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Trianon: Collapse 1918–1921

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Special Editor of the Thematic Issue

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The Flickering Lighthouse: Rethinking the British Judgement on Trianon*

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This article reassesses the official British discourse around the Treaty of Trianon between 1919 and 1921. It studies a range of colorful opinions for and against the treaty, why they emerged at particular times, and why some could prevail over others. Especially it focuses on the rationale of those British parliamentarians or officials who spoke out against Trianon as being unjust to Hungary. These leading voices had varied backgrounds and prejudices, but they all had personal knowledge of Hungary either before or after World War I. The article is divided into three time-periods, thereby highlighting the main shifts in British opinion that were often caused by geo-political changes in Hungary itself. While the key British decisions were taken in 1919 at the time of the Paris Peace Conference, the vibrant and public British debate of 1920–21 also had a long-term impact: it sustained Hungarian hopes and illusions about a future revision of Trianon and about potential British sympathy. In fact, despite the strident voices heard during the British debate, the evidence suggests that there was more agreement among the British elite than some historians have suggested. By 1921, both opponents and supporters of Trianon had reached a certain pragmatic consensus; they recognized both the faults and the fairness of the peace settlement, but most now considered there could be no return to greater Hungary.

Keywords: Trianon, Great Britain, Paris Peace Settlement, revisionism

In one of the compelling spy thrillers which the novelist Eric Ambler wrote in the late 1930s, his stateless hero, Josef Vadassy, is a Hungarian living in France whose life has been dramatically changed thanks to the Treaty of Trianon. It was typical of Ambler to bring East-Central Europe into his thrillers, portraying the region for an English readership as somewhere both exotic and dangerous, where spies competed in the ideological battle of fascism against communism. However, at the start of *Epitaph for a Spy*, his Magyar protagonist makes a gross error. Explaining to the French police that he is from Szabadka, he gives the

* I would like to thank Catherine Horel and Balázs Ablonczy for their help and advice in the original commissioning of this article.

date of the Treaty of Trianon not as 1920 but as 1919.[1] The reason for the mistake is perhaps simple. Ambler had never been to Hungary, and for him the detail was irrelevant: it might well be jarring to a professional historian or any Hungarian reader, but few among his English audience in the 1930s would care, for "Trianon" was unknown to them. On the other hand, if we wish to be generous to Ambler, we might suggest that Vadassy's Magyar credentials were intact when he assumed that the Treaty of Trianon was in place by 1919. Arguably, the crucial decisions about Hungary's future borders were made in that year. What was left, in 1920, was a flood of Hungarian protests, with some outspoken British voices of support, but these voices had little effect on the signing and ratification of the peace treaty.

Since 1920, many historians have suggested that Great Britain played a key role (perhaps the most vital among the Great Powers) in drawing up the treaty which shaped Hungary's new borders and in stabilizing interwar Hungary. In the early 1920s, there was certainly much wishful thinking on the Hungarian side about Britain's major influence, as well as Britain's alleged historic sympathy for the Hungarian cause. Gyula Andrássy, for example, spoke in 1921 of "how deeply disappointed he and others had been that England had deserted her old principles […] It was not the England that Hungary used to know that had made the peace."[2] This illusion of special British sentiments towards Hungary always found some echoes in London too. In one British parliamentary debate in March 1920, for example, a garrulous politician who had recently visited Budapest pressed in exaggerated language for his country to intervene and help the Magyars: "It is Britain that is serving as a lighthouse for the whole world, and if it flickers and goes out through our cowardice, half the world will sink in the storm for lack of guidance which this country alone can give."[3]

Yet the extent to which Great Britain really shaped the Hungarian settlement remains debatable. Even at the time, some establishment figures could not understand why the severe Trianon Treaty emerged as it did and why it had British approval. In April 1921, the treaty was debated in the House of Lords, and Lord James Bryce commented, "No-one has carried any lamp into these dark corners in which the fate of Hungary was decided." A few months later, Lord Sydenham agreed. The Supreme Council's decision concerning Hungary, he said, was "one of the most extraordinary things of which I know. Someday

1 Ambler, *Epitaph for a Spy*, 9.

2 Repington, *After the War: A Diary*, 163.

3 Captain Walter Elliott, quoted in *The Hungarian Problem in the British Parliament*, 50.

it may be explained, and we shall know what was behind this determination, but at present it is unintelligible."[4]

Over the course of the past forty years, several British and American historians have tried to answer these questions. One conclusion has been the predominant influence on the British Foreign Office of "New Europe" adherents, especially the diplomats or "expert advisers" in Paris who shared the liberal-national outlook of publicists like R. W. Seton-Watson. Seeking to carve out a territorial settlement on the basis (mainly) of national ethnicity, these advisers' role in 1919 was crucial in fixing Hungary's borders to the advantage of neighboring states like Czechoslovakia and Romania.[5] Other historians have approached the British impact on Trianon more broadly, highlighting how and why the Anglo-Hungarian relationship dramatically improved between 1918 and 1922 as Britain aspired to the restoration of political and economic stability. According to Gábor Bátonyi, these years were a unique chapter in British interest in the region. From a position of hostility or at least passivity towards Hungary in the first half of 1919, there was then a "positive shift," as the influence of the "New Europe" group declined and the stabilization of Budapest became London's predominant approach. Certainly, Britain was motivated by the desire to penetrate the Carpathian Basin economically, but perhaps as important was the sense that any long-term stability needed to be based on a just or fair settlement too. To some key British observers, the evidence increasingly suggested that the settlement was neither just nor fair to Hungary.[6]

The following discussion, in the centenary year of Trianon, seeks to rethink this shift in British official attitudes. It is primarily a study of the conflicting British discourse about Hungary and Hungary's borders, with a particular focus on when and why certain voices emerged and why some gained ascendency. The article is divided into three time periods of the "Trianon settlement." It also proceeds in reverse chronological order, working from 1921 back to 1918, in order to challenge a rather well-worn historical narrative and to highlight more clearly the trajectory of opinion-formation. Through this approach to the sources, I reassess the continuities or breaks in British perceptions. I also

4 Ibid., 214, 239.

5 See especially Sakmyster, "Great Britain and the Making of the Treaty of Trianon," and Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*.

6 Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe*, 4, 104. See also Sakmyster, "Great Britain and the Establishment of the Horthy Regime"; and for a study emphasising Britain's economic agenda in the region: Lojkó, *Meddling in Middle Europe*.

show that the shifting Hungarian geo-political framework itself determined how British observers responded in a positive or negative fashion. Indeed, to a large extent, London was always reacting to events on the ground in the Carpathian Basin, *faits accomplis* which could not be controlled and were usually only of modest concern to British official interests.

A Certain Consensus

The first period to consider, as an introduction, is spring 1921. After Hungary had ratified the peace treaty in November 1920, the focus in London was on British ratification in order to finish the peace process and allow reconstruction across Central Europe. This ratification occurred on May 5, 1921. The British parliamentary debates before this in the House of Lords and the House of Commons reveal well the underlying perceptions and prejudices for and against the treaty. However, we should not simply note the individuals who took a stand as supporters or opponents of Trianon, but also consider the ways in which the ideas of both camps overlapped and converged. Ignác Romsics contends that by 1921, there was still no rapprochement between the "Foreign Office faction" and the "pro-Hungarian faction."[7] Yet as we shall see, this is only partially true. This notion, furthermore, implies a strict division in opinion when by 1921 the divide was actually rather artificial.

Certainly, there were basic disagreements in the parliamentary debates from March to May 1921, and these very much echoed the views expressed a year earlier (by many of the same speakers). On the one hand, the British Coalition government in 1921 was pressing for treaty ratification. It claimed that the terms of the treaty could not now be reopened for negotiation, as that would mean another peace conference. Instead, the famous "Millerand note" (sponsored by the British) suggested a way forward for some Hungarian border adjustments in the future.[8] Fundamentally, however, speakers like Robert Cecil in the Commons and the Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, in the Lords justified the dismemberment of historic Hungary as a process that was legitimate because of the ways in which the Magyar rulers had behaved before 1918. They had "grossly misgoverned the subject races." Moreover, as Curzon put it, the Habsburg Monarchy had been "an artificial system" which had already begun to totter

7 Romsics, *The Dismantling of Historic Hungary,* 160.

8 See the speech of Cecil Harmsworth (Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs) in the Commons on 20 April 1921: *The Hungarian Problem in the British Parliament*, 113.

before 1914: the war, which Budapest had helped cause, had simply given the system its *coup de grâce*.[9] Following this line of argument about Magyar misrule, the speakers also stressed that neither Britain nor the Paris Peace Conference had broken up Hungary. Rather, the peacemakers in 1919 had been faced with a *fait accompli*: at the end of the war, Hungary's "hostile races" had taken matters into their own hands and Hungary had "fallen into its component parts."[10] Great Britain's role, with the other Powers, had been, according to Curzon, to find a compromise when settling the borders. This had been done as far as possible according to the Wilsonian principle of self-determination. He maintained that the Magyar arguments had been given a fair hearing, and it was now time for Hungarians to put the past behind them: "the war may before long become no more than a painful dream."[11]

Against this optimistic stance, the parliamentarians who spoke out against Trianon also appealed to the lessons of history and then, especially, attacked the way in which the principle of national self-determination had been adjudicated for Hungary. In both areas, however (history and self-determination), many "anti-Trianon" speakers were prepared to accept some of the government arguments: it was not a clear-cut division of views, notwithstanding the contrary contentions of later historians. Among the critics of Trianon, two main loose groups can be identified. One represented new, younger politicians of the parliamentary intake in the immediate wake of the war. A second small group of individuals stand out because of their experience of pre-1914 Europe, including having born personal witness to the relative stability of the old Habsburg Empire. Let us turn to them first.

Most notable in this regard were Lord Bryce and Lord Newton (Thomas Legh). James Bryce had visited Transylvania as early as 1866. He had met József Eötvös in Budapest, and had come to the conclusion that Hungarians were "a courteous graceful people."[12] In a speech in the House of Lords in May 1921, he disputed Magyar responsibility for the war and consistently stressed the sympathetic ties between Hungary and England, which included their alleged mutual crusade for "liberty." Nevertheless, even Bryce was prepared to admit that "old Hungary" now had to bow before the "principle of nationality." Indeed, when travelling in northern Hungary in 1878, he himself had seen how

9 Ibid., 193ff: speech by Curzon.

10 Ibid., 108ff: Harmsworth speech.

11 Ibid., 198–99, 206. Also Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe*, 117.

12 Fisher, *James Bryce*, vol. 1, 119–26.

most of the rural population was Slovak (he described them as "a less advanced and less politically active race" than the Magyars with whom they lived together as friends).[13] Forty years later, he seems to have acknowledged reluctantly that much of Slovakia wished to escape Magyar tutelage; he also conceded that the half of Transylvania with predominantly Romanian speakers might justifiably fall to Romania. What he disputed was the caricature of pre-war Hungary that had made the country seem as bad as Prussia or czarist rule in Poland. In other words, he claimed Hungary was being treated with disproportionate vindictiveness – most glaringly in the unjust way that the borders had been decided in Paris. Bryce therefore conceded the relevance of the "principle of nationality" to some extent, but he stressed that this principle had been violated, notably in the case of Bratislava (Pozsony) and the Székely communities of Transylvania.[14] His parliamentary performance was noticed by Budapest, and it cemented Bryce's reputation as a champion of the Magyars.[15]

Others who opposed the Treaty of Trianon were less compromising than Bryce. Lord Newton questioned whether Slovaks or Croats really wanted to leave old Hungary; he concluded that the country should be treated with "humanity and justice," as it was "the least guilty of our ex-enemy powers." A speedy ratification of Trianon would at least allow the resumption of correct Anglo-Hungarian relations.[16] Newton's forays on behalf of Hungary after the war were well known to the British Foreign Office, where one official thought him simply a dupe of Magyar propaganda, completely ignorant of Hungarian history and policy. But how true was this? His growing connections with Central Europe are intriguing, for alongside Bryce, he was one of Hungary's most persistent supporters.[17] Before the war, Newton had been a professional diplomat, traveling widely and acquiring his own understanding of the Habsburg "civilizing" mission in the Balkans. Apart from having seen Vienna and Budapest briefly in 1887, a visit to Bosnia three years later, mainly for trout fishing, left him singularly impressed: "I got the impression that [Bosnia] was well administered and that there was little to complain of in Austrian rule."[18]

13 Bryce, *Memories of Travel*, 102ff.

14 Bryce's speech: *The Hungarian Problem in the British Parliament*, 213ff.

15 See the pamphlet commemorating the anniversary of Bryce's birth: Balogh, *A magyar revízió angol előharcosa*.

16 Newton's speech: *The Hungarian Problem*, 209, 212.

17 Sakmyster, "Great Britain and the Making of the Treaty of Trianon," 122. See also for Newton's extra-parliamentary agitation: Barta, "Oxfordi Magyar Liga," 370–76.

18 Lord Newton, *Retrospection*, 44, 56–57.

If Newton's Habsburg links before 1914 were always tentative, by the end of the war, he was well-acquainted with several fellow-countrymen who were sympathetic to Hungary, including the future British High Commissioner Thomas Hohler, but also his own cousin, Admiral Ernest Troubridge, the British (Allied) commander on the Danube.[19] Most significant was Newton's underlying conservative stance against any radical peace settlement. He wished that the wartime belligerents had negotiated earlier for a stable peace and thereby prevented the destruction of the old order. In this regard, his scorn for Hungary's neighbors was quite clear, mirroring perhaps his contempt for what he termed the "ill-mannered" Irish politicians, who before 1914 had constantly made trouble for Great Britain. In short, at Trianon, Magyars had been handed over "like so many animals, to alien races of an inferior civilization, in flat defiance of the sacred principle of Self-Determination."[20]

Bryce and Newton viewed Trianon partly through a pre-war lens, in other words a certain nostalgia for what they had observed of the old Hungary, and this colored much of their criticism of the New Europe. However, while one historian has recently suggested that the critics' "inveterate predilection for the old social and political order" was their sole common denominator, it was not in fact the only motivating force.[21] A second group of critics was formed by some younger politicians, newly elected to the House of Commons, who had experienced the horrors of a European war first hand and did not want hostilities to break out again. For them, the troubling aspect of Trianon was not so much what was being lost (old Hungary, Anglo-Hungarian friendship), but rather the new nationalist instability which was already so evident. One speaker in the House of Commons, a former naval officer, attacked the whole "disease of nationality"; with an eye on other running nationalist sores, he claimed that little Ulsters or Alsace-Lorraines were now being created in Slovakia and Transylvania.[22]

Among those who attacked Trianon, a Scottish Conservative, Captain Walter Elliott, was the most vociferous of this new parliamentary intake. According to one witness, as a former wartime doctor and wounded soldier, Elliott had "a wide

19 Ibid., 130, 235. For Troubridge, see Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe*, 104. While pro-Serbian, Troubridge clearly approached Hungary with concerns about Romanian aggression in the region; for the background to his stance, see Šarenac, *The Forgotten Admiral*.

20 Buday, *Dismembered Hungary*, vii (introduction by Newton). See also *Retrospection*, 262–63, and Newton's view of "ill-educated and ill-mannered" Irish MPs, ibid., 99.

21 Bakić, *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe*, 10.

22 Speech of Lieutenant-Commander Joseph Kenworthy: *The Hungarian Problem*, 130–31.

erudition and a fascinating capacity for conversation." But in debate, "he was too diffuse with an argument insufficiently concentrated, often a fault in those who delight others and themselves delight in conversation."[23] Nevertheless, the new parliamentarian immediately made a stir with his oratory, and his many qualities led him to a seat in the British cabinet in the 1930s. His stance on Trianon in 1921 can be explained in a number of ways. As a maverick who tended to shirk from any party label, he felt mistrustful of the politicians who had produced the postwar chaos. He himself, with one eye on the Irish and Scottish problems, inclined towards a "national" style for British politics, where in his perception unity should predominate over fragmentation.[24]

He approached Hungary with the same pragmatism, and here two personal experiences of unabashed nationalism shaped his outlook. First, in the summer of 1919, he had decided to explore the territory of the fallen Habsburg Monarchy. He had motored along the Dalmatian coast (presumably encountering Italian-Croatian nationalist rivalry) and had then visited Budapest, observing the chaotic scenes there precisely in the wake of the regime of Béla Kun. While his biographer lightly dismisses these "trivial tales of excursions,"[25] for Walter Elliott they were crucial in clarifying his abhorrence of the nationalist forces which, he felt, had caused the war and then decimated Hungary and the Monarchy. Secondly, this experience reinforced the views he had long held from his native Scotland. Before the war, the liberal commentator "Scotus Viator" (R. W. Seton-Watson) had proposed Scotland-in-Britain as the ideal federal model for national autonomy in Hungary.[26] Elliott, though greatly loyal to Scotland, was equally averse to what he viewed as the whining criticisms of Scottish nationalists, and he drew his own lessons from that in the interwar world. In April 1921, in the parliamentary debate on Trianon Hungary, he savaged the "wicked policy of self-determination," which had swept away a thousand-year-old entity. He then suggested a vivid comparison. If the Serb "immigrants" into southern Hungary could now leave the country and take territory with them, it would be like Belgian

23 Mosley, *My Life*, 273. According to Cuthbert Headlam, another Conservative politician, Elliott was "extremely able and has the gift of making people believe that he is even more able than he actually is." Ball, *Parliament and Politics in the Age of Baldwin and Macdonald*, 272.

24 Coote, *A Companion of Honour*, 43, 48, 71; Searle, *Country before Party*, 118.

25 Coote, *A Companion of Honour*, 53–57.

26 On Seton-Watson, see Cornwall, "Robert William Seton-Watson és a kései Habsburg Birodalom," 327–49. Also, for a personal view: Seton-Watson, "R. W. Seton-Watson and the Trianon Settlement," 43–53.

wartime refugees suddenly annexing the English coastal town of Bournemouth: what ingratitude that would signify to their host nation![27]

Elliott took the most radical stance in this parliament, but in the long debates of 1921 there was actually some consensus that Trianon should now be ratified to achieve stability and perhaps also to further British influence in the region. The government side was conceding that the Hungarian settlement had been a most difficult subject: it was already criticizing the reparations imposed on Hungary as unrealistic and implying that small border corrections might be possible. In turn, the "anti-Trianon camp" was composed of men who professed to know about Hungary from personal experience, and they shared a common abhorrence of the nationalist New Europe which had replaced pre-war "stability." But even here, there were some surprising concessions and some readiness to accept a break with the old Hungary. They agreed that previous Magyar rule over greater Hungary had indeed caused unrest and dissatisfaction; they also felt that it might be justifiable to implement the principle of national self-determination across the region. The big question for them was whether that principle had been carried out fairly, or whether Trianon contained fresh grievances which might be the seeds of a future European war. Behind the parliamentary vote in favor of treaty ratification on May 5, 1921, there was therefore a latent consensus that some future adjustments to Trianon could be necessary, while at the same time, the basic Hungarian settlement should be accepted.

The Debate at Its Height

The second phase to consider is from October 1919 until the signature of the Trianon Treaty in June 1920. These were critical months, when British interest in Hungary was at its height for many reasons. It was a time when, with the rise of the Horthy regime, there were many new British representatives in Hungary, including a High Commissioner, Thomas Hohler, and a special emissary from the Peace Conference, George Clerk (arriving in October 1919). Meanwhile, in Paris, Hungary's treaty was finally being properly scrutinized. Count Albert Apponyi was able to submit the Hungarian arguments and objections, and in February–March 1920, the "Big Three" of Britain, France, and Italy disputed at least the viability of the proposed Hungarian borders.[28] The winter of 1919–20

27 Coote, *A Companion of Honour*, 77; and *The Hungarian Problem*, 156ff.

28 For a still useful older history of this subject, see Deák, *Hungary at the Peace Conference.*

produced a heightened cacophony of British voices for and against the peace terms. In the end, it was the Foreign Office loudspeaker which would triumph, because its "experts," like Allen Leeper, were deferred to as the key policymakers. They were already insisting that Hungary's frontiers had been permanently fixed, all the more so, as precisely that message had been sent to the surrounding states in June 1919.

The authority of a contrary set of British opinions owed much to the fact that they came from new men on the spot, located on Hungarian territory from the summer of 1919 due to London's concern about Romanian military excesses. Notable were those responsible to the Admiralty or the War Office: particularly Admiral Troubridge, who in August moved the headquarters of the Allied Danube Command to Budapest, and Reginald Gorton, who was sent as the British representative on an Inter-Allied Military Commission.[29] These critical voices were then echoed in the British parliament by Bryce and others. The question arises whether, if this disparate Magyarophile camp had been more coordinated, it could have challenged the "Foreign Office" clique at this crucial stage. Rumors circulated at the time that support for Hungary was mounting. But as Seton-Watson (correctly) reassured the Czechoslovak President Tomáš Masaryk in March 1920, people like Troubridge and Newton did not really represent British policy:

> They are individuals who have been caught up in certain currents and are busily engaged in urging a policy of their own upon our government, but *not* with success […] I can find no evidence of a serious nature to suggest that the Magyar intrigues have got any hold here in London.[30]

Indeed, the challenge for any champions of Hungary's cause was tremendous, because of the Foreign Office "insider advantage" and the prejudices still circulating about Hungary as a German or Bolshevik ally, not to mention the concerted hostile stance of Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

Nevertheless, in late 1919, British officials in Budapest began to request a sympathetic hearing for Hungary in London. They did so partly because the new Horthy regime seemed accommodating, even moderate, and it thus offered a contrast with continued stories of Romanian "atrocities" in occupied

29 Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe,* 103–6; Lojkó, *Meddling in Middle Europe*, 15: Troubridge "retained more leverage over the military situation than any other Allied commander."

30 Bakić, *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe*, 18.

Transylvania or the Yugoslav refusal to withdraw from the region around the city of Pécs. The British were also faced for the first time with an onslaught of Magyar petitions against the treaty, coupled with the widespread expectation that England at least would give Hungary a "fair hearing." Most striking were the reports sent to Paris by Sir George Clerk and members of his mission, for they, after all, were Allied delegates whose designated role was to bring stability to Hungary (ensuring that a stable government was established and Romanian troops were evacuated from the country). One member of Clerk's mission, for instance, reported to London about a tour of the truncated country: "The universal feeling throughout is that the old boundaries must be restored by some means or other and Roumania made to disgorge what she has taken."[31] Another, Percy Loraine, agreed after receiving a mass of petitions that there was widespread opposition to many of the suggested amputations. The loss of Croatia was accepted, but not Slovakia (where it was felt the conference had been duped by the Czechs) and especially not Transylvania.[32]

On the subject of Transylvania, Clerk himself felt that, because of the harshness of the Romanian invaders, a special Inter-Allied commission should be sent there. During the war, Clerk had been strongly influenced by the "nationality principle" in the British Foreign Office. But after arriving in Budapest, he quickly agreed with his Magyar hosts, who stressed that the "new rulers" in occupied Hungarian territory were "learners in the art of government" and of a "lower civilization." One petition submitted to Clerk by the Hungarian Technical University pressed for territorial integrity, arguing that "Hungary has raised culture to a high level on its natural geographical territory […] On mutilated territory Hungary would be unable to further fulfil this vocation!"[33] Clerk concluded that, while the new states needed firm supervision and guidance from the West, Hungary itself, on the basis of what he had observed, could be expected to be sensible: "They realize, I think, the broad justice of the inclusion of peoples of one common stock in one State, but they feel that the Allies have […] only heard one side of the case and have naturally given the benefit to those who fought on their side." He warned against the Allies sowing the seeds of future conflicts.[34]

31 TNA, FO 371/3518, D.C. Campbell to Leeper (private letter), 29 December 1919.

32 TNA, FO 608/17, Percy Loraine to Leeper, 22 November 1919 enclosing ten petitions.

33 TNA, FO 608/17/20922, Clerk to FO sending petition, 2 December 1919.

34 Ibid., Clerk report to Supreme Council, 29 November 1919.

These reports usually found an unsympathetic ear at the Foreign Office, as they were sent first to Allen Leeper or Eyre Crowe (permanent secretary), key figures on the territorial committees of the Peace Conference, and they could easily be deflected.[35] Both Leeper and Crowe were now irritated at Romania's refusal to withdraw to the demarcation lines and were even prepared to send an Allied commission to investigate. But they did not want to reopen *au fond* the nationality questions, which their committees had settled in May 1919. Thus, when in November they were sent a memorandum from the Hungarian government about injustices in Slovakia, both responded negatively. Leeper noted that the memorandum was exaggerated and not worth passing on to the Supreme Council. Crowe remarked simply, "Better leave it alone. These controversies lead to no practical results."[36]

Despite this, there is good evidence to suggest that by early 1920, the mood in the Foreign Office was indeed slowly shifting away from the Leeper-Crowe perspective towards a more positive engagement with Hungary's complaints. One reason was the replacement as foreign secretary of Arthur Balfour, who fully supported Trianon and had been a member of the Peace Conference, by Lord Curzon, who seemed to have less blatant sympathy for Hungary's neighbors.[37] Curzon's introduction to the Central European situation also coincided with the Clerk mission to Budapest, which, as Gábor Bátonyi suggests, started something of a special Anglo-Hungarian relationship in the winter of 1919–20. In addition to a Hungarian Delegation now being invited to Paris, another result of Clerk's mission was the appointment of a British High Commissioner to Hungary. From January 1920, Sir Thomas Hohler was to be an "extraordinarily sympathetic and totally uncritical minister" in Budapest, partly due to his friendship with Regent Miklós Horthy in prewar Constantinople.[38]

Precisely at the time when the Hungarian delegation under Apponyi was putting its case in Paris in early 1920, Hohler sent several reports to the Foreign Office expounding the Hungarian case. He passed on the views of Horthy and Apponyi that, whatever treaty was signed, the state would eventually be restored "to its old historic limits." Here, there was strong evidence that the Magyar

35 For the impact of Crowe and Leeper on these committees (which effectively delimited the Hungarian borders), see Romsics, *The Dismantling of Historic Hungary*, 76–85.

