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Diplomats sitting in front of ruins in Budapest, 1945. Source: Fortepan/Archiv für Zeitgeschichte ETH Zürich, Photo no. 105773

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Special Editor of the Issue

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Abstract

This study presents the first results of a micro-level ecological and economic anthropological research conducted in the village of Tiszapéterfalva, located in Ukraine's Transcarpathian region. It explores the everyday survival strategies and informal income-generating practices—such as smuggling, cross-border trade, and irregular migration—that emerged in response to the unemployment crisis following the post-socialist transition. While these informal activities supported household livelihoods and compensated for the weakness of state institutions in peripheral border regions, they also had negative ecological consequences. The overuse of natural resources, pollution, and the decline of agricultural practices weakened the community's adaptive capacity and disrupted traditional relationships with the landscape, ultimately threatening local resilience.

Keywords

post-socialist economy, Ukraine, socio-ecological system, informal economy

Sándor Borbély

Local Resource Policies. Informality, Consumption, Landscape Relations

The study focuses on two main themes: informal livelihood strategies, i.e. economic actions not or only partially controlled by the state (ranging from informal family subsistence food production, undeclared work and foreign employment to illegal border smuggling), and the links between local ecological systems. It thus analyses how, during the years of post-socialism – the prolonged transition from a planned economy to a capitalist market economy – rural, village households in the border region of Transcarpathia [official name: Zakarpattia Oblast] developed everyday economic adaptation techniques and how these were integrated into a broader local ecological (environmental) resource management system.

This paper, following Moerlein and Carothers, approaches adaptation not as a narrow phenomenon (controlled and isolated by biophysical factors), but as a complex system encompassing the „whole environment of change"[1] , which includes not only environmental factors but also everyday livelihood strategies, poverty, cultural norms, hierarchical social relations and other local historical-economic conditions. In the Transcarpathian settlements I have studied, such external factors in the post-socialist period – in the broad sense of the term – include, for example, the severe capacity problems of the Ukrai-

1 Moerlein – Carothers, "Total environment of change", 10.

nian state, the persistent crisis of formal institutions (economic, political, social and financial systems), the popularisation and gradual standardisation of informal (non-state) economic strategies, or even the entrenchment of historically established unequal land tenure relations (the availability or lack of land and property as an economic resource), which in recent years have fundamentally determined the development opportunities of Hungarian villages and rural settlements in the border areas.

In my study, I will argue that environmental (economic, political, social, ecological) changes, broadly understood, create hierarchical adaptation systems in local societies, within which adaptation to economic changes – at least in the Transcarpathian settlements I studied – overrides ecological adaptation and related conservation concerns. In this way, the everyday survival techniques developed in the post-socialist transition act as drivers of landscape change in border villages and, ultimately, as one of the dominant local institutions that reproduce ecological crisis phenomena.

In this context, my study seeks to answer the following three questions:

1. In the Transcarpathian Hungarian settlements concerned, how did the members of the local population adapt to the structural changes after the regime change (employment crisis, privatisation, new ownership and property relations) with specific informal economic strategies and adaptation techniques?

2. What are the contemporary land-use practices of the local population, in particular of households specialised in agricultural production?

3. How do informal economic actions in peripheral, border spaces affect the ecological relations within local, rural and village lifeworlds? In other words, how do economic and other (‚environmental', ‚natural') risk management strategies and adaptive behaviours fit together?

First, a brief description of the research site. I will then describe the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study and the structural conditions (local economic, political and social conditions) that have contributed to the develop-

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ment of divergent resource management and landscape use practices and multiplicative (multi-level) adaptation models by local society in the post-socialist period.

Location of the study (regional and local contexts)

In Ukraine, the international geopolitical conflict (the so-called Ukrainian-Russian hybrid war) and internal political tensions that have been unfolding in the eastern provinces of the country since 2014 have led to a very serious political, economic and social crisis in recent years.

According to World Bank data, in 2020, Ukraine's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) at *purchasing power par*ity (PPP) was only 82.6% of the level at independence (24 August 1991).[2] With this economic performance, Ukraine has been one of the poorest and least economically developing sovereign nation-states in recent years, not only among the Central and Eastern European countries, but also among the continent as a whole.[3] This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that the size of the shadow or black economy within the Ukrainian national economy, despite a slow decline over the past few years, remains very significant: according to Ukraine's Ministry of Economy, the informal sector accounted for about 28% of the country's GDP in 2019 and 30% in 2020.[4]

2 While in 1991 the GDP per capita (PPP) was $14,968, in 2020 it will be only $12,376. Online: World Bank GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2017 international $) (15 June 2022)

3 Online: IMF: List of European countries by GDP per capita, PPP. *Statistics Times*, 2019 (15 June 2022)

4 Online:Містерство економіки України (= Ukraine's Ministry of Economy): Загальні тенденції тіньової економіки в Україні у січні-вересні 2021 року (= Major trends of the shadow economy in Ukraine in January-September 2021) (15 June 2022) Several researchers consider the size of the shadow economy in Ukraine today to be much larger than the figures in the official statements. While, for example, Ukraine's Ministry of Economy put the level of illicit economic transactions at only 35% of Ukraine's GDP in 2015, 32% in 2017 and only 28% in 2018, Medina and Schneider estimated the share of the black economy in

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Meanwhile, the loss of Crimea and the military occupation of the industrial zones of eastern Ukraine (Donetsk, Luhansk) have caused a drastic decline in the living standards and economic marginalisation of the population throughout the country, which will certainly be further exacerbated by the full-scale Russian invasion launched on 24 February 2022, not only in the short term but also, presumably, in the medium term.[5]

Based on these and other indicators, which can be cited at will, it seems that not only the institutional reforms in Ukraine, which have been dragging on since the early 1990s, but more generally the whole post-socialist transformation process itself has been a fundamental failure.[6] From this perspective, until recent years the post-socialist Ukrainian nation-state was one of those dysfunctional states - in other literary terms: „*weak*", „*fragile state*", „*failed state*", „*quasi-state*",[7] „pseudo-state", where the dysfunctions of the formal governance system (i.e. instability of the political system, legitimacy and rule of law deficit, high corruption levels, increasing poverty, deteriorating infrastructure, etc.) have been the main reasons for the failure of the state to function properly.), in many cases the state has simply been unable to perform its basic functions.

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the country's GDP at 42.9% in 2015, Abel Polese and his colleagues estimated it at 38.3% in 2017 and 38.5% in 2018.
Medina – Schneider, "Shadow Economies around the World", 75.
Polesea – Moiséa – Lysad – Kerikmäee – Saukaf – Seliverstova, "Presenting the results of the shadow economy survey", 110.

5 The micro-level and complex (economic, social, cultural, political) effects of the military expansion launched by Russia against Ukraine on 24 February 2022 are currently unknown. In the absence of in-depth empirical research and credible data, we can only assume that this event could trigger a much more serious crisis and new ethnodemographic processes (ethnic stratification, population turnover, new inter-ethnic conflicts, social disintegration, etc.) in the Western Ukraine region, perhaps even compared to previous years. Given the fact that we currently do not have credible information to assess these phenomena, and taking into account the fact that the empirical fieldwork on which the study is based was completed in the years before the Russian-Ukrainian war in the Tiszahát settlements (2021), in the present study I will only examine informal economic practices in the period before the military occupation of Ukraine.

6 Karácsonyi, "Felosztás vagy felemelkedés?", 57.

7 For a good overview of the different meanings and applications of these concepts, see, for example, Rotberg, *Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States*., Conjau – Popescu, "Analysis of failed states", Robert, *Quasi-States*; Migdal, „Studying the State".

Over the past three decades, the institutional crisis and dysfunctional functioning of the state have become even more pronounced in peripheral or disadvantaged regions hundreds of kilometres from the country's centre of power.

In many respects, this was also the case in the Western Ukrainian region of Transcarpathia, which, on the one hand, has historically been separated from other regions of Ukraine, partly due to its multicultural, multilingual and multiethnic population, and on the other hand, due to its specific geographical location, it is simultaneously part of the border periphery and interference zone of several countries (Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Poland, in addition to Ukraine). On 1 January 2020, the average monthly income of the population living in the region was 9112 hryvnias (about 91,000 HUF) in nominal terms, 15.1% below the national average (10727 hryvnias per capita) and 19.2% below the average income in Kyiv Oblast (11267 hryvnias per capita).[8] However, since 2014, prices for basic foodstuffs and household energy (gas and electricity) have been gradually rising, despite the low purchasing power of the population, and are now close to, and sometimes even at the same level as, those in neighbouring countries. However, the economic development of the country - and, as part of this, of the region - and the low level of social and health care for the population are perhaps even more strikingly reflected in the fact that in 2017, life expectancy at birth for Ukrainian citizens was only 72 years (67 for men and 76 for women),[9] which is about 2-7 years below the average for the region.[10]

The specific location of the research, where I have been conducting anthropological fieldwork and systematic empirical data collection for several years (since 2007), is the Tiszahat region of South Transcarpathia (Tiszabökény, Far-

8 Online: Ukraine State Statistical Service (Державної служби statistics України): Average monthly income per region in 2020 (Середня заробітна плата за регіонами за місяць у 2020 році) (2022.06.20).

9 Timonina (szerk.): *Demographichnyi щorikiknyi,* 53.

10 In 2017, life expectancy at birth was 79 in the Czech Republic, 78 in Poland, 76 in Hungary, 76 in Romania and 74 in Belarus. World Bank: Life expectancy at birth, total (2017 year) (2022.06.20).

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kasfalva, Tiszapéterfalva, Tivadar, Forgolány). This microregion is located in the Nagyszőlős district, in the area delimited by the rivers Tisza and Batar, at almost the same distance (10-12 km) from the official Ukrainian-Hungarian and Ukrainian-Romanian road border crossings.

Figure 1 Geographical location of the Hungarian settlements in Tiszahát (MTA CSFK Geographical Institute; edited by Zsombor Nemerkényi)

According to the latest official Ukrainian census of 2001, the total population of the five villages I surveyed is 5122. The absolute majority of these, 96.4% (4,942 people), identified themselves as Hungarians, while the combined share of the Ukrainian and Roma population, according to the county-level data, did not exceed 3.6% (3.45% and 0.15% respectively) in any of the villages.[11] According to the census I conducted in this group of villages, the share of the Roma population in the population, slightly higher than the official figures in 2001, was 8.3% (438 people). In the last twenty years, partly due to very rapid and profound ethnodemographic processes (international emigration, low reproduction, natural

11 Molnár – Molnár, *Kárpátalja népessége és magyarsága,* 83–84.

attrition, etc.) affecting the whole of Transcarpathia, the Hungarian population has drastically decreased, while the Roma population has significantly increased (however, in the absence of official and credible statistical data and surveys, we are unfortunately unable to accurately capture these changes and trends).

Among the settlements studied, Tiszapéterfalva has been the micro-regional centre of four other settlements (Tiszabökény, Tiszafarkasfalva, Tivadarfalva, Forgolány) since 1958, due to the administrative-economic merger of the Tiszahát villages, where one of the largest collective economic enterprises in the region - the „Border Guard" Kolkhoz - operated. In 1978, the large-scale agricultural enterprises of two villages (Nagypalád and Fertősalmás) were added to the „Border Guard" kolkhoz, which comprised the human resources and economic assets (land, labour, livestock, means of production) of five villages. The resulting large farm was the largest employer in the area from the 1980s, with employees working on some 6646 ha of arable land and large-scale livestock farming (cattle, sheep and pigs).[12] From the late 1960s onwards, a number of factories (brickworks, canning factory, meat processing plant, optics plant, wire-joining plant, sawmill, IKEA furniture factory, fishing and sports factory) were set up in the colony in Tiszapéterfalva. Thus the economy, which initially had a distinctly agricultural profile, generated 60 % of its total income from industrial production in 1980. For decades, hundreds of families in the settlements of Tiszahát were able to make a living from industrial wage labour.

12 As of 1 January 1980, of the total area of the united kolkhozkolkhoz (6646 ha), 5017 ha were arable, 1328 ha were meadows and pastures, 64 ha were forests and 237 ha were orchards. NKHLR = Archives Department of the Administrative Office of the District of Nagyszőlős, 1980. Summary report on the work of the management of the „Border Guard"kolkhozkolkhoz in 1980. 3. Number of livestock on 1 January 1981: 5033 cattle (1200 cows), 1740 pigs (115 sows), 6527 sheep (3400 ewes). NKHLR (1980): ibid. 17.
(The archival sources and materials held in the NKHLR are not organised in the usual way (archival units), but according to administrative and chronological principles (municipalities and years), without specific labels. Accordingly, I refer to the archival documents preserved from the former „Border Guard" kolkhoz in the villages of Tiszahát by indicating the place of origin (NJKHLR) and the year of origin of the sources, in contrast to the traditional archival notation.)

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In the Hungarian villages of Tiszahát in the 1990s, the post-socialist economic and political transition created a very strong and lasting employment and livelihood crisis. As a result, the population was forced to develop a number of innovative alternative income-generating strategies (smuggling, border clandestine trade in clothing, goods and second-hand goods, foreign guest work, etc.) due to the decline of the industrial and agricultural enterprises and production units of the collective economy. Such and similar informal techniques, such as the blat system (i.e. economic exchange based on the exchange of favours), are commonplace and outside the (formal) organisational framework of the state, i.e. bypassing taxation, registration and other regulations,[13] barter transactions between individuals and businesses (economic transactions without cash flow),[14] official corruption,[15] patronage[16] were phenomena that were widespread throughout Ukraine, both in the Soviet and post-socialist era.[17]According to a study by one researcher, Robert Kravchuk, informal market and capital substitution[18] arrangements such as the above accounted for about 60% of the total economic output of Ukraine in the mid-1990s,[19] and their role and social importance did not decline at all in the 2000s and beyond.

Conceptual-theoretical framework of the study

For the analysis of micro-level landscape use practices in the Ukrainian-Hungarian borderlands I use mainly the analytical concepts of adaptation, informality, diversification and pluriactivity. Therefore, before presenting the empi-

13 Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours,* Ledeneva, "From Russia with blat"

14 Humphrey, "Barter and Economic Disintegration"

15 Zaloznaya, *The Politics of Bureaucratic Corruption*.

16 Abente Brun – Diamon, *Clientelism, Social Policy.*

17 Hopkin, "Clientelism, Corruption and Political Cartels"

18 Böröcz, "Színlelt nagy átalakulás? Informális kiút az államszocializmusból." 35.

19 Kravchuk, *Ukraine Economic Reforms,* 18.

rical research experiences, I will briefly discuss the meaning of these terms and the main literature approaches that inspired the analysis.

The modern social science concept of ‚adaptation', as is well known, originates from the field of biology (Darwin), where the term was originally used to describe specific changes in phenotypic characteristics[20] that enabled a biological organism (individual or population) to increase its chances of earlier reproduction, survival or longer-term survival.[21] The concept was introduced into the discourse of ecological and socio-cultural anthropological studies under the influence of the evolutionist and neo-evolutionist research paradigm, where, from the 1950s onwards, complex social systems and their structural and functional modifications as a result of various (mainly exogenous) influences began to be understood by analogy with the physiological model (the ‚biological organism').[22] In this approach, and without taking into account the details, ‚adaptation' is still generally understood by the authors as risk management strategies[23] that enable individuals and households to reduce their vulnerability to global (biophysical, economic, social and other) threats and shocks in an operational way.[24]

In this paper I follow the definition of Obrist and his colleagues.[25] According to Obrist, ‚adaptation' is nothing other than the ability to access certain types of

20 Bock, "The Definition and Recognition of Biological Adaptation".

21 Phenotypic change takes different forms, so we can talk about different (physiological, biological, evolutionary) adaptations. For a summary, see Bock ibid.

22 Alland Jr, "Adaptation"

23 Bollig, *Risk management in a hazardous environment,* Crate, "Climate and culture"; Moran, *Human Adaptability,* Sutton – Eugene N. Anderson: *Introduction to Cultural Ecology*. Lanham – New York – Toronto – Plymouth, UK, MD: AltaMira Press, 2014.

24 Several authors draw a sharp distinction between two forms of social responses to climate change, *coping* and *adaptation.* Thus, while the former term in ecological discourse usually refers to a short-term response to an event, i.e. a state of unresolved stability and resource use, the latter term is usually used to denote longer-term changes. See Agrawal, "Local Institutions and Adaptation to Climate Change", Pelling, *Adaptation to Climate Change.* In other approaches, ‚coping' is more a reversible category, whereas ‚adaptation' can be described as an irreversible change phenomenon. White et al, *Disaster Risk Reduction.*

25 Obrist – Pfeiffer – Henley, "Multi-layered social resilience"

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capital (economic, social, relational, etc.) that enable social actors not only to cope with adverse circumstances (reactive capacity) but also to seek and create new opportunities in various crisis situations (proactive capacity). In doing so, they develop novel competences (i.e., positive outcomes) in order to mitigate the negative consequences of external influences.[26]

A key issue in understanding the concept of „*adaptation capacity*" is to examine the institutional context, i.e. the role of divergent formal and informal structures and networks that regulate social actions (including ecosystem and resource management).[27] Following North's approach, I consider local institutions as culturally constituted frameworks, regulatory ‚rules *of the game*', determining social interactions, including both ‚formal' (e.g. the constitution and laws codified by the state) and ‚informal' rule systems (‚codes of conduct, norms of behaviour and conventions').[28]

By „informality", I mean primarily actions and interactional practices – based on social trust and interpersonal relational capital – that give individuals or groups of individuals (family, kin, subcultural or other small communities) privileged access to resources in areas where state control is too strong or, on the contrary, the state's regulatory capacity is too weak or inefficient. In other words, where formal institutions are hyper-functional or dysfunctional. (Among the scholars working on the subject, Abel Polese and his co-authors also take the former definition as their starting point when they draw a sharp distinction between two types of informal economic transactions: the phenomenon of informal mechanisms *in spite* of the state and the phenomenon of informal mechanisms *beyond the state.*[29]

26 ibid., 289.

27 Ostrom, *Understanding Institutional Diversity*, Agrawal, "Local Institutions and Adaptation"

28 North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*, 3.

29 Polese – Kovács – Jancsics, "Informality „In Spite Of" or „Beyond""

These local, often incongruent[30] formal and informal institutions are of particular importance for ecological-environmental adaptation. Because the human risk management strategies and adaptive capacities are usually highly socially embedded.[31] In the context of everyday life, this often means that formal and informal institutional networks, for example, not only provide access to different resources (food and economic capital) or regulate the redistribution of specific types of capital within the community, but also often mediate novel patterns of adaptation, innovation and normative behaviours that individuals, households and communities can mobilise effectively to reduce climate change risks.[32]

At the same time, the resources represented in institutional structures are very unevenly distributed among individuals, households and smaller (religious, ethnic, social) sub-communities in local society. The members of local society usually have different entitlements[33] (money, knowledge, contacts, opportunities for action, etc.). These different entitlement ‚packages' influence the access of individual actors to formal and informal networks, and thus can usually lead to very differentiated adaptation strategies even within a single local community.[34]

30 According to Helmke and Levitsky, informal („popular") institutions can establish four different types of relationships with formal („state") institutions: 1) *complementary*, 2) *accommodating*, 3) *substitutive*, or even 4) *competing*. According to the authors, two factors determine which of these possible variants of inter-institutional relations prevails. On the one hand, do the outcomes achieved by following informal rules converge or diverge from those achieved by following formal rules? On the other hand, does the outcome of the relationship also depend on the state's enforcement capacity and capability, i.e. whether the state, through formal institutions, is able to enforce written/paper laws in practice? Helmke – Levinsky, *Informal Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America*, 14.

31 Pisor – Jones, "Human adaptation to climate change", 5.

32 Douglass – Rasolondrainy, "Social memory and niche construction"; Holland – Ready – Pisor, "Want climate-change adaptation?"; Pisor – Jones ibid., 5.

33 According to Neil Adger, these „entitlements are the actual or potential resources available to individuals by virtue of their own production, possessions or mutual agreements." Adger, "Vulnerability", 270.

34 Goldman – Riosmena, "Adaptive Capacity and Vulnerability", 589.

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Accordingly, the present paper takes Agrawal's model – based on institutional sociology – as a starting point, which differs from the traditional ways of typifying adaptation practices (proactive-reactive, individual-collective, spontaneous-planned oppositional pairs). This author distinguishes five main and distinct types of adaptation strategies that reflect environmental (biophysical, economic, political) risks:

1. Geographical mobility – spatial distribution of risk (migration of agricultural pastoralists, labour migration, involuntary migration).

2. Accumulation – spreading the risk over time (water storage, food storage (crops, seeds, forest products), livestock accumulation).

3. Diversification – sharing risk across asset classes (asset portfolio diversification, skills and vocational training, occupational diversification, crop selection, production technologies, freezing choices, livestock diversification).

4. Community pooling of resources and assets – sharing risks between households (forestry, infrastructure development, information gathering, disaster management).

5. Market exchange – the sale of risk through contracts (better market access, insurance, sale of new products, sale of seeds, animals and other inputs), which can replace any of the other four categories if households have access to markets.[35]

Local and traditional land use practices can, due to the functioning of formal and informal social institutions and the segmentation of local communities, shape very different individual and household adaptation strategies, which are usually captured in the international literature by the concepts of „diversification" and „pluriactivity" in the sphere of economic action.[36]

35 Agrawal, "Local Institutions and Adaptation".

36 According to Vik and McElwee, the boundaries between the two concepts are somewhat

By „diversification" I mean – partly in the wake of the above criticisms – conscious model shifts or shifts in the micro-level resource management policies or strategies of individual households. The term, in my approach, refers to the everyday strategic actions and forms of economic activity through which agricultural households attempt to adapt to new changes in the economic-environment (on and off the farm) by modifying their previous economic behaviour and/or current income-generating activities.

Diversification of farms is a very important, but only one possible component of economic adaptation of rural households. As the literature shows, family farm adaptation techniques can vary widely. They may include concentration and intensification of agricultural production (through expansion of land use or livestock, increasing value added or even cooperation with other farmers); specialisation of agricultural practices (through reallocation of existing capacities); diversification of agricultural activity; various techniques of formal, informal, illegal off-farm income generation (non-agricultural employment, farm abandonment, external business activities, increasing dependence on public and EU compensation payments) as well as the reduction, partial or total abandonment of agricultural activities.[37] But, as McElwee aptly points out, we must also consider as part of economic adaptation the seemingly negative (but in the longer term not infrequently profitable) solutions whereby members of a family farm, under external pressure, for example in a situation of economic crisis, make the strategic decision to simply do nothing.[38]

blurred, but in general, the literature defines diversification as farm-centred income-generating activities, i.e. the forms of activity that are generated by the reorganisation of resources (land, labour, capital) within or associated with the economy. By contrast, the term pluriactivity in the economic geography discourse refers primarily to capital accumulation strategies outside the farm economy. Vik – McElwee, "Diversification and the Entrepreneurial", 394.

