence Legislation* (Minneapolis, MN: The Advocates for Human Rights, 2012) 1–7.

<sup>15</sup> Women against Violence Europe (WAVE). *Country Report 2011: Reality Check on European Services for Women and Children Survivors of Violence* (Vienna, Austria: WAVE office, 2011), 80–84, 120–124, 128–132.

<sup>16</sup> Women against Violence Europe (WAVE). *Country report 2011: Reality Check on European Services for Women and Children Survivors of Violence* (Vienna, Austria: WAVE office, 2011), 104–7.

<sup>17</sup> Comparing Hungary with other countries, NGOs argued that the lack of specific legislation and emergency services for victims of domestic violence has produced three times as high a murder rate as in other democratic countries. The NGOs stated that 40 women would be dead in Hungary per year if US laws were implemented and less than 20 if Spanish or German policies were used, quoted by Szonja Krezinger, “A nők szüljenek?” [Women: should they give birth?], *Metropol*, 12 September 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Erich Follath and Christoph Schult. “Media Law Outrage: Hungary's ‘Orbanization’ Is Worrying Europe.” *Der Spiegel*, 12 December 2010.

<sup>19</sup> While the field of sociolinguistics holds that the transmission of social norms happens through language and indicate that language reflects attitudes and belief systems, some scholars also caution taking this perspective too far, see Deborah Cameron “Demythologizing Sociolinguistics: Why Language Does Not Reflect Society,” in John Johnson and Talbot Taylor, eds. *Ideologies of Language*. (London: Routledge, 1990) 79–93.

<sup>20</sup> Susan Gal and Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Gender After Socialism: A Comparative-Historical Essay* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000) 37–62.

<sup>21</sup> Judit Takács' recent publications on homophobia and xenophobia in contemporary Hungary attest to this deeply entrenched trend. See “Homofóbia Magyarországon és Európában” In *Homofóbia Magyarországon* [Homophobia in Hungary], L'Harmattan Kiadó, Budapest, 2011), 15–34.

<sup>22</sup> Open Society Institute (OSI) Network Women's Program, *Grant program for 16 days media campaigns to combat violence against women* (2003), accessed 24 January 2013, <http://www.osi.hu/vaw/introduction.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> See <http://16akcionap.org> and [www.silentwitness.net](http://www.silentwitness.net).

<sup>24</sup> Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 1–38.

<sup>25</sup> Economic violence against women includes their lesser remuneration for work equal to men's; limited access to funds and credit; limited, nonexistent, or controlled access to health care, employment, or education; exclusion from financial decision making; and discriminatory laws on inheritance, property rights, and use of communal land, among others. See, for a more extensive discussion, Olufunmilayo Fawole. "Economic Violence To Women and Girls: Is It Receiving the Necessary Attention?" *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*, 9 no. 3 (2008): 167–177.

<sup>26</sup> Both the Russian and the Slovene cases demonstrate local women's groups' desire to include economic violence in domestic violence. See, on Russia: Janet Elise Johnson and Gulnara Zaynullina, "Global Feminism, Foreign Funding, and Russian Writing about Domestic Violence," in *Domestic Violence Policies and Movement Activism in Europe and Post-communist Eurasia*, ed. Katalin Fábián (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 78–110. On Slovenia: Sonja Robnik, "Domestic Violence against Women: When the Practice Creates the Theory: The Slovenian Case," in *Domestic Violence Policies and Movement Activism in Europe and Post-communist Eurasia*, ed. Katalin Fábián (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 195–218.

<sup>27</sup> Anna Szász, "A bántalmazott nők életét, érdekeit védelmező szervezetek (Organizations that Protect Battered Women)," *Esély* 3, no. 1 (2001): 106–119.