36 TNA, FO 608/17, Clerk to Crowe, 6 November 1919, with minutes by Leeper and Crowe.

37 For alarming rumours that Curzon might be pro-Magyar, see Seton-Watsons, *The Making of a New Europe*, 401–2.

38 Steiner, *The Lights that Failed*, 289; Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe*, 114 (for the Clerk mission, 107–14).

leadership hoped especially for British support, all the more so after January 16, when both Curzon and Prime Minister David Lloyd George had shown interest in Apponyi's ethnic map of Hungary.[39] Hohler strongly promoted the idea that Britain should support Hungary as a "friendly buffer state" in the region, and he asked Curzon to consider a fresh presentation by Apponyi in Paris. "The present arrangements," he concluded on February 1, "appear to be faulty and incapable of standing the test of time." The treaty was contrary to Wilson's principle of national self-determination and therefore constituted "an immediate menace to the peace of Europe."[40]

It is of course tempting to suggest that Hohler was simply hoodwinked by Magyar propaganda, but like Clerk, he was at least reporting the protests and mood he observed on the spot. These critical winter months require more research to illuminate in detail the close interaction and even confluence of Anglo-Hungarian arguments and networking. Britain was keenly aware at this time that the French too were vying for influence over Hungary; this has been well documented by historians.[41] Budapest in turn was taking new initiatives to highlight in London the benefits of Britain securing influence in the region. For it was precisely now that Miklós Bánffy was sent by the Hungarian government to London to make contact with politicians, including Curzon and Asquith. According to his memoirs, Bánffy had some success after "endless hard work, attention to detail and, above all, tact."[42] He found willing ears in Bryce, Cecil, and Newton, but also among church leaders, particularly Unitarians and Presbyterians alarmed at Romanian treatment of Transylvanian Protestants, and Jewish leaders like Lucien Wolf, who were anxious about minority rights.[43]

Bánffy's path into the corridors of power was also considerably eased through the "invaluable help" of the Hungarian-born Rozsika Wertheimstein, the wife of Charles Rothschild. Having met the Rothschild heir, a serious conservationist, in 1906 when he was exploring the Carpathian mountains,

39 Deák, *Hungary and the Peace Conference,* 207–11; Romsics, *The Dismantling of Historic Hungary*, 125–28.

40 TNA, FO 371/3518, Hohler to Curzon, 1 February 1920; and Hohler to Curzon, 28 January 1920 (quoting Apponyi).

41 See for example, Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe*, 120ff; and the detailed study of Mária Ormos, *From Padua to the Trianon*.

42 Bánffy, *The Phoenix Land,* 199–201; Romsics, *The Dismantling of Historic Hungary*, 129–30. Something of Bánffy's network in Britain is also clear from the diary of the Hungarian peace delegation kept by Count István Csáky: see Deák, Ujváry, *Pièces et documents relatifs aux rapports internationaux,* Appendix 1.

43 For a discussion of Presbyterian links to Magyar Protestant churches, see Zsuppán, "Hungarian Treaty Revision," 153–60.

the flamboyant Rozsika had moved to England, but she always kept firm ties with her family in Hungary. There, in December 1918, she had led a campaign publicizing the miserable plight of Hungarian children; in interwar Britain, she knew Magyarophiles like Lord Newton, and she actively promoted financial aid to Hungary from Rothschild resources.[44] "In her house," wrote Bánffy, "I almost felt I was breathing the air of my own home; and the lion's share in any success I may have achieved in my mission was thanks to her advice and help and to her mediation on my behalf."[45]

In the spring of 1920, indirectly through Rozsika Rothschild and other social contacts nurtured by Bánffy, vigorous debates began in the British parliament. Bryce, Newton, and others, having urged the Hungarians to delay finalizing the treaty as long as possible, echoed the language of Budapest when they spoke in the House of Lords: namely, that Hungary was pro-British and had been against the war, and that "civilised human beings" were now being handed over like cattle to the successor states.[46] According to Newton, Hungary was like a man "who has had a paralytic stroke and is being constantly kicked and cuffed by his former associates and dependents."[47] Another Bánffy target, Lord John Montagu of Beaulieu, agreed, contending that the treaty was simply "insane and unworkable." If Montagu's own passion for motoring and modern transport perhaps naturally inclined him to criticize the new fragmented communications network in the Carpathian Basin, he had also just visited Budapest. There, he had honed some pro-Hungarian views when staying with his friend, Admiral Troubridge. He concluded that "that country had suffered unfairly in the breaking up of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire after the war."[48]

Yet this fresh British political momentum of early 1920 also owed much to news reaching London about Romanian misrule in Transylvania and rumors about a White Terror (which a delegation from the Labour Party and the British trade unions would soon investigate). Some eccentric Conservative politicians were encouraged to support the Horthy regime precisely because of Labour opposition to it. Thus, in one House of Commons debate, Walter Elliott pointed

44 Rothschild, *Dear Lord Rothschild*, 94–97, 244. Rozsika notably was also a life-long friend of Count Pál Teleki.

45 Bánffy, *The Phoenix Land*, 201.

46 Speech of Newton, 30 March 1920: *The Hungarian Problem*, 54.

47 Ibid., 57.

48 Speech of Montagu: ibid., 66. See also Troubridge, Marshall, *John Lord Montagu of Beaulieu,* 215, 256. In 1900 Montagu had been the first MP to drive a car into the British Houses of Parliament.

out the prejudices of the left-wing press as he went on to condemn the treaty. Describing the new Slovakia as a "banana-shaped country," he ridiculed the proposed borders: "The Peace Conference is full of very great and important gentlemen, but they cannot make rivers run sideways across mountains, because they run downhill and not across." In his view, the iron rules of geography could not be changed.[49]

The Government responded to these criticisms in March 1920 by noting that the expert territorial committees had worked very diligently in 1919, that there was no bias, and that Hungary in January 1920 had had ample time to put its case to the Peace Conference. The critics rightly found this line of defense disingenuous. In fact, it did obscure the differences of opinion that had begun to appear at the Foreign Office. On February 10 in response to Hohler's reports, Curzon noted that he did not really know why the conference had decided on the proposed borders for Hungary. Allen Leeper, however, quickly jumped in to reject Hohler's arguments. He stressed that the territorial committees had followed the ethnic principle as far as possible (except in Slovakia and Transylvania, where transport links were necessary). And since the new countries had been told by Britain that this was the final settlement (and in the meantime had signed their peace treaties), future stability was in danger if everything were to be reconsidered. This would simply encourage Hungary to resist, and would constitute a betrayal of the recognition which Britain had given to Czechoslovakia and the other neighboring states.[50]

Curzon's behavior a few weeks later suggests that he was not wholly convinced by this argument, or he felt at least that the Hungarian question still needed to be revisited. Lloyd George similarly was urging France and Italy that Europe would have no peace if the Hungarian case were not fully scrutinized. A key reason for this governmental shift was that, in early 1920, new opinions had surfaced at the Foreign Office, stemming either directly from British supporters or indirectly from Magyar campaigners in Britain. The Hungarian settlement was suddenly (for the first time) a real focus of public attention.

Nevertheless, Curzon continued to listen to the "expert" Allen Leeper, who stridently expounded his opposition to Hungary's "anachronistic" arguments. The result was that, during a meeting of Allied foreign ministers in London on March 8, the idea of making any changes to the treaty was

49 *The Hungarian Problem*, 47. Elliott would repeat this in April 1921: ibid., 161.

50 TNA, FO 371/3518, Hohler to Curzon, 1 February 1920: minutes by Curzon and Leeper (11 February 1920).

rejected.[51] The overriding argument, as detailed in writing by Leeper, was that Hungary's borders must be settled quickly and short-term stability must be prioritized over any long-term dangers. Thus, in 1920, the very idea of reopening the treaty was construed as a major obstacle. But there was a small "carrot" which the Powers (especially Britain) still seemed to be offering Budapest and which the Hungarians seemed grudgingly to accept when they signed the Treaty of Trianon (June 6). This was the so-called Millerand note, which was sent to Hungary on May 6 under the signature of the new French premier, Alexandre Millerand. While rejecting the Hungarian Delegation's demand for plebiscites in contested areas, the note suggested that if Hungary had objections to the treaty, it might eventually appeal to the League of Nations over specific border rectifications. It was a glimmer of light that would sustain Hungarian revisionist hopes thereafter, just as the Anglo-Hungarian flirtation of winter 1920 had substantially prepared the ground.

Fixing the Trianon Framework

As we have seen, by 1921 there was growing British official consensus over Hungary, a realization that the new normality of Trianon should be accepted. In 1920, however, the clash of opinions was only too evident, for in the struggle for stability in the region, fresh voices had challenged the official line favoring Czechoslovakia and Romania and had questioned what the new Hungarian frontiers might mean for Central Europe. If we now turn briefly to 1918–1919, the third and best documented phase, this was of course the period when the Trianon framework, which later proved so hard to dismantle, was firmly set in place. First, in the *faits accomplis* of late 1918, the Allies had allowed the successor states to invade greater Hungary and stay there. Second, the Peace Conference's territorial committees, guided by the principle of national self-determination, scrutinized the Hungarian frontiers and had them approved without debate by the Council of Ten on May 12, 1919.

Historians have examined much of this period in depth, showing that Lloyd George was an occasional spokesman for Magyar interests (for example in his Fontainebleau Memorandum of March 25, in which he warned about a draconian peace which could ferment Hungarian irredentism). On April 30, he

51 Romsics, *The Dismantling of Historic Hungary*, 134–37. Romsics suggests that Curzon persuaded Lloyd George to accept the resolution of 8 March 1920.

proposed to the Council of Four that Hungary should be invited to Paris to discuss the peace terms. However, generally he was not interested or engaged enough to push his concerns in the face of the Foreign Office, which dominated in Paris and consistently favored the Czechoslovak and Romanian states.[52] It is usually noted that Harold Nicolson, Crowe, and Leeper played key roles on the territorial committees, siding with France and defining Hungary's ethnic borders in the narrowest sense possible; in addition, they focused on making the surrounding states economically viable. What is often ignored is the historic continuity in official British thinking: namely, Hungary was consistently seen as a destabilizing element in Central Europe. As I have shown elsewhere, the Foreign Office before World War I had summed up the "chauvinistic" Magyar regime as a key source of instability and had anticipated, even before Seton-Watson began to gain more influence in 1917, that Hungary would have to be restructured in some way.[53] In the wartime British press, diverse opinions were ventilated for and against Hungary, but in Whitehall, a viewpoint sharply critical of Budapest was long established.[54]

During the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, this trend persisted. The Foreign Office believed that the old Magyar regime had fought to the bitter end and therefore deserved punishment, while the country's new rulers (or were they really so new?) seemed in their petitions to the West far too obsessed with Hungary's territorial integrity. Moreover, any small sympathy for Hungary's aspirations was weakened by the reign of Béla Kun, which caused major headaches for the peacemakers. As Crowe noted on one occasion, the Allied plan in Central Europe was "to set up free and independent states as a counterbalance to a German-Bolshevik combination."[55] Hungary, having been Germany's staunch wartime ally, could now for four months be portrayed as a virulent Bolshevik threat. In both cases (whether Hungary was a German ally or a hotbed of Bolshevism), it was natural to them in the regional danger by affirming tighter frontiers. During the key months of the Peace Conference, these concerns formed a steady backdrop to British official thinking, especially

52 See for example ibid., 76–102. An older narrative covering Anglo-Hungarian relations in 1918–19 is Ardaj, *Térkép, csata után.*

53 Cornwall, "Great Britain and the Splintering." See also the seminal work of Géza Jeszenszky, *Az elveszett presztízs.*

54 For a clash over Hungary in the British press, see Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary during the First World War.*

55 TNA, FO 608/13, Seton-Watson to Balfour (telegram), 9 June 1919: minute by Crowe, 11 June 1919.

when Leeper and others suggested that Magyar nationalism and Bolshevism went hand in hand as a combined threat to Central Europe.[56]

Only a few British observers (apart from Lloyd George) started to become concerned about the future of Hungary. Ironically, Seton-Watson was one of them. In May 1919, having witnessed the chaos there, he wrote, "Little as I love the Magyars or regret the fate they have brought on themselves, I do not wish to see them destroyed altogether."[57] Despite this, like most British officials in Paris or London, Seton-Watson was not questioning the notion that greater Hungary needed to be dismembered. What was vital was to ensure stability and security for the New Europe; the new successor states were the allies who needed to keep order (since Britain itself could not contribute any troops). Only in the last months of 1919 was a new Hungarian regime established which tried to present itself to Britain as a respectable force for regional stability and order. As we have seen, this prompted new forms of support for the Hungarian cause and a new British questioning of the peace settlement.

Conclusion

Of course, the British debate on Trianon did not end in 1921. Fresh controversy was stirred through the press campaign of Viscount Rothermere six years later.[58] During the three phases of the creation of Trianon, it is clear that the Hungarian treaty really became a subject for public discourse in Britain only from late 1919. Until then, the British officials who debated it were working in private on the territorial committees of the Paris Peace Conference. They were chained above all closely to the "nationality policy," which Britain in mid-1918 had semi-officially adopted towards the Habsburg Monarchy.[59]

In its essence, that vision of a New Europe always had an anti-Hungarian streak based on the firm conviction that the Magyar regime in the old Monarchy had been oppressive and that similar nationalistic chauvinists were still in control of Hungary. It was only in 1920 that the idealistic crusade began to weaken, when the reality of the New Europe became clearer, and when new British

56 For instance, TNA, FO 608/13/13266, Leeper's minute, 23 June 1919: "Magyar Bolsheviks and Nationalists have been accomplices on many occasions lately."

57 TNA, FO 608/12, Seton-Watson to Headlam-Morley (private letter), 26 May 1919; also reproduced in Lojkó, *British Policy on Hungary,* 202–5.

58 As an introduction to this, see Romsics, "Hungary's Place in the Sun."

59 For the shift in British policy towards Austria-Hungary, see Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary*, chapter 6; and Calder, *Britain and the Origins of the New Europe 1914–1918*.

voices sprang up to counter Leeper or Seton-Watson. Particularly, some new Magyarophiles emerged in the British parliament to paint a different version of modern Hungarian history and even to question the ideal of self-determination. Among these critics, there was a strong sense that an alternative moral dimension to the ongoing Hungarian crisis existed, one which any "fair-minded person" would surely support.[60]

Indeed, this early British debate over the morality of Trianon had some parallels with a later moral contestation over Central European grievances during the Sudeten crisis of 1938. In the early interwar years, the matter of Czechoslovakia's German minority had received little British attention, or at least justice and morality were mainly felt to be on the Czech side against anything German. By 1936, however, many British observers were inclining towards a moral stance in favor of Sudeten German complaints about discrimination. They did so on the basis of the belief that firm evidence existed to support those grievances; that notion was strengthened by their own personal observations in Czechoslovakia and by the avid campaigning in Britain of Sudeten German political activists.[61] In both cases (the Hungarian in 1920 and the Sudeten in 1938), there was a moral underpinning to the cause that strengthened the arguments of Britons who primarily feared regional chaos or even a new war if the respective grievances were not addressed. The difference in 1938 was that the British government was now prepared to back a (Sudeten) cause, which would reverse the peace settlement of 1919. It viewed that course as both moral and practical for British interests. This, in turn, raised again the matter of territorial revisionism more broadly. Recent research has shown how, parallel to the Sudeten crisis, British equivocation about Trianon naturally resurfaced; in the late 1930s, Anglo-Hungarian relations began to matter again, since key pillars of the New Europe were starting to crumble.[62]

Yet early 1920, when the Hungarians had first put their case to the Allies in Paris, was the key time when they had looked to the British lighthouse for guidance and aid. New feelers were then sent out from Budapest to sympathetic

60 See *The Hungarian Problem*, 9.

61 For a new take on the Sudeten problem in British thinking, see Cornwall, *The Devil's Wall*, chapters 8–9; for the diplomacy, see Novotný, *The British Legation in Prague*.

62 See the recent revisionist work of András Becker: "The Dynamics of British Official Policy towards Hungarian Revisionism, 1938–39; "British Diplomacy, Propaganda and War Strategy and the Hungarian-Romanian Dispute over Transylvania in 1939-40." These stem from Becker's PhD thesis: *The Problem of Hungarian Borders and Minorities in British Foreign Political Thought 1936–1941* (University of Southampton, 2014).

supporters in Britain. In response, the lighthouse sent back some reassuring messages, but it remained flickering and was never consistent. On the one hand, the British establishment was naturally conservative, wishing to conclude the Hungarian treaty as quickly as possible, gain economic advantages, and ensure regional stability. On the other, many British politicians who were now studying the subject for the first time began to feel uneasy about what had occurred. At most, they could suggest to Budapest that the Trianon borders might be adjusted in the future, if only Hungary would behave responsibly and peacefully on the European stage. By 1921, a certain consensus prevailed across the British political spectrum that the basics of Trianon were now permanent. It is worth emphasizing, especially in this centenary year of Trianon, that even friends of Hungary like Lord Bryce or Walter Elliott were not advocating a crusade to overturn the new frontiers. Theirs was a pragmatic approach: to complain about Trianon Hungary, but largely to accept it despite its imperfections: there could be no restoration of greater Hungary.

The next twenty years saw the Trianon grievance occasionally surfacing in Britain and stirring public awareness. Among those who harped on the subject were mavericks like Rothermere or idealists like Lord Newton. For Newton, Hungary had become a lasting passion, a new chapter in his life, and one that brought him into the company of the "most charming" Rozsika Rothschild. He continued to visit the region (for instance Transylvania in late 1921) and advised the Hungarians to be patient: they should "strive to create a homogeneous state, which will serve as an enviable model to their neighbors and do more towards recovering Hungarian Irredenta than anything else."[63]

For others who heard the word "Trianon" in the late 1930s, it surely sparked anxious thoughts. Thus, for the novelist Eric Ambler in 1938, Trianon was above all useful as a small device to enhance the drama and credibility of his espionage thriller. His Magyar protagonist, Vadassy, might well personify one of the sad injustices of Trianon for those who were well-informed. But for most British readers, he probably evoked hazy ideas of chaos in nationalist Eastern Europe in the aftermath of a cataclysmic war. In their minds, the old Hungarian grievances were just some of the many that seemed to be resurfacing in 1938, edging Britain and Europe towards a new period of war and mass death.

63 Newton, in Buday, *Dismembered Hungary*, xiv. See also Rothschild, *Dear Lord Rothschild*, 18; Zsuppán, "Hungarian Treaty Revision," 155.

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Autumn 1918–Spring 1919: Six Months of Postwar Material and Political Uncertainty in Slovakia

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A few weeks after the Czechoslovak State has been proclaimed in Prague (October 28, 1918), Slovak territory is still a battleground for political and military control. Mid-January, the Czechoslovak forces are about to control the demarcation line under the command of Italian officers. But still, at that time, political and material problems surrounding the real control of the territory are hardly overlapped (and won't be for almost a semester). This paper intends to observe and analyze this short period of time (February–June 1919) when the material and psychological consequences of World War I cumulate with a weak legitimacy of the (Czecho)Slovak authorities, multiple material obstacles and the lack of experience of the so-called government in Bratislava. Those uncertainties are cruelly reminded in the personal–official and unofficial correspondence–of the main Slovak protagonists who describe a situation far from being controlled as the propaganda puts it. The paper is based on archives of Slovak National Archive, and namely the general Minister plenipotentiary fond, and some personal archives of the main political actors of that period in Slovakia (mostly Vavro Šrobár, Ivan Markovič, Pavel Blaho, Fedor Houdek, Anton Štefánek). We shall also use some elements of the Regional Military Command (ZVV) Košice available at the National Military Archiv, and notably the regional reports.

Keywords: Czechoslovakia, Slovakia, Upper Hungary, aftermath of World War I, Czechoslovak provisional government in Slovakia

Months after the proclamation of the Czechoslovak State in Prague on October 28, 1918, the Slovak territory[1] remained the theater of a battle for military and political control. Throughout this period, the priority for Czechoslovakia and the Slovak political and intellectual elites which supported the newly proclaimed state was solidly to anchor this territory to the new state, despite limited support and fragile political conditions.[2] First, the Czechoslovak claim to certain territories,

1 For the purposes of this article, I use the term "Slovakia" instead of "Upper Hungary," as the first expression is the only one used in the correspondence on which I have focused. The term refers to a territory which was not defined precisely, but which encompassed the land north of the demarcation line and/or the territory claimed by the Czechoslovak state at the Paris Peace Conference.

2 For a recent synthesis on this period, see Hronský, "Vznik Česko-Slovenska," 112–33; idem, *The Struggle for Slovakia*; Krajčovičová, "Začleňovanie Slovenska do Československej republiky." With different perspectives, see also Nurmi, *Slovakia: A Playground for Nationalism and National Identity*.

particularly those furthest east, was contestable and indeed contested. Second, the forces available in Slovakia to run the administration and take over from the Hungarian authorities were too few. Third, relations between Czechoslovak civilian authorities and the Italian military mission responsible for occupation of the territory were fraught with mutual mistrust. Last, like in most other regions of the former Habsburg Empire, the population faced worsened living conditions of all sorts, and this made the political situation fluid and unstable.

These difficulties and the uncertainties they created within the Czechoslovak apparatus in Slovakia are clear in the private and official correspondence of the main Slovak leaders of the time, who were responsible for administering the region from November 1918. In this article, we will primarily observe the correspondence between the Plenipotentiary, his "government," and the prefects he appointed. This correspondence will shed light on a few themes that structured the activity and influenced the hopes and fears of these authorities in the first six months after the war. This correspondence shows the consequences of the Great War for the territory, as well as the material and political obstacles to the assertion of Czechoslovak authority. After a general overview of the context of the efforts to take over the civilian institutions in Slovakia in autumn 1918, I consider the main difficulties encountered up until April of the following year, when Czechoslovak authority was endangered during the first weeks of the conflict with the Hungarian Republic of Councils.

The Immediate Problem of Taking Control of Slovakia

In the early days of November, the new government under Mihály Károlyi in Budapest did not specifically address the issue of the Kingdom's northern counties, where the Hungarian authorities only partially disappeared. The administrative apparatus was usable neither by Budapest, which had other urgent issues to address, nor by the Slovak National Council (SNR) in Turčiansky Svätý Martin (Turócszentmárton), which had been formed on October 30 and which struggled with its inexperience and lack of authority and political sway.[3]

From the very first days of November, serious problems arose concerning public order, and in many places, they broke down into armed conflicts and

3 An abundant literature is available. See Hronský, *Slovensko na rázcestí*; Krajčovičová, "Slovenská národná rada roku 1918"; Hronský, "Vznik a krátka činnosť druhej Slovenskej národnej rady"; Mlynárik, "Slovenská národná rada."

looting.[4] Often, the various local councils cooperated with the local authorities in an attempt to maintain order and ensure that supplies reached local people, who were often disoriented.[5] In the northeastern regions, Hungarian National Councils or Hungarian National Guards were assembled at the behest of the Budapest government. This happened most widely in the eastern part of the territory, but these bodies were also formed in some of the most densely Slovak-inhabited counties (like Orava [Árva], Turiec [Turóc], Liptov [Liptó], and even Turčiansky Svätý Martin, where a Hungarian National Guard was created on November 4, which contributed to maintaining political confusion through declarations in favor of autonomy). In response, National Councils and National Guards supported by the Slovak National Party (SNS) were formed in several towns.[6] In some places, these Councils managed to take control of the municipal administration, but disorder remained considerable and difficult to control.[7]

On November 4, the National Committee *(Národní výbor)* in Prague named a provisional government in Slovakia *(Československá dočasná vláda na Slovensku)*. Led by Vavro Šrobár, it was composed of three of the most reliable (and available) pro-Czechoslovak politicians: Ivan Dérer, Pavol Blaho, and Anton Štefánek.[8] Its task was to take control of the territory with the help of a few hundred soldiers. This provisional government (known as the "Skalica government," after the city where it had its first seat) managed to take control of the southwestern tip of

4 Medvecký, *Slovenský prevrat*, 3–186. The term *Prevrat*, used in this paper without translation, refers both to October 28, 1918 and to the revolutionary process that followed. *Revolution* and *takeover* are possible translations, but insufficiently encompass the specific use of *Prevrat* in Slovak. In Trnava, see Blaho, Rozpomienky na prevratové dni po západného Slovenska, SNA, Bratislava, of. Šrobár, box 23, inv. č. 1007. In T. S. Martin, see Vyzva SNR, November 4, 1918, LA SNK, 94 R 14. See also recent studies devoted to this question, and mainly Beneš, "'Zelené kádry' jako radikální alternative," and Szabó, "'Rabovačky' v závere prvej svetovej vojny."

5 For an illustration at Tisovec, see LA SNK, 80 H 3, Samuel Daxner: List Jánovi Ormisovi (v forme denníka životopis), 31.

6 Hronský, *Slovensko na rázcestí*, 99–100. See also SNA, Personal collection (of.). Dula, box 9, IVb/3, inv. č. 234/9. For a complete list of the members of the National Councils by county (drawn up between December 6 and 12, 1918), see LA SNK, 94 S 19, Zoznam členov SNR.

7 Hronský, *Slovensko na rázcestí*, Príloha VIII; Medvecký, *Slovenský prevrat,* 3–186. For Turiec, see LA SNK, sign. 166 D 1, Ivan Thurzo, Z práce a z obeti za národ (Rozpomienky) [Work and sacrifice for the nation, Memories], 510–11.

8 Janšák, *Vstup Slovákov medzi slobodné národy*, 71–77. Vavro Šrobár (1867–1951) was one of the first activists of the Czecho-Slovak mutuality in the 1890s. Dérer, Blaho and Štefánek belonged to the most active groups favoring Czecho-Slovak mutuality in the 1900s. More details in Boisserie, "Family networks and the 'generational key'," 114–27.

Slovakia, between the Moravian border and the area north of Bratislava (Pozsony).[9] A few towns were occupied, but resources were known to be insufficient to consider continuing as far as Bratislava.[10] The Czechoslovak troops did succeed, however, in following the river Váh (Vág) upstream and occupying part of it before reaching T. S. Martin. But the situation of the Czechoslovak civilian authorities in Slovakia soon became delicate. The situation varied among regions, but the weakness of the available forces was felt everywhere, raising immediate difficulties for the "liberators."[11] There were many pockets of resistance that were not limited to transport nodes like the Vrútky (Ruttka) railway hub, where the workers came essentially from the Hungarian Plain and which was beyond Czechoslovak control.[12] Initially, the position of the provisional government was fragile, but it was nonetheless more favorable than that of the Slovak National Council. The situation of the Skalica government grew increasingly complicated following the Belgrade armistice, which left the Hungarian Government free to govern the whole territory of the Kingdom, including regions which had been claimed by Czechoslovakia. The Skalica government did work, however, to keep or retake control, eventually reaching parts of the Moravian border. These operations left only a narrow, fragmented strip of land along the Moravian border under Czechoslovak control. Most situation reports sent to Šrobár at the time underlined the instability of the situation and detailed the provisional solutions aimed at ensuring the safety of the population.[13]

In Prague, the Revolutionary National Assembly met beginning on November 14. Two days later, Club of Slovak Deputies which had been formed within

9 For clarity's sake, we have chosen to use the name "Bratislava" here, which would officially be bestowed on the city a few weeks later. In the Slovak documents of the time, there was no single standard: the names Prešpurk or, more often, Prešporok were used most often, but Břetislava and Bratislava were also employed. About the naming of the city, see Bugge, "The Making of a Slovak City." See also Bartlová. "Transformácia administratívy v Bratislave." Some important aspects of the evolution of the city may also be read in van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*.

10 Hronský, "Vznik a krátka činnosť druhej Slovenskej národnej rady," 123 passim.

11 In Trnava (Nagyszombat), see Frndák, *Spomienky na vojnu a prevrat*, 55. See also SNA, BA, collection Československá dočasná vláda na Slovensku, 6–14.11.1918 [Čs. doč. vláda], sign. C, inv. č. 7. For Skalica (Szakolca), see Janšák, *Vstup Slovákov medzi slobodné národy*.