37 Barbieri – Mahoney, "Why is diversification an attractive farm adjustment strategy", 58-66; Breustedt – Glauben, "Driving forces behind exiting"; Meert et al., "Farm household survival strategies"; Moreno-Pérez – Arnalte-Alegre – Ortiz-Miranda, "Breaking down the growth of family farms"; Lansink – Van den Berg – Huirne, "Analysis of strategic planning of Dutch pig farmers"; Smith – McElwee – Somerville, "Illegal diversification strategies"

38 McElwee, "Farmer's as Entrepreneurs", 187.

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Local social groups and resource management strategies

In the 2000s, as a result of the above-mentioned changes, the internal local social, power and economic relations of the settlements in Tiszahát were determined by two trends:

1. There was the emergence and rise of a new, small number of owners and capitalists in the villages of the micro-region. This social stratum consisted of two groups: the former nomenklatura elites (state officials, middle and top managers of the former collective economy) or their direct descendants, and the new entrepreneurial economic elite (in the locals' conceptual categories: „smugglers", „mafiosos", „robbers", „big money people", „small-time kings"). In the early 2000s, these local elites successfully acquired most of the state property and assets (movable and immovable assets of the former collective economy) and locally available economic resources (land, real estate, money, infrastructure, etc.).

2. The other more characteristic process was the intense and persistent decline of the middle strata of local society (former collective workers living from industrial and agricultural wage labour), which led to the emergence of new and mass forms of poverty in the villages studied. In the villages of Tiszahát, as a result of the industrialisation that started in the 1970s, 30% of the population were already working as industrial wage labourers at the time of the change of regime. This social group was among the first to lose formal employment in the early 1990s. The population, which had been excluded from state employment and, after the privatisation of assets, left without any significant property or financial capital, was thus forced to develop alternative income-earning techniques (foreign employment, black work, smuggling and black-market trade, etc.), relatively independent of the state and formal labour markets, taking advantage of the physical proximity to the state border.

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The two above-mentioned developments were accompanied by the institutionalisation of persistent economic, social and power inequalities in local society, which can be traced back to the privatisation of formerly state-owned agricultural land. At the beginning of the 2000s, a total of 1194,04 hectares of agricultural land (1576 ha) used by the former collective farm (the ‚Border Guard' collective farm) in the territory of the Tiszapéterfalva Municipal Council was distributed among 1889 inhabitants. This means that the average size of land per capita was only 0,6 ha. Thus, land privatisation – from the point of view of the population living in the settlement – essentially ended with the restoration of the pre-1948 land market, i.e. the former feudal ownership and land tenure structure. The new local inequalities created by the property transformation are illustrated by the fact that while in 1938 only three quarters of the population, i.e. 78.5%, were landless, or between 0-0.2 hectares of small and small landholders,[39] seven decades later, in 2012, 97.5% (!) owned less than 1 hectare of land (so-called „handkerchief plots"). In other words, the vast majority of the local population - between 0.24 and 0.67 ha - currently owns no land or land parcels other than individual family gardens and allotments.[40]

The situation is further complicated by the fact that the proportion of inactive and retired people among the owners of smaller areas (1-5 hectares) is significant.In 2018, cultivating 1 hectare of agricultural land - without plant protection and soil improvement works - cost approximately 8,800 hryvnias (88,000 HUF), while the average monthly pension in the settlement group was 1,300 hryvnias (13,000 HUF). The monthly income of the majority of one- or two-person pensioner households - in the field of agricultural production - thus did not allow them to finance almost any part of their work. This small landowner stratum, lacking the technical, mechanical and material resources necessary for agricul-

39 Szőllősy – Jánki – Thirring (eds.), *Az 1938. évi felvidéki nép-,* földbirtok- és állatösszeírás, 160-161.

40 In January 2018, the ploughing is UAH 2500/ha, disking UAH 2500/ha, sowing UAH 1300/ha, harvesting UAH 2500/ha.

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tural activity, usually leases or permanently sells[41] their existing land, which further increases the already high concentration of land ownership.

According to the land officer of the Mayor's Office in Tiszapéterfalva, the concentration of land in five villages is very high: in the group of municipalities with a population of about 5495 people, including informally rented land, only 37 people currently own or cultivate about 70% of the total arable land (4542 ha).

Land size	**Number of owners**		**Land size**	**Number of owners**	
	2012			1938	
0 hectares (landless)	0	0	0 hectares	439	44,2
0<0.5 hectares	1310	41	0<0.5 hectares	170	17,1
0,5<1 hectare	1813	56	0,5<2,8 hectares	163	16,4
Total: less than 1 hectare	3123	97	Total: under 2,8 ha	772	77
1<5 hectares	76	2,3	2,8<5,7 hectares	85	9
5<10 hectares	4	0,2	5,7<11,5 hectares	57	6
10<	0		11,5< hectares	77	8
Total	3203	100		991	100

Figure 2 Land size and land tenure in the settlements of Tiszahát (2012)[42]

From this point of view, the process of property and economic transformation that unfolded in the context of the regime change can be interpreted as the last phase of the dismantling of the agrarian way of life after 1945. The privatisation that followed the regime change led to the disappearance of former family land holdings, to a change of function and to the creation of a new

41 In 2018, 1 hectare of arable land in the villages of Tiszahát cost USD 1,000, while the price per hectare of land not privatised or inherited (from ascendants) was only half of that amount, USD 500.

42 The data for 2012 are from the Mayor's Office in Tiszapéterfalva (table is self-edited). The data in the statistics are not strictly comparable, as different categories of farm sizes were defined in the 1938 and 2012 surveys. Nevertheless, the data in the table still provide a good illustration that the local inequalities that emerged in the early 2000s, i.e. the accumulation of capital by a new, narrow economic elite and the mass impoverishment of society, were of a significant scale in the longer (historical) term.

land tenure and ownership structure. The agriculturalisation of local society[43] has thus essentially been completed: agricultural production has now become the dominant economic strategy of a narrow entrepreneurial stratum in each of the micro-regions.

In the last two decades, the population living in the settlements of the Tiszahát has adapted to the new ownership and tenure relations with the help of very diverse economic strategies and adaptation techniques. As can be seen in Figure 3, a number of occupational groups have emerged in the local society, which have developed diverse micro-level resource management and land-use practices.[44]

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43 Kovách, *The countryside at the turn of the millennium,* 63.

44 Of course, the income structure of individual households is generally characterised by pluriactivity and a strong diversification of incomes and activities, which makes it difficult to clearly distinguish between occupations and economic strategies. Accordingly, the categories in the table are only ‚ideal types', since in reality, both economic strategies and expressive and instrumental actions, not only for different members of a household but also for different life stages of a single person, often form a very flexible, multi-level (multiplicative) system of production, consumption and market exchange of goods. In the municipalities studied, this results in hybrid local resource management policies. Borbély, "A diszfunkcionális ukrán nemzetállam informális alapjai"

Figure 3 Resource management strategies and land use practices in the settlements of the Tiszahát (2020)

Occupational groups	Types of action	Land use practices	Market position
1. Agricultural investors	Expressive actions.[45] „Economic policies" based on the acquisition and use of locally available resources (land, financial and human capital, labour)	Large-scale (industrialised) arable and greenhouse farming, modern machinery and landscape management practices	Consumption-driven communities, strong formal market integration of households (buying food from shops, emergence of quasi-urban consumption patterns of rural dwellers)
2. Farmers			
3. Post-traditional (semi) subsistence/productive farms		Small scale (mixed: traditional-industrial) arable farming, small plot cultivation, hybrid agro-industrial (production technology, plant protection and care) knowledge and landscape management practices	
4. Farmers producing food on the farm		Limited, micro-level landscape use, household use of environmental resources to reduce expenditure (gardening, backyard vegetable and fruit growing)	

45 Lin, Social Capital, 17–19.

Occupational groups	Types of action	Land use practices	Market position
5. ‚Quasi' farmers (own land but do not cultivate it or derive income from it)		Total or partial abandonment of farmland: non-agricultural activities (formal labour markets, pensions, social benefits and other income transfers)	Consumption-driven communities, strong formal market integration of households (buying food from shops, emergence of quasi-urban consumption patterns of rural dwellers)
6. Strategies based on the state border and foreign employment as an economic resource (mostly non-agricultural population): „Fuel retailers" - petrol and diesel dealers, „Truckers", „ Sellers" (Sellers on both sides of the border), „Pensioners in Hungary", „Workers", economic forced migrants: a) agricultural seasonal workers b) construction workers c) domestic workers	Instrumental actions. An „economic policy" aimed at acquiring resources available in the „external" (extra-village) space, through international formal and informal markets.	Leaving the local landscape (temporary, permanent or permanent), a physical and symbolic exit from the local biophysical environment	

The everyday adaptive practices of these economic groups are characterised – predominantly – by so-called expressive actions: they are directed towards the acquisition and use of resources (land, financial and human capital, labour) available locally, within the physical space of a concrete settlement. According to the literature, this type of action also has a socially organising, stability-enhancing effect: these strategies create intensive internal (community) relations, i.e., homophilic interactions, within the local society, which is associated with a higher degree of social cohesion and integration.[46]

There is, however, a part of local society – less agrarian – whose economic actions are not primarily aimed at the acquisition of endogenous economic resources, but rather at the acquisition of external (exogenous) economic resources. In the micro-region under study, most of the strategies linked to the state border can be considered as such instrumental actions. Examples include, for example, the various techniques of cross-border trafficking and black-marketing (fuel smuggling, transport, market trading and dealing in everyday and durable consumer goods such as food, clothing, and technical products), pension and health tourism, and certain forms of labour migration (activities of construction workers, seasonal agricultural workers and domestic workers in Hungary). (I will not discuss these in detail here; these occupational groups and activities have already been described in a previous study.)[47] Here, I would only note that the spread and institutionalisation of these economic strategies - as they are usually organised around outward links from the local community (migration, cross-border trade, smuggling, etc.) and are usually characterised by the use of *bridging* social capital[48] - are more likely to lead to the polarisation of local society and, consequently, to the internal disintegration of the village community.

The common feature of these two „sub-communities" is that, although they have very different capacities and marketing strategies as producers, they are

46 Putnam, *Bowling Alone,* 22–24.

47 Borbély, "Informális gazdasági stratégiák az ukrán–magyar határvidéken"

48 Putnam, *Bowling Alone,* 22–24.; Putnam – Goss, *Democracies in Flux*, 9–12.

all strongly integrated into the formal market as consumers.[49] This means very simply that: the commodity-producing rural population buys most of the products and food consumed in the household from the shop, so they are now living as members of quasi-urban, consumption-driven rural communities. The most significant role in the institutionalisation, consolidation and spread of these new economic behaviours and patterns of life management in the settlements of the Tiszahát region – alongside the state-socialist modernisation that began in the 1970s – has undoubtedly been played by the phenomenon of international migration, and in particular *social* remittances, which has been developing over the last three decades.[50]In 2000, I conducted a household census covering the whole population in the centre of the micro-region, in Tiszapéterfalva, which I repeated in 2018, following similar criteria as before. Based on the data collected, in just two decades, the total local population (965 people as of 1 January 2000) has almost halved (52.8%), with a natural decrease of 19.6% and a migration loss of 27.4% (!). Within this figure, the share of international permanent emigrants, – mainly to Hungary –, was 17.5%, while domestic and regional migration accounted for 10.1%. A comparison of the data also shows that a further 7.2% of the local population were directly involved in international migration in some way, i.e. to varying degrees, but some were already living abroad: studying in Hungary (0.8%), working here legally or illegally (2.4%), or retired in Hungary where they own their own homes (4%).

49 Töhötöm Á. Szabó distinguishes several levels and forms of market integration (informal-formal, internal and external). Szabó Á., *Economy, behaviour and integration in a Transylvanian sub-region*.

50 The notion of „social remittances" was introduced into the academic discourse by an American sociologist, Peggy Levitt, in order to draw attention to the importance of social transfers, starting from a critique of the economic paradigm of migration phenomena. According to this approach, migrants are transnational *travellers* who exchange not only material goods but also novel ideas, knowledge practices, identities, cultural and social capital between sending and receiving countries. In this context, ‚social remittances', as the author sees it, are one of the main forms of cultural diffusion at local level, driven by migration, which can bring about radical changes in the internal structures of both societies, and sometimes also in their political and other institutions. Levitt, "Social Remittances" and Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers*.

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The gradual abandonment of agricultural production in the villages of Tiszahát, the spread of new („urbanized", „postmodern") patterns of livelihood strategies and consumption patterns in the context of the crisis and underdevelopment of the formal institutions of the Ukrainian state may contribute to the development of very serious local ecological crises. The following example is a good illustration of this.

An Austrian company, the so-called AVE waste management company, has been present in Transcarpathia since 2006, but in recent years (due to the saturation of storage sites, deteriorated state infrastructure, the poor state of roads and other reasons) it has stopped or limited the collection of household waste in several Transcarpathian municipalities. As a result, in the settlements of Tiszahát, there has been no selective and/or municipal waste collection organised by the state or private companies for many years.[51]

Household waste was collected unorganised and unprocessed by the population in and along the agricultural fields located in the far western outskirts of the village (in the immediate vicinity of the river Batar). The waste disposed of here (in an area with high groundwater levels and occasional light waterlogging and inland waterlogging) still poses serious environmental risks: for example, the pollutants from the waste can easily leach and seep into the soil.

51 This situation will be partially changed from 2021, when the Ukrainian administrative reform comes into force. The Tiszahát settlements were integrated into a larger sub-region of 15 villages (Akli, Aklihegy, Ujakli, Batár, Forgolány, Tiszapéterfalva, Tiszabökény, Fertősalmás, Nagypalád, Szőlősgyula, Tiszahetény, Hömlőc, Csepe, Csomafalva and Feketeardó). A new company („ВБС"=Виноградів без сміття) has been established in the Tiszapéterfalvi Sub-region, which currently collects and transports part of the household waste (only separately collected waste) from the villages of Tiszahát to a central site on a weekly basis.

Picture 2. Changes in the surface cover of pasture areas (1. Nagypengő; 2. Kispengő; 3. Újfüzes; 4. Kismező) between 2006 and 2020. (The first satellite image shows the state of the areas on 7 May 2006, the second on 8 December 2020, source: Google Earth Pro.)

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The situation is exacerbated by the fact that, like most other villages in Transcarpathia, there is no mains water or sewerage network in the villages of Tiszahát. Therefore, some families usually discharge household wastewater into septic tanks in the yard or garden. At the same time, the population meets its own drinking water needs from groundwater, usually through wells drilled or dug in individual homesteads. The poor quality, perceived or real contamination of drinking water thus have led to a higher proportion of families consuming bottled water, which (through PET bottles, flasks and other plastics) adds to the already significant annual household waste generation.

I would like to shed more light on the consequences of the new consumption and lifestyle patterns institutionalised by local adaptation techniques and informal economic strategies after the regime change by means of two practical examples.

1. One of these is related to the change of function of floodplain grasslands. Figure 2 shows four of the riverine pastures located in the north-eastern direction of the village („Nagypengő", „Kispengő", „Újfüzes", „Kismező"), which still played a very important economic role in the second half of the 20th century, during the first decade of collective (large-scale) farming after 1945 and individual, family-based private farming afterwards.[52]

52 In 2000, about 16.7 percent of the agricultural land (1,576 hectares) in the five villages of Tiszahát, owned by the „Border Guard" Ltd. as the successor of the former collective farm, was used as mowing (8.8 hectares) and pasture (254.9 hectares). For decades, since the collective farm was set up in 1948, the company has been engaged in large-scale arable farming on the majority of the land (1202,7 ha) and fruit growing on a smaller part (109,6 ha). Source of data: official documents in the private possession of the manager of „Border Guard" Ltd.

Picture 3 Herd of villagers in the pasture of Tiszapétefalva. (First photo: 1980s, watering at the gas gate of the „Forest's End" pasture; second photo: the remaining herd at the „Forest's End" in 2020)

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These floodplain and riparian pastures were previously used for extensive (extensive) livestock and grassland management (grazing on meadows and mowing along flood protection embankments and wooded groves), which has gradually declined over the past three decades. A comparison of the available statistics (1981 and 2021) shows this trend, i.e. the change in the role of beef and dairy cattle farming. As can be seen in Figure 4, while the number of pens/portas in the group of settlements under study has increased by about 38.2 % over the last four decades, the number of cattle kept on pastures on the outskirts of these villages has fallen dramatically by about 98.6 % (see Figure 3). This has obviously had a strong and rather complex impact not only on the landscape environment but also on the socio-cultural relationship with it.

Village	**Number of sheds/portals**		**Cattle (head)**		
	1980	**2020**	**1980**		**2020**
			a. privately owned	b. collectively owned	
Tiszapeterfalva	436	716	146	5033	20
Tivadarfalva					
Forgolány	235	243	104		10
Tiszafarkasfalva	493	650	188		43
Tiszabökény					
Total	1164	1609	438	5033	73

Figure 4. Changes in livestock (cattle numbers) in the settlements of Tiszahát (1981-2020)[53]

53 In the table, the data for Tiszapéterfalva and Tivadar, and Tiszafarkasfalva and Tiszabökény (for the number of houses, portions and livestock) are combined, as these villages were under common administration during the socialist period. The source of the statistical data for the period before the regime change is NKHLR (1980): ibid. 17. For the Tiszahát settlements, I conducted the first household census in 2006, based on the municipality's farm books; the data of this household census were updated with new quantitative data in 2020.

1. One of these effects – the most striking – is ecological and related to natural succession. Over the last thirty years, the villages in the Tisza Valley have been experiencing a significant increase in the use of abandoned floodplain pastures – the so-called „floodplain pastures". New invasive woody and herbaceous plants (mainly pedunculate goatgrass, green shepherd's purse, Caucasian bear's-foot, serpentine thistle, Japanese knotweed) have been introduced in the abandoned pastures of the „Újfűzes" and „Kispengő", almost the entire area of the „Nagypengő", on the north-south periphery; Judaica, which has spread from public parks in the municipality) have appeared, leading to a very rapid and dramatic transformation of the former vegetation structure of the microsite.

2. The loss of biodiversity of these pasture and mowing areas (e.g. loss of grassland, meadows, changes in species and plant diversity) has been accompanied by another consequence. The areas regularly cleared and tended by the local kolkhozes in the state socialist era, and by the cow farmers in the post-socialist era, which were still engaged in large-scale (industrial) livestock farming, have become overgrown or reforested in the last decade as cattle farming has been abandoned, which has transformed the banks and the flow paths of the Tisza River: in some sections it has triggered erosion processes, in others it has created alluvial cones and natural barrages. Year after year, this causes serious flood protection problems in the settlements of the Tisza river basin, making effective flood protection difficult during the flood season.

3. Finally, we must also mention a socio-cultural consequence. It also indicates a change in the moral, ethical dimension of economic behaviour (and with it the social relationship with the environment). As the grazing and mowing areas mentioned above have been removed from the local economic resource system, the interconnectedness of people and landscape[54] has also changed significantly over the last few decades. As a result, floodplain grazing and mowing areas, previously imbued with everyday economic activities, and in this sense originally rich in meaning and memory (emotional), have been transformed

54 Beery – Wolf-Watz, "Nature To Place", 198-205.

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into peripheral spaces: „*non-places"*. These spaces are now often characterised, especially among the younger generation, by ‚illegibility', i.e. the disintegration of meanings and historical references. One indication of this is the phenomenon that, over the last thirty years, the names of the outlying and border areas of the village (place names) have increasingly disappeared from the collective consciousness and memory, and have been forgotten.[55] Or that certain forms of behaviour - once socially and legally forbidden and morally condemned - such as the neglect of floodplains and pastures, or their deliberate pollution (illegal dumping of household waste, the creation of rubbish dumps), have become increasingly accepted contemporary phenomena in the region under study (see picture 4).

Picture 4 Household waste, illegal landfill at the edge of the „Forest End" grazing area (Tiszapéterfalva, 2020)

55 Ákos Dömötör noted in relation to the socialist urbanisation of the peasant population commuting from the villages around Ózd («their relationship to the factory town») that the younger generation of wage workers› relationship with the traditional natural environment was loosened or substantially transformed «as a result of the increase in commuting to Ózd, the strengthening of industrial work and the significant change in lifestyle». All this, the author argues, has been accompanied by a marked impoverishment and erosion of knowledge of geographical names (everyday knowledge of dune and village names) in the villages of the Hangony Valley since the 1970s. Dömötör, "Az ipari termelés hatása a Hangony-völgyi emberre", 619.

The other empirical example of the transformation of the man/landscape relationship concerns forest use.

On the outskirts of the settlements of Tiszahát, south of the Batár River (along the road connecting Tiszapéterfalva with Nagypalád), the Satu Mare plain was once covered by a continuous forest, of which only a few small patches of unconnected forest (1. „Al-forest", 2. „Tyúkfarm-forest", 3. „Small forest" or „Majális forest", 4. „Large forest") have survived. Most of this mosaic area of 337 ha is covered by a mosaic of oak-hornbeam and a small part by ash-oak-hornbeam, where many elements of traditional forestry practices (firewood and timber farming, barrel and tool making,[56] forest grazing) survived until the mid-20th century. As these forest areas were of little agricultural value in the decades after 1945, due to the high water table and the peaty (ditch) soil, the area remained practically untouched until the change of regime. From the 1960s until 2008, the forest segments were used only for medical felling and were mainly used for recreation and hunting. As a result, the forest was home to a number of rare and valuable species of flora and fauna (e.g. Carpathian saffron, marsh lily or cotully (Fritillaria meleagris), meadow swordflower, black woodpecker, blue dove). (The other part of the same area, on the Hungarian side of the Ukrainian-Hungarian border, is currently a specially protected habitat, belonging to the Satu Mare-Bereg Landscape Protection Area, established in 1982.) However, since the mid-2000s, the situation has changed: a large part of the forest area has disappeared or been destroyed due to a combination of negative factors:

1. Due to global climate change, the groundwater level in the area is decreasing and the nearby river (Batár) is being controlled (dredging, siltation), causing the marshy parts of the forest to dry out. The drought and mild winters have led

56 Already during the time of Maria Theresa's rent control, the villages of the so-called Paladság (Nagypalád, Kispalád, Botpalád) had a relatively significant wagon and wheel manufacturing industry, thanks to the hardwood forests located on the outskirts of the settlements. According to the census of Nagypalád of 3 November 1772, the village „makes whole Chariots, Chariot Wheels, Wheel Cages and Zsendely, and distracts them to Szatthmar and Debreczen, and then to the local market." The text is quoted in Kávássy, "KÜVŐ (kerek-vagy kerékküvő)", 86-87.

to an increase in deciduous forest pest species (oak wilt, American knotweed), which have caused huge losses in the forest stand.

2. The district state forestry responsible for the area – not only in the area that is susceptible to felling, but also in most of the affected area – started felling in 2008. The end-use harvesting was carried out during the growing season, and the large machines and trucks used to remove the timber destroyed a significant part of the grassland and undergrowth on the wet, wet ground, leading to the disappearance of the original vegetation (e.g. 90% of the Carpathian saffron population, the entire population of the marsh lily) and the mass emergence of new, disturbance-tolerant and invasive species.

3. The state forestry authority did not carry out the reforestation or replanting of the harvested areas, or did so only very inexpertly, for financial reasons; the lack of soil preparation, the poor quality of cuttings, etc., meant that the seedlings planted were not retained. Today, 90% of the cleared forest areas are covered with shrubs and bushes (hawthorn, black locust and Blackthorn), where, in places that are more easily accessible by car (e.g. the „Majal forest", the „Chicken farm forest"), the population has in recent years set up illegal rubbish dumps and deposited tonnes of household waste (Fig. 5).

To sum up, in the Ukrainian terrain under study - in the years of post-socialist transition – informal techniques and resource management strategies based on solidarity and interpersonal cooperation have been developed for decades to counteract the dysfunctional functioning of the state. These alternative resource management systems, while enabling many social groups in border communities to make a living in everyday life, have also (in parallel) institutionalised the unequal accumulation and distribution of wealth within local communities.