<sup>28</sup> Amnesty International (AI), *Magyarország: Meg nem hallott segítségkiáltások — A nők nem kapnak megfelelő védelmet a családon belüli szexuális erőszak ellen* [Hungary: Unheard cries — the failure to protect women from rape and sexual violence in the home] (2007), accessed 24 Jan. 24 2012, <http://amnesty.hu/NEEM%20jelentés.html> (in Hungarian), <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR27/002/2007> (in English)

<sup>29</sup> Krisztina Morvai's book was the first volume dedicated to domestic violence in Hungary and as such broke ground in creating more awareness and dispelling myths. Krisztina Morvai, *Terror a családban* [Terror in the Family], (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1998) 213–236.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Ágnes Vadai, Hungarian Socialist Party, Budapest, 24 June 2003.

<sup>31</sup> *Távoltartás* [Restraining order], 2006. Available at: <http://nane.hu/eroszak/index.html>.

<sup>32</sup> Amnesty International (AI), *Magyarország: Meg nem hallott segítségkiáltások*, 2007.

<sup>33</sup> Personal correspondence with Cheryl Thomas, director of The Advocates for Human Rights 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Györgyi Tóth, manager of NANE, 1 July 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Zsuzsa Bán, “Vodafone: tettek az erőszak ellen” [Vodafone: They have acted against violence], *Népszabadság*, 28 August 2012.

<sup>36</sup> Interview, NANE, 1 July 2011.

<sup>37</sup> Jane Jenson, “Lost in Translation: The Social Investment Perspective and Gender Equality,” *Social Politics* 16, no. 4 (2009): 446–483.

<sup>38</sup> Hungarian governments have very frequently reorganized the welfare-related administrative structure of the state to reflect their ideological approach. The Ministry for Family and Social Affairs (Szociális és Családügyi Minisztérium) functioned between 1998 and 2002 merging the previous Ministry of Welfare (Népjóléti Minisztérium) and the Ministry of Labour (Munkaügyi Minisztérium), both in operation between 1990–1998). After operating between 2002 and 2004, the Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs (Egészségügyi, Szociális és Családügyi Minisztérium) developed the single, “long-named” ministry, the Ministry of Youth, Social Affairs, Family and Equal Opportunities (Ifjúsági, Családügyi, Szociális és Esélyegyenlőségi Minisztérium) that existed between 2004–2006. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (Szociális és Munkaügyi Minisztérium) existed between 2006–2010. As of 2010, the mega-institution Ministry of National Resources (Nemzeti Erőforrás Minisztérium) brought under its aegis the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, see <http://www.nefmi.gov.hu/english>.

<sup>39</sup> A Magyar Női Érdekérvényesítő Szövetség, Magyarországi Női Alapítvány NANE Egyesület

Patent Egyesület, *Egyezményes fellépést a nők elleni erőszak ellen — kövessük a lengyel példát!* [We should sign a convention and fight against violence against women: Let’s follow the Polish example!] <http://noierdek.hu/?p=482>

<sup>40</sup> MTI, “Varga István lemondását követeli az MSZP” [The Hungarian Socialist Party demands the resignation of István Varga], *Népszabadság*, 16 September 2012.

<sup>41</sup> Michael Flood and Bob Pease, “Factors Influencing Attitudes to Violence against Women” *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*, 10, No. 2 (2009): 125–142. This article, among others, offers extensive literature that provides consistent evidence of an association between violence-supportive beliefs/values and the perpetration of violent behavior against women, at both individual and community levels.

<sup>42</sup> Nira Yuval-Davis, “Intersectionality and Feminist Politics,” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 13, no. 3 (2006): 193–209.

<sup>43</sup> Laurel Weldon, “Perspectives Against Interests: Sketch of a Feminist Political Theory of ‘Women’” *Politics and Gender* 7, no. 3 (2011): 262–273.

<sup>44</sup> Marcella Corsi, Chiara Crepaldi, Manuela Samek Lodovici, Paolo Boccagni, and Cristina Vasilescu. *Ethnic Minority and Roma Women in Europe* —



*A case for gender equality?* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2010).

<sup>45</sup> Interparliamentary Union, "Hungary: Latest elections in 2010" (2010), accessed 18 March 2012, [http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2141\\_E.htm](http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2141_E.htm)

<sup>46</sup> Some of the events and the demands of the then emerging coalition can be found at [www.prostitutcio.hu](http://www.prostitutcio.hu).