12 Šegľová, "Revolučná verejnosť v roku 1918."

13 See short situation reports (November14–22) for the cities of Zvolen [Zólyom], Banská Bystrica [Besztercebánya], Slovenská Lupča [Zólyomlipcse], Pod Brezová [Zólyombrézó], T. S. Martin, Vrútky, Liptovský Sväty Mikuláš [Liptószentmiklós], Žilina, [Zsolna], Čadca [Csáca], Trenčín [Trencsén], in SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 8, inv. č. 582, November 1918, Zprávy zo Slovenska. Hospodárske a politické [Reports from Slovakia. Economic and political situation].

it proclaimed the transfer of the competences of the SNR to the provisional assembly and the Czechoslovak government.[14] The SNR was marginalized by the second half of November.[15]

The situation in Slovakia raised further difficulties for the Czechoslovak authorities, which were also facing challenges in the Czech Lands. The question of the authority of civilian bodies was acute, and several obstacles complicated the issue of control of the demarcation line.

In early December, a bill was prepared on exceptional provisional measures in Slovakia.[16]

Slovakia (MPS). He arrived in Žilina (Zsolna) five days later, and he convened his government the next day.[17] While his presence in Žilina was a step forward from a Czechoslovak perspective, this government had no legitimacy in the eyes of the locals. There is no clearer demonstration of the difficulties facing the Czechoslovak provisional authorities than the tale of the night-time arrival of one of its key figures, Štefan Janšák, who was in charge of public works. His account is far from glorious: "[The government] set to work in its new seat inconspicuously. At the station, it was met by a single man. Dr. Brežný was afraid that the people of Žilina would protest against our arrival, so he led us towards the center through the side streets. In our worn coats, with battered, old-fashioned suitcases, we looked like traveling salesmen [...]. The hotels were in such a state [...] that we did not venture into them. Dr. Brežný spread us among various local families."[18]

14 Šrobár, *Osvobodené Slovensko*, 254. See also the most comprehensive study: Lipscher, "Klub slovenských poslancov."

15 LA SNK, Martin, Sign. 94 S 8, List výkonného výboru SNR… [Letter from the SNR Executive Committee…]. On concerns in Prague and tensions between Prague and Martin, see also Mlynárik, "Slovenská národná rada," 516–18.

16 Zákon 64/1918 o mimoriadných prechodných ustanoveniach na Slovensku, zo dňa 10. prosince 1918. SNA, BA, f. Československá dočasná vláda na Slovensku, 6–14.11.1918, k. 1, sign. B2, inv. č. 4. The act provided for the appointment of a Minister Plenipotentiary for the Administration of Slovakia and 14 government *referenti* for Slovakia. They had exclusive powers for the Slovak territory under the authority of the counterparts in Prague.

17 SNA, BA, f. Čs. doč. vláda, box 1, sign. B2, inv. č. 4, Správa z nasadnutia min. komisie (MPS) z 13.12.1918.

18 Janšák, *Vstup Slovákov medzi slobodné národy*, 99. See also I. Thurzo, LA SNK, sign. 166 D 1, Z práce a z obeti za národ (Rozpomienky), 582–84. For another type of report, see Šrobár, *Osvobodené Slovensko,* 371–72.

In his memoirs, Ivan Thurzo, then Secretary of the Slovak National Council, mentions another difficulty faced by the Skalica government. Šrobár "knew nothing of what had happened in Slovakia in the last few days," and, in particular, he knew nothing of the passage of the Mackensen army through Žilina, which had had an effect on the population far greater than the effect a few dozen Czechoslovak soldiers could have had.[19] Šrobár also faced a variety of challenges: making the civilian administration work, organizing supplies, and controlling the postal service, communications, and railways.[20] The doubt as to the solidity of Czechoslovak positions was also an obstacle for the members of his government.[21] In a report to Šrobár on the military situation after a tour by train, Fedor Houdek, *referent* in charge of National Defense, painted a picture of the uncertainty of the time:

> in Sučany and Turany [Nagyturány in Hungarian; situated a few kilometers east of T. S. Martin], we did not find any Czechoslovak army members. That was suspicious. The railway administration was occupied by old officials. Either they knew nothing or they did not want to tell us anything, so we learned very little from them. In Turany, the station manager is from Lisková, and he says Šrobár knows him.[22] He was not very well disposed to us, but you could read the fear in his eyes. Disoriented in the political situation, perhaps he feared the return of the Hungarians, and being too attentive to us could have damaged his position. I asked him if I could use the station telephone, and I contacted Ľubochňa [Fenyőháza] and then Ružomberok [Rozsahegy]. In both places, they were unable to tell me if there were Czechoslovak army elements ahead of us, and I could obtain no information from them on the possible presence of the Hungarian army.[23]

At the end of October, the decision was made provisionally to retain all legislation from the Dualist period. Minister Plenipotentiary Šrobár therefore had to reorganize the whole administration on that basis. The implementation of policies in the different sectors was carried out by government delegates

19 LA SNK, 166 D 1, I. Thurzo, Z práce a z obeti za národ (Rozpomienky), 582–84.

20 In his first telegram after arriving in Žilina, Šrobár reported the departure of 70 locomotives and almost all the carriages from the town before his arrival. SNA, BA, f. Čs. doč. vláda, box 1, sign. B2, inv. č. 4, Minister Šrobár na Slovensku…, S.d. 1918.

21 SNA, BA, f. Čs. doč. vláda, box 1, sign. B2, inv. č. 4, Zpráva zo zásadnutia min. komisie v Žiline, 13.12.1918.

22 Vavro Šrobár was born in the village of Lisková (Liszkofálu), in Liptov (Liptó) County.

23 Šrobár, *Osvobodené Slovensko*, 411–12.

chosen carefully by Šrobár from among men who were both experienced and reliable. The various lists available in the Šrobár papers indicate that, while appointments were not yet decided with certainty, he could rely on a group of some 20 close collaborators with long reputations in the Slovak patriotic milieu. Apart from them, the pool was limited, most notably for the administration.[24] In addition to the emergencies that Šrobár's "government" had to handle itself, an essential task was delegated to the prefects *(župani)* appointed in the different counties. Upon their appointment, they were to reorganize local and municipal administrations and ensure the Czechoslovak State's control over the territory. A shortlist of potential prefects had been drawn up before Šrobár's arrival in Slovakia,[25] but one of the difficulties was balancing the importance of presence in Prague and in the Slovak territory.[26]

In the days and weeks that followed, political uncertainty would be an obstacle to strengthening the pool of personnel on which the Šrobár government could. Several men reputed to be reliable cautiously declined the offer when contacted.[27] Šrobár's initial list had its limits. In his memoirs, Janšák sets out the problem in wider terms and highlights that the difficulties continued in early 1919. "Šrobár did his statistics before he even received answers from the people he had considered making the officers of this army of officials. When he informed them in writing that they were to take office, he encountered many refusals and much prevarication. Political insecurity in late 1918 and early 1919 and the risks attached to serving the new state were such that members of the older generations, especially fathers whose livelihood was assured (even if modest), preferred to wait and see which side fortune would ultimately favor."[28] Only in the early days of February were all the prefects definitively appointed.[29] But

24 SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 10, inv. č. 611, Zoznam kandidátov. On prior links between the men of the Šrobár government, see Boisserie, "Family networks and the 'generational key'." For recent global studies on Šrobár's period and the prefects, see Krajčovičová. "Vavro Šrobár," and Šuchová, "'Šrobárovi muži': vymenovanie prvých československých županov."

25 SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 9, inv. č. 607, Slovenskí župani – Návrh z 8.12.1918; SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 10, inv. č. 611, Menoslov slovenských katolíckych a evanjelických advokátov a juristov. See also LA SNK, Martin, C 903, Koncept návrhov na županov na Slovensku, 8 December 1918.

26 SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 9, inv. č. 607, "Slovenskí župani – Návrh z 8.12.1918."

27 For the example of Samuel Daxner (eventually appointed župan of Gemer-Malohont on 29 December 1918), see LA SNK, 80 H 12, Župa Gemer-Malohontská v dobe štátneho prevratu. See also Medvecký, *Slovenský prevrat,* 326.

28 Janšák, *Vstup Slovákov medzi slobodné národy*, 160.

29 See the comprehensive study of Xenia Šuchová, "'Šrobárovi muži': Vymenovanie prvých slovenských županov." See also some aspects of this question in Krajčovičová, "Vavro Šrobár."

some of them, like Otokar Jamnický in Komárno (Komárom), were only able to take office a few weeks later.[30] It was sometimes impossible for them to exercise genuine authority. In Hont County, for example, the prefect's position remained very unstable until April, when the appointment of Milutin Sahulčík enabled the establishment of a fledgling Czechoslovak authority.[31] In his activity report published at the end of the year, the prefect of Hont recalled that "because of the complete lack of Slovak officials in the county seat, the prefect [author's note: then Lehotský] could not carry out his functions, and old Hungarian officials continued to govern." Only in late April could his successor establish his authority in some districts of the county.[32]

If the Žilina government faced these kinds of difficulties in the first half of December, this was also because the diplomatic and military situation remained disordered and uncertain. On December 9, the Czechoslovak Supreme Military Command in Prague published the "directive for the occupation of Slovakia," which was to be carried out by the Czechoslovak army in Italy. Units of volunteers were tasked with securing the major transit routes and borders with Poland and occupying the interior of the territory. The last stage of this first phase of the occupation of Slovakia met with mixed results. The reports sent to Šrobár during the second half of December indicated multiple material difficulties, including food and/or coal shortages in several towns and regions, and the impossibility of installing a nascent administrative apparatus in certain towns. On January 7, 1919, Matej Metod Bella, who had been in charge of supplies for a few weeks, reported that "although we have appointed prefects, the administrations are not working."[33]

However, after two months of great difficulties, some form of Czechoslovak civilian and military authority had been established over the territory. But when the peace conference opened in Paris, difficulties remained considerable—

30 Jamnický, "Z veľkých udalostí historickej doby prevratu," 119.

31 Šťavnica – Hontianská župa – navrh na vymenování Sahulčíka za župana. SNA, BA, fond MPS, box 255.

32 Zpráva župana o politickej a administratívnej situácii župy Hontianskej koncom roku 1919. SNA, BA, fond MPS, box 5, Sign. Prez. II/2, inv. č. 328. For similar problems in Gemer-Malohont County, where the whole of the county's central administration refused to swear allegiance. See SNA, BA, fond MPS, box 255. Tisovce župan. Vymenování župana a úředníků, Tisovec, letter of the Prefect to Vavro Šrobár,12 April 1919, and one month later, the report of the newly appointed Prefect, Ján Jesenský, to the *referent* for internal affairs: "ay župa – zpráva o poměroch", 24 May 1919. SNA, BA, fond MPS, box 255. For a wider overview on this question, see mainly Šuchová, "'Šrobárovi muži.'"

33 Šrobár, *Osvobodené Slovensko*, 427.

and they would increase throughout the spring, as the Slovak authorities faced resistances and insufficiencies that they were unable to overcome in such a short space of time.

Some resulted directly from the weakness of the authority exercised, while others, which were occasional but not unimportant, affected the eastern regions close to the demarcation line or were linked to disruption in certain sectors such as transport and supplies.[34] The overall difficulties were a hindrance to exercising genuine civilian authority beyond Bratislava and western Slovakia, as well as to coordinating this civilian authority with the military authority handled by the Italian military mission since the December 1918 agreement.[35]

Italian-Slovak Tensions and Their Impact in Slovakia

During the construction phase of the Czechoslovak military apparatus, Czechoslovakia's own forces were insufficient, and it had to rely on its allies for support. The main Slovak leaders in Slovakia were acutely aware of these needs. Initially, Italy expressed the most willingness to serve this function. In November, Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš had negotiated an agreement in principle for the Czechoslovak troops of France and Italy to be transferred to Czechoslovakia.[36] It soon became clear that the French were reluctant, while the Italians were more inclined to go ahead with the transfer swiftly.[37] The agreement reached in mid-December was quickly implemented. There were now Czechoslovak units (around 7,000 men) in Slovakia under the command of Colonel František Schöbl. Over the course of the month, these men took back the main cities claimed by the Czechoslovak state. But their behavior was criticized in all quarters, including by the Czechoslovak Defense Minister himself, Václav Klofáč, and by the Italian commanders who reported back to Luigi Piccione, Supreme commander of the Czechoslovak army in Slovakia.[38] However, the Czechoslovak army deployed gradually along the demarcation line, and reinforcements came regularly.

But in the first weeks of 1919, tensions emerged between Rome and Prague, and relations between the Italian military authorities and the Šrobár government

34 See Krajčovičová, "Dva ťaživé problémy Úradu ministra." See also Samuel Zoch's warning regarding the supply of coal in his report on the supply situation in Bratislava and the whole county (Modra, 7 January 1919), in *Od Uhorského kráľovstva*, 153–54 (doc. 61), 160 (doc. 65), and 222 (doc. 101).

35 *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky.*

36 Beneš, *Světová válka a naše revoluce,* 506–8 (doc. 204).

37 Klípa, "Italská vojenská mise," 30–32.

38 Ibid., 42–43.

broke down rapidly. This had an impact on the situation in Slovakia. Ivan Markovič, Secretary of the Foreign Ministry specifically in charge of political and legal affairs reporting to Šrobár, underlined this in a report to Beneš sent in the first days of February:

> In Slovakia, the attitude of the Italian officers is making waves. [...] I do not want to go into detail, because I would only be telling you what I have heard, without evidence, and you would not be able to conclude anything much from it. In short, the Italians are acting as if they had not recognized our sovereignty, particularly in the Magyarized towns. In particular, they are saying that it is not yet certain that these towns (Prešporok, Lučenec, Komárno, Nitra) will be ours. That comes across in the administration (in Nitra, the Italian colonel has not allowed us to raise our flags on the county administration building so as not to upset the Hungarian population).[39]

These conflicts heightened following the government's move from Žilina to Bratislava in early February, and serious incidents occurred in the following days, including during the great demonstration of February 12, killing eight and injuring around 20.[40] The Italians were now said to be favorable to the Hungarians. Their behavior was the subject of numerous complaints to the Czechoslovak authorities,[41] and some of the most criticized officers were replaced. This tension between Italy and Czechoslovakia remained a point of constant tension until the departure of the Italian military mission at the end of May. It came on top of the shortage of available human resources, insufficiently compensated for by the contribution of Czech volunteers, which was organized spontaneously and informally in November 1918 before being made systematic.[42]

This policy of sending Czechs had its limits: the pool of personnel was small, and the chaotic conditions in Slovakia did not help. In several regions, reports

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39 Letter from Markovič to Beneš, Prague, [before 10] February 1919. SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 8. See Boisserie, "'Situácia," 276–77.

40 Šrobár, *Oslobodené Slovensko,* 29–31. For the measures taken by Defence Minister Klofáč, see Opis č. 3641, 4 February 1919, Vojenský historický ústav, Bratislava. VHÚ, collection Zemské Vojenské Veliteľstvo (ZVV) Košice, Presidium 1919, box 2, prez. č. 267/1919.

41 See for example SNA, BA, of. Milan Rastislav Štefánik, box 39, inv. č. 1235 in the case of Lučenec (Losonc) or, more generally in the recriminations and with a detailed description of several series of incidents, same collection, inv. č. 1249.

42 For December 1918, see SNA, BA, of. Pavol Blaho, box 40, inv. č. 1509. The pay problem of Czech officials in Slovakia was addressed from March 1919. See SNA, BA, fond MPS, box 255, 156/1919 prez. Adm, Opatření politického úřednictva, 22 March 1919.

from the prefects highlighted fragile political and social conditions.[43] Other factors were not conducive to increasing the number of volunteers, including the prevailing financial conditions, as pay was markedly lower than in the Czech Lands,[44] and professional questions, as some professions were better suited than others to being exercised in communities in which there were Hungarian majorities and which were reputedly hostile.[45] Other difficulties were merely material and linked to the difficulty of billeting the men. These factors together explain the particular profile of most Czech volunteers in Slovakia: relatively qualified men who were young and unmarried, and who often mentioned pre-war Slovakophilia and/or had personal ties or friendships with Slovaks close to the new regime.[46] Despite this contribution, staff shortages still affected all areas of the administration in early April, including the judicial apparatus, where the situation was soon considered acute.[47] Even as late as April, Juraj Slávik in Prague noted that only three courts were totally controlled by the Czechoslovak authorities, in Banská Bystrica (Besztercebánya), Ružomberok, and Levoča (Lőcse), while others, such as in Nitra (Nyitra), had had to be closed.[48] Šrobár made a wider, sharper report to Piccione on April 10, after having received authorization to occupy the territories north of the demarcation line: "I reminded him of the difficulties we would face *if we were to* occupy the country: supplies, the shortage of specialists and reliable people, administration, justice, railways, and the postal service. We have no teachers (...) and not even enough soldiers to hold a long border."[49] In addition to these administrative problems, there were also more political difficulties that the Czechoslovak administration in Slovakia

43 See SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 10, inv. č. 619 for the reports from February 1919 in Novohrad County and Igor Hrušovský's report for the Žilina region.

44 For a global overview on the question, see Krajčovičová, "Českí zamestnanci v štátnych službách na Slovensku."

45 Markovič to Beneš, Prague, 15 April 1919. SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 10.

46 These were the primary characteristics of those who directly approached the Czechoslovak authorities in Slovakia. SNA, BA, of. Blaho, box 40, inv. č. 1509. The first Czech officials sent to Slovakia had an atypical profile compared to the dozens of volunteers who approached Pavol Blaho. A detailed list of 64 of them sent to Slovakia in December 1918 highlights that they are relatively experienced men: 40 were over 40, and 15 were over 50. Moreover, 53 were married and 38 had children. SNA, BA, fond MPS, box 255, Status zem. kanc. úřed. české národnosti.

47 Markovič to Beneš, Prague, February 23, 1919. SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 10.

48 Porada županů a poslanců ve dnech 11–13/4/19. Odbor soudnictví. Referent Dr. Dérer. SNA, BA, fond MPS, box 255. See also Markovič's report to Beneš, Prague, 15 April 1919. SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 20.

49 Šrobár, *Oslobodené Slovensko,* 114. (Underlined by Šrobár.)

struggled to resolve. Some of these difficulties were provoked by the attitude of the Slovak authorities themselves, particularly in early1919.

The Government's Move to Bratislava and Internal Political Difficulties

From the *Prevrat* onwards, the city of Bratislava experienced a distinctive evolution as regards the territory potentially attached to Czechoslovakia. This attachment had initially been very strongly opposed among the German and Hungarian elites, before a form of accord was reached with the former. In the last days of 1918, the situation might appear to have calmed, but from the beginning of January and until the government's arrival in Bratislava, the situation worsened in the city, particularly because of the decisions made by the Slovak government as it prepared its arrival. These measures contradicted the promises that had been made in the autumn, which had helped defuse the acute political opposition of the first weeks following the *Prevrat*. A few decisions made in late December had already appeared counterproductive. Railway employees who did not speak Slovak had been dismissed, as had those who had refused to swear allegiance to the government.[50] In the days that followed, social allowances for the unemployed were reduced. Some workers were no longer paid, supplies became more difficult to assure, and the administration seemed to struggle to find a solution to material problems. The major difficulty faced by the Slovak authorities throughout the first half of the year remained supplies. The creation in January 1919 of a Supplies Department for Slovakia *(Zásobovací ústav pro Slovensko)* was supposed to help coordinate all activities. But it did not resolve the management and control difficulties that were creating tensions and serious concerns.[51] Food stores in particular were looted, without the law enforcement forces (which were both insufficient in numbers and unreliable) putting an end to it. Moreover, disagreements between the Czechoslovak civilian administration and the Italian military authorities were now an open secret. In mid-January, the Slovak authorities still seemed optimistic about the situation in the city, but the situation went downhill fast.[52] In the end, when Šrobár arrived in the city, there

50 Šrobár, *Osvobodené Slovensko*, 439. See recently: Luther, *Bratislava česko-slovenská,* 44–56.

51 Report of the Conference of Prefects and Deputies, 9–10 March 1919 in Šrobár, *Oslobodené,* 144–45.

52 For a rather optimistic analysis of the situation, see Report of the Prefect Samuel Zoch to Šrobár, January 17, 1919, in *Od Uhorského kráľovstva,* (doc. 83), 87. On the worsening of the situation and the interruption of several economic sectors because of a continuing shortage of coal, see Úradne osvedčenie župan Zoch, 2 February 1919, ibid. (doc. 104), 228.

was an atmosphere of open hostility. The crowd that greeted him was essentially made up of Slovaks from the surrounding area who had been brought in for the occasion. The inhabitants of Bratislava ostensibly did not take part in these festivities. Šrobár had to contend with an insufficient, unreliable administration and a shortage of housing for the new arrivals, as well as scarce coal for the economic apparatus because of the priority accorded to transport, and the need to disarm the railway workers and some postal service personnel. The strikes in February demonstrated the importance of taking control of several administrations, including the railways.[53] In the following weeks and months, more than 450 administrative staff and 2,500 railway workers were sent from the Czech Lands to replace employees who had refused to pledge allegiance to the new state and had been dismissed.

The new government also made repeated errors of judgment. Poor decisions included the closure of the city's university after the refusal of the professors to take part in the festivities for the government's arrival in the city.[54] These tensions came on top of recurrent problems in relations with the civilian population in other regions. In early February, several reports from prefects noted a very unstable and dangerous situation for the Slovak authorities in regions close to the demarcation line.[55] The normal functioning of the administration was endangered and the weakness of the Czechoslovak military presence had led to fatal incidents in a few towns.[56] Two weeks later, Markovič summarized the government's difficulties to Beneš, noting the persistent challenges faced by the civilian administration: "In Slovakia, the situation is more difficult than it was. The Hungarians continued committing provocative acts, especially among officials, and this has led to a general strike. It has above all affected the railways and the postal service, where the largest number of Hungarians and Magyarons work. Luckily, it did not break out everywhere at once, which has allowed us to

53 Van Duin, "Vavro Šrobár, bratislavský štrajk."

54 On February 9, Markovič, Secretary of the Foreign Ministry of the Czechoslovak government, who had recently been given responsibility for liaison with Šrobár, sent the latter a message from President Masaryk: "The University of Prešporok should not have been closed. That is an attack against a cultural institution. Particularly sensitive. It was a tactical error to ask the professors to welcome the government when it was predictable that they would refuse." Message from Masaryk to Šrobár, February 9, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 7. See also Samuel Zoch's decision, in *Od Uhorského kráľovstva,* (doc. 93), 211. And his explanation to Šrobár (14 February), *Bratislava hlavné mesto Slovenska*, 281–82.

55 See in particular, for Novohrad County: Ľudovít Bazovský's reports to Šrobár of February 3 and 5, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 10, inv. č. 619.

56 Letter from Markovič to Beneš, Prague, [before 10] February 1919. SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 8.

gradually and fairly swiftly paralyze it by bringing in Czech personnel. Today, the trains are running more or less as regularly—or rather, irregularly—as before."[57]

Uncertainty on Borders and the Issue of the Circulation of Information

The other immediate difficulty was the lack of information available to Šrobár.[58] And when information did circulate, it was not precise enough for measures to be taken in Slovakia. In his report dated March 11, Fedor Houdek, who was close to the men of the government in Slovakia and a member of the Czechoslovak delegation to the peace conference and who had been in touch with Šrobár for a few days, reported with a touch of disappointment and anger that he could "still not give any positive information on the final settlement of the borders."[59] This problem of information circulation would persist. It was an increasing source of concern as the situation worsened in Slovakia, and the contradictory information available in Prague soon gave Markovič a sentiment of discomfort, which he expressed to Beneš in early April.[60] At that time, the little information Šrobár had received from Houdek dated back to early April and was not very encouraging: there was nothing on borders, there was an atmosphere of secrecy in Paris, and the Wilsonian position "of optimistic humanism... does more harm than good." His general assessment of the overall situation was pessimistic: "For us, the danger has never been greater than it is now, and it will be greater still in the near future."[61]

In the meantime, in February and March, Markovič visited Bratislava, where he would spend several days before heading to Budapest. While he participated in several conferences aimed at asserting Czechoslovak authority,[62] he sent

57 Letter from Markovič to Beneš, 23 February 1919. SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1 inv. č. 10. In Slovak, see Boisserie, "Situácia," 279. In several regions, prefects' reports highlighted the fragility of social and political conditions. SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 10, inv. č. 619, for the February 1919 reports.

58 Šrobár, *Oslobodené Slovensko,* 146. This acute problem was also reported by Markovič to Beneš between February and May: letters from Markovič to Beneš, Prague, February 23, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 10; March 13, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 14; April 7, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 18.

59 Zpráva 7 Fedora Houdka Vavrovi Šrobárovi, Paris, March 11, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 10, inv. č. 623.

60 Boisserie, "Situácia," 280.

61 Zpráva 11 Fedora Houdka Vavrovi Šrobárovi, Paris, April 1, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 10, inv. č. 623.

62 *Slovenský denník*, February 25, 1919, p. 3, March 4, 1919, p. 2, March 6, 1919, p. 3, and March 8, 1919, pp. 2–3.

reports to Beneš that were frankly optimistic as to the situation in the country. He had only just arrived when he sent a report on February 23, in which he offered the following conclusion: "I would not like my report to give you the impression that the conditions here are untenable. They are not. The people are generally showing calm and maturity, but the situation is worsening [...], the administration is working very poorly because there are not enough officials. In brief, the situation in Slovakia is not yet critical, but it is difficult, and it could become critical if the current uncertainty were to last even longer."[63] One month later, the effects of long-term uncertainty on the borders seemed to worsen due to effective Hungarian propaganda: "The Hungarians are still acting as if there were no doubt as to the territorial integrity of the Kingdom being upheld. That can be seen in several of their decisions and in the insinuations made by their press and agitators. And the masses are totally intoxicated by this hashish."[64]

The uncertainty faced at the time by the Šrobár government and its administration was combined with political difficulties on various levels. These were linked in particular to the religious issue and the attitude of the politically organized Slovak Catholic faction. This fraction had organized in November 1918 around a priest from Ružomberok who was a figurehead of the Catholic faction of the national movement before the war: Andrej Hlinka.[65] This Catholic faction, gathered within a Slovak People's Party (SĽS), soon opposed Šrobár's authority.[66] The religious conflict which had marked the last years before the war was revived and amplified by the measures taken by the Interior Ministry in January 1919 to restrict freedom of assembly.[67] These measures attracted much public criticism throughout February and March.[68] In the context of the time, this agitation, described as "anti-Czech" by the authorities in Prague, was a constant source of concern. However, it was considered potentially less dangerous than

63 Letter from Markovič to Beneš, Bratislava, February 23, 1919. SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 10.