In the Transcarpathian Hungarian settlements studied, these specificities have created hierarchical adaptation systems over the past three decades in which adaptation to economic change usually overrides ecological adaptation and related conservation concerns.

Based on the above, one of the systemic properties of the adaptation strategies of the settlements in the Tiszahát region can be described as scale-dependent.[57] This means that a property of a resource management technique observed at one scale (e.g. its function and ecological impact) changes at another scale. By this, I mean that informal adaptive-strategic behaviours, i.e. those operated through extensive interpersonal, family, kinship networks, are productive in many cases at the individual household (micro) level, providing a relatively secure livelihood for the population living in border settlements despite the prolonged economic crisis in Ukraine over several decades. In this way, they are to some extent able to effectively compensate for the inefficiency (‚weakness') and dysfunction of state institutions in the peripheral border areas, which are located far from the more developed centre or core areas. For example, by informal simulation of markets and capital (informal labour markets, job creation, institutionalisation of informal market exchanges, conversion of contact or network capital into money capital, etc.) they can mitigate local social and economic tensions resulting from the unequal and inadequate (state) redistribution of still available resources. On the other hand, however, it can also be seen that these same informal economic strategies for everyday livelihoods and survival can often lead to explicitly negative outcomes at another scale, for example at the macro level – from the perspective of the larger community or the local socio-ecological system. By overexploiting available natural resources (pollution of water, streams, pastures and forests, abandonment of agricultural production, processes of landscape succession and degradation), they reinforce local community maladaptation; they act as institutions that promote the erosion of ecological knowledge, the loss of the constitutive role of landscape in local identity, and the loss of the reactive use of landscape resources. From this perspective, in the longer term, informal network systems may increase the vulnerability and fragility of the Ukrainian-Hungarian border peripheries and the population living there.[58]

57 Moerlein – Carothers, "Total environment of change", 10.

58 Engle, "Adaptive capacity and its assessment."

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Picture 5 Household waste at the site of a clear-cut forest area

(Source: photos by István Matúz)

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Differences in Nutritional Habits or State Propaganda?

Food supply and ethnic groups in Transylvania during World War II

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Abstract

The study examines nutritional habits in Transylvania and their ethnical projection through a specific case from the Second World War. The related Hungarian official standpoint is also investigated in order to establish whether the government's statement covers an everyday reality or should rather be considered propaganda. The study is carried out on the Romanian minority living in Northern Transylvania in 1942 at the time of requisitions. At the centre of the investigation is a sentence of the Hungarian government and the truth behind it. The main aim is to establish whether there were any kind of differences in nutritional habits among the different ethnic groups living in Transylvania at the time and whether there was any truth to the statement that Romanians only fed upon maize and had no use of wheat. It is in fact an attempt to answer these questions with statistical methods, using all available agricultural information of the mentioned period.

Keywords

World War II, food policy, discrimination, ethnic relations, Transylvania, Vienna Award

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Differences in Nutritional Habits or State Propaganda?

Food supply and ethnic groups in Transylvania during World War II

"The role that wheat plays in the nutrition of a people reflects the level of civilization they have reached"

(Vita, 1937: 271)

The present study aims to shed light on the food consumption practices, public provisions and the ethnic dimensions of these among the population in Transylvania through a debate about specific cases that took place during World War II. In 1939, in his work on nutritional habits in Romania, the medical doctor Ioan Claudian stated that nutrition primarily depended on social conditions and not on climate or soil.[1] Regarding food availability and provisions during the years of World War II, the main question is about the interplay between objective food shortage and intentional or socially embedded patterns of exclusion, worldwide. The food history of the region of Transylvania between 1940 and 1944 is a relevant and complex case in this regard since the food issue became an element of rivalry between the governments of Romania and that of Hungary even as both countries were within the orbit of Nazi Germany.

1 Claudian, Alimentaţia poporului român, 23.

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Territorial changes had a direct bearing on food availability. In 1939 and 1940 the German and Italian government addressed the interwar territorial dispute between Romania and Hungary via the so-called Vienna Awards. These decisions diveded Transylvania, leaving most of the southern parts of the region with Romania, but granting the rest for Hungary. As a result, the size of the Romanian and Hungarian population was roughly equal in Northern Transylvania and numbered cc. 1 million. Romanians formed the majority in all counties except for the ones in Szeklerland. (The census of 1941 showed a 52% Hungarian majority, however, a large wave of Romanian emigration preceded it.) Several re-annexed counties had a mixed population. [2]

In 1940, Romania also lost Bessrarabia to the Soviet Union. Due to the agricultural potential of the plains, this resulted in a grave situation regarding food supply. In 1942, Romania was allowed to annex the so-called Transnistrie as a kind of compensation. By 1941, as the armies of Hungary and Romania became involved in World War II, supplying the civilian population apart from the armies going to the front lines posed an ever-greater challenge for the administration. For Romania, the loss of lands annexed to Hungary aggravated the situation further. For the economy of Hungary, annexation was not a clear net gain since resources needed to be re-allocated for the integration of new territories. This applied to the food economy, too.

In 1942, Romanian government began to use the need for centralized food reserve as an instrument in ethnic politics. In the summer of 1942, the Romanian government implemented a discriminative commandeering campaign in which the Hungarian population living in Romania bore the full brunt. This was done without any consultation. The goal of the action was to force Hungarians to flee at the mass level in June 1942. However, this was an unsuccessful measure since, at the request of the Hungarian government, the Axis Powers intervened and demanded the action to stop.[3] Mihai Antonescu (1904-1946), the Romanian

2 L. Balogh, Kiszolgáltatva, 28.

3 For more on the events in Southern Transylvania in 1942 see Sárándi 2014: 73–127.

deputy prime minister stated that the criticized measures were merely responses to the Hungarian tactics intended to starve the Romanian population in Northern Transylvania.[4] If Antonescu had been right, it would have been in line with the policy of reciprocal action that ineed dominated relations between Hungary and Romania since 1940.[5]

June 1942 was not the first instance that Romania accused Hungary with depriving the Romanian population of foodstuff. Indeed, this was one of the common elements of propaganda discourse. The Romanian Embassy in Budapest claimed that there was hunger in the Tara Oasului and Maramures area and that Romanians are running out of reserves in general already in the autumn of 1941.[6] On 13 May 1942, prior to the commandeering, Undersecretary of State, Davidescu brought up the charges yet again emphasizing that Hungarian authorities purposefully starve the Romanian population. As a response, the Hungarian Embassy in Bucharest handed over a memorandum to the Romanian government denying the charges but presenting a willingness to investigate specific cases.[7] On 15 June 1942, after the commandeering had already started, it was the Romanian Embassy that handed over memorandum to the Foreign Ministry that contained detailed complaints of 14 locations spread across five counties (Bihar, Máramaros, Szilágy, Szolnok-Doboka and Ugocsa) at the request of the Hungarian government. Most of these were about discrimination experienced during the distribution of supplies. In some of the reported cases authorities allegedly excluded certain Romanian families from rationing, so that they did not receive ration cards or rations and sowing seeds. The document emphasized that the Hungarian inhabitants received their due rations without issues. There was one

4 *Menekültkérdéssel kapcsolatban tartott értekezlet jegyzőkönyve*, 1942. ANIC, Fond 765, dos. 515/1942. 1–30.

5 For more on what the politics of reciprocity meant in the Hungarian-Romanian relations see L. Balogh 2013: 84–92.

6 *Bukaresti román követség által átadott jegyzék a románok közellátására vonatkozóan*. 1942. május 13. MNL OL, K 63, 268. csomó, 27. tétel. 113–114.

7 *Bukaresti magyar követség jelentése a dél-erdélyi magyarok élelmiszerkészleteinek elrekvirálásáról*. 1942. június 20. MNL OL, K 63, 268. csomó, 27. tétel, 163/pol. 1942. 698–710. Published in L. Balogh, Kiszolgáltatva, 174–181.

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case that looked more serious than the others: the inhabitants of Jód village in Máramaros County reportedly had to use flour made of corncob.[8] There were signs indicating that the food shortage was occasionally grave. In May 1942 a revolt broke out in a village with mixed ethnic composition, Gyergyótölgyes and the armed forces had be called in to suppress it.[9] Drought conditions in 1941 and 1942 and the growing food export to Germany further aggravated the food situation for the government.[10] The chief administrator of Beszterce-Naszód County complained that there was not enough corn. For this reason, the leaders of the county particularly welcomed the return of the Banat to Hungarian administration but that their hopes for more corn were not fulfilled.[11]

The Hungarian Foreign Ministry forwarded the memorandum to the Office of Public Supply, emphasizing that supply issues have a foreign policy dimension. In order to prompt the intervention of the Axis Powers and halt the discriminative commandeering in Southern Transylvania, the Hungarian government made a commitment to investigate the complaints. It asked to Office of Public Supply that it should be a ministerial committee that carries out the investigation instead of local public administration.[12] In line with existing practice, investigations did

8 *Román követség által átadott szóbeli jegyzék a román lakosság élelmezési panaszairól*. 1942. június 15. MNL OL, K 252, 1, doboz, 39/1942. 284–288. Iván Balassa, a leading Hunarian ethnographer found that using corncub was a practice in times of famine, however the last time the population actually amde us of it was in the late 19th century. Balassa 1960: 427.

9 *Gyergyótölgyesi járás főszolgabírájának jelentése a közellátási hiányosságokról*. 1942. május. 9. MNL OL K 149, 1942 6 tétel 131. doboz. 1942-G-13253. 19-20. This is a village with inhabitants of mixed ethnic background, this might have had an impact on food distributed there.

10 *Szolnok-Doboka vármegye főispánjának beszámolója a közellátásról*. 1942. augusztus 11. MNL OL K 28, 222. csomó, 439. tétel. 1942-O-23890. 289-291. See also Hámori, "„Produktív szociálpolitika", 101.

11 *Beszterce-Naszód* vármegye főispánjának beszámolója a megye közellátásáról. 1942. augusztus 12. MNL OL K 28, 222. csomó, 439. tétel. 1942-O-23890. 33-35.

12 *Külügyminisztérium átirata a Közellátásügyi Minisztériumnak a román követség jegyzékéről a román lakosság közellátási panaszait illetően*. 1942. június 19. MNL OL K 251. 39/1942. 282–283.

not look for general causes but followed a case-by-case method.[13] Eventually, these investigations dismissed each complaint and denied that discrimination was the reason even if the reports acknowledged that there were delays in distributing rations.[14] Regarding the case of Jód, the investigation found that all those concerned received their rations, however, one of the families did not have enough money to pay for the flour ration, while in the other case the family was too large, therefore, they tried to make up for the shortage by resorting to flour made of corncob.[15] The Hungarian government posited that in Hungary the issues had to with limitations of supply and even if there were cases of discrimination, these were the outcome of arbitrary decisions taken at the local level, while Romania made discrimination part of their official commandeering policy.[16] The Hungarian government argued that whenever local administration consisted of Hungarians who were found to be biased, these staff were transferred to ethnic Hungarian area. [17] Following the commandeering of 1942, the Inter-Ministerial Committee found similar instances. They proposed to the prime minister that the civil servants working in majority Romanian areas should be reminded that biased decisions had an adverse impact on the territorial revision. [18]

13 The case of Tőkés in Szolnok-Doboka County was typical. According to the Romanian memorandum, the notary told the Romanians asking for sowing seeds that they should go ask God instead. The investigation focussed on whether the notary actually said those words.

14 *Közellátásügyi Hivatal jelentése a románok élelmezési és vetőmagpanaszaira*. 1942. július 13. MNL OL K 251, 1. doboz, 39/1942. 293–299.

15 *Jegyzőkönyv Jód község közellátásáról*. 1942. július 5. MNL OL, K 251. 1. doboz, 39/1942. 344–349. Due to the continued practice of letting a significant portion of the arable fallow made conditions in Iod worse than they would have been otherwise. For conflicts related to banning the fallow, see Oláh 2004: 98–113.

16 Romanian grievances in Northern Transylvania and the Hungarian response to these. 1942. júl. 22. MNL OL, K 28, 274. csomó, A. dosszié. 21–34. It is a propagandistic document written in German. A note on the folder says that „it was not handed over".

17 *Közellátásügyi Hivatal jelentése a románok élelmezési és vetőmagpanaszaira*. 1942. július 13. MNL OL, K 251, 1. doboz, 39/1942. 293-299.

18 *Az észak-erdélyi magyar kormányintézkedések és a román panaszok ismertetése*. MNL K 63, 259. csomó, 27. tétel. 674–696. *Miniszterközi Bizottság jelentése Kállay Miklós miniszterelnöknek a románok kiűzéséről szóló vádról*. 1943. május 3. MNL OL, K 28, 92. csomó, 150. tétel. 1943-O-31267. 837–839.

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Moreover, the Hungarian government reasoned that occasional hunger is the outcome of the difference between the nutritional habits of Hungarians and Romanians: while the staple diet of Hungarians is wheat, Romanians exclusively opt for corn and they do not know what to do with wheat they receive from the government, thus, they sell it on the market.[19] The Romanian Embassy rejected the argument that Romanians would refuse to take wheat flour in times of food shortage and asked for specific cases to be presented to them.[20] According to contemporary Romanian publications, although there were regional differences in the country in terms of diet, namely that people consumed more corn in the area of the Old Kingdom than in Transylvania, corn consumption of Romanians was declining and made up only half of the food consumed.[21]

In the remainder of the paper, I investigate the extent to which these claims were true. The paper will reappraise the motto quoted above, which suggests that there were significant differences in nutritional habits of the different ethnic groups living in close proximity in Transylvania in the mid-20th century, and that the Romanian population had no knowledge about processing wheat flour. In order to contextualize the situation in Northern Transylvania, I briefly describe the system that was in place in contemporary Romania. Subsequently, I will discuss the changes in nutritional habits that had taken place between the late 19th century and the 1940s. I chiefly give my answers using statistical calculations based on contemporary data on agriculture that I will supplement with information from narrative sources. Concerning Northern Translyvania, we do not have data either for production or consumption, therefore I will compare the late 19th century data with the last agricultural statistics from interwar Romania (1937). Of course, the comparison is problematic since not all output was consu-

19 *Simándi Ferenc német-olasz tiszti bizottsághoz kirendelt összekötő tiszt jelentése a Vezérkari Főnökség 2. osztályának a bukaresti magyar követ tiszti bizottságnál tett látogatásáról*. 1942. jún. 28. MNL OL K 63, 263. csomó, 27. tétel. 4478/1942. 120-122.

20 *Román követség által átadott szóbeli jegyzék a román lakosság élelmezési panaszairól*. 1942. június 15. MNL OL, K 252, 1, doboz, 39/1942. 284-288.

21 Claudian, Alimentaţia poporului român, 121–126. According to Claudian, on average, corn occupied 30% of the arable land in counties of Transylvania.

med: sowing seed and animal food need to be deducted. I included Máramaros in the analysis because the most serious case reportedly took place in a village from the county, namely, Jód. I compare Máramaros with the three counties of Szeklerland in Southeastern Transylvania where geographical conditions were similar. Even though these did not favour cereal production, the inhabitants insisted on growing plants used for making bread even as they were dependent on cereal imports. I took Bihar County as the control group.

Public supply and the system of commandeering during World War II in Hungary and Romania

For addressing the problem presented above, it is indispensable to outline the system of commandeering and public supply and related measures in place in Romania and in Hungary in 1942.

Increasing war effort meant the shift to the so-called war economy in which the main task of the economy is to supply the army with what it needs. This meant that the civilian population had access to less consumer goods. In 1940, both states decided to increase its involvment with the economy, just like many other states in Europe. In this model, the state itself tried to act as the main distributor replacing the market in organizing supply to the public. The system evolved gradually, the first step being the introduction of price caps in order to reduce differences in prices and inflation that arose due to the scarcity of goods. The economic rules of such centralized system of public supply included that in case there was a shortage of some of the goods, it was only available at prices higher than the one set by administration. On the other hand, if a price cap was miscalculated, it might have led to a price hike. Romania introduced this method of redistribution in 1940 and the Hungarian military administration adopted it right away in the annexed areas of Transylvania. Due to the permanent shortage of goods, the gap between officially set and actual market prices could

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grow enormous. This led to the emergence of black market, and, hence, dozens of sabotage cases.[22] Despite these efforts on behalf of administration, prices kept rising in 1940: the inflation reached 38% in Romania,[23] and 20% in Hungary[24]

The other key administrative measure was rationing that applied to basic food items. This, too, appeared in both countries already in 1940 and was extended to even more goods with the shift to war economy. In Hungary, rationing was centrally regulated, thus local authorities only had to deal with implementation. By 1942, the system of national rationing extended to all basic food items (bread, flour, sugar, rice, canned food) as well as to paraffin and soap.[25] According to the decree of 1942, each rural inhabitant had the right to own and retain 2q of wheat per year, 4kgs of flour per month and 1.6kgs of finely ground flour.[26] For urban dwellers the ration was 150 grams of bread per day and 1.6 kgs of flour per month.[27] Just like in Romania, the system of requisitioning/procurement was about the change in Hungary in 1942. Initially, it worked on a voluntary basis and the authorities purchased the quantities above the above-mentioned limitations.[28] However, since this method was not sufficient to gather the required quantities of foodstuff, the so-called Jurcsek regime, named after Béla Jurcsek (1893-1945) the state secretary for public supply, replaced of the voluntary one. This determined the quantity of foodstuff that farmers needed to give up for the purposes of public supply based on their income per acres. State authorities

22 In Romania, both sellers and buyers were brought under investigation for transactions above the maximum prices.

23 Szamos. 1940. augusztus 11. *Júniusban 16%-kal drágult az élet*. 4.

24 Szamos. 1940. október 31. *Magyarországon a háború első évében alig 20%-kal emelkedett az elsőrendű fontosságú cikkek ára*. 6.

25 Subsequently, the introduction of no-meat days made the system even harsher.

26 *Jegyzőkönyv Tőkésbánya közellátásáról*. 1942. július 3. MNL OL K 251. 1 doboz, 39/1942. 323–328.

27 Rations became smaller and smaller: initially the ration consisted of 250grams of bread daily and 2 kgs of flour per month. *Feljegyzés a magyarországi élelmiszer-ellátásról*. 1942. július 22. MNL OL K 28, 274. csomó, 2. tétel, A. dosszié. 52–62.

28 *Kolozs vármegyei közellátásügyi kormánybiztos jelentése a város polgármesterének*. 1942. január. 31. MNL OL R 374. 3. doboz, 20/1942. 9–104.

made their claim for the surplus already during thrashing.[29] This way, the central administration could estimate the amounts of wheat that it would supply to the army and to the public in a given year. However, this method of distribution did not give sufficient weight to possible bad harvest years that would leave the families of farmers with less than they needed. Yet, the system remained in place. Until 1942, there were two requisition campaigns, in May 1941 and at end of the same year. Unlike in Romania, the authorities announced both of these in advance.[30]

Before the events of 1942 discussed here rationing was not centrally regulated in Romania. Local authorities had the power to decide to introduce it considering the specific conditions of the given area. Local authorities tended to introduce rationing for flour, oil, sugar, leather, sowing seed and wool but there was significant regional variation.[31] Commandeering and rationing were closely related. Sending armies to the front meant a double burden for production. On the one hand, most enlisted men were farmers who were lost to production, at least in the short term. On the other hand, tens of thousands of people had to be supplied. For providing enough to them, and later on, to civilians, the state had to turn to commandeering. In Romania, related decrees were frequently amended while rations and reserves were reduced. In December 1941, the State Secretariat for Public Food Supply issued decree no. 2260/1941 that regulated the year 1942. This prescribed 4 wheat days and 3 corn days. The ration for wheat was set until August 1942 at 0.4 kgs per day and for corn until 1 November 1942 at 1kg per day.[32] Since rules were not precise, commandeering was carried out two times before the summer of 1942. During the one in spring, authorities were to

29 The Hungarian authorities calculated the quantities that farmers needed to give up in Northern Transylvania based on the average produce in interwar Hungary without considering regional characteristics and limitations. This was a grievance in itself for the local population.

30 *Feljegyzés a magyarországi élelmiszer ellátásról*. 1942. július 22. MNL OL K 28, 274. csomó, 2. tétel, A. dosszié. 52–62.

31 *Külügyminisztérium jelentése a dél-erdélyi gabonarekvirálásról*. 1942. június. MNL OL K 63, 263. csomó, 27. tétel, 3373/1942. 331-338.

32 *A Közélelmezési Államtitkárság 2260/1941 sz. rendelete*. MNL OL K 63, 443. csomó 47. tétel, 285/pol. 1942. 207–208.

leave 46 kgs of wheat and 108 kgs of corn for farmers, 6kgs of wheat and 32kgs of corn for agricultural labourers and, they were supposed to consider needs for sowing: 130kgs of barley or hay per acre and 30kgs of corn or potato. For producers this meant 5 kgs of wheat or 4 kgs of wheat flour or 8 kgs of corn flour per months on average.[33] Those engaged in heavy physical work or had animals could keep extra quantity above these quota.[34] The novelty of the decree was that authorities registered the quantity of cereals during threshing and claimed the surplus with the explicit goal of preventing farmers from hiding the produce or find others way out from the system of commandeering and rationing.[35] Commandeering and reducing public supply to a minimum did not mean extraordinary conditions during World War II.

Changes in Nutrition during World War II in Northern Transylvania

Before turning to the data sets, we shall keep in mind two circumstances. First, that small-holders could hope for a better harvest from corn that wheat. Moreover, the market price of corn is lower than that of wheat and *mamaliga* is more nutritious than bread, therefore, it makes much sense to have a corn-based diet. [36] Second, as far as it is possible for us to know, virtually all households had an oven suitable for baking bread in Transylvania. [37] There are no overall data on food consumption and nutrition from the first half of the 20th century in

33 *Külügyminisztérium jelentése a dél-erdélyi gabonarekvirálásról*. 1942. június. MNL OL K 63, 263. csomó, 27. tétel, 3373/1942. 331–338.

34 The decree allowed the farmers to keep 1 kg corn for feeding each pigs daily. However, due to lack of food resources, people tended to keep part of that amount. It was a shortcoming of the regulation that it failed to consider that most families kept poultry and did not allocate extra corn for this purpose. *Beszámoló a gabonarekvirálási panaszokról*. 1942. július 31. MNL OL K 63, 444. csomó, 47. tétel. 373/pol. 1942. 172–174.