<sup>47</sup> Babett Oroszi, "Morvai újabb kirohanása az EP-ben [Morvai's latest outburst in the European Parliament]," *Stop*, 13 March 2012.

<sup>48</sup> Substantial amount of information about this multi-agency effort can be found at <http://www.romadecade.org>.

<sup>49</sup> Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality* (New York: Pantheon Book, 1978) 15–50.

<sup>50</sup> The literature is extensive and persistently critical of social movements as weak and illiberal. Some of the most relevant examples are: Marc Morjé Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 31–92; Susan Rose-Ackerman, *From Elections to Democracy: Building Accountable Government in Hungary and Poland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–25; Petr Kopecky and Cas Muddle, eds. *Uncivil Society: Contentious Politics in Post-Communist Europe*. (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>51</sup> Kristen Bumiller, *In an Abusive State; How Neoliberalism Appropriated the Feminist Movement against Sexual Violence* (Duke University Press, 2008) deals with the complicity of the state appropriating and undermining violence against women.

<sup>52</sup> Jill Vickers, *Reinventing Political Science: A Feminist Approach* (Fernwood: Halifax, 1997).

<sup>53</sup> Robert Benford and David Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, (2000): 611–639.

<sup>54</sup> Two recent articles in the same issue of *Signs* enhanced the perception that this shift is starting to take place. Magdalena Grabowska, "Bringing the Second World in: Conservative Revolution(s), Socialist Legacies, and Transnational Silences in the Trajectories of Polish Feminism," *Signs* 37, no. 2 (2012): 385–411, and Jennifer Suchland, "Is Postsocialism Transnational?" *Signs* 36, no. 4 (2011): 837–862

<sup>55</sup> Kornelia Slavova, "Looking at Western Feminisms Through the Double Lens of Eastern Europe and the Third World," in *Women and Citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe*, eds. Jasmina Lukić, Joanna Regulska, Darja Zavirsek (Great Britain: Ashgate, 2006), 248.

<sup>56</sup> Padraic Kenney, "Borders Breached: The Transnational in Eastern Europe since Solidarity," *Journal of Modern European History* 8, 2 (2010): 181.

<sup>57</sup> The Minister of Human Resources indicated that even at a very advanced stage of preparing a bill in mid-January 2013, there was no agreement on what to call domestic violence, MTI, 14 January 2013.

<sup>58</sup> Alena Heitlinger, "Framing Feminism in Post-Communist Czech Republic," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 29, no. 1 (1996): 77–93; and Steven Saxonberg, "In the Shadow of Amicable Gender Relations." In *Pink, Purple, Green: Women's, Religious, Environmental, and Gay/Lesbian Movements in Central Europe Today*, edited by H. Flam, 33–46. Boulder, CO: Columbia University Press, 2001; and *The Czech Republic before the New Millennium: Politics, Parties and Gender*. Boulder and New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

<sup>59</sup> The literature listing the problems and dysfunctionality of funding and civil society in post-communist region is extensive. Two excellent examples are Armine Ishkanian, "En-gendering Civil Society and Democracy Building: The Anti-Domestic Violence Campaign in Armenia," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 14, no. 4 (2007): 488–525; and Tanya Narozhna, "Foreign Aid for a Post-Euphoric Eastern Europe: The Limitations of Western Assistance in Developing Civil Society," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 7, no. 1 (2004): 243–66.

<sup>60</sup> Alexandra Hrycak, "From Mothers' Rights to Equal Rights: Post-Soviet Grassroots Women's Associations," in *Women's Community Activism and Globalization: Linking the Local and Global for Social Change*, eds. Nancy A. Naples, Manisha Desai (New York: Routledge, 2002), 62–79.

<sup>61</sup> Jasmina Lukic, Joanna Regulska, and Darja Zavirsek, eds., *Women and Citizenship in Central and East Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 1–20.

<sup>62</sup> Tsveta Petrova and Sidney Tarrow, "Participatory Activism in the Emerging European Polity: the Puzzle of East-Central Europe," *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 1 (2007): 74–94.

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