64 Letter from Markovič to Beneš, March 13, 1919. SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 14.

65 Výzva A. Hlinku na založenie…, 10. november 1918 [Appeal of Andrej Hlinka for the creation of…, November 10, 1918]. SNA, BA, of. Hlinka, box 21, inv. č. 976. On Catholic agitation and the attitude of Hlinka, see Kramer, *Slovenské autonomistické hnutie.* See also Rychlík, *Češi a Slováci ve 20. století,* 75–79. More recently, Holec. *Hlinka: Otec národa,* 138–56.

66 Zápisnica z porady výkonného výboru, 28. novembra 1918. SNA, BA, of. Hlinka, box 21, inv. č. 977.

67 Memorandum, January 21, 1919. SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 10, inv. č. 613.

68 The sessions of the Club of Slovak Deputies echoed those tensions in February. See mainly "Zápisnica schôdzky Klubu slovenských poslancov, dňa 27. Februára 1919," in *Zápisnice Klubu slovenských poslancov,* 148–51. See also Pavol Blaho's request to Šrobár (March 26, 1919) for the creation of a Catholic periodical that would enhance Czechoslovak sentiment and serve the new State. SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 10, inv. č. 613.

the supply problems, which had become acute.[69] In the first weeks of spring, the accumulation of material difficulties, political agitation involving the main leaders of the different Slovak factions, and the imperfect implantation of an embryonic administration supported by Czechs came to a head.[70]

In addition to this tense intra-Slovak context, the attitude of the Hungarian population also raised difficulties.[71] Writing from Bratislava, Ivan Markovič underlined the most important aspects in a letter to Beneš in the first half of March.[72] He reported the fear of incidents during the commemoration of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence on March 15 and the rumored armed uprisings, notably in Bratislava and Košice (Kassa), where exceptional security measures were taken.[73] In Košice, the command of the 6th Infantry Division asked General Schöbl to ensure that all contact between officers and the civilian population was avoided in the days following the banned festivities.[74] In Prague meanwhile, Prime Minister Karel Kramář was worried about the authorities' ability to control the situation.[75]

Persistent Weaknesses and the "Kun Effect"

The impacts of the material difficulties and strategic situation of Slovakia both before and after Béla Kun came to power in Hungary were a source of concern. In early March, Markovič informed Beneš of the recurrent agitation provoked by the scarcity of food and other essentials and the lack of work. "This shortage is definitely a good means of agitating against the Czechs and the army, which is 'starving' Slovakia," he wrote. No doubt used to modest goals,

69 Letter dated March 13, 1919. SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 14. On this meeting, see also *Slovenský Denník*, March 5, 1919, "Bratislavské porady," and *Slovenský Denník,* March 6, 1919, "Politická situácia na Slovensku."

70 Boisserie, "Situácia," 281–82. See also the report of Milan Ivanka, referent for internal affairs during the Council of April 11–13, 1919. SNA, BA, fond MPS, box 255, and an illustration in the Nitra County: letter from Igor Hrušovský to Vavro Šrobár, March 26, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 10, inv. č. 619.

71 Among recent studies on the subject, see Nurmi, *A Playground*; Michela, *Pod heslom integrity*.

72 See for example letters of March 6 and 13, 1919. SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 12 and 14. On this subject, see also the resolution adopted by the members of the Club of Slovak Deputies on February 27 1919, *Slovenský Denník*, March 5, 1919, "Za očistu nášho politického života."

73 Letter from Markovič to Beneš, March 6, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 12. For the measures adopted by Šrobár, see Výnos MPS, 1131/1919 adm., March 6, 1919. VHÚ, BA, ZVV Košice, Presidium 1919, box 3, inv. č. 613.

74 VHÚ, BA, ZVV Košice, Presidium 1919, box 3, inv. č. 7854.

75 Letter from Kramář to Masaryk, Paris, February 28, 1919, in *Korespondence T. G. Masaryk – Karel Kramář*, 330.

he did consider, however, that "the machinery is just about functioning"[76] and that, while the stability of the Czechoslovak authorities remained fragile, the reliability of certain bodies that had long been questionable (for instance the police) was gradually improving, and anti-Czech agitation persisted in a less radical form. But less than two weeks later, while reporting a calm situation, he did note that, in some places, this calm could transform into a rebellion were the Czechoslovak authorities to show an insufficiently firm hand.[77] The situation in Eastern Slovakia and Ruthenia particularly captured the attention of the Slovak authorities, which were informed of the multiple difficulties encountered. The material situation there was constantly described as even more unfavorable than in other regions. In March, acute supply difficulties became a problem again. During the Conference of Prefects and Deputies meeting of mid-April in Bratislava, the *referent* for supplies, Matej Bella, reported that the situation had at that stage "reached a point where there were fears of collapse." The situation was still seen as critical by some, meaning only "the most basic needs" could be fulfilled.[78] This situation raised fears of the population turning to Bolshevism in a region suffering endemic poverty and where the Czechoslovak ability to run a civilian administration encountered the most recurrent problems. Judging from the report by prefect Ladislav A. Moyš on the situation in Užhorod County in early May, this problem persisted throughout the period: "So far, we have been forced to run the administration, the justice system, etc. with officials from the old regime insofar as it is better to have poor staff than no staff at all."[79]

Evidence indicates that the change in regime in Hungary and the Kun offensive had a positive impact on the authority of the Czechoslovak state. The fears inspired by the Kun regime in certain categories of the population, which had hitherto been either silently or overtly hostile to the Czechoslovak State, helped limit the destabilization of the Czechoslovak authorities, particularly

76 Letter from Markovič to Beneš, March 6, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 12.

77 Letter from Markovič to Beneš, March 26, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 15. On the same topic, see the report on Šrobár's foreword in Porada županů, April 11–13, 1919, SNA, BA, fond MPS, box 255.

78 Porada županů a poslanců ne dnech 11–13/4/19. Odbor zásobování. Referent Dr. Bella. SNA, BA, fond MPS, box 255.

79 VHÚ, BA, ZVV Košice, Presidium 1919, box 4, inv. č. 1496. For the memories of prefect Moyš, see Ladislav A. Moyš: Jeho účinkovanie počas vojny, počas prevratu a po prevrate, SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 26, inv. č. 1096. At that time, Užhorod County included part of the eastern part of the Slovak territory, as it was eventually delimited in the following years.

in Bratislava,[80] and criticism of the authorities became less audible. Reports converged in this vein to the extent that President Masaryk wrote in a rather satisfied tone to Beneš: "Hungarian bolshevism has helped us a lot in Slovakia: many Hungarians and Magyarons now see us as their salvation."[81] Markovič, meanwhile, mentioned certain segments of the population to which he referred as the *majetnejšie neslovenské triedy* (non-Slovak property-owning classes), for whom personal security and wealth were more important than the integrity of the Kingdom of Hungary and whose relations with the Czechoslovak authorities were now "generally better."[82] But the eastern sector remained an exception. Hungarian propaganda allegedly was exerting a growing influence over the population, who lived in a state of great deprivation, regardless of creed or nationality.[83]

Setting aside the special case of the eastern regions, which were fragile in the long term, early April saw the beginning of a general improvement in supplies and a gradual strengthening of the administration.[84] In certain sectors important to the new regime, such as schools, the population was not spontaneously welcoming with the new arrivals, even in regions with Slavic majorities. This school issue was, along with that of the judicial institutions, one of the difficult points to address across the territory.[85] In his report to the Conference in mid-April, the *referent* for school affairs, Anton Štefánek, reported that the opposition of Hungarian teachers to the new regime had grown in the first weeks of spring, and he announced the decision to close all schools that did not have a Czechoslovak teaching "corps" *(Sbor československý)* early, underlining the importance of triggering a "great cleansing of schools from the national point of view."[86]

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80 Letter from Markovič to Beneš, April 7, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 18.

81 Šolle, *Masaryk a Beneš ve svých dopisech*, 204.

82 See for example letters from Markovič to Beneš, April 7, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 18) and April 15, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 20, and the identical assessment in *Slovenský Denník*: Štefan Janšák, "Verejné práce na Slovensku," April 8, 1919, and especially "Minister Šrobár precestuje...," April 11, 1919.

83 See for example the report from the command of the Užhorod (Ungvár) garrison for the week of April 7–13, 1919, VHÚ, BA, ZVV Košice, presidium 1919, box 4, inv. č. 1222.

84 See in particular Vrchní velitelství čs-slov. vojsk na Slovensku, 361/op, Materiální situace, Kroměříž, March 8, 1919, příloha č. 6, VHÚ, ZVV Bratislava, Presidium 1919, box 3, inv. č. 683.

85 On the difficulties of establishing a Slovak education system, see SNA, BA, of. Anton Štefánek, box 10, inv. č. III/2, Veselé a tragikomické príhody v prvých dňoch oslobodeného Slovenska. For the very difficult case of Košice, see VHÚ, ZVV Bratislava, Presidium 1919, box 3, inv. č. 879 and 951.

86 Porada županů a poslanců ne dnech 11–13/4/19, Odbor školství. Referent Dr. Štefánek. SNA, BA, fond MPS, box 255.

Despite persistent military difficulties, most civilian and military reports from this period mention a slight improvement in the situation, for which there were multiple causes. The attitude of the population now seemed more favorable to the Czechoslovak authorities, even if tensions persisted in certain regions, including in the west, such as in Nitra or Štiavnica. The general improvement in the food situation in April and early May helped strengthen the position of the Czechoslovak civilian authorities.[87] Control of the railways and postal service had improved since the strikes had begun to subside in mid-March, but the worry provoked by the serious shortage of personnel to replace the previous administration remained high. It was in this context, which remained unstable, that the Czechoslovak army began a new phase in the conflict with the Hungarian Republic of Councils. Their initial victories gave way to a rout that shed light on the army's endemic fragilities.[88] It lacked means of transport and communication, its supplies were poor, it was ill-equipped, and it was weakened by a discipline more unreliable than ever and overt defiance of the Italian officers. A flurry of reports underlined the role played by the Italian officers in the moral breakdown of the Czechoslovak army.[89] Moreover, during this Hungarian counteroffensive, part of the state apparatus also showed its fragility.[90] Considerable pressure had to be applied to Hungary for the authorities to be able to take back and assert control of the territory from the beginning of July.

Conclusion

The failure of the Czechoslovak authorities to take quick control of the territories in question and the local administrations and the material uncertainties this failure caused undermined the Czechoslovak position.[91] At the beginning of the summer of 1919, Markovič was even more pessimistic than he had been

87 See the weekly report by the Bratislava command for April 7–13, 1919, VHÚ, BA, ZVV Košice, presidium 1919, box 4, inv. č. 1221; similarly, in Lučenec (Situation report of the garrison command for the third week of April, same collection, inv. č. 1265) and in Banská Bystrica (Situation report dated April 27, same collection, inv. č. 1363). For the case of Nitra, see in particular MNO to ZVV Košice, April 18, 1919, 10743/11, VHÚ, BA, ZVV Košice, Presidium 1919, box 4, inv. č. 1252, and Igor Hrušovský's report, Žilina, March 26, 1919, SNA, BA, of. Šrobár, box 10, inv. č. 619.

88 Hronský, "Priebeh vojenského konfliktu."

89 See in particular Výňatek ze zpravod. hlášení pos. vel. v Košicích ze dne 20.5.1919, VHÚ, BA, ZVV Košice, Presidium 1919, k. 4, prez. 1658.

90 Details in Boisserie, "'Markovič zdeluje…'"

91 Hronský. "K problémom konsolidácie a bezpečnosti Slovenska."

in the months before. He observed that the conditions were "beyond doubt worse than they were after the *Prevrat* [...]. Not so much because of a lack of will or because of any particular resistance, but because of the demoralization and general apathy of people, worn down by five years of war."[92] This observation in the summer was confirmed at the end of December 1919 in the Minister Plenipotentiary's report on the situation in Slovakia, which warned against "the slightest optimism," which it contended would be "inappropriate and dangerous" given the major difficulties the Czechoslovak authority continued to face, particularly in the four southern and eastern counties (Komárno, Hont, Gemer, and Abaujtorna).[93] Most of difficulties were familiar from the previous period: the Hungarian threat, the apathy of the Slovak population, the fragility of the administration, and occasional tensions between the army and the civilian population in regions close to the Danube River or the Hungarian border, as well as in eastern regions.

It took several more months to structure the administration, this time employing resources from the Czech Lands and local Slovak elites and/or pre-Prevrat civil servants in some regions.[94] But in many districts, particularly in the south and east, control remained incomplete. This administrative and political fragility of the Czechoslovak authority amplified the supply problems driven by the destruction and disorganization of the war against Hungary, which remained considerable.

Moreover, ahead of the legislative elections of spring 1920, Slovak internal political divisions (the early signs of which were observable from November 1918) intensified, as did the power struggles between the SNR and the Club of Slovak Deputies and the tensions between the authority of the Minister Plenipotentiary and political Catholicism. The Czechoslovak government in Slovakia addressed these difficulties through a policy of authoritarian control, taking measures to restrict the freedom of the press and the freedom of movement and using propaganda. Despite a few episodes of social conflict, the new absence of an external threat and the fatigue of the population helped stabilize Czechoslovak authority in the first months of 1920.

92 Letter from Markovič to Beneš, July 29, 1919. SNA, BA, of. Markovič, box 1, inv. č. 63.

93 Situační zpráva ze Slovenska ode dne 8./XII. do dne 21./XII., Bratislava, December 28, 1919. SNA, BA, fond MPS, box 5, Sign. Prez. II 1, inv. č. 328.

94 In the case of Bardejov (Bártfa), for example, see Szeghy-Gayer, "Államfordulat és az újrastrukturálódó helyi elit Bártfán."

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Summer of 1919: A Radical, Irreversible, Liberating Break in Prekmurje/Muravidék?*

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In this article, I examine political, cultural and social circumstances in Prekmurje/Muravidék after its occupation by Yugoslav forces in August 1919. Since the mid-19th century, Slovene national activists in Cislanthania had considered this part of the Kingdom of Hungary as a territory densely populated by Slovene compatriots and therefore as an integral part of Slovene national space. Drawing on this belief, in 1919 Slovene officials, politicians, and journalists celebrated the act of occupation of Hungarian territory as an event that brought to the end of Hungarian oppression to the locals and with it a radical, irreversible and liberating break with the past. By examining archival sources and secondary literature, I confront the victorious Slovene discourse with the reality on the ground. In addition, I also assess how a set of administrative ruptures and legislative changes imposed by the Yugoslav government in the immediate post-1919 period influenced the everyday lives and experiences of the local population.

Keywords: Prekmurje, Muravidék, Treaty of Trianon, transition, transformation, imperial legacies

On August 12, 1919, military units of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes crossed the border with the Kingdom of Hungary and occupied segments of two counties, Vas (Železna in Slovenian) and Zala. Several weeks before that, the occupation had been sanctioned at the Peace Conference in Paris. To be more precise, in early July 1919, the Council of Heads of the four great powers' included this small fragment of land in the very west of Hungary in the package of territorial compensations promised to Yugoslavia in exchange for Yugoslav participation in the military overthrow of the Hungarian Soviet Republic.[1] The Yugoslav territorial acquisition of Prekmurje was confirmed a year later with the signing of the Treaty of Trianon. With the exception of a short interruption during World War II, Prekmurje, as the region is officially known in Slovenian

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1 In this text, I use the shorter term "Yugoslavia" to describe the polity that was officially known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

(Muravidék in Hungarian), has been under Slovenian administrative control ever since.

The sudden July decision to hand over the territory of soon-to-become Prekmurje to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes came as a surprise, even though the Yugoslav Peace Delegation had laid claim to Prekmurje soon after the diplomats started to convene in Paris at the beginning of the year. According to the statements made by Slovenian members of the Yugoslav delegation, the linguistic and ethnographic facts unambiguously confirmed the region's Slovenian character. To build a political strategy on language and cultural markers was a common practice among Central European diplomats competing for contested areas at the Paris Peace Conference.[2] Yet in contrast to many territorial disputes that broke out after the collapse of Central European empires, the claim for Prekmurje did not require the Yugoslav diplomats and experts to engage in creative reasoning based on hastily compiled ethnographic and linguistic "facts." On the contrary, in this particular case, Yugoslav diplomats could base their request for territorial rearrangement on "solid" evidence which had already been gathered. Since the late nineteenth century, Slovenian national activists, ethnographers, linguists, and writers living in the Austrian part of the Dual Monarchy had been accumulating extensive knowledge about the Slavophone community densely inhabiting western Hungary.[3] In their interpretation, framed and thoroughly impregnated by the ethnolinguistically defined notion of Slovenian national belonging and adherence, these Slavophones were members of the Slovenian nation inhabiting the territory between the upper Adriatic to the west and the outskirts of Pannonian Basin to the east.[4] In 1919, Matija Slavič, the Yugoslav delegation's Slovenian expert responsible for Prekmurje, thus only additionally elaborated and refined previously published and widely disseminated findings.[5] The culmination of his efforts was an ethnographic map of Prekmurje which meticolosuly depicted the area densely inhabited by Slovenian compatriots who had, according to the established Slovenian ethnolinguistic national narrative, been living under oppressive Hungarian rule for centuries.[6]

2 On the border-drawing practices employed at the Conference, see Prott, *The Politics*, 113–47; Crampton, "The Cartographic."

3 Kosi, "The Imagined," 90–94; Kosi, "Slovenski nacionalni."

4 On ethno-linguistic nationalism, see Kamusella, "The History"; much more broadly Kamusella, *The politics*.

5 On Slavič's contribution to the "Slovene cause," see his personal account: Slavič, "Prekmurske meje," 83–92.

6 Slavič, "Carte ethnographique."

Despite the seemingly convincing case (convincing at least according to contemporary standards) substantiated with the strong evidence, the great powers were at best lukewarm about the Yugoslav territorial expectations regarding Prekmurje. The situation changed only as a result of the establishment of the Soviet Republic in Hungary. After the French delegation began propagating the need to suppress the Communist regime in Budapest, a window of opportunity opened for the additional readjustment along the northernmost part of the Yugoslav-Hungarian border.[7]

The legitimacy of the Yugoslav occupation of Prekmurje was grounded on the idea of the right of the self-determination, despite ultimately being only a consequence of strategic considerations. In reality, however, the decision could hardly be described as the implementation of the Wilsonian principles. There was no plebiscite in Prekmurje, and the locals were not given the right to choose which state they wished to join. They also had no say in the decision-making process at the Paris Peace Conference, despite different political initiatives formulated and propagated by members of local elites in the period between autumn 1918 and August 1919. It is true that the "Yugoslav option" was not without supporters in Prekmurje. In the months after the collapse of Austria–Hungary, many Slavophone catholic clergymen (though not all) who were in close contacts with Slovenian national activists in former Cisleithanian lands agitated among Slavophone parishioners for the annexation of the territory to Yugoslavia. Yet much more vocal were those members of the local elite who propagated an administrative reorganization within the borders of Hungary that would recognize the linguistic and ethnic peculiarity of the local population and grant the region some sort of autonomy. While these initiatives were seriously discussed on various levels of the Hungarian administration, the most radical application of the principle of self-determination was doomed to fail from the outset. The so-called Republic of Prekmurje, which was proclaimed on May 29, 1919 by Vilmos Tkálec, a low-level official of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, lasted for only slightly more than a week, as it was suppressed by the Hungarian army on June 6.[8]

In the days after the occupation of Prekmurje in 1919, Slovenian politicians, national activists, and journalists employed a common post-1918 interpretation to rationalize and substantiate the territorial gain. The contemporary Slovenian

7 Kyovsky, "Trianonska pogodba," 236–59; Hornyák, *Hungarian-Yugoslav*, 46–49.

8 For an overview, see Feiszt, "Revolucionarni pokret," 345–52; Kokolj, "Prekmurje v prevratnih," 53–205.

press described the territorial acquisition as "a moment of liberation" for the Slovenian compatriots and "a radical and irreversible break" of the region with its Hungarian past. "Nothing will ever be the same," the Civil Commissioner Srečko Lajnšic promised the locals in August 1919. Lajnšic was the first head of the new Yugoslav administration in Prekmurje. According to him, the Yugoslav occupation of Prekmurje brought freedom after 1,000 years of struggle under the Hungarian yoke; it gave Prekmurje's Slovenes a chance to unite with brothers in blood to form a single polity. This kind of post-imperial narrative was not uncommon among members of Central European national elites who happened to find themselves on the winning side of history in autumn 1918.[9] Still, to what extend did the narrative correspond with the realities on the ground? Did the 1919 annexation truly play a role in the groundbreaking rupture with the past for people living in Prekmurje? What do administrative sources, historical accounts, and scholarly works reveal about the nature of this supposedly "radical and irreversible break"? In what follows, I will focus on a set of administrative ruptures and legislative changes imposed by the Yugoslav government after it acquired the region, and I will examine how these changes influenced the everyday lives and experiences of the local population.

As one would expect, for locals living in Prekmurje, the single most important break with the past was the change of the state regime, embodied in the incoming representatives of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Despite the fact that the local inhabitants and Hungarian officials who were present in the region offered no resistance to the newly arrived Yugoslav officials, the process of the administrative incorporation of Prekmurje initially did not go smoothly. The first weeks following the annexation were marked by internal strife between the Slovenian and Croat mid-level administrative bodies. Slovenian and Croat politicians and administrators could not agree on the question of which geographic and administrative jurisdiction Prekmurje should be associated with. As a consequence of this, both the Slovenian and Croatian provincial governments sent officials to the region seeking to put the territory of Prekmurje under their own administrative control. Moreover, the provincial government in Ljubljana also proclaimed Srečko Lajnšič, the district captain in the neighboring Styrian town of Maribor, the new Civil Commissioner in charge of the organization of temporary administration in Prekmurje. Unsurprisingly, Slovenian politicians saw

9 On the Czech example, see Bugge, "Czech democracy," 24.

the attachment of Prekmurje to the provincial government in Ljubljana as the only possible outcome of the occupation. In their eyes, it logically harmonized with the predominant reasoning of the Slovenian political and cultural elites from the former Cisleithanian lands, who regarded the formerly Hungarian territory as an integral part of the Slovenian national space. To their chagrin and exasperation, however, Croatian politicians and civil servants in Zagreb did not share their views. Instead, they immediately sent their own officials to take over several government and security posts in areas of Prekmurje that bordered Međimurje on the south, an area which had already been under the control of the Croatian administrative bodies since the winter of 1918.[10]

The fragmentation of the civil administration in Prekmurje led to conflicts and misunderstandings, as there was no clear demarcation line between the overlapping jurisdictions of Croat and Slovenian administrative bodies. The dispute was put to an end only after the intervention of a higher authority. On September 2, the Yugoslav minister of internal affairs Svetozar Pribičević finally interfered and provided a conclusive decision concerning the issue of administrative competences in Prekmurje. Pribičević ordered the provincial government in Ljubljana to mitigate the conflict, which was creating internal strife between Slovenian and Croat branches of administration and could also put Yugoslav control of the occupied territory in jeopardy. He thus decided that until the new constitution was written and ratified, Prekmurje should remain a single administrative entity under the auspices of the Civil Commissioner. The Slovenian provincial government should then, he insisted, provide the necessary officials and, in case of need, ask the provincial government in Zagreb for help. In any case, Pribičević reiterated once again, the territory of Prekmurje should remain a single unit with the Civil Commissioner in charge of the administration.[11] The next day, the president of the Slovenian provincial government, Janko Brejc, ordered the subordinated departments and offices immediately to provide the requested personnel to the Civil commissioner.[12] The Civil commissioner then moved the seat of his office from Radgona/Radkersburg in Styria to Murska Sobota in Prekmurje.[13] With that, the first phase of the consolidation of the new administration in the occupied territory was completed.

10 Kokolj, *Prekmurski Slovenci*, 21–22.

11 Arhiv Republike Slovenije (ARS). Pokrajinska uprava za Slovenijo – predsedstvo (AS 60), Prekmurje IV, V. 10417, 2.9.1919.

12 ARS. AS 60, Prekmurje IV, V. 10417/1919. Upravna ureditev v Prekmurju, 2.9.1919.

13 ARS. AS 60, Prekmurje IV, V. 10595/1919, 6.9.1919.

The Yugoslav occupation of Prekmurje in August 1919 thus marked the end of Hungarian administration and of Hungarian as the official language of the state administration. From the outset, the incoming state representatives did not tolerate the existing Hungarian administrative structures. The newly arrived Slovenian administrators regarded the presence of Hungarian officials in Prekmurje as a security risk. "The state within the state cannot exist," Lajnšic insisted. He added, "law won't be restored as long as the administration remains in the hands of those who constitute a threat to the new order." Given the fact that "a proper administration must be established," the Civil Commissioner continued, "authorization should be given to take over or at least to suspend the work of the existing administrative bodies, for the Hungarian authorities only work against the establishment of public order."[14] Many Hungarian officials thus voluntarily left the region soon after the occupation, while others were encouraged, by different means, to hand over their official responsibilities to the Yugoslav representatives, pack their belongings, and leave for Hungary. The replacement was quick and clinical. Several weeks after the Yugoslav forces started entering Prekmurje, the Slovenian officials had taken over all the public offices and administrative posts in Prekmurje, from the courts and the gendarmerie to post offices and railway stations, and they had subordinated them in the process to the administrative bodies in Ljubljana.

Another important case indicating a clear rupture with the past involves the new categories introduced for the population. A series of decrees and laws enacted in the weeks and months after World War I had ended revealed that in the newly constituted nation state of South Slavs, citizenship would be "nationalised." The national belonging ascribed to each citizen would play a crucial role in determining a given citizen's rights and the extent to which these rights were respected and protected by the authorities. In other words, national belonging would influence the way in which the authorities treated a particular citizen. Since the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in December 1918, the newfound Yugoslav official ideology propagated the state as a nation state. Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were regarded as constitutive tribes of the so-called three-named nation *(troimeni narod)*, or the Yugoslav nation. In this sense, the new state was understood as a culmination and embodiment of the principle of the national self-determination of one sovereign Yugoslav

14 ARS. AS 60, Prekmurje IV, V. 10092, Položaj v Prekmurju, 26.8.1919.

nation.[15] However, alongside Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, many people lived within the borders of the kingdom who identified themselves or were identified by the state administration as members of other national and religious minority communities, for instance Montenegrins, Macedonians, Jews, Germans, Hungarians, Muslims, etc. Following the postwar international agreements on the protection of national minorities, the state granted the members of several of the abovementioned communities a set of specific minority rights. In this sense, the new state officially recognized the existence of several other national groups, the members of which were normatively bestowed equal citizenship rights and, in some cases, also specific minorities rights.[16]

After acquiring Prekmurje, the new Yugoslav administration began applying the new categories to the local population. Locals who were granted citizenship (the majority of people living in Prekmurje) were divided into two distinct categories. The first one consisted of locals who spoke Slovenian dialects. This part of Prekmurje's population was regarded as an integral part of the Slovenian tribe and thus as members of the Yugoslav nation. The second category, however, was reserved for members of the local population who were identified by the state administration as belonging either to the German or to the Hungarian minority. According to the peace treaty, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was not allowed to discriminate against citizens who belonged to minorities. But the state bureaucracy nonetheless treated citizens in Prekmurje differently with respect to their presumed national affiliation. Many documents reveal that the level of citizenship rights depended on the ascribed national belonging, as only citizens who were regarded as members of a dominant nation were granted full citizenship rights.[17]

In addition to the replacement of the state administration and the introduction of the distinction between majority and minority groups, inhabitants of Prekmurje experienced another major shift in the years following the occupation, namely the land reform. In 1919, Prekmurje was a predominantly agricultural region. The majority of the population consisted of peasants who owned no land and farmers who had small holdings. The division of large estates into parcels gave the peasant population of Prekmurje access to a means of basic survival, i.e.