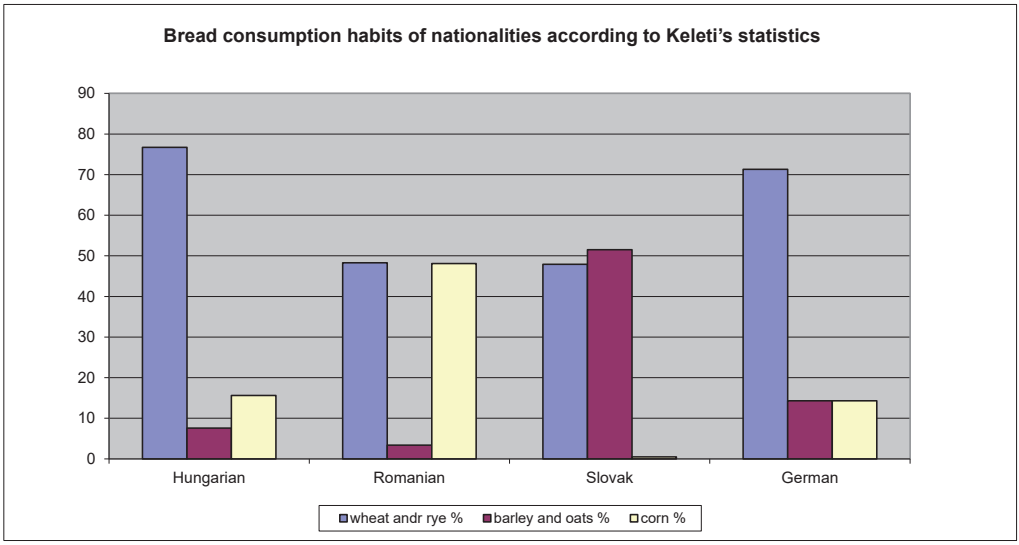
35 *Beszámoló a gabonarekvirálási panaszokról*. 1942. július 31. MNL OL K 63, 444. csomó, 47. tétel. 373/pol. 1942. 172–174.

36 Claudian, Alimentaţia poporului român, 137.

37 Claudian, Alimentaţia poporului român, 126.

Transylvania and Romania. Thus, in the lack of better alternatives, I attempt to draw conclusions from data on food production.[38] The latter type of data cannot be taken as if it directly referred to food consumption but, perhaps, they are good enough to track major shifts.

In 1887, using questionnaires and other data, Károly Keleti published his results about consumption of basic foodstuff. For this paper, I focus on his statements about ethnic minorities and only on the questions of bread and the ingredients used for making it.[39]



Keleti believed he observed differences in nutrition along ethnic lines. He identified three large regions in the territory was then the Kingdom of Hungary. There was Upper Hungary where Slovakians mainly used barley, oat and some wheat for making bread, the Great Plains where Hungarian and Germans chiefly aet bread made of wheat and Transylvania where, while wheat is also present, where the amount of corn is markedly more than in the other two regions.[40] Since

38 In the interwar period, the school of sociologist Dimitrie Gusti also paid attention to nutrition and calories consumed. However, there were no all-Romania surveys conducted. See Georgescu, Problema alimentației tărănești, 6–10.

39 I left out potato from the analysis since this paper discusses bread consumption.

40 Károly Keleti included both flour and spoon food while assessing corn consumption.

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the majority of the inhabitants of Transylvania were Romanians,[41] Keleti linked the prevalence of corn to the presence of Romanians.[42] Based on Keleti's statistics, one may deduce that only Slovakians used to eat significant quantities of barley and oat,[43] and corn only mattered to Romanians, while wheat dominated the diet of Germans and Hungarians even if it was present in the daily life of all ethnic groups. Instead of saying that corn, or barley and oat were dominant among Romanians and Slovakians, respectively, Keleti's figures tell that both communities had a mixed diet in which wheat played a role. It remains a question if these categories really refer to ethnic communities, or, indicate regional differences.

Keleti's statistic for Transylvania provides a complicated picture. According to him, in areas where Romanians live in rather homogenous blocks (such as Maramures, Beszterce, Szolnok-Doboka), corn should have dominated nutritional habits, while in the three Szekler counties (Csík, Udvarhely and Háromszék) wheat and barley should have been prevalent. On the surface, this appears to be the case as the proportion of corn was 0 and wheat and barley took up 65-95% in the Szekler counties, while corn consumption makes up 75% of the total in Maramures. However, if we consider the three Szekler Counties individually, we find larger differences. In Háromszék County, the combined proportion of corn, barley and oat was 8%, while in Csík County corn alone counted for 14.5%. Since the Hungarian central government argued that Hungarians living in Northern Transylvania exclusively eat wheat products, we separated wheat and oat for the analysis.[44]

Although the ratio of wheat was low in Máramaros, in the case of Szekler Counties the thesis about the importance of wheat did not hold: oat dominated to various degree: 52% in Csík County and 65% in Udvarhely County. In Bihar,

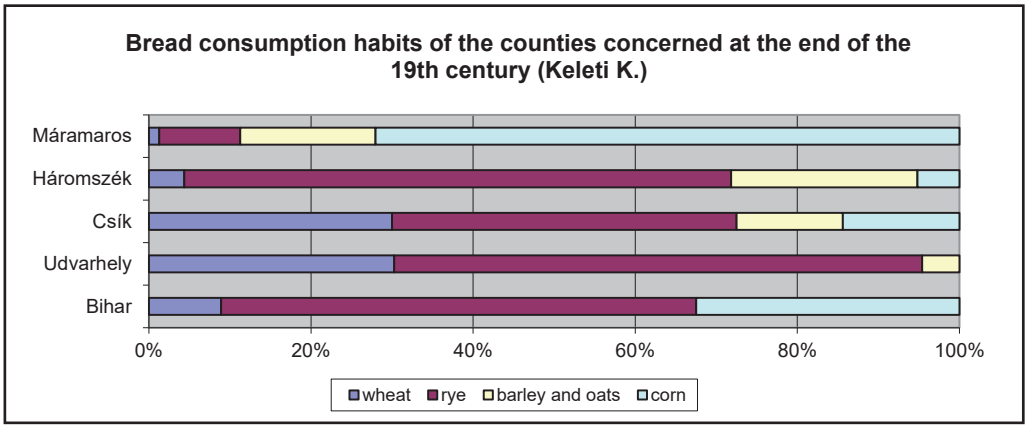
41 According to the census of 1910, 55% of the population of Transylvania were Romanian, 34% Hungarian and 8.7% German

42 Keleti, Magyarország népességének élelmezési, 144–149.

43 Balassa, A magyar kukorica: 395.

44 We did not disaggregate barley and rye as they were marginal crops in all regions analysed here.

the proportion of rye reached a similarly high level (58%). Thus, it is clear that in the 19th century Hungarians did not exclusively eat wheat.



After 1918, the peace treaty ordered that Transylvania and the areas known as the *Partium* should become part of Romania. This was a radical change from the point of view of nutritional culture since these areas came into direct contact with regions having a markedly different food culture and habits. [45] Moreover, from 1918, these areas constituted the food market of Romania together. It is beyond the scope of this paper to dwell into all the differences. We limit ourselves to discussing the relative importance and role of wheat and corn.[46] The land reform that took place in Romania in 1921 was the most radical one in the region is another factor that makes such a focus relevant. [47] Due to the land reform, the proportion of most important category of corn producers, small holders, increased significantly.[48] Throughout the interwar period, Romania produced more corn than wheat and this was unlike the situation in Hungary or in

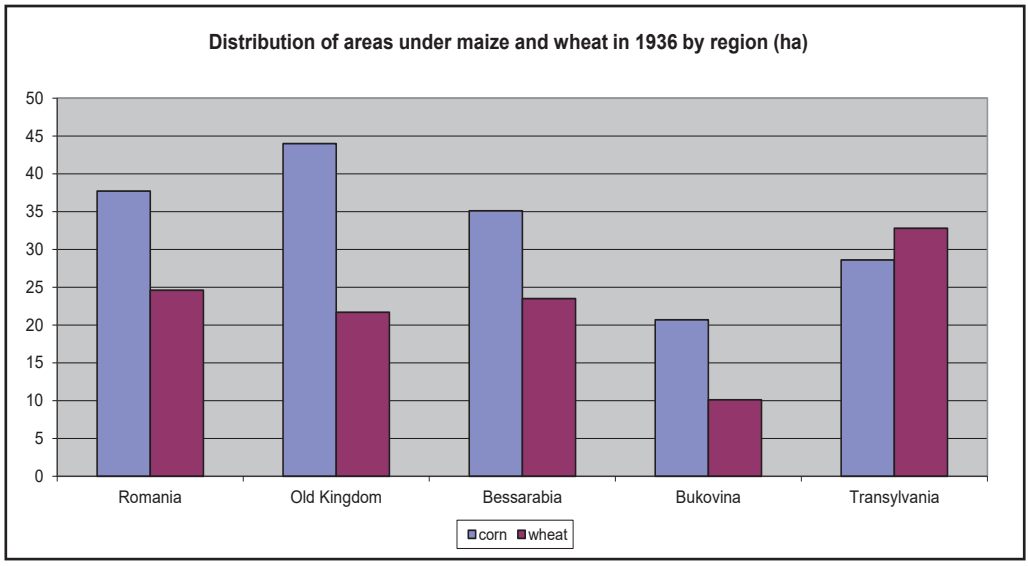
45 Based on ethnographic studies, spoon-food dominated east of the Carpathians, while in the Great Plains bread was the most important item. Transylvania was a mixed zone in this regard. Kisbán 1970: 99. Unfortunately, due to lack of information, we could not take the distinction between corn uses to make spoon-food (puliszka) and bread into consideration.

46 There were important differences between Transylvania, and the Old Kingdom in terms of land use. In Romania, on average, 62% were arable land and 21% were forest, but in Transylvania arable land made up only 24% and the proportion of forest and pastures were similar. Enciclopedia 1939: 303.

47 In 1921, the Romanian legislation sanctioned three land reforms the most radical of which was that of Transylvania. Venczel, ”Az erdélyi román földbirtokreform”, 323–337.

48 According to statistics from 1938, in Romania 74% of the farmers worked an areas between 1 and 5 ha and 14% had 5 to 10 ha. Enciclopedia, 305.

Western Europe.[49] In the Old Romanian Kingdom, there were sizeable cornfields and these were increasing in the interwar period: in 1924, 30.4% of the arable land was sown with corn, while in 1938 this figure rose to 37.7% .[50] Despite this increase, corn export did not grow as the produce served domestic demand. Slow growth[51] and large fall-backs characterized Romania's agriculture in the interwar period. Romanians produced more corn than wheat. The gap became particularly large in the later 1920s. [52] At the same time, regional characteristics became more pronounced.



In 1936, corn took up 37.7% of the arable land and 24.6% wheat. In the Old Kingdom, the difference was larger: 44% vs. 21.7%.[53] Even if nominal differences were smaller, the trend was similar in the other two areas recently incorporated into Romania: in Bessarabia and Bukovina. In Transylvania, however,

49 The first timet hat the area of corn surpassed that of wheat in Hungary was in 1945. Balassa 1960: 78.

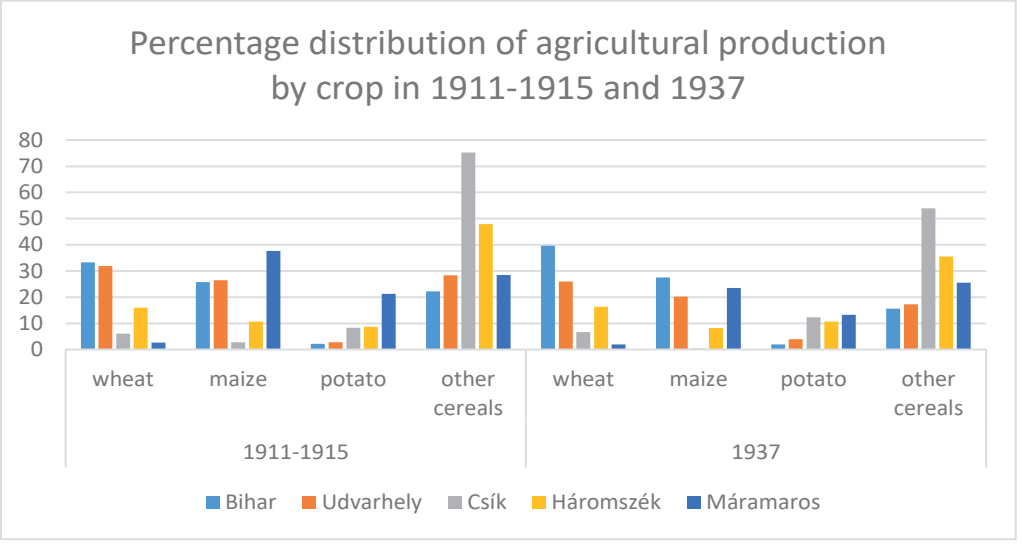
50 Balassa, A magyar kukorica, 29.

51 Altogether, in 1921, 71277000 q cereals were harvested in Romania, while in 1937 this number was 104307000 q. Statistica 1938: 71.

52 In 1929, 63862000 q corn was produced, in 1937, 46560000 q. In 1929, 63862000 q corn and only 27149000 q wheat were produced. Statistica 1938: 71.

53 Claudian, Alimentaţia poporului român, 138.

the area of wheat (32.8%) surpassed that of corn (28.6%).[54] This situation and regional pattern is surprising since apart from some areas in the Partium and Banat, Transylvania is not an ideal region for wheat growing, while large plains of the Old Kingdom and Moldva would be.[55] The proportion that corn occupied indicates that corn was not only used for feeding animals but it was also the basis of human nutrition. We can illustrate the changes that had occurred in nutritional habits since the 19th century with comparing two data sets: the relative proportion of plants produced, and data about late 19th century consumption along with per capita cereal consumption. Admittedly, this is a simplification that distorts reality to some extent.



Despite modernization, changes in the boundaries of counties and the land reform, data about the production of cereals shows considerable continuity. In Máramaros County, which was dominantly Romanian, the area covered decreased in case of all plants considered. While the area for wheat dropped only slightly, from 5% to 2.9%, the change is more drastic for corn (from 37% to 23%).[56] There were significant differences among the Szekler counties in terms

54 Enciclopedia, 309.

55 Claudian, Alimentaţia poporului român, 21.

56 Statisztikai közlemények 1924: 113–115. Statistica 1938: 59. Despite the decrease, nearly

of production.[57] Even though the general trend was similar in all three counties: there was a decline in the production of cereals and mostly in the area of barley and oat. This was so despite the fact that geographical conditions would have favoured just these two types of cereals. The area of wheat and rye decreased to a smaller extent in Udvarhely and Háromszék County but dropped to one third (from 29.3% of the total arable area to 8.1%) in Csík County. As a result of the decrease, rye nearly disappeared in Udvarhely and Csík counties (standing at 1.4%) and in Háromszék County it occupied just half of the area it used (5.9%). Differences among the Szekler counties were also pronounced in corn production: it was marginal in Háromszék és Csík Counties (0.4, and 8.2%), while in Udvarhely County corn took up more than 20% of the arable area.[58] In Bihar, the situation was markedly different: the area of wheat and rye combined (from 43.4% to 47%) and corn increased (from 25.8% to 27.5%), while that of barley and oat decreased (from 12.1 to 8.1%).[59]

Since there are no better proxies, we shall compare the part of Károly Keleti's late 19th century statistics on food consumption related to the ingredients of bread with per capita quantities of cereal based on the statistical data from 1937.[60] Of course, we shall only draw cautious conclusions from this exercise. At first sight, the most important difference between the two data sets is that the proportion of barley and oat increased. However, these types of cereals played a marginal role in human nutrition in Transylvania. At the same, time, the amount of wheat, rye decreased while corn increased. Looking at regional patterns, in

one fourth of the area was sown with corn. It is important to note that Máramaros had the worse output for corn in the whole country: it had a 7.8q/ha output vs. the national average of 11q/ha. Indeed, the county only reached the national average in barley production among all cereals. Marina 1939: 28.

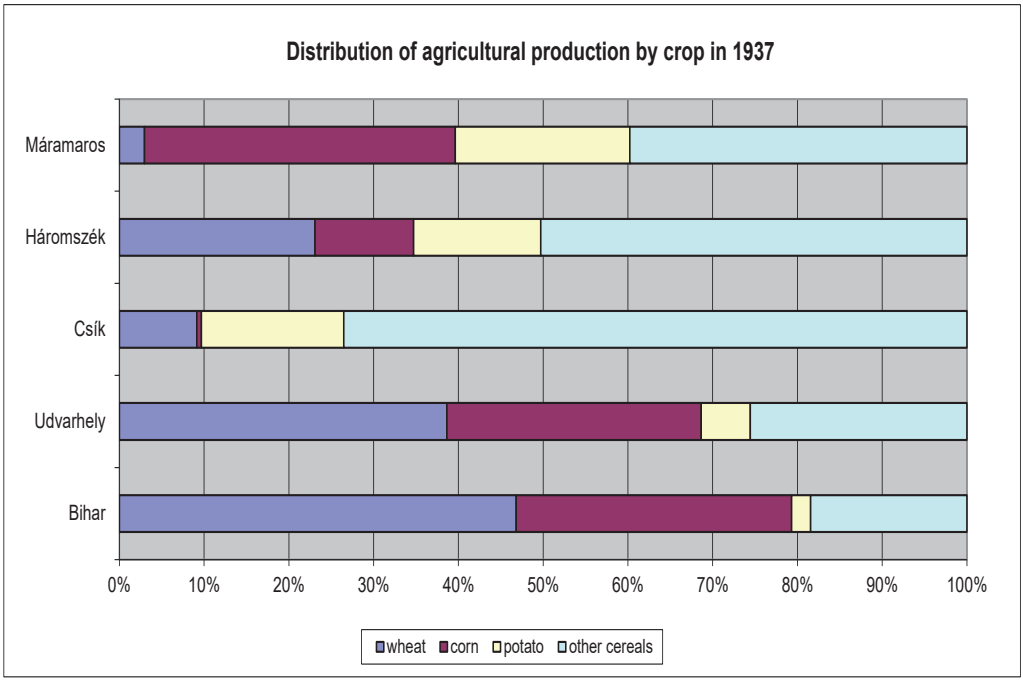
57 In 1937, wheat was the most important cereal with 26% of the area in Udvarhely. In Csík, oat was on the top with 24.5%, and, in Háromszék County, barley occupied 16.4% of the arable. Statistica 1938: 59.

58 Statistica: 1938. 59. In Udvarhely County, corn is consumed as bread, while in the other two counties it is primarily eaten in the form of porridge (puliszka). Kisbán 1970: 102.

59 Statistica 1938: 59.

60 Barabás 1907: 39.

Máramaros County, the quantity of corn also decreased and we can register increase in the quantity of barley and oat.[61] In the Szekler counties the quantity of wheat and oat fell while the amount of corn consumed grew.[62] In Bihar, the quantity of corn remained unchanged, and there was only a slight decrease in wheat and rye.[63] If we separate wheat and rye, we see that the quantity of wheat increased and rye decreased in all counties. Since small holders typically produced corn while large estates prioritized wheat, we may point at the land reform of 1921 as the reason behind the growing corn production.[64]



61 In 1938, there were 1564 wagons of cereals produced in Máramaros County but only 902 went for human consumption. At the same time, requirement was no less than 7408 wagons of cereals so that domestic production only covered 94 days of consumption. Marina 1939: 24, 67.

62 Balassa, A magyar kukorica, 425.

63 Per capita quantities given here are based ont he census of 1930 and the production data from 1937. Recensământ 1938: XXXII–XXXIII. Statistica: 1938. 86–89.

64 In Hungary, the majority of corn was produced on small farms of less than 20 holds in size. Balassa, A magyar kukorica, 81. The same can be said of Romania, where large estates primarily cultivated wheat, while small farms mainly produced corn. Enciclopedia 1939: 308.

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Summary and Conclusion

Although there were some elements of truth in the arguments of the Hungarian government regarding the food supply situation in Northern Transylvania, these arguments were not entirely well founded. The government argued that there was a general shortage in food availability that arose from the agricultural output of the re-annexed territories being insufficient.[65] Indeed, among these regions only the Banat produced surplus but this surplus was exported to Germany.[66] It was characteristic of the shortage that inhabitants complained about the delay in the distribution of rations in Szeklerland. [67]

The second argument about the differences in nutritional habits along ethnic lines was a false one. Before 1918, Southern Transylvania was the most important corn growing area in Hungary. Once it was annexed to Romania, Hungary had to import corn in years of bad harvest and this was even more so after the re-annexations of 1938-1940.[68] The argument was that in the system of rationing, Hungary produced corn only for the needs of domestic animals and there were no stocks for feeding the population with corn. Therefore, Romanians would also receive wheat flour but they did not want it. Although the Hungarian Government maintained that the Office of Public Supply reported that Romanians tended to reject wheat flour, there was not a single specific instance cited and confirmed. Even if corn played a more important role in the nutrition of Romanians than in the diet of Hungarians, it is untrue that Romanians did not know what to do with wheat flour.

Since we do not have data on consumption for the interwar period, attempts

65 *Feljegyzés a magyarországi élelmiszer-ellátásról*. 1942. július 22. MNL OL K 28, 274. csomó, 2. tétel, a dosszié. 52-62.

66 On the disadvantageous obligations to export all surplus wheat to Germany, see Vargyai 1985: 167.

67 Szerklerland had no railway connection to Hungary until the railway line between Déda and Szeretfalva was completed in 1942.

68 *Feljegyzés a magyarországi élelmiszer-ellátásról*. 1942. július 22. MNL OL K 28, 274. csomó, 2. tétel, a dosszié. 52-62.

at statistical comparison only brought partial results. Károly Keleti's statistics positing that there were fundamental differences in nutritional habits along ethnic lines is valid only if we break it down at the regional level. It is valid for the 1940s that people consume more corn in Transylvania than in other parts of contemporary Hungary and that Romanians eat more corn than Hungarians. However, the diet in mountainous land will resemble those of other highlands more than plains regardless of nationality. In terms of nutritional habits, we will find more similarities in the nutritional habits of Romanians in Máramaros and Hungarian in Szeklerland than the latter group and Hungarians living in the plains of Bihar County. Further studies in historical ethnography are required to refine this picture. For example, they would have to address the anomalies of the prevalence of a certain type of cereal where conditions are suboptimal for its growth.

At this stage of the inquiry, one may state that land reform did not substantially impact nutritional habits. Although, due to the increase in the proportion of small holders resulted in the moderate growth of the area of corn, there was no significant shift in the composition of cereals and, presumably, this was also true of their consumption. Importantly, the regions and counties that relied on imports did not eat what they produced. While in Máramaros 75% of the bread was made of corn in the late 19th century, in 1937 cornfields made up only 39% of the arable area. Similarly, in the late 19th century inhabitants of the Szekler Counties primarily used to eat rye bread and also used wheat and corn to a lesser extent, in 1937, in Udvarhely the key cereal was wheat, in Csík it was oat, and in Háromszék barley took the lead.

We may conclude that the Hungarian government made its arguments about food supply in Northern Transylvania based on stereotypes and previous propaganda statements. Romanians consumed both corn and wheat in the late 19th as well as in the mid-20th century. The statement that Romanians did not know how to process wheat flour distributed to them was certainly false. It was not a coincidence that local investigations did not confirm any such instance. It was also a propagandistic oversimplification that Hungarians would only consume wheat

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since corn was a part of the diet in the Szeklerland and it had even increased between the late 19th century and the 1940s. Since, except for Bihar County, the regions discussed here needed to import foodstuff, the introduction of the central distribution of food depended on the good will of state authorities to a large extent. This vulnerability was even more pronounced in the case of ethnic minorities.

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Swing in front of the ruins of District I of Budapest, 1945. Source: Fortepan, Photo no. 60167.

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Virág Bogyó

Children of Year Zero

https://doi.org/10.51918/ceh.2024.1.3

Abstract

The cruelty of war, the constant presence of death and destruction, the lack of education and play, the constant state of readiness have crippled a generation of children. In the post-war years, one of the primary tasks of social workers was to help both children and adults to find their way back to their traditional roles. For children to become children again, they had to be provided with a safe and healthy environment, with opportunities for learning and play. The examples that will be presented were part of a longer series of efforts that believed in the possibility of democratic functioning based on extensive local communities and self-government, and saw it as a way of reforming the political system or urban planning. The paper first introduces the post-war situation as a terrain of ruins and then presents the importance and main ideas of the Danish Carl Theodor Sørensen and British adventure playground movement and the activist work of the British landscape architect Marjory Allen. The final part turns to the example of Gaudiopolis, the children's care insitution associated with Gábor Sztehlo in Budapest and gives a detailed account of its structure, constitution, specific agenda and activities.