15 On the nature of citizenship in interwar Yugoslavia, see Kosnica, "Odnos državljanstva," 61–83; Štiks, *Nations and citizens*, 32–34. On the idea of "troimeni narod," see Troch, "Yugoslavism between," 229–32.

16 For more detailed information on the minority and religious rights in Yugoslavia, see Greble, "The Uncertain," para. 9–17.

17 Kovács, "Agrarna reforma," 68–97. Komac, "Narodne manjšine," 59–66.

land. The decision of the state to introduce the land reform and hence intervene in the existing property relations was thus perhaps the most important rupture affecting the everyday lives of the local population.

The land reform in Prekmurje was part of the broader strategy of rural pacification adopted by the government soon after the proclamation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in December 1918. In the precarious first postwar weeks and months following the proclamation of the new state, the Yugoslav countryside was plagued by a wave of discontent and a series of more or less violent outbreaks.[18] The uprisings of the rural population were influenced by a revolutionary movement in Russia and enabled by a fragile state apparatus, massive social deterioration, and a weak or non-existent monopoly of the state on violence. Since the economic recovery was at best gradual, the government decided to use the promise of land reform as a tool to quell rural social movements. As part of this strategy, in February 1919, regent Alexander confirmed a provisional bill that dissolved all large estates in exchange for financial compensation.[19]

In the years that followed, in Prekmurje as in the rest of the kingdom thousands of hectares of farmland changed the ownership. In truth, the transfer of property (the ownership of arable land) came into effect sluggishly because of the many conflicting interests and the complexity of the process of land division itself. The constant shifting of people in government also slowed down the procedures, as did the complaints concerning the measures, the revisions that were made to the decrees, the annulment of some decrees, and the involvement of political parties. Nonetheless, the change of ownership of arable land transformed the economic and social conditions in the region. Before the beginning of the agricultural reform in Prekmurje, one could cross the whole region from one end to the other (approximately 90 kilometers) without leaving the estates of only twelve large landowners. A good decade after the introduction of the first decrees, almost ten thousand land seekers held legal property rights to 56 percent of the farmland that had formerly been part of large estates. Much of the land was thus still part of large estates, but the land reform enabled many farmers to get their own plots.[20]

18 Banac, "Emperor Karl," 284–305; Newman, "Post-imperial and post-war," 249–65; Beneš, "The Green Cadre," 207–41.

19 *Službene novine Kraljestva Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, February 27, 1919, no. 11.

20 Kokolj, *Prekmurski Slovenci*, 483–591.

The three post-1919 changes described above significantly influenced the everyday lives and routines of locals living in Prekmurje. In many ways, at least at first glance, the 1919 rhetoric thus indeed did describe actual changes which had taken place in Prekmurje in the years that followed the Yugoslav occupation and the subsequent annexation. Still, did these changes retrospectively substantiate the narrative of a "liberating," "radical," and "irreversible" break with the past in the summer of 1919?

To begin with, in post-1919 Prekmurje various institutional practices, administrative procedures and norms, and also everyday habits survived the collapse of the Dual Monarchy. Many sections of Hungarian civil law and other decrees from the Hungarian era were simply translated into Slovenian and remained in force in Prekmurje throughout the interwar period, despite the inclination of the Slovenian provincial government to replace the existing Hungarian body of law with the normative framework that was in use in other territories under its control. In the late 1920s, the "Provisions of Vas County Regarding Buildings and Public Cleanliness" from 1909, for instance, still regulated the urban spatial restructuring of Murska Sobota, the administrative center and commercial hub of Prekmurje, while the unique combination of former Hungarian laws specified the rights of citizens regarding fishing and hunting in Prekmurje.[21]

The aspirations of Slovenian state actors completely to reorganize everything in Prekmurje were not inhibited solely by pragmatic reasoning and the lack of state resources. Their ability to address and their willingness, ultimately, to tolerate the reality on the ground and the continued attachment to customs and practices were often influenced by conflicts with the expectations of locals. Through dynamic negotiations, locals on many occasions managed to convince the representatives of the Yugoslav state to show some consideration for established practices and existing institutions. When in 1920 the Slovenian administration tried to put the existing network of elementary schools run by the local clergy under the control of the state, the local Catholic and Protestant dignitaries viciously opposed the proposals. As a consequence, until the early

21 On regulations concerning the outlook of public space in Murska Sobota, see Brumen, "Panonskost Murske Sobote," 91–102. The fishing and hunting rights in Prekmurje were regulated with the official translation of fragments of Hungarian laws combined with administrative procedures that were used in the former Cisleithanian lands; see Lipovšek, *Lovski in ribiški*.

1930s, the network of confessional semi-independent schools remained intact in Prekmurje.[22]

The occasional willingness of Slovenian judges sent to Prekmurje from Ljubljana to include in their rulings specifics of Hungarian law and practice that did not exist in the existing body of law of the former Cisleithanian lands is also telling. For instance, after the death of Štefan Kerčmar, his wife Fani Kerčmar asserted the right of survivorship (widow's right), which gave her the right to use her husband's property until her death or marriage. Though since 1914 the imperial Austrian Civil Code had not acknowledges this right, a Slovenian judge who followed imperial Austrian procedure regarding the inheritance recognized the legality of the widow's request in the concluding verdict.[23]

Furthermore, despite the intention of the Slovenian government to purge the administrative bodies in Prekmurje of any Hungarian influence entirely, several Hungarian lower officials retained their positions. Soon after the occupation, the new Slovenian civil servants came to the conclusion that they would not be able to govern without the help of experienced and literate officials fluent in Hungarian. These individuals were familiar with the circumstances on the ground and as such an important source of reliable information about the expectations and needs of local communities, and they could also function as intermediaries between the state institutions, where predominantly Slovenian was used, and locals who spoke only Hungarian.

The example of a dispute which erupted in November 1920 between the two highest representatives of the state authority in Prekmurje concerning the employment of a municipal clerk who had dubious political views illustrates how the pragmatic aspects on many occasions prevailed over political and nationalistic ones. On November 2, the Civil Commissioner wrote to the head of the regional State Police Department, Gustav Puš. He expressed his dissatisfaction with what he saw as the inappropriate prerogatives given to one of Puš's subordinates. Puš was the highest state law enforcement official, and he also held the position of provisional unelected mayor (gerent) of the Murska Sobota municipality. In the complaint, the Civil Commissioner thus revealed his astonishment at the fact that he had received an official certificate issued by a municipal clerk named Györy. He could not understand how it was possible that Györy was still employed at the municipal office and had the right "to sign

22 Kokolj, Horvat, *Prekmursko šolstvo*, 318–24.

23 Nemec, "Pravo v Prekmurju," 54–64. On differences between the Hungarian and Austrian inheritance law, see Milić, *Pregled*, 58–76.

documents in the name of municipality and even use the municipal seal," given that he had recently been convicted by the Civil Commissioner and even served a sentence for having committed anti-state acts. György was not loyal to the state, he continued, hence it was "absolutely unacceptable" to grant him authority to issue certificates and handle the official municipal seal. For this reason, the Civil Commissioner instructed the head of the state police and the provisional mayor of Murska Sobota to sort out the scandalous situation. In short, he asked him to replace György as a municipal clerk with someone who would be seen as trustworthy by the Slovenian population of Murska Sobota.[24]

Gustav Puš's response was surprising. He explained to the Civil Commissioner that György was in charge of issuing certificates on the conditions of families and properties so that grain could be distributed to the poor population as had been demanded by the Civil Commissioner in the instructions Puš had recently received. György had been entrusted with this task for a good reason, as he knew the conditions of the local population well, Puš asserted. He continued: "I am well aware that György was punished, for I was the one who led the investigation in question. At the municipal council meeting on July 23, 1920, György was nominated and accepted unanimously to serve as the municipal secretary. The transcript of the municipal meeting in question was sent to the Civilian Commissariat. If today, as the order demands, the district government wants to dismiss him, this would create many difficulties. […] I must point out that Györi has done a good job so far. His specific task has been to compile various lists, such as a list of recruits, a census of livestock, and other things that would be difficult for someone else who does not know the situation, people, and language." In short, in his role of provisional mayor of Murska Sobota, the head of state police defended diligent work of his subordinate clerk, whom he had previously persecuted. On this occasion, the smooth functioning of the administration took precedence over the more abstract interests of the state.[25]

These cases suggest that the consequences of the transfer in 1919 of power over the territory were far from radical and irreversible. But neither was the annexation liberating, at least not for many locals living in the region. As mentioned above, the newly founded Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes promised to respect the citizenship rights of all citizens regardless of their

24 Pokrajinska in študijska knjižnica Murska Sobota (PIŠK). SI_PIŠK/0001/001/001/00027. Dopis Civilnega komisarja, predstojniku oddelka državne policije o potrebni zamenjavi občinskega tajnika v občini Murska Sobota, 11.2.1920.

25 Ibid.

nationality and to recognize minority rights of several national communities. In spite of these promises, after the war, Prekmurje's Hungarian speaking population encountered many obstacles. The majority of the educated Hungarian speaking inhabitants of Prekmurje left the region after the occupation and annexation and settled in the new state of Hungary. Others, especially Hungarian administrative employees and teachers, were fired soon after the occupation because they allegedly did not speak the official language of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.[26] Their departure was a major reason why it was difficult to set up a network of schools for the Hungarian minority. The interwar circumstances were precarious from the perspective of elementary schooling in Hungarian. This eventually led to a decrease in the number of pupils and, later, to the almost complete abolishment of minority schools in the region.[27]

In addition to disrespecting the rights of the Hungarian minority to their own educational institutions, the new authorities discriminated against members of the Hungarian minority, especially its rural segment, in another way. Hungarian speaking peasants, who densely inhabited the area around Lendava along the new border with Hungary, were also excluded from the land reform. Though the local Hungarian speaking farmers and rural communities were initially allowed to rent out arable land of the sequestered and dissolved large estates, they were forbidden in the second stage from buying it, and hence they were prevented from becoming proper owners. This opportunity was given to locals and newcomers considered Slovenians instead of to Prekmurje's Hungarian speaking population. In contrast with what took place in some other parts of Yugoslavia, the exclusion was not about citizenship, but about the presumed nationality of the locals. At the beginning of the reform, the Yugoslav administration allowed peasants and farmers in Prekmurje who either spoke Hungarian or identified as Hungarians to lease the land, even though they still held the right to opt for Hungarian citizenship. Yet, in 1924, when these locals had become citizens of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, their contracts were revoked on the basis of their presumed nationality, which was determined by using the 1921 census. The officials of the district state agency responsible for the land reform in Prekmurje analyzed records of the census taken in villages along the Yugoslav-Hungarian border and postulated that the declaration of a local citizen's mother tongue should be regarded as an objective marker of his or

26 Kosi, "Slovene ethnolinguistic," (forthcoming).

27 Göncz, "Madžarska manjšina," 81.

her national identity. In this sense, the state officials classified inhabitants of villages who declared Hungarian as their mother tongue as being of Hungarian nationality and, as such, potentially unreliable citizens, whose ownership of the land along the border could cause potential problems for the integrity of the Yugoslav state.[28]

The integration of Prekmurje's Slavophone speakers of the region into the new Yugoslav frame was not exactly smooth either. The incoming administration perceived the Slavophone population of Prekmurje as their Slovenian brothers who had finally been liberated from one thousand years of Hungarian domination. The local Slavophones, however, looked on the newcomers with suspicion. Many of them were in fact patriotic Hungarians who expressed particular notions of self-belonging as Slovenes that did not correspond with the understanding of "Slovene-ness" cultivated in the former Cisleithania. As a result, after the Yugoslav occupation and annexation, two separate notions of "Slovene-ness" began to intersect in the region of Prekmurje. The sentiments of ethnic belonging held by the local Slovenian speakers were very different from the idea of "Slovene-ness" developed and widely disseminated in the course of the nineteenth century on the other side of the former border between the Austrian and Hungarian parts of the Dual Monarchy. The officials who came to the region after the war were for that reason identifying Prekmurje's Slovenian speakers as a part of their own Slovenian nation, which supposedly stretched from the coasts of the Adriatic to the westernmost parts of Hungary. In contrast, the local inhabitants, with the exception of a few catholic priests, continued to nurture their own local and regional identifications. As a result, in 1919, members of Prekmurje's Slovenian speaking population predominantly identified themselves as "Sloveni" or "Slovenci," yet they regarded the incoming Slovenian officials sent to the region as representatives of the new Yugoslav state as Carniolans, Slavs, or simply "newcomers." Prekmurje's Slovenes hence did not think of the incoming Slovenes as belonging to the same ethnic group as them.[29]

The two abovementioned Slovenian groups commonly fought about the role of Prekmurje's regional literary language, particularly in the educational and church setting. These disagreements were passionate because Prekmurje's Slovenian was both a symbol of the region's ethnical particularity and, above

28 Kovács, "Agrarna reforma," 68–97.

29 Kosi, "The Imagined," 95–102.

all, the language of the local evangelic and Catholic Church. The incoming Slovenian officials, especially teachers, nonetheless treated Prekmurje's literary tradition in a patronizing and occasionally even contemptuous manner. In their eyes, the Slovenian spoken in Prekmurje was not a language but merely one of the dialects of "proper Slovenian," and for that reason, it should be eliminated. After all, according to them, a true nation could only have one national literary standard.[30] Misunderstandings between the locals and the newcomers were further exacerbated by a particular group of newcomers, the Slovenian teaching staff who fostered and spread liberal views which differed from the view of the local clergy.[31]

Many archival documents from the months following the annexation reveal the animosity between the local Slovenian speakers and the newly arrived Slovenian administrators. For instance, in April 1922, the commander of Murska Sobota's gendarmerie reported on the positive responses of the local Slovenian "nationally unconscious intelligentsia" to Hungarian propaganda in support of border revisions and the return of Prekmurje to Hungary. According to the sources, along with the local Hungarians, some Slovenes also supported the return of the region to Hungary, more specifically "all the Lutherans, including Lutheran innkeepers, pastors, and teachers." The writer of this report continued with the following claim: "Prekmurje's people hate us—Serbs especially—and are convinced that they form a particular, not Slovenian nation."[32] Furthermore, under these tense circumstances, Jožef Klekl, a priest, a member of the national assembly, and one of the very few people in Prekmurje who had supported the Slovenian national movement in the prewar times, was declared a threat to the state because of his autonomist viewpoints.[33]

In conclusion, after August 1919, the inhabitants of Prekmurje had to confront the reality of living in a state in which the institutional framework and the political culture differed considerably from what they had experienced in the Kingdom of Hungary. The new Yugoslav state actors who came to the region replaced the Hungarian officials, but that was certainly not all they did. Almost immediately after the region's incorporation into the new state, they started to

30 Kosi, "Slovene ethnolinguistic," (forthcoming).

31 Kokolj, Horvat, *Prekmursko šolstvo*, 307–9.

32 ARS. AS 60, Prekmurje IV, V.Pov 1890/IV. Madžarska propaganda v Prekmurju, 15.4.1922.

33 ARS. AS 60, Prekmurje IV, V. Pov. 6573/IV. Klekl Jožef, upokojeni župnik in narodni poslanec v Prekmurju, informacija, 8.6.1921.

introduce new administrative practices and state institutions, together with a new normative framework that legally divided the body of citizens into separate communities along the lines of presumed or expressed nationality. Generally speaking, the administrative apparatus treated the Slavophone majority of Prekmurje as a constitutive part of the "three-named nation," and it classified local German-speaking and Hungarian-speaking communities as parts of two recognized minority groups. Last not least, the Yugoslav state enacted the land reform and radically intervened in the existing ownership relations. Thousands of local Slavophone farmers were given an opportunity to become owners of the land they cultivated.

However, a closer examination of several aspects of the local circumstances in Prekmurje in the decade after the incorporation of the region into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes offers a much more nuanced interpretation of the changes which took place. Instead of supporting the characterization of the annexation as a moment of radical rupture, the events which took place on the ground suggest that the changes occurring in the summer of 1919 in Prekmurje instigated a process of pragmatic adaptations and gradual transformations framed by many aspects of the imperial past. In this sense, the documents which survive speak for themselves, and they also cast a shadow of doubt on the prevailing Slovenian national narrative, according to which the summer of 1919 was the moment of the unification of the Slovenes of Prekmurje with the mother nation.

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"It Is an Unpatriotic Act to Flee": The Refugee Experience after the Treaty of Trianon. Between State Practices and Neglect*

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In the wake of World War I, the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy and creation of new political borders in accordance with the peace treaties prompted more than 400,000 people from the lost territories to seek refuge in Hungary. In this essay, I map the policies adopted by the Hungarian state in its efforts to integrate and pacify refugees, but also at times to discourage refugees from coming to Trianon Hungary. These policies were implemented with the participation of ministries, refugee organizations, large state-run enterprises, and municipal councils. I also interpret the various strategies used by individual actors in these processes. Taken together, the policies and strategies adopted by the state demonstrate the *de facto* prolongation of wartime administrative practices and offer examples of how the state turned against its own Christian, nationalist, and authoritarian ideology in the course of its efforts to keep prospective refugees from entering post-Trianon Hungary. How the questions raised by the refugee crises were tackled in the country was conditioned by multiple considerations and perspectives. The ambiguities of the policies that were adopted explain in part the long silence that has fallen over the issue of post–World War I refugees in Hungary.

Keywords: refugees, Trianon Peace Treaty, state administration, government, memory

The post–World War I flight of Hungarians was relatively organized and, most importantly, did not involve as much bloodshed as other exoduses during and after the war, such as the plights of the Greek-Turkish or Galician refugees. Moreover, this is an untold story in the Hungarian historiography. Recent articles by foreign scholars (especially Friederike Kind-Kovacs and Ilse Josepha Lazaroms) have drawn attention to this forgotten topic, focusing on children's relief or on Jewish wagon dwellers in Budapest, but they have tended to focus more narrowly on particular groups.[1]

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1 Kind-Kovács: "The Great War, the Child's Body and the 'American Red Cross'," 1–2, 33–62, and "Compassion for the Distant Other," 129–59; Lazaroms: "Jewish Railway Car Dwellers in Post–World War I Hungary."

During the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in October and November 1918, the first wave of refugees from the borderlands reached the core territories of Hungary. This flow consisted essentially of railway workers, post officers, village and county clerks, and officers in the police forces and the gendarmerie. On October 31, Mihály Károlyi, an aristocrat, was nominated head of the government by Charles IV, the last emperor and king of the Monarchy. Károlyi would be the first prime minister of the newly formed Hungarian People's Republic and then, from January, the first president of the same People's Republic. His cabinet, composed of social democrats, the so-called bourgeois radicals (*polgári radikálisok*, a left-wing party consisting mostly of urban intellectuals), and people from the former Independence Party, had to confront the invasion of the former Hungarian territories by Serb, Czechoslovak, and Romanian troops, as well as the collapse of the public food supply, the Spanish flu, and a deepening political crisis inside the country. Károlyi's government had not been recognized by the Allies or the Paris Peace Conference, and his main activity in foreign affairs was limited essentially to making repeated protests concerning the advancement of foreign troops on Hungarian soil to the head of the Allied military mission in Budapest, Lieutenant-Colonel Fernand Vix, whose so-called second note (March 20, 1919) led to the demission of Mihály Károlyi as President of the People's Republic, which was followed by the communist takeover on March 21, 1919 and the proclamation of a Republic of Councils, which fell due to Romanian military intervention on August 1. That moment, followed then by the election of Miklós Horthy as Regent of Hungary on March 1, 1920, can be regarded as the beginning of the counterrevolutionary period, and it constituted a crucial shift in the handling the issue of refugees.[2]

This was an issue, however, which was relatively underrepresented in the Hungarian public sphere. Although the Hungarian press reported on it extensively in the first half of 1920s, the topic was barely taken up in political debate. The social side of the question was peddled by the opposition parties (social democrats, liberals, and the radical right), who wanted to demonstrate the government's incompetence in the matter.

Similarly there were no movies, plays, or novels of any remarkable success about the refugee issue, or at least there were no works which have since become part of canonized national culture. After 1945, for reasons quite different from the ones in the earlier period, this topic was not among the preferred themes

2 Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century*, 89–123.

of the state's memory regime. After 1956, for the Kádár regime, which was constructing its own legitimacy on anti-nationalist foundations, such a topic would have presumably been awkward, although the experience of flight appeared in some memoirs. There have been only a few attempts to explain the silence of the interwar period. While alongside its anti-communist and, at times, pronounced anti-Semitic stances the demand for the revision of the territorial boundaries of the Paris Treaties was one of the pillars of the Horthy era in Hungary (1920–1944), the regime did not wish to exploit the potential of the trope of flight, despite the uses it might have had in state propaganda. This paper discusses the possible reasons for this. Historians have not addressed the issue in depth. There is only one monographic study on the refugees in Hungary after the Treaty of Trianon. István I. Mocsy, an author who lives in the USA, attempted to present the issue on the basis of published materials. His location conditioned the type of sources on which he could draw.[3]

In this study, I analyze the reactions of Hungarian state organs (including the state railway), explore the motives behind their actions, and discuss images of refugees and the strategies which were developed by the community of refugees to promote their interests. First, I briefly present state policies and features of the social profile of wagon dwellers and of those who were repatriated. I do not interrogate sources to determine the reasons behind people's decisions to flee. I inquire, rather, into the relationship between the circumstances of integration and dissipation of refugees into Hungarian society despite state policies that neither were effective nor were products of measured reflection and the erasure and transformation of the memory of refugees.

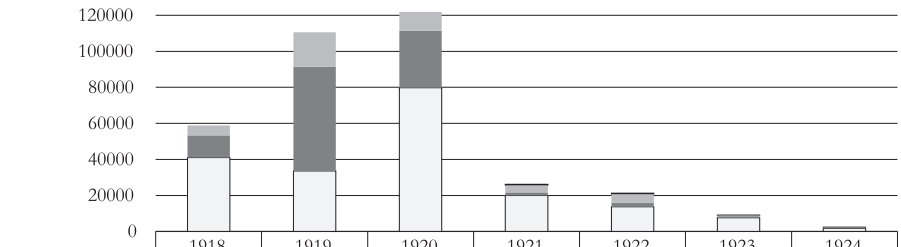
Numbers of Refugees in Hungary and Their Places of Origin

The immediate prelude to the flight between 1918 and 1924 and the test of the Hungarian refugee policy was the large-scale movement from the eastern and southern border areas of Transylvania, which was triggered by the Romanian invasion in August 1916. More than 200,000 people fled to interior areas of Hungary, and since the Hungarian public administration could not stand the pressure, refugees appeared in Transdanubia as well.[4] This shaped the ways in

3 Mocsy, *The Uprooted: Hungarian Refugees*. Recently Dékány, *Trianoni árvák*.

4 This figure relates to those who managed to cross Királyhágó (in Romanian: Pasul Craiului) the historical border between Transylvania and the Kingdom of Hungary. There are only estimates of the number of people who moved to new locations within Transylvania.

which authorities treated similar crisis situations, such as aid, child protection, and refugee reception centers (for instance, Hajdú County, the capital of which is the city of Debrecen, was designated for refugees coming from Csík County, today Ciuc County in Romania, and in particular the capital of the county, Csíkszereda, today Miercurea Ciuc).[5]



	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924
Austria				499	576	112	34
Kingdom SHS	5459	19239	10551	4023	4705	541	385
Czechoslovakia	12373	57783	31606	1722	2310	852	195
Romania	40952	33551	79773	19879	13651	7536	1593

Table 1. Refugees arriving in Hungary from different countries, 1918–1924 (based on data from the National Office for Refugees)

The repatriation of Transylvanian refugees had hardly been completed when, in autumn 1918, large waves of refugees poured into the interior areas from all occupied territories, not only from Transylvania. Initially, the movement was spontaneous, but it was subsequently replaced with a practice of expulsion on behalf of citizens of the successor states. To the extent that the military activities and the blockade permitted, the stream of refugees continued during the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Despite research efforts, we have only scattered information about the institutional framework of refugee policy between March 1919 and August 1919. According to the National Office for Refugees, which was set up in 1920, by 1924 roughly 350,000 people had fled to Hungary due to the change of borders. (However, this figure is a suspiciously round number,

5 Hungarian historiography has not dealt with this aspect. There are partial results, however. The most recent include Ilona L. Juhász, *"Amikor mindenki a háború igája alatt roskadoz…" Erdélyi menekültek a mai Szlovákia területén* [When are all toiling under the burden of war…Transylvanian refugees in present-day Slovakia], Somorja/Samorín, 2015; József Buczkó, *"Szállást adtunk hűséges magyar véreinknek": Székely menekültek Hajdúnánáson, 1916–1918* [We provide lodging to our loyal kin], Nánási Füzetek 19, Hajdúnánás, 2011. The summary that the leading expert of the theme wrote, Csaba Csóti, "Menekülés Erdélyből 1916-ban," *Rubicon* 27, no. 1 (2016): 74–81.

and it is likely that it is not precise.) The author of the monographic study that addressed the issue, Istvan Mocsy, estimated a much larger number in 1983. He talked estimated that there were between 420,000 and 425,000 refugees.[6] According to official statistics, of the 350,000 refugees, 104,000 had had some form of employment (some 20,000 had been civil servants and 20,000 had been railway employees). Regarding this group, we need to correct two widespread beliefs which are based on stereotypes. First, most refugees did not depend on the state for employment, even if the proportion of civil servants was much larger among refugees than it was in the general population of the country. Second, we do not know the proportion of those who were expelled from the new states by the new authorities, nor do we know how many relocated because their professional positions made it practical to do so and how many simply chose to leave.[7] In order to answer these questions, one would need a comparative study of citizenship policies in the surrounding states. For the moment, no such study has been done.[8]

The Policies of the Hungarian State

The activities of the Hungarian state related to the reception of refugees were ambiguous, to say the least. The first refugees in October-November 1918 were chiefly Hungarian State Railway employees and, to some extent, postal services employees who had left Croatia, Bosnia, or Fiume because of the advances of the Serbian and French army, uncertainty caused by revolutionary and national movements, or simply straightforward looting. In 1910, the Hungarian State Railways and other railway companies had nearly 110,000 employees.[9] The relationship between railways and nation building deserves a separate study, but the Hungarian State Railway was definitely one of the symbols of Hungarian state authority in the areas where non-Hungarian ethnic groups dominated. From the last days of October 1918, Hungarian railway employees arrived by the dozens

6 Mocsy, *The Uprooted.*

7 Jelentés az Országos Menekültügyi Hivatal négy évi működéséről.

8 For Romania, see e.g. Constantin Iordachi, "Állampolgárság és nemzeti identitás Romániában" [Citizenship and national identity in Romania], *Regio* 11, no. 3 (2000): 27–57, 40–46. Compare with Lajos Nagy, *A kisebbségek alkotmányjogi helyzete Nagyromániában* [The constitutional position of minorities in Greater Romania], Cluj, 1944, 76–87. For Czechoslovakia: István Gaucsík, "Állam, polgár, jog. Megközelítések Csehszlovákia állampolgársági intézményének vizsgálatához" [State, citizen, law. Approaches to studying institutions of citizenship in Czechoslovakia], unpublished manuscript, 2019.

9 Szűts, "Vasutas vagonlakók és a MÁV menekültpolitikája," 90.

and, then, by the hundreds to cities close to the southern borders of post-Trianon Hungary, such as Gyékényes, Nagykanizsa, Csurgó, Murakeresztúr, Barcs, Pécs, and Szeged.[10] The directorate of the State Railway in Budapest experimented with local solutions and ordered station managements to find employment for the people who were arriving. However, it soon became apparent that local station managers were unable to do this even at the largest junctures. There were simply not enough posts. At first, railways, just like other state-owned companies and state organs, encouraged their employees to hold out and allowed them to swear allegiance to the new states. Then, it allowed them to leave, only later to reverse the policy and subsequently, encourage employees to stay at their posts until the spring of 1919.[11] Contradictory orders frequently figured as explanations in applications submitted by railway employees for compensation after 1919. One applicant, for instance, made the following complaint:

> It is natural that, as in all things, the railway institution is the last to help its robbed emigre employees. While superiors, such as leisurely sheriffs and public notaries who grew fat during the war, do not fail to receive aid on time, it is odd that while we had little joy in the war and our supplies (compared to civil servants) were insufficient beyond measure, … we are the ones who are at the end of the list in receiving aid. […] Considering that our Directorate and Management ordered us to stay at our posts and thus, partially, caused our misery, we now ask the Directorate to differentiate us from those who were more fortunate and left with their belongings.[12]

The quote points to a certain competition among branches. The case of railway employees was dealt with at the company level. Initially, the Railway Syndicate was the authority responsible for refugee issues at the largest state owned company, and beginning at the end of 1919, the "Central Authority for Issues of Hungarian State Railway Refugees" played this role. Refugees could receive a few hundred Korona cash aid and possibly be sent to a new work station, but many of them would be reassigned to stations which were now on "the other side of the border," such as Kolozsvár (Cluj in Romania), Szabadka (Subotica in Serbia), or Nagyvárad (Oradea in Romania), within weeks or months, which meant that

10 A case study: Matus, "A horvátországi vasútvonalak evakuálása."

11 Cserháti, "Az első világháború utóhatása a MÁV hivatalnokrétegére."

12 MNL OL, Z 1610, box 119, 1919/12083. sz. Letter from Károly Kürthy, refugee railway officer from Zilah (Zalau, Romania), to the central directorate of the Hungarian State Railway. Debrecen, April 15, 1919.

they had to leave again. In late 1918, the management of the Hungarian State Railways began to assess which of their employees would remain employed in the new states. It is somewhat surprising that, despite chaotic conditions, among the declarations that were sent to Budapest about the willingness to be employed in those weeks we find documents written in both Croatian and Hungarian, and the names, which were from several different languages, were written in a diverse variety of ways. This indicates that the decision to stay or leave was not necessarily a question of ethnicity or national identity, at least not in the first period of state succession.[13]

At the ministry level, the Ministry of Interior appointed Pál Hegymegi Kiss, who would become a noted politician of the opposition in the interwar period, as Commissioner responsible for arranging accommodation for sheriffs and notaries, and he was also given responsibility for school teachers and the staffs of museums. While leaders at the university in Kolozsvár (Cluj) and Pozsony (Bratislava) decided to stay, professors and students of the forestry and mining college at Selmecbánya (Banska Stiavnica, in present-day Slovakia) left for Budapest and, subsequently, for Sopron.[14] Crossing the mountain pass in winter and the act of leaving presented as something resembling an expedition from a periphery to the interior became part of the legendry of the institution, which still exists. However, the migration of the college was also the end of a prolonged debate in Hungarian educational policy, so professors arriving in Sopron received extra benefits that other fugitive civil servants did not have access to. This situation led to tensions and competition for the title of victim.[15]

Refugees kept continued arriving during the period of the Soviet Republic of Hungary, which lasted from March until August 1, 1919. Pauses due to military activity and border blockades were temporary. After the fall of the communist experiment, the new anti-revolutionary administration created the Transylvanian Department of the Office of Preparation for Peace Treaty Negotiations, which was explicitly tasked with providing aid for refugees from Transylvania. There were civilian organizations that tried to cover other regions (the Szepesi Szövetség or "Szepes Alliance," the Területvédő Liga or "Territorial Defense League," the Felvidéki Liga or "Upper Country League," and the Délvidéki Liga or "Southern Country League"). In April 1920, i.e. relatively late, the government finally set

13 About this, see the same fond, box 120, File: Letters exchanged in 1919, passim.

14 Németh, "A Selmecbányai Bányatisztképzőből lett soproni Erdészeti és Faipari Egyetem."

15 MNL OL, K 26, bundle 1264. 1921-XLIII. t., 10935-1920, Refugee civil servants' petition to the Prime Minister, May 1921.

up the National Office for Refugees *(Országos Menekültügyi Hivatal – OMH)* and the National Council of Refugee Issues, which was its advisory and supervisory body. The head of the council was István Bethlen, who would later become prime minister and who was among the most influential politicians in Hungary in the interwar period, while the head of the office was a refugee aristocrat and former prefect, Emil Petrichevich-Horváth (1881–1945). Transylvanians had a marked presence throughout the lifetime of these institutions. Initially, the office worked within the framework of the Office for Preparation for Peace Treaty Negotiations, but shortly became directly subordinated to the Office of the Prime Minister. Beginning in 1922, it was part of the Ministry for Labor and Welfare, and the head of the office was a state secretary until the institution was closed in 1924.

The papers of the office are lost, probably destroyed by fire during the battle of Budapest in 1944–45. Since then, scholarship on refugees has relied chiefly on a single source, the office's own official record. However, these data should be treated with caution.[16] OMH dealt with a range of issues, in addition to providing direct aid (clothes, cash, and coal) for refugees. It ran soup kitchens, organized re-training courses, provided legal counselling services, coordinated construction projects, and organized recreational holidays for children. It also established check points check newly arriving migrants, especially at the more important railway junctures which were also border stations.[17] The explanation for this lay in the fact that, after the Treaty of Trianon had been signed on June 4, 1920, the Hungarian state faced the reality that the rate of immigration (290,000 refugees by the end of 1920) could not be sustained. In September 1920, Bethlen was very firmly in favor of stopping the flow, that is, immigration. In his view, 70 percent of the 300–500 refugees who were arriving daily were not really refugees, but people opting for citizenship, which they would only be able to do after the treaty had been ratified, which did not take place until November 1920. Bethlen felt that the attempt by these refugees to resettle in Hungary for reasons of personal economic interest "fundamentally threatened Hungarian national interests," because it lessened the proportion of Hungarians in the lost territories, which would have been the basis for revision of the treaty). As Bethlen wrote in a letter to Prime Minister Pál Teleki in September 1920,

16 Petrichevich-Horváth, *Jelentés az Országos Menekültügyi Hivatal négy évi működéséről.*

17 Ibid.

> the majority of the émigrés do not have sufficient reason to emigrate and do so in hope of finding easy employment […] This way, in Transylvania and in the southern areas, houses which had been inhabited by Hungarians become empty, the number of Hungarians living in the cities is shrinking, and they are being replaced by a wave of foreign elements. Leaving this process without intervention would be a threat to the nation.[18]

In October 1920, Teleki adopted Bethlen's point of view (they were distantly related and both had family roots and lands in Transylvania) and ordered outposts to be set up to control and limit immigration. Teleki voiced his opinion publicly and used wording that was almost identical to Bethlen's. In addition to the idea of a "threat to the nation" and the urban dimensions of flight (i.e. the Hungarian population decreasing in towns and cities), he also mentioned the crisis of housing and damage to private property:

> The rapid increase of the number of refugee officers fleeing from occupied territories is a national threat. We cannot push citizens out of their homes to provide housing for refugees. Doing so would be close to Bolshevism. […] It is an unpatriotic act to flee if they not forced to leave but only do so because they have sold their property in Sokols, Lei, or Dinar and they even pay to be expelled.[19]

His words caused considerable uproar in some groups of refugee officials and on the political far right,[20] though they also caused echoes in other circles. The owner of a house expressed his anger with a refugee magistrate from Arad (Arad, Romania) when the refugee was allotted a portion of the property:

> on seeing the order, he loudly protested against letting the property pass and stated that he didn't build a villa for refugees to live in it! We should have stayed where we were, did we think that ham grows by the

18 MNL OL K 26, bundle 1299. XLIII. t. Letter from István Bethlen to Prime Minister Pál Teleki, Budapest, September 16, 1920

19 "A kormány a menekültek beözönlése ellen" [Government against the flow of refugees]. *Pesti Napló*, October 30, 1920. 1.

20 MNL OL, K 26, bundle 1299. XLIII. t.–1922, Gálocsy Árpád továbbítja a Területvédő Liga tiltakozásának jegyzőkönyvét. Budapest, 1920. november 14. At the same location: Egri menekült tisztviselők memoranduma, Eger, November 26, 1920.

> side of the road in Budapest? We are worse than the communists were, since they spared his villa, but we take it by force.[21]

The government did not think legal regulation was sufficient to tackle immigration, and it occasionally set up a border blockade (for example during the summer and early autumn of 1921). In such periods, no refugees were received mainly out of concern for the number of railway wagons needed during harvest. The government was firmly convinced that wagons that would have been used to transport and, perhaps, accommodate refugees were essential for the success of the operations related to harvest. In 1921, because of these policies, the number of migrants fell to one fifth of what it had been in 1920, and the total number in 1922 was 80 percent of the figure of 1921. In 1923, 9,043 people immigrated (or fled) to Hungary, while in 1924 this number had dropped to under 1,000.[22] We do not have detailed statistics about their geographical location, such as place of departure and place of arrival. A recently released database about more than 15,000 refugees from the period (www.trianon100.hu/menekultek) shows an overrepresentation of urban migrants (coming from an urban milieu in the territories annexed by the successor states and arriving to cities, in particular Budapest, in postwar Hungary. However, this database is quite fragmented, and some groups (such as railway workers) may be overrepresented, so the results should be treated with caution. The reluctance of the government to accept all expellees, returnees, or "person moving in" (the Hungarian term used at the time was *beköltöző*) was probably motivated by fear of a "third wave" of revolutions led by distressed middle-class refugees whose loss of prestige and search for proper lodging would lead to clashes with the authorities at the beginning of the 1920s.[23]

21 OSZKK, Quart Hung. 4313: Dezső Ottrubay, "Visszaemlékezés az 1914–1918. világháborúra" [Remembering the World War between 1914–1918] and "Háború utáni nehéz évek" [Hard years after the war] f. 211–12.

22 *Jelentés az Országos Menekültügyi Hivatal négy évi működéséről*, 37.

23 See i. e. "Vagonlakók a Lipótvárosi Kaszinóban és a Demokrata Körben" [Railway car dwellers in the Lipótváros Casino and in the Democrat's Circle]. *Az Est*, November 9, 1920. 3. It should be noted that these institutions were considered as the seats of leftist or liberal associations and the process of moving in was facilitated by the far-right Association of Awakening Hungarians (ÉME).

Wagons and Barracks

The government constantly feared that refugees would become a source of social unrest and that this group, which for the most part had belonged to the middle class in the pre-war societies in which they had lived, would become the engine of a new wave of revolution. It is clear from statistics that the authorities did their best to keep the most visible elements, those who lived in wagons, away from the capital, which had already borne witness to several revolutions, occupation by a foreign army, and other traumatic upheavals in 1918–1919. Although these people and the conditions in which they lived became symbols for the suffering of post-Trianon Hungary, hardly more than 12–14 percent of them lived in wagons for extended periods of time. It can also be established that a maximum of 20,000 people lived in railway cars parked at railway junctures or side tracks at any one point of time. A family was usually allotted two wagons. They kept their furniture in one of them and lived in the other one. These wagons were not suitable for extended habitation (for instance, they could not be properly heated), and hygienic conditions became unbearable around them, as there was no running water and some of the families had domestic animals. Diseases and epidemics soon broke out, and there were many accidents. The latter chiefly affected children who played around the railway lines. Statistics allow us to track the efforts of the government to distribute wagon dwellers throughout the country and limit their numbers in the capital. In early 1921, county prefects along the borders complained in vain, asking the government to find places somewhere else for the refugees.[24] When statistical records began to be kept in October 1920, there were a recorded 1,540 wagons in Budapest with 3,840 people living in them, while outside the capital there were 4,137 wagons with 16,500 inhabitants. Subsequently, in Budapest, the number of wagon dwellers quickly declined until the spring of 1921, but this number began to grow again, reaching a peak in September 1921. In the second wave, the number of wagon dwellers dropped below 1,000 in September 1922, and a year later, there were less than 300 people living in such conditions. Newspapers in the capital triumphantly reported that there were no more wagon dwellers.[25]

24 MNL OL K 26, bundle 1264. 1921-XLIII. t

25 For example: *8 Órai Újság*, January 15, 1925. 5.

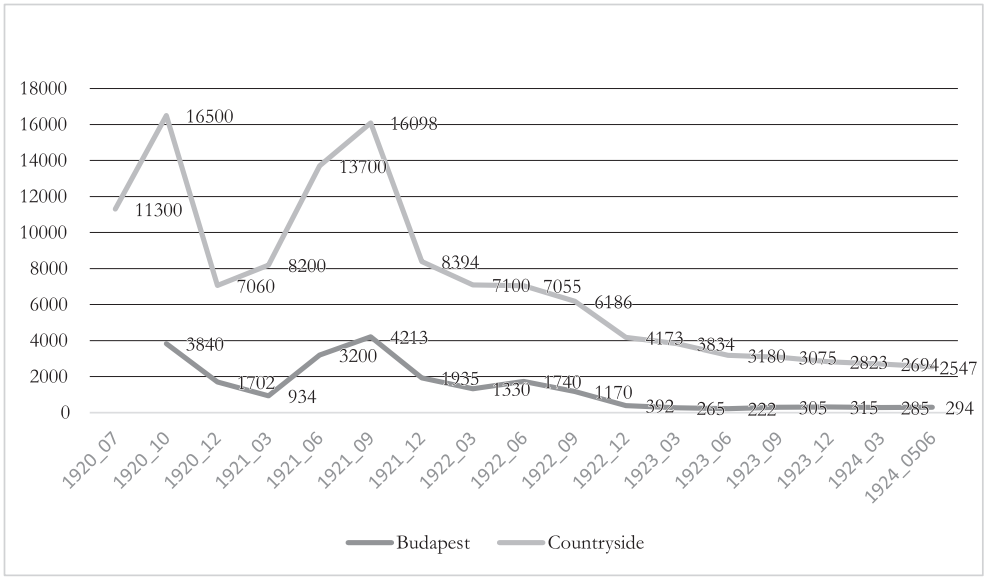


Table 2. Changes in the number of wagon dwellers in Budapest and in the countryside

The decline in these figures was much slower outside the capital. There were several examples when railway stations in villages (for example Mórágy, Almásfüzitő, and Kecel) also received wagons with refugee families living in them.[26] This way, however, the sight of refugees became more familiar to people across the country, and the unpleasant conditions in which they lived served as a poignant illustration of the consequences of the Treaty of Trianon even in small communities. While wagon dwellers became symbols of the misery of the country and the tragedy of the Treaty of Trianon, newspapers hardly mentioned them after 1924–1925. Although in the mid-1920s, papers reported several times that "the last wagon dweller" had moved into proper housing, there nonetheless remained refuges who continued to live in wagons, temporary shelters and barracks. The wagon dwellers' suffering became part of a narrative of suffering which followed the pattern of the Stations of the Cross and drew a parallel between the Crucifixion of Jesus and the fate of Hungary. It is a telling detail that the Jewish press in Hungary partially endorsed this view. At the same time, the papers hardly mentioned the multitudes of Jewish refugees.[27]

26 On this see statistics that the Hungarian State Railway prepared in July 1920: MNL OL, Z 1610, box 120. Kimutatás a vagonban lakó menekültekről, 1920. június-július.

27 Zeidler, *Ideas on Territorial Revision in Hungary*; Lazaroms, "Jewish Railway Car Dwellers." I am especially grateful to the author for having shared her paper with me.

Though wagon dwellers hardly made up one-seventh of all refugees, initially they were the subject of disproportionate attention (though interest in their plight had completely dwindled by 1924). Those that lived in barracks, former army hospital buildings, and schools dramatically outnumbered the wagon dwellers, but they did not become symbols of the postwar fate of the country to the same extent. This overrepresentation of the wagon dwellers in the imagery concerning the refugees could be explained by the fact that their conditions provided an apt and pithy image of the decline of the middle classes after the war, and the wagon itself became a symbol.[28]

Although the government and local authorities tried to facilitate the settlement of refugees with programs for small flat construction and by creating residential colonies, if one considers the number of flats completed in the first half of the 1920s, this intervention was hardly efficient or sufficient.[29] More research is needed to determine how Hungarian society absorbed more than 100,000 refugees (or 400,000 if we include family members) who were mostly from middle class backgrounds and who had relatively high expectations when it came to living standards and material conditions. (There are countless examples of middle class refugees refusing to accept one-room apartments offered to them by municipalities, as they contended that these dwellings were of a "proletarian type."[30]) Based on randomized analysis of data, by the 1930s, the number of refugees sharply dropped in the barracks that had been built for them, and they were replaced by the urban poor.[31] One possible explanation for this is that refugees might have built houses drawing on their own resources. One such example is the St. Emeric Suburb *(Szent Imre Kertváros)*, which lay beyond the boundaries of Budapest at the time. The community, which consisted primarly of former civil servants, struggled for ten years for the right to move to their new homes. The cross erected in the central square, which was named Hargita (a mountain range in Transylvania and also the name of a county in Transylvania), reminded the 280 owners of the Treaty of Trianon, as did the street names, decorations, and the designs of some of the houses.[32]

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28 The wagon dwellers are "the martyrs of the homelessness" (*Népszava*, July 24, 1926. 9.) or the wagon became the symbol of "distress, bitterness, suffering" (*Miskolczi Napló*, April 6, 1920, 5.).

29 On this, see Umbrai, *A szociális kislakásépítés története,* 69–75.

30 A late example: *Újság*, September 4, 1925. 8.

31 Dr. György Szalai, *Barakklakók a Horthy-korszak Budapestjén: Történetszociográfiai áttekfintés* [Barrack-dwellers in Budapest during the Horthy Era. A historical-sociological account]. Budapest, 1963. Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könyvtár Kézirattára, Bq 333/135.

32 Teplán, "Szent Imre Kertváros."

Institutions

Apart from futile initiatives, such as the launching of the so-called Székely National Party in 1920–21, the refugees did not appear as political force. After June 1921, the Bethlen government banned associations which openly irredentist views, such as defense leagues and relocated/expelled municipal authorities formed in Hungary *(menekült törvényhatóságok)* and associations that formed on a territorial basis and had territorial revision in their articles of association.[33] These measures created a serious limitation to ability of refugees to give expression to their interests through civil bodies. A centralized institutional setting funded Hungarian associations across the border in a covert way, but until the formation of *Revíziós Liga* (League for Revision) in 1927, only those organizations were allowed to exist that organized activities that did not go beyond reminding members of their common cultural heritage. Yet, the orientation of these organizations was not in doubt: the organizations that operated in areas that were outside of the territories reannexed between 1938–41 quickly dissolved. The remainder of the associations functioned under close government control: the papers of the Prime Minister's Office (Department of Nationalities and Minorities) and those of the Ministry of Home Affairs offer proof of the strict surveillance under which the activities of every refugee organization were kept. The first exercised its influence by granting or retaining subsidies, while the latter used the means of legal controls.

Being a refugee had importance in individual career paths. Almanacs kept by the Parliament of the time clearly illustrate that having come from one of the lost territories, having suffered the experience of flight, or having played an active role in an irredentist organization were assets in politics. These experiences complemented the "Good Hungarian, Good Patriot" image even in cases of politicians who had little to do with Transylvania. They did not however, become a basis of group formation.

Some refugee communities developed strategies with which to address the new circumstances. The migrants from Szepesség/Zips/Spiš often had German origins, and they used their associations as a kind of network of pressure/interest groups targeting pensions, jobs, and benefits. The pattern of migration among intellectuals of the Szepes region, which had been a palpable tendency since the nineteenth century, remained an observable trend, as did attachment

33 Iratok az ellenforradalom történetéhez, 2:177–81.

to ethno-regional identities and the maintenance of ties to the homeland. These ties were nurtured through organized tours, regular exchange of information, and organized holidays for children.[34] The associations around the much larger group of people who had left eastern Transylvania and especially the Association of Székely University and College Students (SZEFHE) and the network of associations around it had a different strategy. They did not build a network of influence. Instead, they sought to act in a Messianic way and integrate elements of Székely cultural heritage (military borderland identity, free peasant community, mythical Hun origins) into the national canon in order to transform Hungarian society, regardless of whether change came from radical Left or radical Right. One of the central figures put their mission in the following way: "I absolutely believe in Transylvania. I believe that all light, health, talent, good, beauty, and moral power comes from there. If Hungarians can still be saved, this can only be done via Transylvania."[35] This presence proved so powerful that it survived decades of state socialism. The revival in the post-1990 era of the Székely Anthem and a runic script allegedly used well before Hungarians adopted the Latin alphabet is partially a sign of the success of their and their successors' efforts.[36] The Zipser and the Székely refugee community had pronounced contours and defined itself vis-à-vis the state. While the first wished to use state infrastructure to promote their individual and group level goals and to protect cultural heritage, the second wished to integrate this heritage into the national canon.

Between 1918 and 1924, alongside people and artifacts, institutions were also relocated to a new country. Professors and students at the university of Kolozsvár (Cluj) and Pozsony (Bratislava) came to Budapest and, subsequently, to Szeged and Pécs, where their successors operate to this day. The Forestry and Mining College found its new home in Sopron, and the law schools of Máramarossziget and Eperjes also moved to Hungary. Although these individual histories are well explored, the question of institutional level flight has hardly been made the subject of study, and the comparative studies of policies towards universities are not complete in their scope or framework.[37] From the

34 See Szűts, *A szepesi menekültek sajtója,* and Ablonczy, " 'Lesz még kikelet a Szepesség felett'."

35 György Csanády's Papers (Budapest, private property), manuscript notes ad. 3–7. d. n. [1928]. Csanády was a radio program editor, one of the five founders of SZEFHE, and the author of the Székely Anthem.

36 On the Székelys, see Ablonczy, "Székely identitásépítés Magyarországon." On the frameworks of Székely ideology, see Hermann, Orbán, *Csillagösvény és göröngyös út*.

37 Ladányi, *Klebelsberg felsőoktatási politikája*, 28–39. On the university in Kolozsvár, see Vincze, *A száműzött egyetem*.

perspective of the broader context, it is worth noting that the leadership of the universities initially adopted a strict legalistic point of view at the time of the political changeover and tried to continue working at their locations until they were forced to leave in 1919. Some of the institutions and the more specialized training institution in Selmecbánya found their place, since the development of universities was a matter of state policy in the 1920s. Institutions that did not fit the prevailing concept, however, barely survived or lost state subsidies and had to close down. I am thinking, for instance, of law schools whose curricula did not harmonize with the state's concept of development.

Images and Imagination

If we look at remembrance of flight and repatriation, we find a picture that is more complex than the picture of victimhood. It is useful to consider memoirs written between the second half of 1920s and the 1980s about experiences of flight between 1918 and 1924.[38] I considered it important, from a methodological point of view, to use memoirs that form a control group. I identified three memoir writers who hesitated and eventually chose remain in the lands of their birth. Their motivations are at least as telling about the circumstances of repatriation as the writings of those who left.

The individuals who decided to stay did not adopt a heroic pose ("loyalty to Transylvania") when making this decision. Their motivations were fear of material uncertainty, a rejection or fear of the ideology of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, or fear of the so-called white terror. The feature that the writings of those who left and those that stayed have in common is strong referentiality. None of them used arguments that stand on their own. Arguments that might well be accepted as reasonable explanations for the decision to leave would include fear for one's life or the desire not to become part of a national minority living in a new nation state. Instead, the memoir writers made references to more specific details of their individual circumstances. For instance, they would mention the advice given by a pastor, or they would mention the desire to free themselves from someone they despised. They also mentioned having lost their jobs or having been betrayed by (Hungarian) colleagues. In some cases, such as that of László Ravasz (a Calvinist preacher who was born in Transylvania and who emerged as a prominent representative of the Calvinist Church in the

38 See Ablonczy, "Menni vagy maradni?"

interwar period), there was even reference to a divine order. It is even more puzzling that the use of references to external persons or circumstances is independent of political regimes. It is just as typical of memoirs produced in the 1930s as it is of those written after 1947–48, i.e. in communist Hungary. The memoirs suggest that their authors felt the reasons for the decision to leave were not self-evident or understandable in the eyes of others. There was a need for *one more* explanation in the argument. The other feature that stands out is that those who went to Hungary adjusted to an expected mode of speaking. Memoir authors whose writings did not fit the prevailing ideological currents stayed and died outside of post-Trianon Hungary. One could mention Farkas Gyalui, the director of the library in Kolozsvár, who felt like vomiting when he thought of Mihály Károlyi, the communists, the anti-Semitism of the post-1920 regime, and the people he regarded "Hungarians in word only," i.e. those who had left the land of their birth and resettled in Trianon Hungary.[39]

The images of refugees in works of literature are no less loaded. No great novels were written about the plights of the refugees, and refugees often did not recognize themselves in the works that were produced. Zoltán Szitnyai (1893–1978) was a journalist and a writer whose novels were frequently published in the interwar period. Since he was born in Selmecbánya/Banska Stiavnica, his works often revolved around the city and the people who left for Trianon Hungary. In his novel *Hodinai Hodinák* ("Árpád from Hodina," 1936), some of the expelled Hungarians living in Budapest drew up lists of alleged traitors, in their eyes, those who remained and continued to maintain the pre-war patriarchal world. They were more like merry tourists: their behavior did not reflect any suffering or pain. Szitnyai used the same framework in his work about the association of refugees that was published in Kassa (Kosice) in the early 1930s (*Szeptemberi majális* or "May Day in September"). The author/observer was critical of the loftiness and emptiness of the leaders and members of the association and the fawning attitudes that they exhibited on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the association. They were looking forward to seeing a minister who had been sent to see them, and they all hoped that their requests would enjoy the support of the influential politician. Lajos Zilahy (1891–1974) was one of the best-selling authors of interwar Hungary. His novel *Földönfutó város* ("Beggar Town"), which was published in 1939, was not one of his major successes. It builds on experience he gained during his work as a journalist, and it offers a (man's

39 Gyalui, *Emlékirataim 1914–1924*.

perception of a) female perspective on the society of refugees. It is the story of a family falling apart. Following the death of her husband, the widow decides to repatriate and become a wagon dweller. Although the novel has a surprisingly tolerant tone (it does not contain anti-Semitic formulas and it addresses taboos such as homosexuality), it is not optimistic in its final judgement: emigration, moral degradation, and human pettiness and the ill-will of refugee society provide an allegorical framework for the fate of the family. The mother saves her new love from the police, but her children leave her, and it seems unlikely that her new relationship will last.