Keywords

post-war, junk playground, children's rights, self-government

Virág Bogyó

Children of Year Zero

„Ashes! Ashes! We all fall down"

On 11 November 2022, in the pitch-black town square of Kherson, children and adults celebrated the withdrawal of the occupying Russian troops by dancing in a circle. The image reminded me of Emmanuil Yevtserikiny's famous 1942 photograph of the ruined city centre of Stalingrad (now Volgograd).[1] The fountain, also known as *Barmalej* or *Horovod* (Round Dance), is in the foreground of the burning buildings.[2] The contemporary sculpture depicts a group of children dancing around a crocodile. In Yevtserikiny's photograph, the gigantic scale of the destruction contrasts sharply with the surprisingly intact and lifelike figures of the children. The juxtaposition of destruction and children's play, an allegory of hope and life, has been in the world press and has become one of the best-known photographs of the World War II. The fountain itself was completely restored after the war, long before the surrounding buildings, through social work. In May 1945, a sports parade was held in front of the statue, in which young girls performed a gymnastics demonstration in the form of a circle dance.[3]

1 „Story of one Photo." English Russia. https://englishrussia.com/2009/04/06/story- of-one-photo/ Last viewed 1 August 2023

2 The fictional character of Kornej Chukovsky was a pirate or cannibal who, after trying to cook children, is eaten by a crocodile. But Barmelej vows to reform, so the crocodile releases him at the children's request.

3 Although the statue was demolished in the 1950s, it became an important symbol of the politics of remembrance, and many replicas were made. Thanks to the Kremlin-backed

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On 8 May 1945, the war in Europe ended, the daily existential threat of armed conflict was over on paper, but the cities and the lives of the people in them were in ruins. The personal crises were not over, living conditions were improving and the decades-long process of reconstruction was just beginning. The war-torn urban spaces continued to provide the setting for children's play activities. The streets of Warsaw, Dresden, Berlin, London, Rotterdam, Budapest – and I could go on – are dotted with footage of children playing in the ruins of the shattered city. Each of these images operates with the same counter-argument as the image of the Stalingrad round dance: the society of the future playing on the ruins of the (society of) the past. In what follows, I will argue that these ways of depicting children, in addition to functioning as imprints of everyday life after the war, also played an important role in the process of reconstruction because of their symbolic power. As the design critic Alexandra Lange puts it, "Children needed to play, but adults also needed to see them play as a witness to the rebirth of the city."[4]

Construction After the Great Destruction

In her widely known and influential book Anne Applebaum claims that: "This was the moment sometimes called the zero hour, Stunde Null: the end of the war, the retreat of Germany, the arrival of the Soviet Union, the moment the fighting ended and life started up again."[5]

Although everyone was sure that a radically different, new era was about to begin, it was not at all clear at the time what it would look like, nor was it

Night Wolves Motorcycle Club leader Alexander Zaldostanov, a replica was unveiled in front of Volgograd station in 2013 by Putin himself. Since then, the statue has been in the media again in the wake of a tragic event, after a suicide bomber detonated a cluster bomb at the station in August 2013.

4 Lange, "Fear of Fun"

5 Applebaum, *Iron curtain*. 4.

clear what path the states of Central and Eastern Europe would take. It was not until the very end of the 1940s that the Cold War consensus was consolidated. Although the Yalta Conference had already unveiled the Soviet expansionist ambitions and the later policy of the United States and Britain in Eastern Europe, the bipolar world order was set up by a series of further steps. After the Second World War, the foreign policy of the Western powers was fundamentally influenced by fear of the rise of communism. As economic crises usually favour the strengthening of totalitarian regimes, financial intervention seemed justified. It was feared that if Europe failed to restart its economy, the recession would open the door to communist influence.[6] The US provided $14 billion in reconstruction aid to European countries under the Marshall Plan. Under Soviet pressure, the Eastern European states refused to participate in the programme and this widened the gap between the Soviet Union and the West. The United States' post-war policy towards the Soviet Union was fundamentally shaped by diplomat George Kennan's famous telegram of February 1946, which made it clear to the US leadership that there was a need for a strong political, economic and cultural alternative.[7] The Marshall Plan traveling exhibition is a good example of this ambition. The exhibition, which promoted the benefits of rebuilding war-torn European nations into modern capitalist societies in seven Western European countries, promoted an economic and cultural alliance with the United States as a counterweight to the influence of communism.[8]

These political processes and the opportunities of the period can be traced through the architecture of Europe and the discourses of the architectural profession. Beyond the need to rebuild vital infrastructures immediately, the main question in the years following the war became how to build a better society and for a better society.[9] However different the political aspirations of the emerging blocs, there was a consensus on the themes of (re)humanising architecture and improv-

6 Masey – Morgan, *Cold War Confrontations*, 27.

7 Helmig, "The Long Telegram."

8 Masey – Morgan, *Cold War Confrontations*, 28.

9 Hopfengärtner, "Introduction", 14.

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ing living conditions. The bombed-out cities opened up exciting new possibilities for architects to develop even comprehensive, large-scale concepts. At the same time, each demolished building raised questions of building, non-buliding and the possibility of rethinking urban micro-spaces.

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Children in Reconstruction

„Our playground: ruins. Our toys: shell-cases and bombs."[10]

Although the possibilities for freedom of thought and action in the countries of the Eastern Bloc were increasingly limited, 1945 did not mean a sudden, radical end of humanist or modernist approaches. A tremendous social energy, a belief in building a better world, pervaded the post-war years, and the subject of aspirations for the future was often the *child.* In the years that followed, children were privileged as members of the society of the future and builders of a strong nation in many countries.[11] On the one hand, a range of writers, artists, designers, filmmakers were engaged in creating work to help children deal with trauma, and a growing number of psychologists and educators turned to the use of art therapy.[12] On the other hand, children also became a prime target for urban planners, politicians and the market. The myths of 'good play' and 'good parenting' were soon born, but with them the need for state control over children's lives grew. This shift in family and children's rights can be observed almost everywhere, regardless of the political situation.[13] The clear need of the state for youth was the driving force behind many welfare measures and is reflected in the press and publications of the time, regardless of the geopolitical situation.[14]

10 Seymour, *Children of Europe*

11 Laine-Frigren, "Traumatized Children in Hungary", 150.

12 For some prominent examples, see O'Connor, „Processing Trauma" 147-49.

13 Peacock, *Innocent Weapons,* „Introduction", Cretney, „The State as a Parent"

14 Venken – Röger, "Growing Up in the Shadow of the Second World War"

After the war, in addition to the physical reconstruction, there was also the psychological and social damage to deal with. In addition to the millions of orphans and homeless children, the care of displaced persons, concentration camp survivors and returning prisoners of war represented a humanitarian crisis for the whole of Europe. Beyond the state, church and international aid organisations in operation, this period saw the creation of a number of international initiatives such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the International Federation of Childcare Centres (FICE) and the World Organisation for the Early Childhood Education (OMEP), which focused primarily on children. In 1948, David Seymour of the newly formed Magnum Photos agency was commissioned by UNICEF to document the work of the organisation and the lives of the children they supported.[15] This series of photographs was used to produce *Children* of Europe (1949). Seymour's series, in addition to foreshadowing the frequent collaborations between rights groups and artists that followed, and inspiring generations of press photographers, was a document on children's rights in Austria, Greece, Italy, Hungary and Poland.[16] The accompanying texts of the publication reflect the dichotomy that was at the heart of the discourse on child and youth protection at the time. The traumatic experiences of war had led to children being seen as both vulnerable and in need of protection, but also as potentially dangerous and to be controlled.[17] This dichotomy is also often reflected in the portrayal of children's physicality, with some depictions of children appearing younger than their age due to malnutrition, while others show them looking worn and old from their experiences.[18] An example of the latter is a letter from Morris Troper, head of the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) in Europe, to Eleanor Roosevelt, in which she describes the French refugee children arriving in Lisbon as 'little broken old men and old women'. Reflecting on their playfulness, she says:

"One of the most dramatic sights I have ever seen was the way these children, freed from their burdens, tried to learn to play again. After the ordeal of the past

15 Bourgeois-Vignon, "Children of Europe"

16 Prevezanos, "The Legacy of Photographer David Seymour"

17 Laine-Frigren, „Traumatized Children in Hungary", 150.

18 Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 9.

few years, they simply didn't know how to relax. They played gloomily, as if they feared that at any moment the sun, the beach, the food, the new-found freedom might be snatched away from them and they would fall back into the misery and anxiety from which they had just been freed."[19] The same phenomenon is reported by Marie Meierhofer, child psychiatrist and educator, about the children in the Pestalozzi Children's Village in Trogen[20] and by Gábor Sztehlo in his memoirs[21].

The cruelty of war, the constant presence of death and destruction, the lack of education and play, the constant state of readiness have crippled a generation of children. The normalisation of violence, the disintegration of society, the ubiquity of crime even as a means of survival caused a rapid and massive increase in juvenile delinquency across Europe.[22] The image of stolen childhood has become symbolic and central to charity campaigns and debates about reconstruction and the re-socialisation of children and youth.[23] In the post-war years, one of the primary tasks of social workers was to help both children and adults to find their way back to their traditional roles.[24] For children to become children again, they had to be provided with a safe and healthy environment, with opportunities for learning and play principles that were later recognised as fundamental rights for all children in the 1959 UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, a document that was the outcome of the hard work of children's rights activists.[25] The priority

19 Letter from Morris C. Troper to Eleanor Roosevelt, June 7, 1941, last viewed August 23, 2023. http://www. fdrlibrary.marist.edu/_resources/images/hol/hol00304.pdf. The letter was brought to my attention by Tara Zahra's study cited above.

20 Meierhofer,"First Experience on Medical-Psychological Work"

21 „The older children, aged 10 to 14, even had to be taught to play games, because between the fighting, the only thing left in their minds was the fighting game. They had little else to play with." Sztehlo, *Háromszázhatvanöt*, 362.

22 Bányai – Gombocz, "A traumafeldolgozás útjain", Fisher, *Disciplining Germany*; or Fishman, *The Battle for Children*

23 Laine-Frigren, „Traumatized Children in Hungary", 150.

24 ibid.

25 Although according to the Hintalovon Foundation for Children's Rights, the real breakthrough for children's rights came in 1989, when the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. These articles detail the specific rights that

was to build essential infrastructure, housing and education. New orphanages and children's villages were set up across Europe, many of them so-called "children's villages".[26] These are also described in the *Children of Europe*, which also mentions the often cruel dynamics of children's communities, organised along the lines of criminal lifestyles, which were not unknown in Europe at the time and against which these institutions were intended to provide a caring and healthy alternative.[27] The main principles of children's republics were to educate children for democracy, to foster a sense of agency and responsibility, and to promote the development of the the children cared for as useful, active and individually important members of society. In most cases, they had their own local government, sometimes they even had a press and a currency. Children often participated in the construction of buildings belonging to the institution, ran self-sufficient farms and learned a trade.

Community construction projects were of crucial symbolic and practical importance. Much of the work of clearing the ruins and rebuilding, especially the cleaning up of public spaces, was done by communities. Few things could better describe the optimistic atmosphere that pervaded these times, despite the miserable conditions, than the film newsreel of June 1945, showing children bathing in the former reservoir of Baross Square in Budapest: "The reservoirs, which recall the memory of the siege of the capital, were promoted by the children's movement in Pest to become a beach bath. It was the unbridled love of swimming and the healthy desire for sport with which the youth took possession of these water pools that had lost their purpose." [28] But it was much more common for

all signatory states must ensure for children." „History of the Convention." Gyermekjogiegyezmeny.hu. Last accessed August 13, 2023. https://gyermekjogiegyezmeny. hu/?page_id=166

26 Kinchin, "'Children Asking Questions'" 152-55.

27 Seymour, *Children of Europe*, 10. See also Rick Ostermann's 2013 film *Wolfskinder* (Orphans of War) about orphans fleeing from the territories of Eastern Prussia.

28 "Gyermekek strandolnak a budapesti víztározókban" [Children swimming in Budapest's reservoirs]" MAFIRT Krónika, 1 June 1945.National Film Institute Hungary, Last viewed 1 August 2023. https://filmhiradokonline.hu/watch.php?id=5958

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children to continue to play in the bombed-out buildings, searching for treasure and often explosives. So it became vital to create an alternative, to absorb the children's energy and provide safe conditions for their play activities. Communities cleated corridors and built playgrounds.[29] By the 1950s, so-called play streets had become very fashionable in many European countries.[30] However, these spaces were no match for ruins and construction sites, they offered in the sense of excitement and the activities that could be carried out there. It is therefore no coincidence that playing with ruins has been a source of inspiration for many contemporary educators and landscape architects, as well as for filmmakers (see *Debris rubble films*)[31].

Experiments From Rubble. Wartime and Postwar

„Ruin literally means collapse, but in fact ruins are more like remnants and reminders [...] Ruins make us think of the past that would have happened and the future that never did - they offer utopian dreams of escape from the irreversibility of time."[32]

29 „ A IX. kerület dolgozói gyermekjátszóteret építenek a Ferenc téren. [District IX workers are building a children's playground on Ferenc Square.] MAFIRT Krónika, 33 August 1946. National Film Institute of Hungary. Last viewed 23 August 2023. https://filmhiradokonline.hu/watch.php?id=6207

30 „History of play streets." Play Streets. https://londonplaystreets.org.uk/about/ history/ Last accessed 16 August 2023. See also Vincze. "Hatvan éve még játszóutcákkal".

31 The child playing in the ruins is a recurring visual element in the so-called „Trümmerfilm" (rubble film), a popular film genre, especially in East and West Germany, Italy and Eastern Europe. The central element of the Trümmerfilm is the thematisation of the bleak, miserable life of the destroyed cities, the possibilities of starting over, rebuilding, and maintaining continuity. The genre of the Trümmerfilm includes, for example, Wolfgang Staudte's Die Mörder sind unter uns (1946), Gerhard Lamprecht's Irgendwo in Berlin (1946), Kurt Mætzig's Ehe im Schatten (1947), Roberto Rossellini Germania anno zero (1948), or Géza Radványi's Valahol Európában (1948). It was Roy Kozlovsky's book ‚The Architectures of Childhood' that drew my attention to the examination of the Trümmerfilm genre in the context of children's play conditions in the post-war years. Kozlovsky, Roy. 2016.

32 Boym, *The Off-Modern*, 43.

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In 1943, during the German occupation of Copenhagen, Danish landscape architect Carl Theodor Sørensen created an unusual placemaking experiment called junk playground at the initiative of the Workers' Housing Association in the town of Emdrup.[33] Sørensen envisioned a place where children could shape the site of their play activities, and had space to build and destroy, learn about materials and techniques, and care for plants and animals. From 1925 onwards, he was involved in the design of green spaces in residential areas.[34] He rejected the idea of prefabricated play equipment and, inspired by the Danish educator Hans Dragehjelm, wanted to create playgrounds that would make up for the lack of nature and the countryside for urban children. The grassed areas of his playgrounds symbolised the meadow, the bushes and trees the forest, the pool the sea and the sandpit the seaside.[35] Sørensen, based on his observation that children are naturally attracted to exploring and playing in construction sites and rubbish dumps, wrote in his book *Parkipolitik i Sogn og Købstad* (Park Policy in Sogn and Købstad) in 1931: "large areas of rubbish and material playgrounds should be established where children can play with old cars, boxes and wood..."[36] This is when the idea of the junk playground was born. And in 1935 he already used the term *skrammellegeplads* (junk playground): "We should finally experiment with the so-called junk playground. I am thinking of an area, not too small, separated from its surroundings by dense vegetation, where all sorts of old junk could be collected for the amusement of the older children, and with which the children of the apartment houses could work, as the children of the country and the suburbs do. There would be branches and debris from trees and bushes, old cardboard boxes,

33 The junk playground is called skrammellegeplads in Danish. In other languages it is also referred to as a construction playground, adventure playground or Robinson playground (following Swiss examples), but these have slightly different meanings. I will go with the original term "junk playgrounds" when referring to the Danish playground, and I will refer to the English and general examples as adventure playgrounds. In the Hungarian context I will also use the term adventure playground, adapted from English.

34 Burkhalter, *The Playground Project*, 201.

35 ibid.

36 Sørensen, *Parkpolitik i Sogn og Købstad* cited in Allen, *Planning for Play,* 9.

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slats and planks, scrap cars, old tyres and much more all of which the lively boys would be happy to use for something. It would look terrible, of course."[37]

In 1943, the first playground was opened. As Roy Kozlovsky points out, contrary to later interpretations, but similar to Sørensen's earlier designs, the playground included simple landscape interventions.[38] The fenced plot was grassed, with a sandpit in the middle and beds of shrubs and saplings running along the inner half of the fence. An adult supervisor, called the *play leader,* worked in the playground.[39] Sørensen's original idea did not include a supervisor, but the housing association insisted on having one. The playground also met the parents' needs in that children could play and have intense experiences in a sheltered environment, rather than on the street. Parents feared that the German occupying soldiers the camp might interpret their children's street play as sabotage.[40]

The initial orderliness of Emdrup soon changed, however, with a succession of crazier and crazier structures: straw houses, towers, bunkers, wigwams, caves. All sorts of things were used: dismantled cars, car wheels, timber, ropes, bricks, concrete cylinders, earth, etc. In addition to building, the children played role-playing games, built fires, cooked, baked and at one time kept animals. War also filtered into the children's play with children often making their own special weapons and other military tools. The use of scrap materials for play was long associated with the shortage caused by war, but, as we have seen above, Sørensen's idea goes back much earlier. However, the fact that Sørensen's idea could work so well and that children could really become the builders of their own playground was largely due to John Bertelsen's pedagogical approach.

37 Cited in Burkhalter, *The Playground Project,* 201.

38 Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood,* 53.

39 Later, English professional terminology began to use the term play worker, which better describes the anti-authoritarian approach.

40 Nefertari, "When Play Is Criminalized"

Bertelsen, was active in the resistance and had a background in early childhood education, ran the playground from 1943 to 1947.[41] He was present as an "elder friend", providing the material resources and institutional background for the playground., negotiating with the authorities, but above all, by being loving and supportive, it created a safe environment for children to play. [42] Jonas – as the children called him – took a *laissez-faire* approach to his education, with the children in control of the play activities.[43] "It is always the children who must take the initiative... I cannot and will not teach children to do anything," Bertelsen confessed.[44] This was in line with Sørensen's vision: "Some supervision and guidance may be necessary, of course, but I am convinced that one must be extremely careful when interfering in children's lives and activities."[45] Bertelsen's pedagogical programme drew heavily on the radical, innovative, ethos of the Borup Højskole early childhood education course he had attended,[46] but as Kozlovsky points out, the use of anti-authoritarian methods could also be interpreted as a challenge to the fascist ideology of the occupiers.[47] Especially since we know that John Bertelsen, himself, was a member of the Danish Resistance.[48] This was a well-known fact around Emdrup, and contributed to the character of Jonah and the playground activities.

Indeed, many Danish educators feared that children would overidentify with resistance and that it would lead to a moral crisis and the legitimisation of

41 Frost, *A History of Children's Play*

42 Henriksen, *Skrammellegepladsen*

43 The term laissez-faire comes from the psychologist Kurt Lewin. Lewin distinguished between three types of leadership styles: authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire. Lewin investigated the practical functioning and effects of these styles of leadership through experiments with groups of children.

44 Quoted in Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood,* 56.

45 Quoted from Allen, *Planning for Play*. 55.

46 Henriksen, *Skrammellegepladsen*

47 Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood,* 56.

48 He also spent 3 months in prison for his partisan activities. See for example, Gadd,"The Junk Playground"

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violence and disobedience.[49] The playground, however, proved to be a good tool to create alternatives and to teach children democratic values, peaceful problem solving and responsibility. Bertelsen also related the activities in the playground to contemporary art discourse of the time, and spoke of it as anti-art that opposed bourgeois culture. He likened the constructions to spatial Dada constructions and coined the term *skrammologi* (junkology) to describe children's play - how it appropriates objects that the social consensus deems ugly or useless.[50] The housing association tried to persuade Bertelsen to take a more controlled approach to his work from the start, but he resisted this pressure until his resignation in 1947. In a contemporary diary entry, he writes: "The last thing I was involved in was the demolition of the 20-metre-high tower - a symbol of the children's sky-high dreams and creative joy."[51] Annie Mygind, in a 1961 memoir in the journal *Anarchy*, described Bertelsen as a "Christ-like figure" who "took on all the sins and conflicts of contemporary society through children."[52] What is certain is that his work has served as a model for generations of playground leaders even though Agnete Vesteregn, Bertelsen's ex-wife who took over the management of the playground, had a different approach and different methods. During her time, the spontaneous, ever-changing structures were replaced by buildings designed for the long term,[64] and the activities on the playground became more tied and structured. In the 1960s, the change of name from a playground to a playground for building was discussed, and Agnete Vesteregn gave an interview to *Politiken* in June 1964, in which she said: "During the war, Danish society as a whole was characterised by the recycling of discarded things. It was a virtue to be able to get something out of other people's rubbish. [...] That is no longer the case. Children don't have the same attitude to rubbish as they did back then. And the romantic notion that if they are left free to play, they will create something good

49 Graziano, "Recreation at Stake"

50 Papastergiou,"Junk Playgrounds"

51 Bertelsen, „Early Experience from Emdrup." 20.

52 Mygind, "New Town adventure"

and valuable anyway is just a fantasy."[53] The Emdrup playground still exists today but apart from its name little else preserves the original spirit of the place.

In the decades after the war, the idea of the playground became internationally known. The British adventure playground movement and the activist work of the British landscape architect Marjory Allen (also known as Lady Allen of Hurtwood) played a major role in this. Before I turn to the analysis of the British movement, it is important to describe the existing traditions in which it was embedded and other factors that may have contributed to its success.

In Britain, there was already a long tradition of the so-called *play centre* movement, which functioned as a supplement to school, providing children with an afternoon activity. Some adventure playgrounds later became extensions of these institutions.[54] On the other hand, already in the period between the two world wars, various organisations were actively addressing the issue of children's urban play. In 1925, the National Playing Fields Association (NFPA) was formed to promote the cause of urban spaces for play, in addition to protecting parks and green spaces. In 1938, the Street Playgrounds Act was passed, allowing local authorities to close streets for periods of time to allow them to function as playgrounds. [55]In 1944, legislation was also passed to allow the use of demolished land as playgrounds in preparation for the return of children to cities after the war and their need for play and public space.[56] In addition to the legal framework, the reformist educational tradition may have contributed to the success of adventure playgrounds. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, there have been a number of childcare institutions in the country with experimental pedagogical programmes, where the motif of building by children has been introduced. One such example was the King Alfred School in north London, where in the summer of 1920 children built a large indoor ‚pavilion' called

53 Quoted in Henriksen, *Skrammellegepladsen,* 64.

54 Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood,* 71.

55 *Play Streets*. „History of Play Streets." https://londonplaystreets.org.uk/about/ history/ Last viewed 16 August 2023.

56 Kozlovsky,"Adventure Playgrounds and Postwar Reconstruction", endnote 24.

Squirrel Hall, where they gave readings, lectures and scientific demonstrations.[57] The idea of a community-built playground can also be found in a 1939 film news report from the British Pathé archive, which shows a ‚playground built by children in the playground of a Bolton schoolyard'.[58] The site seen in the film footage is certainly the same as the Prestolee School, led by Edward Francis O'Neill, famous for his unorthodox methods.[59] The Prestolee is also the subject of another 1945 film newsreel, in which the same structures are recognisably seen.[60] In contrast to the construction of adventure playgrounds, these structures look like serious engineering. Although the constructions, do not appear to be the work of children, the commentary in both films makes the pedagogical intent clear. The importance of children's self-activity and interest, the community-building role of playing and working together are principles that have often been expressed in the context of adventure playgrounds.

Interestingly, the model of the adventure playground concept, including the demolished area and the practice of co-building, was established in London at the same time as Emdrup. The pedagogical experiment was led by Marie Paneth, an artist and educator from Vienna. Paneth was a student of Franz Cižek, a pioneer of child-centred art education, and was also in contact with several members of the Viennese psychoanalytic circle.[61] These influences strongly shaped her pedagogical approach. Paneth settled in London after his forced emigration during the war. Between 1942 and 1943 he worked at a play centre in Paddington, where children who were deemed too troubled to be evacuated were sent.[62] Paneth's first attempt to deliberately release the children's anger resulted in total

57 The school in a 1935 film newsreel. *Treetop School*, 1935. British Pathé Archives, FILM ID: 1396.18. https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/83341/ Last viewed 23 August 2023.

58 Kids Playground or Children's Playground, 1939. British Pathé Archives, FILM ID: 1268.20. Last viewed 23 August 2023. https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/80373/

59 Burke – Dudek, "Experiences of Learning"

60 Lessons Without Tears or Lessons Without Fears, 1945. British Pathé Archives, FILM ID: 1215.03. Last viewed 23 August 2023. https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/78286/

61 Smith,"Marie Paneth"

62 Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood*, 79.

aggression, the demolition of the building, the resignation of the staff and the closure of the centre. As a result, Paneth was forced to work with children on the streets. This necessity led to the use of a nearby demolished plot of land and the outsourcing of activities. According to Paneth, the reverse situation had a positive effect on the children. Paneth was seen as "guests", rather than as an imposed authority. Children felt the environment was their own, they made the rules themselves. A year later, in 1944, Paneth wrote about her experiences and experiences here in her highly acclaimed book *Branch Street*. In her writing, she made a connection between the wounded soul and the ruined site.[63] The press of the time focused mainly on the wildness and aggression of children, with little understanding of the potential of Paneth's programme.

To get the idea of an adventure playground across to the public with a positive message and thus gain support, Lady Allen's perseverance and ingenuity were needed. Marjory Allen, née Gill, graduated from the University College of Reading in 1920 with a degree in landscape gardening. For the next decade and a half she worked mainly as landscape architect, with considerable success. She was a founding member of the Institute of Landscape Architects and made her name designing the roof garden of the Selfridges premises and the BBC balcony garden. Her political views, her commitment to the oppressed in society and especially to children's issues were certainly influenced by her husband Clifford Allen's political career[64] and by her own experience as parent, which set her on the path to organising nurseries. Motivated in this direction, she joined the Nursery School Association of Great Britain and Ireland (NSA) in 1933 and later became its President between 1942 and 1951. The greatest turning point in her career came in 1939. The outbreak of the Second World War was accompanied by a personal tragedy: the death of her husband. Marjory's grief and inertia against the war soon turned into action. The Association of Kindergartens as a member of the board, she started a campaign for the provision of nursery

63 Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood*, 82.

64 Clifford Allen was a pacifist and member of the Independent Labour Party. He was president of the Anti-Slavery Society in the First World War and was imprisoned three times as a conscientious objector. This led to permanent ill health and his early death.

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care for displaced children. After the successful campaign, she was actively involved in the establishment and organisation of the kindergartens. The nursery centres consisted of cheap, prefabricated units that could be set up quickly, and the Association of Nursery Schools started courses for nursery teachers to train their staff.[65] Allen writes of this period. "As a staunch pacifist, I could not participate in the war effort, but I could help the children."[66] It is worth noting that the idea of reusing the rubble had already appeared. By 1942, with the increase in the number of centres and the supply and production difficulties caused by the war, it became more difficult to equip nurseries with utensils and toys. Allen suggested that they should be made from the ruins of demolished buildings. She recruited helpers from among conscientious objectors and volunteers from the fire brigade, who turned the remains of buildings, that were often well-known, into toys and nursery furniture. In total, some three million objects were made in these workshops.[67] Some of these were later exhibited and the exhibition was opened by the then Home Secretary Herbert Morrison who supported the project.[68] As well as being a huge problem to be solved immediately, the evacuations also revealed deeper problems in British society. The issue of homeless orphaned children came into the public eye.[69] In 1945, Allen published a pamphlet titled *Whose Children*, in which she criticised the bureaucratic, inhumane way in which foster homes were run, the unpreparedness and overwork of the staff, the chaotic administration and the fragmented childcare system. It has called for the expansion of the foster care network, smaller homes designed to accommodate fewer children, reform of foster care training, higher salaries, reliable and reliable childcare, and the creation of a new system of childcare for the establishment of a monitoring authority. The publication generated huge press coverage

65 Penny Wilson. s.a. "Children Are More Complicated than Kettles: The Life and Work of Lady Allen of Hurtwood." The Internationale. https://theinternationale.com/pennywilson/38-2/ Last downloaded: April 24, 2023.

66 Allen – Nicholson. (eds.) *Memoirs of an Uneducated Lady* cited in Holman, *Champions for Children*

67 Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood,* 58.

68 Holman, *Champions for Children*

69 Holman, *Champions for Children*, 31-42.

and contributed to the establishment of government committees on the issue, and, in the longer term, to the Children Act 1948.[70]

In the years that followed, Allen became a well-known figure as a children's rights activist, participating in numerous inter-ethnic projects, working for UNESCO and UNICEF, and from 1949, he was UNICEF's liaison officer for social welfare. In 1948, she co-founded the World Organisation for the Education of Young Children (OMEP), which aims to promote the welfare, rights and education of young children. In 1945, on a mission to Copenhagen, Allen visited Emdrup and she was impressed by what she saw.[71] On her return, she set out to promote the development of junk playgrounds of the UK with great vigour."Why Not Use Our Bomb Sites Like This?", published in *Picture Post* magazine, called for the conversion of bombed plots into playgrounds in the post-war reconstruction narrative.[72] The article also reported on the rise in juvenile crime and the high number of child victims of hit-and-run accidents. She saw the root of both problems in poorly designed public spaces, poor planning and boring playgrounds. She believed the playground could provide a solution to these problems and praised the community-building and democratic potential of playgrounds, but he also had to recognise that the word 'junk' had a negative connotation for a large proportion of society. She, therefore, coined the term *adventure playground* and linked it to ideas of creativity and construction. Thanks to Marjory's wide network of contacts, her commitment to the cause and her campaigning, the first adventure playgrounds were born in London in the following years. Between 1948 and 1960, a total of seventeen adventure playgrounds

70 The law made clear that local authorities have a duty to take into care any child who is left without a parent or who, for whatever reason, cannot be cared for by his or her parents, if it is in the child's best interests.

71 The date of the visit is not clear. Some sources give the date as 1945 and link the Emdrup visit to Allen's participation in the SEPEG conference in Zurich. The 1945 date is confirmed by Allen herself in a film about her work (Lady Allen. 1971. Central Office of Information. Last accessed 23 August 2023. https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-lady- allen-1971-online.) Kozlovsky, on the other hand, links the visit to Allen's UNICEF appointment. Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood,* 57.

72 Allen, "Why Not Use Our Bomb Sites Like This?"

were established in the UK.[73] While Allen's role is undeniable, especially in providing the initial impetus, there were many others working behind the scenes, with adventure playgrounds being run by a combination of local, state and international organisations.

While educators and sociologists of the time saw adventure playgrounds as an opportunity to learn participation, democracy and empathy through play, the contemporary press was fascinated by the image of children playing in the ruins, which "created a link between the narrative of the individual and the narrative of nation-building."[74] The use of sites of destruction and violence for play was both disturbing and cathartic for both the children and the adult gaze that watched them.[75] Making children at play visible and linking their constructive activity and the idea of reconstruction was present from the beginning of the movement. It is no coincidence that Kozlovsky gives the subtitle "Play on Display*"* to chapter of his book that I often refer to.

The organisers of adventure playgrounds also tried to capitalise on the media attention and the positive public mood. The Lollard Adventure Playground, or "Ruins" as it was known, was located on the site of a demolished school next to the Houses of Parliament.[76] While the campaign material in the press and adventure playgrounds of the time mostly focused on the motif of construction, in reality the gesture of demolition and the cycle of demolition and construction was an integral part of the activity in many places. Peter C. W. Gutkind, in his 1953 report on the Clydesdale Street Playground also made it clear that destruction was part of the programme.[77] Just as Vesteregn, Gutkind criticised

73 Norman, *An Architecture of Play*

74 Kozlovsky, "Adventure Playgrounds and Postwar Reconstruction" 181

75 Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood,* 77.

76 Lollard Adventure Playground." MSS 121/AP/3/5/14, MRC. Cited in Kozlovsky, 2008. note no. 23

77 Cited in Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood,* 65.

Allen's liberal approach to play that presupposed children's natural play instinct, creativity and self-directed functioning.[78] As in the case of Clydesdale and the Crawley Adventure Playground, destructive, wild, often war-like and sometimes really aggressive play by children was seen as a natural element of child development and trauma processing.[79] The personality and pedagogical skills of the playground leader played a key role in ensuring that play did not degenerate and that peaceful, democratic solutions prevailed.

The different frameworks of the adventure playground coexisted. The adventure playground has been referred to as a place of freedom, as a safe environment to protect children from street traffic and the negative influences of society, as a community centre, as a second home for children from difficult backgrounds, but also as a social model and as a place to learn democracy through play. In addition, different pedagogical and therapeutic considerations collided or were mixed. The thinking about children and their play activities, the ways of dealing with trauma and conflicts, the role of the playground leader were largely determined by local conditions, the social composition of the children's community, the person and pedagogical attitude of the playground leader, and the institution that created and maintained the playground. A very good example of the coexistence of different interpretations is the film *Adventure Playground,* commissioned by the National Playing Fields Association (NFPA), which in its fourteen minutes attempts to highlight the benefits of adventure playgrounds from almost every possible angle.[80] What is certain, however, is that adventure playgrounds represented a unified critique of traditional playgrounds and an approach in which the child, as a creative and independent being, was given a central role.

78 Allen, *Planning for Play*, 55.

79 In the film "A New Town Story" by Crawley Film Unit the Crawley Adventure Playground appears as of 1955. https://screenarchive.brighton.ac.uk/detail/318 Last downloaded: 23 August 2023

80 National Playing Fields Association, Stanley Schofield Production. "Adventure Playgrounds," Last accessed: 4 August 2023 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uwj1wh5k5PY

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Gaudiopolis as an experiment in democracy at the dawn of Sovietisation

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Gaudiopolis, the "city of joy", operated as a children's republic from 1945 in the PAX Children's Home, led by Gábor Sztehlo, until the nationalisation of the home on 7 January 1950.[81] Gaudiopolis had its own government, laws, court, money and press. From the educational point of view, it is still considered a significant experiment. Its history began in March 1944, when the Lutheran pastor Gábor Sztehlo started his work as a child rescuer on behalf of the Good Shepherd Missionary Subcommittee, the organization established by László Ravasz Protestant bishop. In the following year, Sztehlo, in cooperation with the Swiss Red Cross, ran forty-two orphanages, mainly for children of Jewish origin.[82] Many of the caretakers and other helpers were themselves rescued persons. Nearly two thousand people owe their lives to Gábor Sztehlo's rescue work.[83] The idea of continuing the coexistence, the children's republic, was already conceived in the basement where Szehlo and some of the rescued people stayed during the siege of Budapest. Among the sources of inspiration we can also refer to Norman Taurog's 1938 film *Boys Town* which told the story of the Boys Town Omaha orphanage (Nebraska, USA) founded by Roman Catholic priest Edward Joseph Flanagan. Indeed, many children's societies were influenced by that film. Father Flanagan's aim was to create a democratic community that prepared boys for active participation in society. Sztehlo refers to the SKID Republic and Makarenko's pedagogy, in addition to Boys' Town[84]. Yet, the Gaudiopolis' own pro-

81 Until May 1946 it was the children's home of the Jó Pásztor Alapítvány (Good Shepherd Foundation). This instiution was meant to provide protection for members of the Church from forced labout and deportation.

82 The list of organizations on the website of the Sztehlo Foundation: http://www. sztehloalapitvany.hu/jopasztor/jopasztor.html. Last accessed 23 August 2023.

83 For this, Gábor Sztehlo was awarded the title of Righteous among the Nations in 1972.

84 Sztehlo, *Háromszázhatvanöt*, 247, 257. The SKID (Skola-kommuna imenyi Dostoevskogo) was a Soviet children's republic that provided a home for orphans left behind by the civil war, often wandering in troops, in the 1920s. Stehlo was probably familiar with SKID from the novel Skid - The Republic of Tramps by Bjelich and Panteleyev, and in his memoirs he mentions the German translation. Sztehlo, *Háromszázhatvanöt*, 361.

gramme is above all the result of a dialogue with the children who lived there. It was the result of joint thinking and work.[85]

After several moves, Gábor Sztehlo, his family and the children who remained in his care moved in the spring of 1945 to the 30 hectares of land on Budakeszi Road, which the Weiss family had made available to the home.[86] The estate consisted of several villa buildings in varying states of repair, in which the children were later placed according to age and gender. The older boys lived in the 'Wolf's Nest', the fifth to sixth graders in the 'Fecskefészek' (Swallow's Nest') and the younger boys in the 'Zergelak' (Chamois's Home). The girls' house was called 'Leányvár' (Girl's Castle) and the nursery and kindergarten children's hostel was called 'Napsugár' (Sunshine).[87]

From the very beginning, the older children have been actively involved in the organisation of the home, in everyday tasks, cleaning and housework. Their participation was, of course, partly out of necessity, but, as Sztehlo's recollections show, he gave work and active participation an important role in his pedagogy. As a precursor, even during the period of hiding, older children were involved in running the homes, fetching water and food, caring for the children, and often entertaining the younger children. However, several recollections show that the organisation of life and the allocation of time and tasks was already highly structured. In addition, there was a great deal of pedagogical work in the homes, with carers developing a variety of forms of learning, play and exercise adapted to the situation to maintain mental and physical fitness.[88]

85 Sztehlo, *Háromszázhatvanöt,* 361, 418, 433.

86 We don't know exactly with whom Sztehlo negotiated the right to use the property, but it is clear from the documents that he was determined to keep it in the Weiss family until the last minute. The individual developments and construction works were also carried out with the family's knowledge. However, with nationalisation in 1950, the fate of both the institution and the property rights was doomed.

87 Guide to the exhibition "Valahol Európában – Gaudiopolis", HU OSA 206-2-96. Somewhere in Europe Gaudiopolis.Last accessed 23 August 2023 https://catalog.osaarchivum.org/catalog/jDeZlD3B

88 Sztehlo, *Háromszázhatvanöt,* 106, 177, 254.

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In the autumn of 1945, the Gaudiopolis Youth State was formed. A Prime Minister, ministers, magistrates (representatives of some houses), a press officer and police officers were elected. By February 1946, the Code of Laws, the first official record of the functioning of the republic. The Code defined the state's objectives, its relationship with the mother state, the organisation of the form of government, the organisation of elections, the legislature and the judiciary.[89] The Ministry of Economy supervised the treasury and expenditure. The state had its own bank and mint. The latter issued the currency of the republic, the Gapo dollar, whose value was adjusted to the pengő[90] and later, due to runaway inflation, to the current price of a tram ticket. Citizens were paid for their work in Gapo dollars, which they could convert into alms, cinema tickets or exhibition passes. In addition, in the spirit of freedom of the press, the children also edited a newspaper, the fifth grade class published *Our Newspaper* and the seventh grade class published *Our Own.* To put these in context, it is relavant that this phase of Gaudiopolis was contemporaneus with Hungary's experiment in democracy. Although many believe this experiment was doomed from the start, cultural life at Gaudiopolis contradicts this. Children exhibited a keen interest in political and cultural issues and had links to the cultural life of 'adult' Hungary through Sztehlo and the teachers who worked there, and in some cases, via their family backgrounds. One of the greatest strengths of the aforementioned exhibition "*Somewhere in Europe - Gaudiopolis",* held at the OSA Archives, was the presentation of these links and of contemporary Hungarian cultural life. Indeed, Sztehlo saw work as one of the most important bastions of education for democracy.

Sztehlo, who often used the term 'work school', saw the learning and appreciation of physical work through experience as an opportunity for social reconciliation.[91] At PAX, children could learn in different workshops, such as shoe-

89 The Code of Laws, the first official record of the functioning of the 'state', was completed by February 1946. See "A Gaudiopolis Ifjúsági Állam törvénykönyve" [The Code of Laws of Gaudiopolis Youth State] Sztehlo, *Háromszázhatvanöt,* 422–29.

90 The currency of Hungary between 1 January 1927 and 31 July 1946

91 Sztehlo, "Report" és Sztehlo, 2022. 415, 432, 443.

maker, carpenter, locksmith, tailor or lace maker.[92] In addition to the workshop, the children also took part in various renovation and construction works in the area. At first, the existing buildings were made habitable, but later, as the number of people grew, additional buildings became necessary.[93] The boys helped with the earthworks and levelling, working alongside a bricklayer, who laid the foundations and in the construction itself.[94] They also built a sports field on the site and started a subsistence farm. The farm was also home to animals: horses, poultry and rabbits.[95] Active togetherness was not limited to the PAX area; the 1946 holiday in Tihany also began with a joint construction project to make the bombed-out holiday home habitable. Here, beds, doors and windows were made with joint effort. The pursuit of self-sufficiency and collective construction were also symbolic acts. They were the physical manifestation of the building of a new democratic world - or at least a youth state. The extent to which the boys felt a sense of ownership of both the state and the activities associated with it, as well as the fate of the buildings themselves, is well illustrated by a letter from Ádám Horváth, the Minister of Culture of Gaudiopolis, in 1947.

”We also have a practical goal. There is a practical purpose. We want to build, that is to say, to construct the home. In our present situation we live in buildings that are not quite suitable for the distribution of our homes, and are far apart from each other. We would like to build a unified and suitable home according to our vision... in other homes such work might be done by force. We have built it from our own idea and we would like to build the whole home. And in this work we are not forcing any of us. Anyone who likes to work and who can work for the community will help. What is certain is that there will be no one

92 There is photographic evidence for these activities, see Mariann Reismann’s collection at the National Evangelical Museum of Hungary.

93 Sztehlo originally asked architect Gábor Preisich to design the complex. The plans were published in the February 1948 issue of New Architecture. Preisich’s plans were for pavilion-style buildings with a capacity of 20-50 people. Sztehlo was very pleased with the plans, which fitted in well with the educational concept. However, eventually necessity won out and cheaper huts were built. See A. B. ”A gyermekvárosról.” Új Építészet, 3. (1948) 2.

94 Sztehlo, *Háromszázhatvanöt,* 395, 398, 432, 441.

95 Sztehlo, *Háromszázhatvanöt*, 438.

who does not want to help. We want to increase our own home, our own property. Who is there, is there anyone who does not want to increase or beautify their own?"[96] It would be wrong, however, to present the "city of joy" or its mother state, the PAX, as an institution organised solely around work. Both Sztehlo and the carers and teachers' primary goal was to create a loving, safe environment, a family atmosphere that breaks down social barriers helping children to cope with trauma and, in the long term, to re-socialise into society.

The later recollections of the PAX children show that they were helped in this by some excellent teachers. These teachers often used experimental methods, transcending the traditional school framework: outdoor activities, often encouraging the students to organise exhibitions and theatre performances. These teachers' actions may have been driven primarily by personal pedagogical considerations, but it is more than likely that disciplinary, frontal methods would not have worked in the first place for children from endlessly mixed backgrounds and often over-worked. Most recall the lessons of Zoltán Rákosi, Balázs Vargha. The latter led art pedagogy sessions, while Rákosi led unusual literature lessons. The poetry of the boys left the confines of the institution as newspaper articles, radio reports were made with the children about their poems.[97]· The therapeutic benefits of the various activities were also relevant. The work of the institution was also supported by psychologist Margit Hrabovszkyné Révész, who carefully monitored the physical and mental development of each child, their social behaviour and made notes about them and tried to facilitate the work of the caregivers with practical advice.

Recollections tell that in addition to the wide range of activities provided by PAX that children were able to find opportunities for unsupervised play and mischief. Episodes appear about the memorable holiday in Tihany, swimming across the bay, stealing fruit and corn are also mentioned.[98] The most controversial aspect of unsupervided activtities was that the boys often played war games.

96 Merényi, *Sztehlo*, 86.

97 For example, Géza Képes interviewed children about their poems for the publication called Rádió Gyermekújság (Radio Children's Journal

98 Andrási–Laborczi,

It was easy to find abandoned military equipment, and, as we have seen above, it was a way of processing the events around them. The war game is mentioned quite often in Sztehlo's recollections.[99] He tells of a case where the children found abandoned SS badges, armbands, shoulder straps and other medals in a neighbouring garden and used them to decorate themselves armed and ready to fight. "Soldiering sometimes got very out of hand, and persecution of Jews, beating and beating Russian soldiers, etc., was the order of the day. I myself did not know much about the whole 'war game'. However, people living in the surrounding residential houses saw it. There was also a very sensitive schoolteacher who also saw great danger in this game."[100] This incident prompted Szerén Stern, who otherwise supported Gaudiopolis, to reprimand Sztehlo for the incident at the social services department of the municipality of Budapest. Sztehlo writes: "What could be done against a game, if not to set up another game against it, so that the children's playfulness and joy would not be drowned in some other bitterness, which might have driven them to worse paths? I entrusted the matter to the management of Gaudiopolis, in addition to informing the mothers and teachers of the seriousness of the situation. Gaudiopolis took care of it."[101] This resolution of the case is a testament to Stehlo's great pedagogical sense. Even in such a dangerous situation, which threatened the very existence of the institution, he did not act in an authoritarian manner. Trusting and giving responsibility to the child, true to the pedagogical programme, he let the State of Gaudiopolis find a solution to the problem itself.