Addressing the plights of refugees in the tradition crafted by memoirs and literary works was burdensome, and this may explain why their stories remain largely untold in Hungary. Under pressure from official and public discourse, these narratives were distorted and used to legitimize flight. The fact that these stories have gone untold has constituted a barrier to the memory of the community, and it has prevented this memory from being integrated into the larger national narrative of victimhood.

Conclusion

One can speak of the refugee policy of the Hungarian state in its true sense from the end of 1919, when the state set up certain institutions to manage the flow of immigrants arriving in the country and initiated and coordinated welfare efforts. This approach replaced earlier approaches that were used in a time of flight in 1916. Beginning in the second half of 1920, the government focused on drastically cutting back the number of new arrivals. They were motivated by concern for public order and hypothetical revision of the peace treaty in the future, rather than by humanitarian considerations. State companies, Churches, and state institutions or local municipalities had different and inconsistent policies. The latter used the refugee issue in their battles for material resources, in fights against control from center of the state, and in internal political battles. With the closure of the National Office for Refugees, the problems faced by immigrants disappeared from public view and, except for a few marked groups (Zipsers and Székelys), refugees were not able to represent themselves in the public or political spheres. Refugees not only had to face limitations imposed on them by government policies, but also had to grapple with the obstacles which arose because of the simple fact that many people in the communities in which they sought to settle saw them as competitors for available resources, so their

cause did not evolve into a national outcry. Their flight forced them to justify their decisions and redefine their identities. Although state efforts were neither satisfactory nor consistent, Hungarian society finally integrated and absorbed this predominantly middle-class crowd of refugees, but the details (the technical details and networks) of this integration should be subjected to further study. In this sense, integration was a success story, though not thanks to the state. However, in many cases, the cost of success was silence.

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Addressing the Trianon Peace Treaty in Late Socialist Hungary: Societal Interest and Available Narratives

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In the 1970s and 1980s, the state socialist regime of Hungary was aware of its failure to provide serious ideological reflection on the national question. The party actively sought information about contemporary historical and national consciousness and reacted both in policy and institutional terms. Within the framework of these developments, discourses about the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920, which constitutes an especially traumatic episode of twentieth-century Hungarian history, also started to become more varied. Historians were in the center of these processes, although they operated often in a reactive manner both with regard to domestic journalistic and literary circles and to foreign scholars who discussed the same issue. The article provides an overview of the dynamics of late socialist science policy pertaining to the national question and the different discourses about the Trianon Peace Treaty that emerged during this period.

Keywords: socialist patriotism, Trianon Peace Treaty, historiography, science policy

This article analyzes the ways in which the Trianon Peace Treaty, a uniquely important point of reference in Hungarian national history, was discussed in the 1970s and 1980s and how the state learned about people's interests in this question and historical research itself, which indirectly fueled such conversations. The 1920 Trianon Peace Treaty brought about the breakup of Hungary, resulting in great territorial, economic, population, and political losses and significantly influencing the course of twentieth-century Hungarian history.[1] I was interested in what kinds of (historical) narratives people had access to during the years of late socialism if they sought to read about the event and its consequences, beyond the chronologically defined narratives used in primary and secondary education. In order to uncover the situatedness of these narratives, I built my analysis on an institutional and policy-based tenet, which is followed by discussion of the production of related historical knowledge. Reviewing the most important decisions of the people who defined limits of historical discourse in the socialist state, it also became crucial to engage with the development of the idea of

1 For a detailed discussion of the peace treaty, see Bárdi, Fedinec, and Szarka, *Minority Hungarian Communities in the Twentieth Century*, Section I.

socialist patriotism in this period, as its (in)capacity to reflect on Trianon was one of its ultimate tests of applicability.

Similar investigations merit scholarly attention, as memory politics in post-2010 illiberal Hungary and a parallel system of knowledge-producing institutions (in the making)[2] has a very specific and rather simplified agenda when it comes to depictions of historians as disinterested in issues that are corollary to national history under state socialism. These phenomena are perhaps particularly conspicuous and influential in Hungary, but there certainly is a regional trend in the devaluation of knowledge production under state socialism.[3] Hence, the well-known argument for the "return of the national" after 1989 is often evoked and remains dominant in regional scholarship, although critiques of this argument have been published, mostly by researchers from outside the region, most recently, by John Connelly.[4] With my analysis, which identifies instances of discourses on Trianon and investigates their structural embeddedness in the infrastructure and politics of historical knowledge production, I would like to contribute to the literature that emphasizes continuities between pre and post-1989(/1991) historiographies, especially the resilience of the nation as the main actor,[5] while appreciating the importance of the realization of the freedom of speech, which gave great impetus to historical research after the transition.

Late socialist Hungarian historiography showed a gradual liberalization which found expression primarily in the growing variety of narratives. As there were practically no historical taboos left by the 1980s, with the exception of the 1956 uprising and the events of the Soviet occupation in World War II, this ongoing liberalization, which was non-linear nonetheless, was less palpable in terms of approaching topics that had been beyond reach. That being said, historical knowledge production remained tied to state-funded institutions, and various actors in science policy influenced their research agendas partially either by ordering specific projects or by issuing mid-term and long-term research plans.[6]

In what follows, first I am going to discuss the ways in which the party-state sought to familiarize itself with contemporary historical consciousness

2 Egry, "Constructing a New Past in Hungary."

3 Michela, "The Struggle for Legitimacy," 118.

4 Connelly, *From Peoples into Nations*, especially Chapter 21.

5 Górny, *The Nation Should Come First*; Palmowski, *Inventing a Socialist Nation*; Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism*.

6 Ember, "Tervezés és szervezés a történettudományban."

and attitudes towards the national-nationality question. This will be followed by consideration of the different reactions prompted by the conclusions of these efforts. The third section investigates theoretical interventions of (mostly) historians in relation to the national question and its link to the issue of Hungarian minorities in national consciousness. Lastly, I offer a discursive typology to map the different historical narratives that were publicly available about the Trianon Peace Treaty in late socialist Hungary.

The Inquisitive State: Surveys of National Consciousness during Late Socialism

State socialist regimes, including Kádár regime, aimed actively to shape social consciousness, mainly through the channels of state education but also through popular and party education. In the course of the 1970s and 1980s, numerous works pointed towards the decreasing appeal of communist ideological messages, as they were increasingly deemed empty and detached from reality. These calls were not independent from the practical implication of György Aczél's often contradictory, conciliatory claims aiming to solidify the hegemony of Marxism. The mastermind of Hungarian cultural politics in most of the 1970s and the early 1980s, Aczél claimed that hegemony is desirable instead of monopoly, while he rejected the idea of "multiple Marxisms."[7] At the same time, other state socialist regimes in the region also had to come to terms with the realization that the importance of national belonging does not seem to wither.

A telling example of how socialist leaders understood that national consciousness did not fade away is that of literary historian István Király, a close collaborator of Aczél. An entry in his diary in November 1970 reads, "It is rather strange how freely we can be anti-Romanian. Only a few years ago, I got into an argument with Illyés [Gyula Illyés, internationally acclaimed writer – R.K.] because of the five million Hungarians who live beyond the borders of Hungary proper. I defended the Party. Today, good Communists are echoing him."[8] Király was an ideologist of culture who tried to position himself somewhere halfway between reform communists and the so-called agrarian populist authors.[9] His

7 Aczél, "Művelődéspolitikánk a marxizmus hegemóniájáért," 111.

8 *Napló 1956–1989*, 199.

9 Agrarian populists, a loosely organized circle of intellectuals who rose to prominence in the interwar period, propagating a "third way" for Hungary that would be built on the pure power of the allegedly hitherto oppressed peasantry. Many of the writers published sociographies and showed a genuine interest in the everyday struggles of people living in rural Hungary. After a strained relationship with the Stalinist regime, during the Kádár era, some of the writers made their compromises with the softening dictatorship,

observation indicates that at the beginning of the period under investigation, the national question, often in connection with the Trianon Peace Treaty, was not only a concern of those who were linked to the loose group of agrarian populist authors or part of a current that voluntarily withdrew from the public sphere because of their incompatibility with the regime. Rather, it was self-evident that the nation as a historical category remained important for the individuals who made up contemporary socialist society. Therefore, Király believed, taking into consideration the existing though fading ideological complex, both literature and historiography had to preserve and develop contents relevant for national consciousness (and subsequently raised awareness) that would be compatible with the values of socialist society. Király, who was an important representative of the current that advocated for the cultivation of socialist ideology, considered emotional attachment part and parcel of this national consciousness that was to be hammered out.[10] He thus realized quite soon the limited appeal of theorization concerning socialist national consciousness and the perhaps more limited potential of any state attempt actually to fashion such a national consciousness.

These impressions found expression not only in the challenges that state socialist regimes faced all across the Eastern Bloc and in Yugoslavia (Polish, Hungarian, East German uprisings, the Croatian Spring, and the Belgrade protests). Király's observation was confirmed by polls which measured habits of cultural consumption and value changes. A poll conducted in 1971 (but only published in 1976) asserted that a large portion of Hungarian society was interested in the interrelated issues of the Trianon Peace Treaty and the minority Hungarian communities:

> The answers were quite equable in relation to the statement that "He/she is deeply embittered by the Trianon Peace Treaty." 70.4 percent of the participants consider this statement valid for them (mostly the intellectuals, unskilled workers, and agricultural physical workers, it is least likely among free professions, employees, and skilled workers). 19.4 percent answered no (in the cases of the two youngest age cohorts, these answers exceeded 40 percent). (We obtained valuable answers from 46 percent of the participants).
> With a small margin, the people who rejected the following statement with a double negation formed majority: "He/she did not approve of

while others became active in the emerging opposition. Trencsényi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, 2/1: 143.

10 Király, "Hazafiság és internacionalizmus," 360.

> the returning of the Transylvanian and Upper Hungarian [i.e. Slovakia] territories" (50.2 percent). 42.2 percent of the participants agreed with the statement (especially employees, skilled workers, and homemakers). (Only 59 percent of the sample gave valid answers).[11]

The researchers emphasized that numerous circumstances may have prevented the participants from giving honest answers. However, the conclusion was still easily drawn on the basis of the 500 samples: the national question, which included Trianon, remained a relevant issue for a significant portion of Hungarian society. Although generational differences were palpable in the ways in which people related to the past, the topic continued to generate interest, as György Csepeli has concluded in his monograph.[12]

Partly due to these phenomena, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) put the investigation of the national issue on its agenda of long-term research projects, with a promise that interdisciplinary cooperation would be an element of the projects at every stage of the research. The Mass Communication Research Center of the Hungarian Radio and Television *(Magyar Rádió és Televízió Tömegkommunikációs Kutatóközpont)*, in cooperation with HAS, became a central organ to research on national consciousness in the beginning of the 1970s.

One of the most important cooperative endeavors was realized within the framework of the main research focus of HAS. It was entitled *The Development of Hungarian Historical Consciousness after the Liberation*, and it can be considered an early attempt at researching national consciousness.[13] Although the main goals of the research did not point directly towards the issue of Trianon, it is important to emphasize here that a prehistory existed to the broad sociological surveys which also sought to investigate historical and national consciousness and the ways in which historical knowledge was mobilized by Hungarian society.[14]

Perhaps the most important comprehensive research project was launched at the beginning of the 1980s. The project proposal, entitled *National Consciousness*

11 Hunyady and Pörzse, "Vélekedések a XX. század történetéről és a családok múltjáról," 53.

12 "These research projects… [those dealing with national consciousness – R.K.] showed that the patterns of national feeling and identity are alive within the population. If one knows the political and ideological system of state socialism, these results may come as a surprise, since in general we may say that public official discourse suppressed the expression of alternative social identifications." Csepeli, *A nagyvilágon e kívül*, 123.

13 Témabeszámoló 1972–1975. MTA Történettudományi Intézete [Report 1972–1975, HAS Institute of History]. MTA Levéltára, II. Filozófiai és Történettudományok Osztályának iratai, box 241, folder 5, 72–75, 76–80.

14 Ibid.

in Hungary: The National-Nationality Question in Our Politics, was drafted by the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee. The main goal of the project was to determine "what the population of Hungary feels and thinks about the national question, what they identify with, what the contradictory elements of their thinking and feelings are, what the content of contemporary national consciousness is, and what the tendencies of development are."[15] The subsequent studies delivered important conclusions to the leaders of the regime, who had been hoping for a gradual withering away of the significance of identification with the "nation."

Institutional Reactions: Science Policy and Research Plans

The politics of science and culture drew the necessary conclusions. The issue of patriotic education became ever more pressing under the aegis of the "youth problem," and new momentum gathered in the support for popular historiography, a hitherto less influential genre. In the end, the state socialist regime was aware of and made efforts to understand and give a (new) scientific basis to the national question, not only in a reactive (e.g. to manifestations of Romanian nationalism) but also in a proactive manner.

The Science Policy Committee *(Tudománypolitikai Bizottság)*, an institution under the auspices of the Council of Ministers,[16] acted as the supporting institution of deliberating organs with competence in matters of science policies in the period under investigation. The committee was headed by one of the appointed deputy prime ministers.[17] Other committees were also involved in policy-making, most importantly the Coordinating Committee for Social Sciences *(Társadalomtudományi Koordinációs Bizottság)*, which was founded as a sub-committee to the Science Policy Committee in 1975 to serve as an advising and evaluating body, which also had the right to submit proposals. The latter prepared proposals for the Central Committee and was entrusted with instructing working groups which collaborated in research projects already underway.

For the purposes of this study, I am going to focus on the competencies and activities of the Science Policy Committee that directly pertained to the

15 Tájékoztató a Társadalomtudományi Koordinációs Bizottság 1981. dec. 10-i üléséről [Prospectus about the session of the Science Policy Committee on December 10, 1981], May 1982. MTA Levéltára, Tudománypolitikai Bizottság , box 23.

16 Kónya, "Az Akadémia szerepe," 346.

17 Tolnai, "A hazai tudomány- és műszaki politika," 125.

initiatives that were connected to research on national consciousness and, therefore, the place of Trianon on the mental map of the average Hungarian. The documents that were preserved in the archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences enable a partial reconstruction of the committee's activities. One should add that the length and utility of the records are rather uneven.

In 1982, the Science Policy Committee adopted a resolution in the presence of Imre Pozsgay, the Minister of Education at the time. This resolution established that the Ministry of Culture and the HAS would launch a new, long-term research direction entitled *The Exploration, Cataloging, and Publication of Our Cultural and Historical Traditions*. The resolution emphasized the need to take into consideration research projects that had been initiated earlier but were directly connected to the realization of this research trend, noting that these running projects had already been given a high priority by party organs.[18]

General objectives were set and a detailed list of tasks was also prepared in order to provide clear instructions for research institutes that were to be involved in the implementation of the research plan (Institute of History HAS, Institute of Literature HAS, Mass Communication Research Center HRT[19]). The main areas of interest included the development of political and historical thought, especially Marxist thought in Hungary, the national question in capitalist and developing countries, press coverage of the preceding five years on issues of patriotism and socialist internationalism and the presence of patriotism and socialist internationalism in primary and secondary education, recent manifestations of socialist patriotism and internationalism in Hungary's neighboring countries, and artistic depictions of Hungarian history.[20]

The records of the Committee that dealt with the history of Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia and their relations to Hungary mostly used terms like "(people of the) Danube Region" *(Duna-táji népek)*, "(people of the) Danube Valley" *(Duna-völgyi népek)*, and Central Eastern

18 Tájékoztató a Tudománypolitikai Bizottság 1982. febr. 5-i üléséről [Prospectus about the session of the Science Policy Committee on February 5, 1982]. December 19, 1981 - March 12, 1982. MTA Levéltára, Tudománypolitikai Bizottság, box 23, folder 3.

19 A short overview of the activities of the research institute that was established in 1969 is provided in Hunyady, "Áttekintés Az MRT Tömegkommunikációs Központ munkájáról." The national question is also addressed, see ibid., 576.

20 A MTA kutatási-fejlesztési terve az 1981–1985 közötti időszakra BT/7. Témakör A nemzeti tudat és a nemzeti kérdés korunkban [The research and development plan of the HAS for the period between 1981–1985. December 19, 1981 – March 12, 1982. MTA Levéltára, Tudománypolitikai Bizottság, box 23, folder 1.

Europe. This set of terms can be seen as a semantic experiment. Instead of using terms that were associated with the former Hungarian rule and evoked by the dominant, nationalist-irredentist discourses of the interwar era, the Committee opted to use strictly geographical, often composite units, pointing towards the creation of a discourse that would include these topics in a manner which was compatible with the idea of socialist patriotism. This language was rooted in interwar and immediate post-1945 discussions of the left, especially in the writings of Oszkár Jászi and István Bibó. The fact that the Committee ordered this research project signals the genuine wish of the state socialist leadership to learn more about the relevance and content of contemporary national consciousness by using the available interdisciplinary research methods.

The analysis of Hungarian national consciousness showed that, even if the dominant frame of reference remained the nation state, contemporary Hungarian national consciousness included a sense of solidarity among several segments of society with the minority Hungarian communities. Although these tendencies had been acknowledged in the secondary literature since the beginning of the 1970s, it was not until 1984 that the first institution was established the existence of which confirmed that leaders in science and cultural politics drew the necessary conclusions from the abovementioned studies and acknowledged the raison d'être of these ideas.

This institution called Hungarian Studies Group *(Magyarságkutató Csoport)* was established based on the 1984 resolution of the Agitation and Propaganda Committee. The research group was to operate under the umbrella of the National Széchényi Library. The historian Gyula Juhász was appointed head of the research group. According to the resolution, the research group was supposed to focus on three major areas:

> 1. The national-nationality questions and problems of national consciousness. Relying on the research that had been carried out previously primarily by the IH HAS under the title "National Consciousness in Hungary, the National-Nationality Question in Our Age," but also research carried out by others…[…]…The main purpose of this study is to clarify how we can encourage the expression of the great forces that the national idea contains in harmony with socialist consciousness. It is also important to pursue research in order to develop further the Marxist theory of the nation according to our contemporary standards.

> The continuation of the research initiatives that are developing further the Marxist theory of nations is essential according to the needs of our time. Providing help in the demanding realization of the national-nationality question in education, tertiary education, and public education is a priority in the course of the investigation of this topic.
> 2. The second large topic of Hungarian studies is the complex and continuous research on the contemporary as well as historical, economic, social, and cultural circumstances of Hungarians living abroad. Since no systematic research has been carried out yet, an essential prerequisite of truly scientific research includes the consecutive exploration, collection, and ordering of sources, statistical data, etc. in order to prepare a so-called databank.[21]

The third topic pertained to Hungarian studies and related research abroad. The fact that the resolution relied heavily on the results of previously conducted research into national consciousness is proven best by the description of the first topic.[22]

The authors of the resolution specified the ways in which they envisioned the realization of the tasks and dedicated four subprograms to it. Pál Zsigmond Pach, head of the Institute of History of HAS, was appointed to lead the activities of the first subprogram, which was entitled *The National-Nationality Question and Research into the Problems of National Consciousness*. Director Juhász was entrusted with the leadership of the second subprogram, called *Complex and Continuous Research into the History and Contemporary Circumstances of Hungarians Living Abroad*. The third subprogram was assigned to Péter Dippold, an expert in library studies, under the title *The Exploration and Ordering of Sources that Concern Hungarians Living in Neighboring Countries as Well as in Diaspora: The Creation of a So-Called Data Bank*. The last subprogram was named *Research Aiding the Transmission and Education of Hungarian Studies*. It was put under the leadership of linguist János Pusztay.[23] The slow process of institutionalization manifested most visibly in the configurations of the research community and the new variations to describe and interpret the national-nationality question. It was not long before this growing plurality became apparent on the international scene as well.

21 *A művelődési folyamatok és történelmi-kulturális hagyományaink kutatása*, 44.

22 Ibid., 45–48.

23 Ibid., 49.

Historians, Socialist National Consciousness, and Minority Hungarians

Informed by the surveys already discussed and various debates among regime-compatible intellectuals and fellow travelers, the state treated the issue of shaping national consciousness within the broader framework of socialist thought-shaping *(szocialista tudatformálás)*. In that process, research centers were considered background institutions,[24] and historians came to play a prominent role. Neither professional nor popularizing discussions about national consciousness were confined to the research institutions or the pages of professional journals though. Various influential outlets including the party's theoretical journal *Társadalmi Szemle* (Social Review) published regularly on the issue (sometimes quite lengthy articles), but from time to time, the topic emerged in dailies and even in interviews.[25]

Socialist national consciousness was primarily conceptualized in juxtaposition to bourgeois national consciousness. The scholarship of the 1970s acknowledged several further stages of national consciousness: undeveloped national formations, nation of the transitory period, the communist nation, as well as corresponding, self-reflexive national consciousness in the case of each.[26] A theoretical piece suggested the adoption of the Soviet definition in order to identify the prerequisites of socialist national consciousness: social homogeneity, a community of interest in terms of economy and politics, uniform cultural and intellectual identity, an internationalist worldview of society.[27] It is important to notice the centrality of the nation state, a geographical and spiritual entity that is defined by solid borders: its acknowledged continuous importance preempted a conflict between the nation-centered historiography that was inherited from the interwar period and the political expectations that were transmitted in party resolutions.

Of the historians of the Modern era, two leaders of the Institute of History of HAS contributed most frequently to the debates about national consciousness. Alongside Pál Zsigmond Pach, head of the Institute of History of HAS, and research fellow Ferenc Glatz, (later deputy head of the Institute of History)

24 "Beszámoló a Filozófiai és Történettudományok Osztályának tevékenységéről," 224.

25 Tandi, "Társadalmi tudat, műveltség, minőség."

26 Farkas, "A szocialista nemzetté fejlődés kérdései," 161.

27 Ibid., 161.

and research fellow Mária Ormos[28] also published on the topic in the course of the 1980s.[29] However, only Pach and Glatz participated systematically in these discussions, and their publications concentrated explicitly on the ideological implications of the national question. Therefore, my study is going to limit itself to the analysis of their writings. Most of the reflections on contemporary historical consciousness encompassed centuries in their argumentative parts and avoided a clear focus on a single event. The rhetorical strength of these arguments was in fact provided in part by the large temporal framework and well-established generalizations.

Contributions pertaining to the development of socialist consciousness during late socialism harkened back to the Molnár debate, the single most important ideological-historical debate of the early years of the Kádár regime. Erik Molnár (1894–1966) was a lawyer by training, and he tried his hand in historical research and concomitant ideological work as well when he was member of the Hungarian government between 1944 and 1956. In 1949, he also took the position of the head of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences. The Molnár debate took place after the 1956 uprising[30] and provided a forum for presentations of multiple forms of possible historical consciousness under state socialism. Molnár was staunchly internationalist, and he characterized all national movements in Hungarian history as having only benefitted the ruling classes (feudal lords and the bourgeoisie) and criticized scholarship, interwar and communist alike, when it tried to locate the "national" in settings when it was anachronistic or simply absent (e.g. conflation with religious identity). Molnár's internationalist inclinations were especially critical of "popular Marxist" tendencies (propagated by Aladár Mód and Erzsébet Andics among others from early on),[31] according to which the anti-Habsburg struggles were progressive movements. Molnár, on the one hand, was challenged by a handful of historians (including György Ránki and Péter Hanák) for absolutizing class antagonisms.[32] This brief contextualization was necessary, as much of the following analysis

28 Ormos got a teaching position around that time. She was appointed to the newly established Faculty of Humanities of the University of Pécs. Her political career was also progressing.

29 Ormos, "A reális történelmi tudat a hazaszeretet hordozója."

30 Litkei dealt with the first controversy in which Molnár played a leading role in 1950. Litkei, "The Molnár Debate of 1950."

31 Lackó, "Molnár Erik és a 60-as évek történészvitája," 1483.

32 Ibid., 1525.

was framed even by contemporaries as a later stage of this very same debate, though Molnár died in 1966.[33]

Pach claimed repeatedly throughout the 1970s and 1980s that the post-1945 patriotism of the builders of socialism was continuous with what he called the popular-democratic national consciousness of the Revolution of 1848–1849. Pach identified the radical fringe of the 1848 revolutionary leaders (Sándor Petőfi, Mihály Táncsics, and Pál Vasvári) as the first representatives of this trend.[34] After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, nationalism and patriotism parted ways according to the Marxist interpretations that Pach adopted. However, he successfully linked the 1848 Revolution to the democratic revolution of 1918 and the short-lived 1919 Communist regime based on the premise that "the idea of social progress intertwined with the progressive trends of national ideology in both cases."[35] Pach reacted to Király's study as well, claiming that Király's judgement failed when he proclaimed that supranationalism posed the greater ideological danger as opposed to nationalism. Pach had a historicized view of the development of socialist consciousness and surrounding discussions, which naturally meant that he was ready to historicize its role in it as well.

Revisiting the Molnár debate explicitly, Pach criticized the fact that in support of the different arguments, only Hungarian historical examples were cited, though he immediately explained the reason for this: "On the one hand, our view of history was only beginning to gain certain national colors…; on the other hand, among historians it was still something of a taboo—we did not want to stir the issue. We only dealt with our shortcomings, this was not only dominant but exclusive."[36] This use of words can only be interpreted fully within the semantic field of earlier works. It was previously often emphasized by policy makers and historians (in fact, this attitude only faded away in the mid-1980s) that those who had an objection against nationalism(s) of neighboring countries should make sure first that the domestic scene was devoid of any distortions of bourgeois nationalism.[37]

Although Pach himself discussed the issue of national consciousness in relation to minority Hungarians, he usually did so in a rather opaque way, using

33 Pach, "'Molnár-vita' – nacionalizmus – szupranacionalizmus."

34 Pach, "A hazafiság néhány kérdése," 44.

35 Pach, "Nemzeti fejlődés, nemzeti öntudat," 27.

36 Pach, "'Molnár-vita' – nacionalizmus – szupranacionalizmus," 257.

37 "Some of the scrupulous exorbitance in the criticism of nationalism escalated the disturbance of national consciousness instead of decreasing it." Pach, "A nemzettudatról napjainkban," 27.

periphrases. The contributions of Glatz and Péter Hanák, renowned historian of the Dualist Era,[38] were more direct and radical. Still, it is worth paying attention to the less dynamically changing semantics of Pach they are good indicators of changes in the rhetoric of the party in matters of the national-nationality question, as he was in the Institute of History since its creation in 1949, and he proved politically reliable both before and after 1956. Eventually, he rose to the position of head of the institute, which he held between 1967 and 1987.