Gaudiopolis' programme, which may have often seemed immature or contingent, fitted in well with the hopeful, democratic, transnational, pacifist spirit that pervaded the period. As we have seen, a number of children's institutions, independently of each other, were established in Europe in the post-war years, democratically organised on similar principles to Gaudiopolis. Eventually, these insitutions gathered for establish cooperation among themselves. The main event

99 Sztehlo, *Háromszázhatvanöt*, 313, 362–63, 419–20.

100 Sztehlo, *Háromszázhatvanöt*, , 419–20.

101 Sztehlo*, Háromszázhatvanöt,* 419–20.

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of this process was the conference of the directors of children's villages that gathered in 1948 in the Pestalozzi Children's Village in Trogen, Switzerland. It was for this occassion that Sztehlo summarised the activities of PAX and the homes it ran in a report.[102] From Hungary, the director of the Children's Village of Hajdúhadháza, Zsigmond Ádám was also present at the meeting. The managers of the various homes shared their experiences, reported on the difficulties of their work and also dealt seriously with the physical and mental state of the children in their care and the issue of trauma. Furthermore, in order to bring together a diverse range of organisations under a common umbrella, it was decided to use the term children *communities* and the International Federation of Foster Care Homes (FICE).[103]

Nationalisation was the main reason for the demise of Gaudiopolis. Sztehlo wrote of nationalisation: "History had set the course for a totalitarian form of government in this eastern part of Europe. In this totalitarian form of state, which uses the whole person, annexationism is an institution representing an idea in which the individual and the individual's capacity for initiative are important."[104] At the same time, it is important to add that the end of Gaudiopolis also had to do with Sztehlo's conviction to work on the basis of need, regardless of religion and origin to provide a home for children. Because of this stance, he could not reach an agreement with his own church. This became a crucial issue when donations from foreign aid organisations and private donations dwindled and Hungary did not benefit from the European Recovery Programme (ERP).

Moreover, by the mid-1950s the movement of children's republics seemed to be fading out at the internationa level, too. There was a strong contemporary criticism of the methodology of children's communities, that they were being brought up in a kind of idyllic shell that did not prepare them for reality. As a result, there was a kind of 'dilution' of the International Federation of Foster

102 Sztehlo, "Report"

103 Provisional summary report (of the ten meetings)." Meeting of Directors of Children's Villages, Trogen, Switzerland, 1948. UNESCO Digital Library. ED/CONF.1/SR.1-10. Utolsó megtekintés: 2023. augusztus 23. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ ark:/48223/pf0000144261.locale=en. See also Gardet, Le modèle idéalisé.

104 Sztehlo, *Háromszázhatvanöt*, 450.

Care (FICE). The initial enthusiasm had waned and real pedagogical considerations had often become a sham.[105] That said, as children's republics continue to survive, there are still a number of institutions today which, although they operate with a more regulated, more strongly framed programme, their primary aim is to provide a family environment and small community education.[106]

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Conclusion

In the previous pages, I described some of the space experiments, all of which were born out of the great world conflagration, the *Zero Hour.* Initiatives that looked at ruins, disorganization, and disrupted spatial and social structures as possibilities. An opportunity to create new spaces and societies organised along different lines - in which the young generation was seen as playing a major role. The examples presented were part of a longer series of efforts that believed in the possibility of democratic functioning based on extensive local communities and self-government, and saw it as a way of reforming the political system or urban planning. Marjory Allen saw potential in the use of 'residual' or 'in-between' sites as a counterpoint to large-scale reconstruction programmes. Local thinking was strongly inspired by the way post-war societies energy and drive to build a more humane and democratic future, and which in many cases encouraged individuals to get involved. The same is true of Gaudiopolis, which, in addition to fitting into the international pacifist, transnationalist vision of rejecting the old order and building a new society, also shares many other similarities with the idea of adventure playgrounds. As in the case of adventure playgrounds, the need to build and create spaces together, to familiarise children with materials and tools, the importance of participation and cooperation, the reduction of juvenile delinquency and promiscuity through physical activity and the interest of children, the creation of a safe, homely environment and the promotion of democratic values,

105 Gardet, "Le modèle idéalisé"

106 See for example, SOS Children's Villages

and the idea of self-definition in the face of authoritarianism and fascist ideology were all fundamental. However, it is important to note the crucial difference that while adventure playgrounds focused on daytime childcare and children's leisure time - their audience was basically children who had families and places to go home to - the homes that functioned as children's republics covered all aspects of children's lives - above all, they provided a home. However, the merging of Gaudiopolis with international examples of experimental children's spaces provides an interpretive framework for bringing to the fore often underestimated segments of youth work where extracurricular education outside the classroom, (free) play and experimental practices of co-creation of space play an important role. On the other hand, it also highlights, by means of visible parallels, the fact that in the first years after the war it was still largely superfluous and misleading to think in terms of a bipolar world order. The visions of the future generation were much more permeated by the unified, transnational idea of creating a better society, of humanist aspirations.

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Soldier in World War I preparing his meal, 1915. Source: Fortepan/Virág Bogyó, Photo no. 196111.

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The Diplomat and the Expert: British Officials in Hungary in 1945.
The Contexts for Reading the Papers of a British Diplomat in Hungary

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Abstract

The study presents and contextualizes the diplomatic reports of Alvary Fredrick Gascoigne, the head of British Political Mission in Hungary from 1945 until 1946 and the lecture of Carlile Aylmer Macartney given in March 1946 at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House, London) based on his experiences of his trip to Hungary in February 1946. With the use of new and updated research, the aim of the paper is to present the official and semi-official British perceptions, experiences and activities in Hungary in 1945. Although they had correct information on Hungarian events, but had no real impact on these. Their official and semi-official standpoints and information were important contributions to what Britons might have known about Hungary and might have had a pivotal role in the existence of the pro-British Hungarian elite during and soon after the WWII.

Keywords

Alvary Frederick Gascoigne, Carlile Aylmer Macartney, British strategy and diplomacy, Hungary in 1945, British diplomatic reports

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The Diplomat and the Expert: British Officials in Hungary in 1945

The Contexts for Reading the Papers of a British Diplomat in Hungary

The main features of Great Britain's policy towards Eastern Europe, including Hungary and Hungarian foreign policy during and after the Second World War are well known in the Hungarian literature. We also have a growing knowledge of the various aspects of British − Hungarian foreign relations during the Second World War.[1] However, the opinion of the two persons acting as diplomats in the immediate post-war period whose position and ideas interest me in this paper, is still of interest as they shed light on the role and perspective of experts in British foreign policy at the time, show how contemporaries might have perceived Soviet presence and the shrinking political space in Hungary, as well as on the type of interventions that diplomats attempted in 1945 and 1946.

Alvary Frederick Gascoigne (1893-1970) represented the official standpoint of the United Kingdom at the end of the war. He was an experienced diplomat who communicated his sharp observations in his reports on Hungarian home policy, the suffering of the people, the role of the Soviets, and the key persons in the politics of Hungary of the time. His reports were partly published by Éva-Haraszti Taylor. Sir Alvary Frederick Gascoigne was a Yorkshire landowner,

1 Fürj, Orsolya 2017

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the prototype of the well- to-do country gentleman, well educated (Eton) and open-minded, but not part of the British intellectual elite. After his military service in the First World War, he entered the Foreign Office and by 1931 he was a foreign affairs adviser to the Foreign Office. Gascoigne's diplomatic activities in Hungary as head of the British Legation in Budapest in 1936-38. During the Second World War he was military consul in the Tangier zone in North Africa. From the spring of 1945 to the spring of 1946, he was the Chargé d'Affaires of the British Political Mission in Debrecen and later in Budapest. He completed his diplomatic career as British Ambassador in Tokyo (1946-1951) and, then, in Moscow (1951-1953). His meetings with Lipót Baranyai and István Bethlen's wife gave the impression that Gascoigne was sympathetic to the Horthy regime. Many in the Foreign Office shared this view, and may have provided some basis for this.

The main critic of Gascoigne was Professor Macartney, who said that the British diplomat in Budapest took every opportunity to emphasize London's disinterest and inertia in Hungarian affairs[2] According to Macartney, Gascoigne had talked the Hungarians out of pursuing an anti-Soviet policy, but they could not have been pro-British either, so they could not have expected much help from the British diplomat. Carlile Aylmer Macartney was a distinguished historian (see his main work: *October 15. A History of Modern Hungary 1929-1945.* Edinburgh: 1956-57.) and diplomat who developed an expertise on the Horthy-regime. In Hungary, he earned his popularity thanks to his talks on BBC radio told in Hungarian during the war (until August of 1943). Although he generally supported the Horthy-regime, he also criticized it because of the the undemocratic electoral system, the lack of land reform and for the close ties to Germany during the interwar and WWII period.[3] In 1945−1946, he was a member of the Foreign

2 „He loses no opportunity ...of creating the simultaneous impression that we do not want to have any influence in Hungary, and could not have if we would." Minute by A. Macartney to Mr Addis, Southern Department, FO. 29 August, 1945. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" Introduction. xviii.

3 Macartney 1956. Vol I. 46. 67-68.

Office Research Department-F.O.R.D.)In his lecture of March 1946 given at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House, London), he described the heavy losses (looting, starvation, rape, forced labour, and forced migration etc.), and the possibilities and chances of post-WWII Hungary. Most of his forecasts proved to hold.[4]

The Foreign Office records of Sir Alvary Frederick Gascoigne (The National Archive- TNA, Foreign Office - FO), a British diplomat, sent from Hungary to the Foreign Office contain envoy reports, which were published in English in 2005.[5] Gascoigne sent his first telegram[6] to the Foreign Office from Debrecen on 7 March 1945, and his last one on 16 May 1946 from Budapest. The British diplomat was thus a witness to the Soviet occupation of the country, followed the events of Hungarian domestic politics, met the leading politicians of the time, and formed an opinion on the country's situation, problems and opportunities.

Arguably, the British did not have goals to achieve with respect to Hungary. Douglas F. Howard, the head of the Foreign Office's Central Europe Division, made this clear in a memorandum in the spring of 1945: *'I do not see how we can prevent the Russians from acting as they see fit in Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary, and to some extent in Yugoslavia, but the sooner we recognize the real situation and thus reduce the suspicion which poisons Anglo-Soviet relations, the better.*"[7] On the one hand, in 1945 London was not in the position to extend its influence and further its interests in Eastern Europe (including Hungary).

4 The Hungarian translation of his lecture (*Conditions in Hungary*. March, 18, 1946. Library of The Royal Iinstitute of International Affairs, 8/1209. p. 10.) was published by Barta, Róbert. *A magyarság vonzásában. Válogatás Carlile Aylmer Macartney írásaiból és beszédeiből.* Debrecen: 2021. 98-106.

5 Haraszti-Taylor, *,Dear Joe."* On the work and publications of Éva H. Haraszti as a historian, see: *Klió*, (12. évf. 2003/1.) 173─175.

6 The diplomatic report, addressed to Anthony Eden, gave a detailed account of the composition and activities of the Provisional National Assembly and the Provisional National Government, the points of the ceasefire and Gascoigne briefly described the main political forces and their leaders.

7 The National Archive (TNA) FO 371/48192 no. (30 April 1945)

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First and foremost, it lost its status as a great European power, a fact made clear by its Soviet and American allies in Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam. Apart from the Battle of Britain in the air, the island nation as a whole did not perform very well on the fronts of the World War II and, without American help, it would probably not have held out. Since British and American troops never reached Hungary's western borders, the secret 1943 British-Hungarian preliminary armistice agreement[8] could not come into force. Instead, the verbal agreement of the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in October 1943 came into force, whereby the armies of the Allied Powers would essentially determine the fate of the peoples who live in the countries they occupy.

One the other hand, the British disinterest can be partly explained by their lack of information. When, during the Potsdam meeting, Stalin asked Churchill a question about London's intentions towards Hungary, the British statesman simply could not answer. Churchill's unpreparedness in this respect surprised even the members of his own delegation [9] At this point, it is worth considering the role of experts and expertise in wartime and post-war British foreign policy. The Foreign Research and Press Service (FRPS), headed by the historian Arnold Toynbee, had been operating alongside the Foreign Office since 1942, providing research and studies to assist British foreign policy-making.[10] This group of experts developed ideas for the reorganization of the Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe during and after the war. At that time London was still active in the region, but in different ways in different countries. Romania, in June 1940, by denouncing British guarantees, provoked a British position and condemnation: *'The belonging of Romania and Bulgaria is not a factor of importance either for Europe or for Great Britain, whereas Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovakia belong to Europe, both historically and geographically; these countries*

8 For more on the armistice negotiations, see: Juhász, *Magyar-brit titkos tárgyalások*

9 Lukacs, *A párviadal*. 362. cited by Bán D., András: "A brit külpolitika" 146.

10 A part of the FRPS documents was published in 1996 by. Bán D András. A number of institutions and organizations were responsible for the British political warfare in the region during the war. For details, see: Joó, *Szervezetek, háborús célok, memorandumok*.

are therefore essential elements of European security and balance.' [11] After the war, and because of the presence of Soviet forces in Hungary, London's influence could only be officially exercised through the British member of the Allied Control

According to his colleagues Gascoigne's personality perfectly suited to represent a neutral, contemplative diplomatic position.

Gascoigne's Papers

Gascogignes's papers contain three sets of documents that are of particular interest for us. In addition to the diplomatic cables (86 in total) relating to Alvary Frederick Gascoigne's stay in Hungary, we also find the transcript of Professor Macartney's lecture[12], and Gascoigne's report that he sent from Moscow to Anthony Eden, in which the ambassador discussed the Soviet foreign policy towards Asia.

The diplomatic cables were written according to the rules of foreign protocol, so were mostly secret (sometimes ciphered) and were also sent to other British missions.[13] Diplomatic reports were usually addressed to foreign ministers (Anthony Eden, Ernest Bevin) or senior Foreign Office officials (Orme Sargent,-

11 Cited by Bán, "A brit külpolitika" 141.

12 Carlile Aylmer Macartney (1895-1978), historian and foreign policy adviser to the Foriegn Office(FO), was considered an expert on the Hungarian question from 1937. In his work *Hungary and Her Successors. The History of Trianon and Its Consequences 1919—1937*. considered an ethnic-based and limited Hungarian border revision to be partly justified and supportable. His book on the Horthy regime, published in 1956-57 (*October Fifteenth. A History of Modern Hungary 1929-1945.* Vols. 1-2.) is a balanced and objective overview, and in some respects can still be used as a basic work of the history of the period. On Macartney's contemporary writings on Hungary, see: Beretzky, *Scotus Viator és Macartney Elemér*.

13 Gascoigne also sent his reports to the Foreign Office, usually to the British missions in Moscow Belgrade, Bucharest, Sofia and Caserta (Italy).

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[14]Douglas F. Howard), but Gascoigne also sent nine reports directly to Churchill (between 25 June and 31 July 1945). Officials in the relevant Foreign Office offices (Northern Department, Research Department) added so called minutes to some of the telegrams that the the British envoy in Budapest sent it. These comments sometimes differed from Gascoigne's views.

Clearly, Gascoigne did not believe that a strong British position on Hungarian affairs was reasonable, and despite their occasional differences, this was the view of his superiors, too. His main role was providing credible reports on domestic political events, as well as liaising and meeting regularly with party leaders, church and public dignitaries in Hungary. Perhaps because of his character and liberal education, he preferred to keep an equal distance from the leaders of the various political parties, stressing that he was happy to meet any politician, including Mátyás Rákosi.[15] Despite this observer position, Gascoigne had strong opinions on the most important domestic policy issues of the period, and he communicated these to London on several occasions. He established a wide network of political contacts in Hungary in a short period of time. He had meetings with Béla Zsedényi, President of the Provisional National Assembly, Prime Minister Béla Dálnoki Miklós, Count Géza Teleki, Archbishop of Kalocsa József Grősz, Foreign Minister János Gyöngyösi, as well as with the leaders of political parties on several occasions.

Gascoigne's analysis and diplomatic reports shed light on the actors and events of the period in a way that nuances and expands our knowledge of the period. The telegrams sent to Churchill reflect what the contemporaries believed to be key events. Some of these are not so evident today. The cables provide information on elections, the political police, anti-semitism, land reform, the gen-

14 Sir Orme Sargent was then Under-Secretary of State for Central and Eastern Europe at the Foreign Office (FO). From 1946 he was Secretary of State for Administration and Permanent Under-Secretary of State to the Foreign Secretary.

15 „M. Szakasits...ask me whether I would receive M. Rakosi /Mattias/, the Communist leader. I said that if M. Rakosi wished to see me, I should of course be delighted to welcome him here, as I would the leaders of any of the Hungarian political parties. I thought it well, however, to stress that the initiative must be theirs and that my attitude towards the five existing political parties was merely thatof an „interested observer". Gascoigne to Bevin 4 August, 1945. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" 151─154.

eral economic situation, prisoners of war and the deportation of the Hungarian citizens as well as on important events of the day.

He was skeptical about the room available for the political parties to actually influence outcomes. In a letter to his close colleague and friend Orme Sargent, Gascoigne gave a relatively long assessment of his stay in Debrecen, the political situation, the role of the Russians and a fairly accurate view of the near future: "*The left-wing forces in the National Assembly, the Communists, the Social Democrats and the Peasants, are presumably seeking to seize power and form a left-wing coalition government, but it is possible that they will wait until the present government has sunk into the mire of land reform before they do so... Of course, behind the scenes there are the Russians. Everything else is nothing but a puppet, controlled by the Russians, but it is unlikely that they would allow a radically left-wing government at this stage. That would be unacceptable to Moscow at the moment for a number of reasons*."[16] Moreover, Gascoigne was explicit about his disappointment about the visual message the Soviets conveyed as, in his view, these resembled that of Fascist and Nazi regimes. Since the British Political Mission moved from Debrecen to Budapest at the end of April 1945, he observed the May Day parade in the old-new capital. He likened the popular festivities of the Spanish Falangists and the Nazis, and was shocked to note that the Soviet authorities had ordered everyone to take to the streets. He reported that those who stayed at home were considered Nazis. According to the telegram he sent, the people were mainly marching with red flags and communist symbols, but were still broken and tired from the siege.[17] Gascoigne proved to have an eye for the contradiction of symbolic politics in the case of the state reburial of Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, too. As he reported in late May, the day after the funeral: "Bajcsy-Zsilinszky is interesting from this point of view; he was not a communist, he was an anti- communist, and the current government should know that. If he had not been executed, he would hardly be an acceptable figure at present." [18]

16 Gascoigne to Sargent, 10 April 1945. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" 71.

17 Gascoigne to Eden, 2 May 1945. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" 81–82.

18 Minutes of Macauley 14/6/45. Gascoigne to Eden, 28 May 1945. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear

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In the spring of 1945, Gascoigne was mainly concerned with the land reform issue. He reported in detail to London on Hungarian land ownership before and after the land reform. However, he considered the introduction of the Land Law by decree to be a defeat for representative democracy and criticised its practical implementation. He found no direct evidence that such a rapid introduction of land reform by decree was forced by the Allied Control Committee (ACC or SZEB in Hungarian) headed by the Soviet Marshal Voroshilov. His view reminds us that the decree appeared while the war was still going on and was still a prime concern for contemporaries. On 21 March 1945, he wrote that "As regards the attitude of Russians towards the implementation in Hungary of Land Reform, it looks now, rather suprisingly, as if this measure may have been rushed through by order of Marshall Voroshilov although I have no confirmation of this. If true, this seems to be contrary to Russia's usual policy in the liberated countries, i.e. to encourage the Governments concerned to do all that is possible to assist the Russian war effort. The introduction of Land Reform at this critical juncture of Hungary's history, will not, (at any rate in the near future), increase Hungary's war potential."[19] In fact, despite the large-scale propaganda activities of the government, only a fraction of the Hungarian soldiers fighting the Soviets in the Transdanubian region laid down their arms and returned home upon the introduction of land reform.

In the light of recent publications on the post-War violence in Hungary, Gascoigne's point about the background to anti-Semitism is noteworthy.[20] During his conversation with Count Géza Teleki, the Hungarian politician discussed the rise of anti-Semitism, which he saw as a 'spontaneous' reaction against the Jews who had sided with the new regime and had joined the political police in large numbers. Gascoigne also discussed this new 'Jewish question' with Miklós Béla Dálnoki, naively suggesting that the religious leaders of Jewry could restrain their own radicals.

Joe" 107.

19 Gascoigne to Howard, 21 March 1945. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" 26–27.

20 Apor

Around the summer of 1945, Gascoigne became more active in influencing opinions in centres of power outside Hungary. The excesses of the political police and the marginalization of the churches were a recurring theme in Gascoigne's discussions. On 28 May 1945, the Archbishop of Kalocsa told the British diplomat that he was under constant surveillance and could be arrested at any time for their meeting. At this instance, Gascoigne tried to intervene: he was in the role of a mediator between Archbishop József Grősz of Kalocsa and the Vatican. The report and assessment of their meeting on 28 July 1945 were sent to the Holy See.[21]

Shortly thereafter, he tried to assess and inform about Rákosi's position, communication and character in the context of the elections to be held.[22] In these cables, the British diplomat repeatedly said that he did not see much difference between the leaders of the Hungarian Social Democrats and the Communists. The British diplomat had already described Rákosi as a strong man in Moscow and the future leader of the country, based on his abilities.[23] According to Gascoigne, Rákosi had tried to reassure and lecture the British, stressing that there was nothing wrong with Hungarian democracy, that it was the weak and incompetent Hungarian government that was to blame for all the problems. According to the communist leader, there was no terror in the country, only agricultural products had to be brought to the cities, and therefore the black market had to be eliminated by hard means. The political police, in his opinion, are amateurish and make mistake after mistake, because they are not arrest the real reactionaries. According to Rákosi, there were more than a hundred "reactionary organisa-

21 The Archbishop of Kalocsa informed the Vatican about the ecclesiastical aspects of the land reform, the internal political situation, the activities of the Russians, etc. Gascoigne to Churchill, 23 July 1945with Minutes. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" 138.

22 After the British Conservative's defeat in the summer and Labour's election victory, Gascoigne sent a total of 29 diplomatic messages to Ernest Bevin, the new Labour Foreign Secretary.

23 „It seems that Mátyás Rákosi will play an important role in Hungarian political life and that the Kremlin's power and influence will be exercised through his personality." Gascoigne to Eden, 7 March 1945. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" 1─5

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tions" in the country and they needed to be combatted much more effectively. He promised the British diplomat free and democratic elections within two months, in which he said the three major parties would achieve almost equal results. Rákosi also stated that there was no Soviet-style regime on the agenda, so there would be a coalition government for at least another five years until the reconstruction of the country was completed.[24] The importance of the meeting was indicated by the fact that Gascoigne sent an unusually long telegram of about three pages to London, which Orme Sargent sent with comments to Prague and Washington, in addition to the usual destinations (Belgrade, Bucharest, Sofia, Caserta, Moscow). Gascoigne considered the Social Democrat Árpád Szakasits to have communist sentiments.[25]

Indeed, British diplomacy was active in forming a negative opinion about a possible joint list for the national elections that Voroshilov proposed as a response to the Communists' defeat at the local election of 7 October 1945. Gascoigne reported that the idea of a coalition government had been discussed between the parties before the elections, but its implementation was postponed.[26] Politicians of the Smallholders' Party (mainly Zoltán Tildy and Ferenc Nagy) made several visits to the British diplomatic mission with the undisguised aim of pressuring London to take more active action against the Soviets. Although during the meetings the Hungarian politicians strongly emphasized the expected success of the Smallholders at the elections, Gascoigne was more cautious in his assessment.[27]

24 Gascoigne to Bevin, 22 August 1945. In Haraszti-Taylor, Eva. "Dear Joe" 178─181.

25 The British diplomat was referring to the Szakasits speech of 18 August 1945 at the 34th Congress of the Social Democratic Party, which, in his opinion, was hardly different from that of Mátyás Rákosi, who spoke at the same congress. Gascoigne to Bevin, 21 August 1945. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" 172─173.

26 „It was further suggested that the coalition government which it had been decided by the party leaders would in any case be formed as a result of the General Elections, should be made up before theelections were held. After some ten days of crises...it was decided that a new coalition government should be formed after the elections, and not before them." Gascoigne to Bevin, 5 November 1945. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" 220.

27 Gascoigne to W. G. Hayter, 5 November 1945 In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" 216.

After such events, the British were pleasantly surprised by the smooth conduct of the election, and especially by the fact that the Soviet army remained in barracks during it, and thus the military presence was hardly noticeable. Béla Zsedényi was the first who give a detailed assessment of the election results to the British. He said that although the election was more of a referendum where the vast majority of citizens voted against Communism, the leadership of the Smallholders' Party (especially Zoltán Tildy) was in a dilemma since the serious economic situation meant that the government led by the Smallholders would have to make too many concessions to the Communists. Zsedényi believed that the best way out was a policy of continuous concessions but also that this could break up the Smallholders Party in the short term and sooner or later lead to the Rákosi party coming to power. Gascoigne agreed with this to a large extent. He was critical of the choice that the Smallholders wanted to pass on the responsibility for serious decisions of a predominantly economic nature through coalition government[28] Gascoigne, in accordance with his task, analyzed the election results and the composition of the new government in two more detailed telegrams. In addition to providing facts and figures, he stressed that no party was satisfied with the results. The Communists were likely to try to compensate for their electoral defeat by dynamic parliamentary and government work and by winning key positions in the executive power.

During the very last days of his stay in Hungary, Gascoigne met none other than Count Mihály Károlyi and sent a cable about it. This last experience must have been a dramatic and sad event for Gascoigne, echoing his own perspective. The diplomat reported that Károlyi was disillusioned and exasperated, believing that under the present circumstances he saw little chance for the consolidation of a Western-style democracy and political culture: "Count Karolyi told me that he was suffering from great sorrow, disillusion and disgust; sorrow because of the ruins of a once beautiful capital, disillusion because of the weakness which was obviously being displayed by those in power towards the Communists, disgust because of the wholesale immorality and graft which permeated all strata of the

28 Gascoigne to Bevin, 10 November 1945. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" 225–229.

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population, both official and otherwise...Count Karolyi said that he would not be staying in Hungary for very long. He did not desire to have anything to do with the internal politics of the country." [29] Although formally Mihály Károlyi received a warm welcome, the former head of state quickly came to the conclusion that he had no place in Hungarian domestic politics essentially dominated by the Soviets and the Rákosi group.

The documents of Sir Alvary Frederick Gascoigne's activities in Hungary add essential diplomatic sources to our knowledge of Hungarian history in and soon after of 1945. This will not only help specialists in the field, but will also give the wider readership a glimpse into the exciting world of diplomatic history. Gascoigne sought to present a decidedly objective picture of the domestic political events of the period, but it was also clear that he was more sympathetic to the bourgeois parties and their representatives and to the Catholic clergy. He had a good sense of the backlashes of the land reform, the Soviet intentions behind the internal political struggles and was apt in his characterization of Hungarian politicians. He represented Great Britain at a time when many still believed in the future of Hungarian democracy. But Gascoigne was no longer backed by the British Empire. After 1945, London was unable to enforce its old great power policy, either in Eastern Europe or elsewhere. Without real means and power, the centuries-old values of British political culture and the ideals of Western democracies were extremely difficult to represent in a country where the Soviet Red Army was in power. Britain's influence on the fate of Hungarians in and after 1945 was and was only possible with extremely limited means and only with a degree of activity commensurate with its own [30]

29 Gascoigne to Bevin, 16 May1946. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" 236─238.

30 "British influence in Hungary has no chance against that of the Soviets... It is obvious that Hungary will for many years be a Soviet annexed state, where Communist influence will prevail." Gascoigne to Churchill, 23 July 1945. Minutes of J. M. Addis. In Haraszti-Taylor, "Dear Joe" 138.

Carlile Aylmer Macartney's account of his visit to Hungary in February 1946

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What about the contemporary British experts? Did they believe the same? Carlile Aylmer Macartney, as a pro Hungarian lobbyist, did much to make British public opinion more nuanced and less hostile to the Horthy regime. This was mainly achieved through his Foreign Office activities and his wartime BBC radio speeches in Hungarian. In 1944-45, he was still confident that a left-wing but essentially Western-style regime could be established in Hungary. Historical strove for objectivity, professionalism and accuracy in his scientific works, while in his other publicistic work (articles, speeches) his sympathy for Hungarians was more evident. However, his "sympathy" for the Horthy regime necessarily requires a more nuanced approach, since the Oxford historian-diplomat constantly called to account the system's democratic deficits, i.e. the lack of land distribution, constitutionalism, universal, equal and secret suffrage, and the stubborn persistence of feudal social and public relations. The Professor of History at All Souls College maintained his links with Hungary after 1945, but these were more professional than political, and accordingly he never openly attacked the post-war Soviet-style Hungarian regime.[31]

The best-known British expert on Hungary in the interwar period, the historian-diplomat Carlile Aylmer Macartney, in addition to his theoretical work, gained extensive practical knowledge during his many trips to Hungary, broadened his knowledge of Hungarian language, and constantly cultivated and expanded his Hungarian contacts, which he used later on. Of his visits to Hungary, sponsored by the League of Nations, the British Foreign Office and the British Council, or organised by Hungarian institutions/organizations. The one at the end of January 1946 is particularly interesting, because in his lecture based on this visit he presented a completely new Hungary, discussing the consequences

31 On C. A. Macartney's post 1945 Hungarian contacts, see: Barta, *A magyarság vonzásában.* 201-205. Ránki,, *Találkozásaim Macartney Elemérrel*. Czigány, *Trianon angol kritikusa*.

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of the Soviet occupation and the short and longer-term trends in domestic politics. I am publishing the full English transcript[32] of his lecture and the subsequent debate and exchange of views, on one hand because the questions and comments reveal what some of the British political and intellectual elite of the time were interested in relation to Hungary, and on the other, they give us a taste of the British debate culture of the period.

C. A. Macartney: Conditions in Hungary[33]

Sir Harry Haig[34] introduced Mr Macartney.

Mr Macartney said that he had only been in Hungary for three or four weeks, after an absence of some six years.[35] He had, in consequences, a great deal of somewhat heterogeneous information which he would find difficult to convey in the time available. He would divide his talk into four parts:

The Russian occupation

The Economic Situation

The Immediate Political Situation

The Long-term Political Situation

32 For Hungarian translation, see: Barta, *A magyarság vonzásában*. 98─106. I have provided explanatory and supplementary notes to the published source, and I have identified the contributors and discussants only where their position, influence or connection to Macartney warranted it. I have abbreviated the main parts of the lecture and the main points made by C.A. Macartney, and his own views and opinions.

33 Macartney, *Conditions in Hungary.*

34 Sir Harry Haig (1881─1956) British politician, statesman, British Governor of India from 1934 to 1939. He was an active member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs from 1940.

35 It is about Macartney's visit to Hungary in 1940, when he also met Prime Minister Count Pál.Teleki. Due to the war and the British-Hungarian state of war at the end of 1941, his next visit did not take place untilearly 1946.

The Russian occupation

He would take this subject first, partly because it was always the first to come up in conversation with any Hungarians, and partly because it stood a little outside his other three subjects, and dominated the whole Hungarian situation.

The Russians had entered Hungary in the autumn of 1944-and they had entered fighting: there had been two millions Russian troops in the country, but whether that number had lessened considerably or not, was something which no one could tell, since no figures was ever published. The Hungarian authorities estimated the remaining troops at one million, but he himself thought that was an exaggeration. He thought that there were about half a million troops, and that they were tending to leave. *There was no doubt that they constituted a very heavy burden on a country economically exhausted; and the situation was not improved by the probability that Russian troops in Austria were being supplied from Hungarian sources. Their requisitions was often done in a wasteful and badly organised manner-food would be collected and the left to rot because there was no transport to collect it, or because the troops for whom it was intended had been suddenly moved.*

This occupation had an important political and psychological impact on the Hungarians-he would not pretend that the Russians were invariably wrong, nor the Hungarians invariably right: the Hungarians tended to forget that they had once occupied parts of Russia. But whatever the provocation they had certainly had cause for complaint. Soon after the Russian's arrival in Buda, they arrested some forty to fifty thousands in the streets and interned them as prisoners of war: the story run that the Russians had officially claimed that number of prisoners at the capture of Buda, and had actually taken next to none, and that these so called prisoners of war had been interned to bear out Stalin's reports. Some were sent to work in Russia, and had not returned: some were sent to fight the Austrians: and some were eventually freed.

Apart from this there was continual looting- particularly of watches; the Russian fondness for watches had become a joke in Hungary. There were also

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causes with women. Stories of these incidents undoubtedly tended to become exaggerated, but, on the other hand, it would not be wise to dismiss them all as unreliable. Members of the Mission had very few intimate friends in Hungary, and no woman do inform a casual acquaintance that she had first-hand experience of Russian licentiousness. He thought the behavior of the earlier troops had been very bad, but it had improved as the older fighting men had been replaced by younger soldiers, probably recruits fresh from Russia: there were not many troops in Budapest now. It was unfortunate that such incidents still occured; as it left a lasting and unpleasant impression in Hungary: the day before he had left the bodies of four girls had been discovered covered in the pile of rubbish, left in some recently vacated barracks. No one was in the streets at night alone in Budapest: an invitation to dinner meant an invitation for the night, unless a car could be hired for the return journey.

He felt convinced that there was a deep-rooted dread and hatred of the Russians now-not least among the poorer classes. It sometimes happened that the more educated people had had a Russian officer billetted on them, and had been able to speak a little Russian or Serbian, so that their impressions were fairly amicable. *The peasants and workmen had suffered most from the requisitioning policy of the Russians, and he did not think that any amount of improved behavior would wipe out these bitter memories.*

The economic situation

Mr Macartney felt that there was something misleading in the word "situation", since it implied at least a degree of stability, and he doubted whether-with the exception of Poland-any country in Europe was in such a chaotic state as Hungary. Until 1944 she had probably suffered less, but in that year several things happened in quick succession. Firstly, the Germans left the country taking with them everything that they could lay hands on: fighting went on all over Hungary for six months, from September to May: and there was heavy, material destruction, particularly in Budapest, and in the hill of Buda, where the Germans made a last stand. Then there was a complete collapse of the communications system, all bridges were blown up, and the entire rolling stock from the rail-

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ways was removed to Germany, where it was now sitting in the American zone. Finally, the Russians occupied the country, requisitioning or looting all food, and other supplies. There was also a good deal of native looting and smuggling

The food situation was appalling. There were places in the country where it was quite good-a district in the north east, for instance, protected by the two arms of a river where a bridge had been demolished. The inhabitants made sure it was not rebuilt sufficiently to take lorry traffic, and thus protected themselves from requisitioning raids.[36]Other parts of the country were not so fortunate, and in the towns it was very bad. They had a small basic ration of bread, occasionally, of maize and beans: sometimes there were potatoes and salt which were shared out on the ration cards. He had been three times to the midday meal at the Budapest University-the main meal of the day- where twice they had had soup, and once a small helping of noodles as well.

Financially speaking, Hungary had hardly any existence: inflation was quite unchecked and unbounded. When he had been there the pound had been worth a million pengő and the dollar worth 750 thousand pengő. He thought the pound might have increased in value six times by now. Money meant nothing- a professor's salary was about 250 thousand pengő a month, only usable for buying a newspaper, or stamps, or for riding on a tram: otherwise everything was done by barter. The big factories and the ministries had group rationing schemes which provide meals, such as he had had at the University, for their worker. Bargaining for wages had been replaced by bargaining for better meal, with more calories for the worker's relations at home. People not covered by these schemes made groups of their own, and sent someone out to the country to barter clothes for food. Even really destitute families, once wealthy, still had servants, and still lived-though now somewhat cramped with extra tenants-in their pre-war homes. A maid was sure of her own room, which was a great asset. It was usually she

36 This was most probably the Bodrogköz and the Tisza bridge in Tokaj or the Bodrog bridge in Sárospatak. Macartney visited Sárospatak during his trip to Hungary at the end of January 1946. See: Organizations in Liberated Hungary. Ministry of Information-Related papers, The National Archive (TNA) FO 930/262.

who had relations in the country and did the bartering for food. He had not heard of any deaths through starvation, but he could not imagine how they continued to live; and he wondered what would happen when there were no longer clothes to barter for food.

The problem of Russian reparations was another heavy burden-though this was not out of proportion, and he thought that, if Hungary was given time, and could spread payement over five years, for instance, from1950 or 1951, the reparations could be managed. At present it was impossible. The lack of machinery and equipment removed from Hungarian factories as part of the reparations breaks the production chain and does not help to increase production. But this is not good for the Russians either, because they find it difficult to integrate these machines into their own production structure. What factories yet remained in production were now at work on preparation orders: there was a certain amount of finishing work done on materials sent from Russia. When these products were finished the larger part was returned to Russia, a part went to the black market, and a part was distributed, more or less fairly to whatever section of the population needed it most. The goods hardly reached the shops at all, and while he thought that the situation would improve after the next harvest, he did not see how production was going to revive.

The Short Term Political Situation

The short-term view of the situation was hopeful. After the liberation the government of Hungary had been entrusted to a coalition in which were represented the Communists, the Social Democrats, the National Peasants-a group of intelligent intellectuals espousing the cause of the landless agricultural workers-, the Smallholders and the Independent Bourgeoisie. These remained in power until the 1945 elections, with the exception of the Independent Bourgeoisie and some Trade Union representatives who were thrown out meanwhile. After the elections the Independence Front Coalition continued-the Smallholders Party had polled some 50-60% of the votes but very rightly had not had enough confidence to form a government.[37] The Social Democrats and the Communists had

37 Barta, *Brit követjelentések*. 84 In fact, the Ssmallholders wanted to share the responsi-

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polled about 15-20% of the votes.[38] There were some reallocation of the ministries, but the government seemed to be proceeding with an agreed programme in harmony-even with wisdom. *In fact, there was not much that any government could do: There was universal agreement on the necessity for re-establishing communications, and securing more coal and more food. The Communists were amongst the most energetic and intelligent in prosecuting this programme-and they and the Social Democrats had done good work in the summer of 1945, by persuading the working men of the necessity for carrying on at work.*

The Long-term Political Situation

This presented a different picture; one of continuous unrest, agitation, and shouting: there were frequent street meetings in Budapest airing the view that reaction in Hungary would be crushed. In spite of the fact that no party suggested doing anything not on the 1944 programme-there was an atmosphere of extreme political crisis, as if Hungary were in a 1919 situation.

This was largely the fault of the Communists. After the fall of the Communist government in 1919 there had been a complete reaction, and though some individual Communists remained, they were very few in number, and the party and the party organization did not even exist in an underground form. When the Russians entered the country in 1944, however, they brought with them some fifty men from Moscow, to create a Communist party, which was to form part of the Coalition government. They recruited the main body of the party from the former Arrow Cross extremists who had been interned by the Hungarian authorities, and whose general views were very similar to those of the Communists, except that they were anti-semitic, and revolved round Berlin rather than Moscow as a centre. They were offered the choice of continued internment or membership of the Communist party, and large number who chose the latter alternative formed a useful rank and file-though they naturally had no say in

bility for the serious government decisions that awaited them with their future coalition partners.

38 For the exact results of the November 1945 elections, see: Romsics, *Magyarország története a 20. században.* 190─191

policy. Some others were genuine Communists, some were opportunists, and some came from the Social Democratic party. It was the men from Russia-the Muscovites as they were called-who held power in the Communist party: they were able men, mostly of Hungarian origin or Magyar-speaking, mostly Jews, Moscow trained and Soviet citizens-and it was from this point of view alone that they looked at Hungarian affairs.

The political conflicts in Hungary were fundamentally concerned with the future orientation of the country-whether Western or Eastern influences were to predominate: it was safe to say that the entire country was split between the Communist leaders and a proportion of their followers-and the rest of the country. *Mr. Macartney had broadcast regularly to Hungary during the* war,[39] *and was a well-known figure there: he had been interested to note that whereas the Communist leaders received him politely, but with the definite attitude that when his next came he would inevitably be liquidated, although possible with regret-the rest of the population, without distinction of class and religion had welcomed him with warmth and understanding. He had been gratified and touched, and felt that there were no doubt that most of the people wanted a Western orientation for Hungary.*

He could not say what the future of the country would be: he did not know what the real reason for the resumption of the Communist offensive might be. He did not feel the situation should be exaggerated-it was partly fear, partly automatic: it was their training which made it difficult from them to join with the bourgeoisie, and which made them require an opponent. Partly, no doubt, it was a reflection of the reaction between Britain and the U.S.S.R. He wondered whether the Communist leaders would be given orders to bring about a situation in which the coalition government could be declared impossible. If they had such orders, and were backed by the Russians, they could do anything-though a Communist régime would be intensely unpopular. It was an unfortunate effect of the present situation that the opponents of the communism tended to crystallize round the extreme right. In this way, he felt, some of the most valuable elements

39 On C. A. Macartney's radio appearances during the war, see: Pál, "Jó estét kívánok, itt Macartney Elemér beszél."

in Hungarian politics-the Social Democrats and the best of the Smallholders-lost considerable power.

Comments

Sir Harry Haig thanked Mr Macartney for a vivid account of conditions remote from our own circumstances. The Countess of Listowel[40]asked what was the role of the political police? And said that it was her impression that the Communists were out to split the Smallholders: the right wing was the older part of the Smallholders, and could not be called reactionary, but if the Communists succeeded, they could put the governing wing in a minority; and there was a bill in existence by which anyone who resigned could be called upon to give up his mandate. She wondered whether the Russian attacks in Poland, the attacks on the Smallholders, and those on the "reaction" in Roumania and Bulgaria were not all part of a larger plan in which Hungary was not really important, because it depended on relations between the big powers.

Mr C. A. Macartney said he would take the last point first. He agreed that Hungary, by herself, was relatively unimportant- but he could not say whether the communist manoeuvres were part of a general plan or not. He had not mentioned political police because his time was short: they were a definite grievance. They have been mainly recruited from the extremists amongst the Jews, who had suffered, and would not forget their suffering. The organization was not run by a communist, however, and though abuses were rightly attributed to take police, it must not be forgotten that this was not the first time in that Hungary had had political police. He did not think the Countess Listowel was quite right in her analysis of the attack on the Smallholders. He felt that there was some justification for complaint against them. Since the original programme had been drawn up the right wing parties had been prohibited, but the voters were not disfranchised. Men of right wing sympathies had got themselves returned by right wing voters, posing as Smallholders, though they were, in fact, Conservative-and often

40 Barta, "Márffy─Mantuano Judit (Judit Listowel) angliai tevékenysége."

large landowners. In this way elements were introduced into the government which did not represent the original coalition parties. Those attacked often did not agree with the Government programme-though, of course, there could be no denying that the Communists did want to weaken the Smallholder's Party.

Michael Zvegintsov said that the same thing was happening all over Eastern Europe, and he wondered what was the purpose of such a campaign of fear. It had turned the common people against Russia- he had observed it again nag again In Eastern Germany with the refugees from Eastern Europe. He thought perhaps the Russians had realized that the situation was uncertain and needed clarification, and were taking action in the form of this desperate attack. Relations between the great powers did not affect the matter-it would be impossible to exorcise the fear of Russia that prevailed: he though that the Communists were afraid of an appeal to public opinion.

Miss Freda White asked about land reform in Hungary. She confessed that she was ignorant in the matter, but she felt it affected the situation. She would have thought it a reform which could have been postponed, in view of the acute food shortage in Hungary, since conversion from large to small scale farming nearly always involved a drop in production at first.

Mr. C. A. Macartney said that it was a measure which could not have been put off, politically speaking. *It was supported by all the Coalition parties and was on the government programme. Even if the land had not been divided up with legal sanction he thought it would have been done illegally.* In fact, there had been some increase in production: the old and experienced smallholders had done very well, though the newcomers had been handicapped by the difficulty of getting tools or seed. He thought that if the land reform had not taken place, there would have been no production at all on the big estates non divided. The large landowners were mostly living outside Hungary, and it was very difficult to get labour. In present conditions there would be less produce for the general market than the big estates had produce formerly, but it would not be fair to judge the land reform for another ten years.

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Mr. John Epstein asked how the ordinary people had reacted on Hungary's becoming a republic: had they minded that their country was no longer a kingdom?

Mr C. A. Macartney said that he thought that majority had not wanted the change. It was shaming for Hungary that only one person who had vigorously protested was a woman: Sister Margaret Schachter[41]was small and frail, but she had saved Jews from persecution and was running a small political party of her own. There was a saying that there were only two men in Hungary today, and that they both wore petticoats-Sister Margaret was one and the new Archbishop,[42]a man full of courage, was the second.

Mr. John Epstein asked how he had finally got to the consistory? Mr. C. A. Macartney did not think he had been really prevented from going-it was merely a question of the usual Russian delays in granting any pass.

Miss Freda White asked for news of Transylvania. Mr. C. A. Macartney said he had not been there, and would prefer not to say anything, though he understood it was a complete rocket.

Lt. Col. H. H. Lloyd asked whether the civil police were armed, and whether they were loyal to the government? He also asked what was the position of the Russian Army in Hungary?

Mr. C. A. Macartney said he would answer the second question first: the role of the Russians was that of any army occupying a country after war until peace declared. They did not to much to maintain law and order, but they had patrols on duty to examine papers: there were Russian police on the only bridge out of Budapest to see that Russian vehicles had priority in crossing. He would not call the police civil police in either sense of the words: they were neither civil nor police. The Minister of the Interior,[43] who had been responsible for their constitution,

41 On Margit Schlachta's career, see: Mona, *Schlachta Margit*.

42 For more details on the career of József Mindszenty, see: Balogh, *Mindszenty József*.

43 The Hungarian Minister of the Interior until 20 March 1946 was Imre Nagy, followed by László Rajk.

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had been corrupted by his wife, and the police were very unpopular. The old gendarmerie had been scrapped, and the two police very thoroughly sifted: the new civil police were Communists, but not Jews, and though commonly referred to as armed bandits, they were said to be improving.

Miss J. M. Westley asked whether the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRRA) had done anything to relieve the food situation in Hungary? Mr. C. A. Macartney said that some stuff was coming in unofficially. UNRRA had met with difficulties both from our side and the Communists, but eventually an agreement had been reached.

Mr. J. R. Wraight said that supplies should begin to enter the country in April; they were to be handed over to the Hungarian government who would be responsible for their distribution. In the matter of land reform, he thought that circumstances made it difficult for the government to put up a good defence for their policy. If any food surplus was announced it be scooped up immediately, and therefore the figures issued were always on the pessimistic side. Similarly, with food collection in general, the figures were not a good advertisement. Mr C. A. Macartney agreed, but said the harvest had been below normal even so.

Miss Dorothy Fraser said that she understood from friends of hers that Hungarians in Transylvania were having a very bad time. Major Hugh Seton Watson[44] said that the Romanians were suffering equally badly.

Sir Harry Haig thanked Mr Macartney for his talk. It was extremely valuable that he had been able to analyse Russian policy in the Hungarian area: if the same thing could be done for a different countries in a similar position it might help us understand Russian world policy.

18 March 1946 Chatham House, St. Jame's Square, S. W. 1.

44 Hugh Seton Watson (1916-1984) British historian, political scientist, son of Robert Seton-Watson. He served in British military intelligence during the Second World War. In his publications on Eastern Europe and Hungary, he strove for impartial objectivity. In 1981, three years after Macartney's death, he wrote the still useful summary of the Oxford historian-diplomat's career. See: Seton-Watson, *Carlile Aylmer Macartney 1895-1978*.

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