Pach's interpretative frameworks and use of words reflected quite reliably the discourse about the contemporary national question (reflecting indirectly on the current trends of Hungarian-Romanian relations). He published his views fairly often in *Társadalmi Szemle*, for instance on the goals of socialist minority politics, which would be the creation of a community the members of which would be "bilingual people who have a dual cultural embeddedness and who concomitantly possess a citizenry-based and a healthy national-nationality consciousness."[39]

Péter Hanák clearly went beyond the usual joint mentioning of the national-nationality question. In his article entitled "Nation–National Loyalty–National Consciousness" *(Nemzet – nemzeti lojalitás – nemzettudat)*, Hanák granted equal status to the issue of minority Hungarians in contemporary historical consciousness:

> we should treat the Hungarian population of neighboring countries as national minorities, that is to say, as a community with dual bonding. A community that is tied to the Hungarian nation by the threads of history and culture while citizen loyalty and the functioning community links them to their current homeland. This dual bond and dual identity do not necessarily create a paradox, on the contrary, in theory, they may be harmonized in socialist states. In reality, the obligations of dual identity may only be harmoniously integrated if the political system is ready to provide sufficient circumstances for the expression, realization, and development of both identities.[40]

38 The ways in which Hungarian minority politics during the Dualist Era was addressed exerted a strong influence on interpretations of the behavior of the minorities that ultimately seceded and joined the new emerging states. Going beyond the issue of minority politics, evaluations of the 1848–1918 period had a significant impact on the shaping of national consciousness.

39 Pach, "Nemzeti fejlődés, nemzeti öntudat," 36.

40 Hanák, "Nemzet – lojalitás – nemzettudat," 184.

A similar position was taken by Glatz, whose interventions were published in his own popular historical outlet, *História*, featuring as editorials or in the column called "Self-Critical Historiography" *(Önkritikus Történettudomány)*. These writings were not historical essays. Rather, they were musings or "readers' guidelines." Glatz knew well the proceedings of party meetings where ideological issues were debated, and he quickly adopted the notion of cultural nation as opposed to state nation. Moreover, contrary to the practices of narrowly conceived historical fora, Glatz regularly explicated the anomalies of the minority Hungarian communities whose minority status emanated from the Trianon (and Paris) peace treaty and that of contemporary historical consciousness. Glatz's line of thought is well illustrated by the following excerpt from 1982:

> Trianon. The figures concerning Hungary's territorial, economical, and first and foremost, social-populational losses after World War I are well-known. Hungary lost almost 70 percent of its former territories and more than half of its population. About 40 percent of Magyars were left outside the borders of the new Hungary and became nationalities, minorities in the new states. The historian has to tell this: there was no other people in history, not even before the national and state formation, which would have taken the loss of two thirds of its population and territory with tranquility, after two generations had passed. For a long time, our historiography and intellectual circles were ruled by incomprehension concerning the national shock of Trianon. We were afraid of lurking nationalism even when concerns were only raised to point to the continuity and presence of the problem. Our historiography today is not particularly surprised anymore that great territorial rearrangements (1920, the collapse of historical Hungary, the territorial revisions of 1938–1942, the return of territories after 1945), the collapse of states and new settlements, the evacuation of the population of entire provinces kept regional historiographies in the aura of momentary "rights," the mutually committed sins and their supportive arguments.[41]

Glatz frequently used this framework in the years of late socialism. The fact that these views were transmitted by a popularizing magazine that was published in thousands of copies from the beginning of the 1980s shows that by that time, the Trianon Peace Treaty was a topic that could be approached and read about in various ways.

41 Glatz, "Kérdések etnikumról, nemzetről a 20. század végén," 34–35.

Historians were involved in the development processes of a gradually more inclusive notion of the nation which included members of the Hungarian minorities in the surrounding states. Research was conducted both on the basis of individual interests and party orderings. The conclusions drawn from the findings of these research projects and their publication for professional, administrative, or popularizing purposes influenced the language that the party used in related issues: the terminologies mutually affected each other.

Narrating Trianon in Historical Works: Three Patterns

Historians, naturally, took part in the shaping of a discourse about Trianon in more direct ways as well, as they researched the peace-making process itself, the genesis of the interwar state, and related aspects. My close reading of the literature produced about the Trianon Peace Treaty reveals three discursive patterns in the historiography, both in professional and in popularizing fora.[42] I chose to discuss these two fields together, as popular history was institutionally part of the profession, and the difference between the two was more a matter of style and format than a difference in the quality of supporting research. While the grouping of the discourses yielded significant analytical benefits, I would also like to point to their occasional confluence.

The largest group is constituted by the publications that followed the chronological-neutral pattern. Their common features include a strictly descriptive language that does not allow for the evaluation of the peace treaty or at least dramatically limits criticism. In them, the Trianon Peace Treaty was depicted as a diplomatic act, usually within a broader context of international relations. They strove for a meticulous reconstruction of the preparation process and the effects of the treaty. In order to do this, historians utilized the holdings of Hungarian and Western (most notably English and French) archives. Their reliance on archival sources predestined diplomatic historians to produce texts in which sources are simply rearranged into a narrative. This practice occasionally led to the inclusion of contemporary expressions in scholarly articles in a manner that was not adequately self-reflexive. The two citations that follow are typical representatives of this category. Both were chosen from texts by two

42 In this section, I am not going to extend the scope of inquiry to source publications, as narrative options and frameworks are the primary focus of my article. However, the publication record of such volumes was also rich in these kinds of terms.

prominent diplomatic historians of the period, Mária Ormos and Magda Ádám, respectively:

> The peace treaty was made ready, the allied got by and large what they wanted and the former enemies swallowed the bitter pill.[43]

> While earlier England, Italy, and the United States had taken a stand to correct the unjust decisions of the peace treaty and managed to put this possibility in writing in a lettre d'envoi, now the tables have been turned. They discarded Millerand's suggestion, even though it was originally their idea.[44]

Gyula Juhász, one of Ormos's and Ádám's colleagues at the Institute of History of HAS, and also Géza Jeszenszky, an affiliate of the Karl Marx University of Economics, were important representatives of this trend.

This discursive pattern was not without predecessors, of course. Its most important antecedent or, indeed, the groundwork was the monograph by Zsuzsa L. Nagy (Institute of History, HAS), which was published in 1965.[45] As these works all represented the chronology-focused trend of diplomatic history, this made them especially apt for the purposes of textbooks.

The second category consists of works that aimed at the integration of the discussion of the Trianon Peace Treaty within the frameworks of socialist patriotism, hence I call it socialist patriotic pattern. As I pointed out earlier, the interventions of Hungarian intellectuals rarely produced specific theoretical results fitting the local context during late socialism. The overall picture of the field is rather undertheorized and fragmented. However, this apparent lack of a larger, comprehensive framework did not mean a lack of theorizing attempts. The interventions of Erik Molnár, Zsigmond Pál Pach, and István Király are among the most important ones, even though they failed to create a decidedly Hungarian socialist patriotism. Beyond historical works, this pattern was prevalent in policy papers and institutional programs as well, including those that have been introduced in previous sections of this article. The works that qualify for this category contained more evaluative comments and repeatedly cited Lenin's condemnation of the peace system that emerged after the Great War.[46] On a

43 Ormos, "Francia-magyar tárgyalások 1920-ban," 907.

44 Ádám, "Dunai konföderáció vagy kisantant," 463.

45 L. Nagy, *A párizsi békekonferencia és Magyarország 1918–1919*.

46 Lenin, "A nemzeti és gyarmati kérdésről szóló tézisek," 127–31.

semantic level, these publications used most extensively the terms *imperialista békediktátum*, or "imperialist peace dictate," and *rablóbéke*, or "predacious peace."

The first example is from *História*, the first popular historical journal. It was established in 1979. The author is László Kővágó (1923–1990), who was born in Senta/Zenta (Yugoslavia) and who spent his active years in the employment of the Party History Institute. He was known for his publications about the interwar Communist party and the national question and the national-nationality question in the region throughout the twentieth century.

> The theses about the national and colonial question called the Paris Peace Treaties and the Western democracies' brutal and nefarious violence against weak nations and the Comintern repeatedly emphasized the necessity of revolutionary destruction of the peace treaties. At the same time, the Comintern advocated the expediency of federal unification of nation states, based on the Russian experience.[47]

The second excerpt is from an article by Pach. It showcases the use of the most common terms that denoted the peace treaty.

> Later, the severe trauma, the defeat in the Great War, the ruthless history which materialized in the imperialist peace dictate of Trianon, did not become the teacher of life either. What had been done within the boundaries of the homeland before continued beyond it in the post-Trianon times. The thesis of Hungarian cultural supremacy blossomed at a time when the means of direct power were obviously missing.[48]

Iván T. Berend, the renowned economic historian and President of the HAS 1985–1990, commented in his presidential capacity on the international controversy that emerged around the publication of *The History of Transylvania*:[49]

> The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and the affiliates of its respective institutes accept historical realities, and we all, as has been emphasized

47 Kővágó, "A Kommunista Párt és Trianon," 7.

48 Pach, "Nemzeti fejlődés, nemzeti öntudat," 32.

49 The *History of Translyvania* had been long in the making and was considered a project of the Institute of History of HAS. Even though the historians addressed post-1918 history only briefly, it was perceived as an attack on Romanian historiography and historical consciousness, as Transylvania was not described as an *ab ovo* Romanian territorial unit. For an overview of the controversy, see Köpeczi, "Erdély története harminc év távlatából."

> in our Presidential Proclamation, share the relevant resolutions of the Helsinki closing accords, which include both guarantees for the current status quo and human rights. However, this does not change the truth that was proclaimed by Lenin as well, that the peace following the Great War was imperialist and predacious and that the Hungarian Soviet Republic cannot be seen as a nationalist action against Romania.[50]

The contexts of the three excerpts show that authors, who were trying to situate their contributions in relation to socialist patriotism, did so in several formats and at times when they belonged to different institutions of historical knowledge production with similarly diverse positions in their respective hierarchies. Therefore, it can be established that discussions of the Trianon Peace Treaty within the framework of socialist patriotism were not confined to a single genre, institution, or political self-positioning.

The third and least voluminous discussion referred to the peace treaty through its most visible contemporary impacts, and for that reason I refer to it as the pattern defined by the national-nationality question. It appeared at various fora, including cultural journals and policy speeches. The most important feature of this discourse was the way it used the notion of Trianon as a metonym to allude to the "questions concerning the fate of the Hungarian nation," or *"a magyarság sorskérdései"* or to call attention to current issues. The fact that this strategy worked (the works were allowed to appear in print, the readership was able to decode them, and they were soon sought after) proves that Trianon has been made into a cultural code that garnered attention and established a place for itself in late socialist media. These texts, irrespective of their authors, who might have been ministers or historians who regularly published in samizdat, emphasized the need to incentivize research with regard to Hungarian communities in the neighboring countries. For instance. Lajos Für, a historian with an agrarian populist agenda, made the following claim:

> When we say that the territory of the country shrunk to its ca. one third, sticking to the mere facts, it appears to be expedient to add that one third of the Hungarian-speaking population was left beyond the borders of the new country and became one of the minority communities of neighboring states. Our textbooks diligently and accurately describe the national minorities of historical Hungary and mention in a sober and open manner that in the territories that were

50 Berend T., "Tudományos-szellemi életünk néhány központi kérdése," 443.

> ripped away…Hungarians lived. Would it hurt anybody's sensitivities to publish exact numerical data as well?[51]

The second example is provided by an article by Béla Köpeczi, General Secretary of the HAS at the time of publication and later Minister of Education:

> Concerning the nationalism of the peoples of the Danube region, even though we may understand their aggressiveness until the formation of their nation states, their responsibility cannot be denied for the fate of the region after 1919. The ruling class of the new nation states learned much from Hungarian landlords and bourgeoisie with regard to the oppression of minorities. A comparative analysis of these nationalisms would be most beneficial, as it would show that they have many common sources and mutually reinforced one another.[52]

In this format, emotional approaches became apparent, either in a fervent condemnation of the peace treaty and current minority affairs or in a more personal manner.

Conclusions

Late socialism in Hungary is usually described as a period of gradual relaxation in which ideological rigidity and ideology's general significance steadily decreased. Arguably, the late and timid acceptance of the persistence of the nationality question was of special importance in this context. The ultimate failure of the regime to establish a long-lasting relatable ideological promise and identification (socialist patriotism practically vanished soon after the transition) does not mean that no efforts had been taken on the part of different actors. Leading ideologues and strongmen of science and cultural policy were completely blindsided or paralyzed by this phenomenon.

My article sought to recover a single aspect of the attempt to fill the ideological notion of socialist patriotism with a content which would give it serious societal resonance. Zooming in on the ideological interventions and historiographical narrative strategies of the period in relation to the Trianon Peace Treaty, I offer an account of diverse approaches that were available in official publications. The fact that the consequences of the peace treaty, a key

51 Für, "Milyen nyelven beszélnek a székelyek?," 64–65.

52 Köpeczi, "A szocialista nemzeti tudat," 3.

issue in national memory, were not present simply in diverse historical works, but rather several distinct patterns emerged, proves that there was a discursive space which allowed for the pursuit and publication of related research. Excerpts from the writings of prominent historians at the time demonstrate that they were able to establish explicitly the logical link between Trianon and the contemporary situation of Hungarian minorities, even if samizdat publications went further in that direction.

From the perspective of today, we know that historians enjoyed the last decades of authority over matters of historical issues in late socialism, though writers, especially agrarian populist writers, were already posing a serious challenge to them. Approaching the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Trianon Peace Treaty, insightful observations may be made in relation to the afterlives of the discursive patterns introduced here, and their place in the context of policy and institutional survival.

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VIEWPOINTS

The Hungarians in Europe: A Thousand Years on the Frontier*

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The paper is a revised version of the first in a series of twelve lectures on Hungarian history at the University of Vienna, starting on October 5, 2017. It discusses some key issues of Hungarian history around the theme of continuities and discontinuities. Namely, a particular dynamism of Hungarian history derives from the incongruence between the historical narrative of the Hungarian state and the historical narrative of the Hungarian nation for extended periods during the last thousand years. The survey addresses political, social, economic and cultural aspects of Hungarian history and concludes by arguing that the adoption of Christianity and the foundation of the Hungarian state by the first king, Saint Stephen, are the longest-lasting achievements of Hungarian history, properly commemorated by the most important national holiday on August 20.

Keywords: Hungary, geopolitics, frontier experiences, periodization, continuity, discontinuity

* The original talk was entitled "Ungarn in Europa. Tausend Jahre an der Grenze" and it includes much from our previous publications. We would like to thank Professor Oliver Schmid (Austria), Iván Bertényi Jr., Deputy Director of the Collegium Hungaricum in Vienna, and Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics, research fellow in Research Centre for the Humanities (Hungary) for organizing this series of talks on Hungarian history. Our introductory survey was followed by Attila Türk, "Actual problems of the early Hungarian history: Old questions–new results" (October 12, 2017); Attila Bárány, "St. Stephen's realm: Hungary in Europe in the age of the Árpád dynasty" (October 19, 2017); Katalin Szende, "Von Mohi bis Mohács. Geschichte Ungarns im späten Mittelalter zwischen Blütezeit und Bedrohung" (November 2, 2017); Géza Pálffy, "Bollwerk und Speisekammer Mitteleuropas: Das Königreich Ungarn in der Habsburgermonarchie im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert" (November 9, 2017); Sándor Papp, "Ungarn im Schatten der Osmanen, 16. und 17. Jahrhundert" (November 16, 2017); István Soós, "Das Jahrhundert des Neuaufbaus. Das Königreich Ungarn zwischen 1686 und 1790" (November 23, 2017); Gábor Erdődy, "Die Entstehung der modernen bürgerlichen ungarischen Nation, 1790–1848/49" (November 30, 2017); Ágnes Deák, "Im Kraftfeld zentrifugaler und zentripetaler Kräfte–Ungarn in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts" (December 7, 2017); Iván Bertényi Jr., "Blüte und Zerfall: Die letzten Jahrzehnte des historischen Königreichs Ungarn" (December 14, 2017); Ignác Romsics, "Ungarn in der Zwischenkriegszeit" (January 11, 2018); László Borhi, "Imperial or ideological? Hungary and East Central Europe in the Soviet Empire, 1945–1956" (January 18, 2018); Attila Pók, "Blut und Brot. Die Kádár-Ära und die Wende, 1957–1990" (January 25, 2018).

This is the first time for many years that the University of Vienna has hosted a series of lectures by Hungarian historians. We are very glad and greatly honored to be delivering the introductory talk of the series, although a general introduction to Hungarian history is not an easy undertaking. To stir up your attention before we start, we would like to share with you a whimsical line of thought.

As we all know, there are times when some small details diverts the course of history from what might otherwise have been expected. We have played with a speculative, and admittedly slightly tendentious, idea that starts with Matthias Corvinus's capture of Vienna in 1485. Let us suppose that he did not die five years later, but lived until, say, 1505. In the meantime, he fathered an heir or had his illegitimate son's right of inheritance recognized, and the House of Hunyadi stabilized its control of the whole of Austria and Central Europe for many centuries. The Ottoman threat would have made Vienna the center of the Hungarian empire, and its population (like those of East Austria) would gradually have been Magyarized in language and custom. In 2016, a professor of the highest institution of Hungarian education, the University of Vienna, has the idea of running a series of lectures on Austrian history, a subject that rarely appears on the syllabus. After all, he says, the Austrians used to make up half of the common empire and the Hungarians are not taught much about them. The talks will of course be presented in Hungarian, so that the students can understand. So you would now be speaking in Hungarian about your "neglected history" to us, the Hungarians of Vienna. A bizarre idea, but things could quite easily have turned out that way. And I think it underlines the need to know each other better. We are therefore very grateful for the chance to talk about ourselves.

Two Narratives

The first difficulty we encounter shows up one of the idiosyncrasies of Hungarian history: it is actually two histories. One is of the Hungarian people, and the other of the Hungarian state. What makes our task particularly difficult is that Hungary has never been inhabited by Hungarians alone, and many Hungarians lived, and still do, outside its borders. Our history takes on a special dynamic from the congruencies and divergences of these two narratives through the centuries. In the Middle Ages, Hungary was regarded as a great power, but for 150 years starting in the middle of the sixteenth century, it was divided into three parts. Hungarian statehood found its place within the Habsburg Monarchy, and after the First World War, Hungarians first got a taste of being a small state. Interruptions and

fundamental reorganizations have constantly attended the life of Hungarians. In the twentieth century alone, we have gone through nine changes in the form of state or the political system. In other words, every twentieth-century generation has had to get used to at least three or four different systems, not to mention occasional shifts within the system. Nonetheless, despite historical changes that have become increasingly frequent as we approach the present, it is long-term continuity that is most important. Where should we seek the beginnings of these changes and continuities?

Which Part of Europe Does Hungary Belong To?

The oriental ethnic group that became known as the Hungarians formed in the first millennium BC. From being hunters and fishers, they became horse-riding nomads herding large animals on the steppe, and subsequently settled as farmers. They migrated from their original homeland beyond the Urals to the South Russian-Ukrainian steppe and, during the ninth century (some say partly in the fifth and sixth centuries), to their present homeland. Originally a Finno-Ugrian people, they had acquired Turkish material culture, music and faith (of which a memory is their most widespread foreign name: Onogur→vengerski, Ungarn, Hungarian, hongrois), when they came to their final homeland. Throughout all of these metamorphoses, the basic characteristics that made them a people displayed an unparalleled continuity. Over three thousand years, they have managed to retain their system of symbols (above all the language) and distinguish and separate themselves from other peoples, as manifested in their enduring name for themselves, Magyar. (In modern German usage, *Ungarn* usually denotes the country, and *Magyaren/Madjaren* the people.) Only one or two other former steppe peoples can boast such an achievement.

Upon their conquest of the Carpathian Basin, the Hungarians found themselves in the geographical center of Europe, and started to participate in Western, or European, civilization. This civilization has been summed up by the French philosopher Rémy Brague as essentially consisting of Roman roots and an emerging Latinity, and Latin Christianity. The essence of this "Roman model" is continuous renewal through the rediscovery and reinterpretation of old cultural heritage and the passing on of old traditions to the constantly-changing present. Consequently, the history of Europe is a series of renaissances, through which it has constantly expanded territorially and intellectually and developed unparalleled abilities of self-reflection. This has given rise to the capability of

constant renewal, the creation of dynamic structures and–its most important and most individual feature–the separation of the spiritual and the temporal (ultimately, of church and state). Having settled in geographical Central Europe, the Hungarians initially put out feelers to Byzantium but eventually joined Latin Europe, the *respublica Christiana*. Ever since, Hungary has been part of the constant renaissance that characterizes life in the West. Romanesque and Gothic art, humanism, Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque, Rococo, Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, the avant-garde, etc. have without exception, if sometimes with some delay or reduced intensity and prevalence, appeared and taken effect in Hungary. (Indeed, a more complete set of styles appeared here than in Italy or France, for example.) The furthest reach of the Gothic style clearly marks out the borders of the European *Occidens*, and it coincides exactly with the eastern edges of old Hungary.

Hungary thus became part of Latin Europe, but has always remained at the outer frontiers. Its borders were the political and military boundaries of the *Occidens*, beyond which Byzantine civilization stretched out to the east and south. Hungary earned widespread respect in repulsing the long series of attacks by Eastern peoples from beyond the Carpathians and the southern river borders, and developed into one of the largest and strongest states of contemporary Europe. The Latin West regarded the Hungarian kings as "defenders of Christendom," "champions of Christ," etc., and the country as the "gateway to the east." Never forgetting their oriental roots, Hungary's people and leaders always chose the West, whatever the price. This happened during the Mongol Invasion of 1241–1242 and the time of Ottoman Turkish occupation, when the wars fought to defend the country and the West led to demographic and political catastrophe for Hungary.

There is of course a line of argument, especially in the historiography of some Balkan countries, that denies Hungary's Westernness. Even some Hungarian scholars, notably the internationally-renowned Jenő Szűcs, who divide Europe into three historical parts and place Hungary in "middle" Europe. But a brief comparison of the late medieval Hungarian and Balkan states, as has been made by Pál Engel, immediately demonstrates why Hungary should be regarded as part of the West.

The first difference is in the role of the church. The adoption and development of intellectual currents displayed by the Hungarian church were not paralleled in the Balkans. Hungarian bishops were ecclesiastical princes, with enormous estates and political functions, while in the Orthodox world, the bishops lived

in monasteries and were part of the state rather than an independent body. Secondly, there were enormous differences in the secular institutions. Hungary was from the beginning a state entity *(corpus)* with a stable structure, while the Balkan states were territorially fluid. The Kingdom of Hungary had well-established state symbols: the Holy Crown symbolized continuity and strength of the state body. The coronation developed with well-defined ritual and criteria, and the state had well-defined armorial bearings. Hungary's statehood did not face danger even when there was a break in royal power. These features were all absent in the Balkans. Hungary's stability largely rested on a system of estates that provided hierarchical representation of political groupings *(universitates)* headed by the king *(caput)*, and together they passed the laws of the land through the diets. This did not exist in the Balkans. Latin literacy, the other component of institutional stability, was much more advanced in Hungary than in the Balkans and left several times as much to posterity. Urban autonomy based on Roman law was established and–by European comparison–very widespread in Hungary. There were even a few true (royal) towns surrounded by villages. No such towns existed in the Balkans, castle and town were distinguished much later–by adoption of the Hungarian word *varoš* (Rom. *oraș*). In medieval Hungary, the peasant had the legal status of *Hörige* and enjoyed *Freizügigkeit* privileges, while in the Balkans, he was bonded and subject to corvee labor.

This is perhaps enough to convey the deep correspondences of structure and content that underpin Hungary's classification as Western, in contrast with the Orthodox-Slavic world. This does not mean that Hungary reached the same stage of development at all times or in every respect. The difference can most clearly be perceived in the Romanesque or Gothic churches in small Hungarian villages: they had the same structure as churches in French village churches, but in size and ornament, they look like reduced copies.

Paradoxically, it was during the period of the dual monarchy, when Hungary was closest to Western Europe, that some of its elite turned to the East. This was partly due to the influence of European "orientalism," but a crucial factor was the rediscovery of the Hungarian people's Eastern origins. Interest in the Eastern character took effect in developing the nation-building strategy in the second half of the nineteenth century. Two conceptions clashed in Hungary at that time. One was the "nation-state" concept, which regarded all of the ethnic groups in Hungary, rather than just the Magyars, as part of the Hungarian nation. This put the stress on citizenship in its definition of the nation. The other was the "cultural nation" concept, which saw the nation as residing in

the community defined by shared ethnic origin and language. This placed great significance on folk culture, an area of discovery at the time, which was seen as the imprint of ancient–oriental–Hungarian culture. Another contributory theme was an attitude that had been gathering strength since the Ottoman invasion, the feeling of "aloneness," and the fear of stronger Western nations (including the Austrians) and the increasingly assertive ideologies of pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism. Feelings of ethnic isolation prompted patriotic Hungarians to seek support and refuge in the East, to which they reached out with great enthusiasm and curiosity, identifying there the ancient forms of the Hungarian character and soul. This accounts for the popularity, after the turn of the twentieth century, of "Turanist" and "pan-Turanist" ideas (which actually became most prominent in the Ottoman Empire). Turanism offered nations who felt threatened and friendless with the hope of finding a place in a community or, more daringly, of setting up a great Eurasian empire. The intensifying draw of the East set off a reaction among followers of the Western orientation, and in the ensuing debate, the concepts of East and West took on symbolic significance. Thus in 1905, the poet Endre Ady described Hungary as a ferry country that plies back and forth between the banks of East and West. Politicians and intellectuals committed to the idea of the nation-state stood by the Habsburg Monarchy and Western orientation, and historians refuted oriental romanticism with historical arguments. Gyula Szekfű, for example, a prominent historian in both the dualist and Horthy eras, described the conflicts in Hungary between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries as the clash of two civilizations, East and West, diverting the Hungarian nation and state from its main course of development. The Hungarian government between the two world wars also revived the old idea of the "bastion of Christendom" with a view to bolstering the country's role in defence against the Bolsheviks. It was an irony of fate that after the Second World War, Hungary became the western bastion of the communist world. Since then, heavyweight intellectuals have continued to ponder the question of what makes Hungarians what they are. Do they belong to East or to West? Many people in the European Union, but also within Hungary, look on in bewilderment at the recent foreign policy of "opening to the East," with occasional but highly visible breaks from Western allies and their expectations. Also attracting international attention is the new oriental romanticism that has gained great popularity in some sections of Hungarian society. It includes such ideas as neo-Turanism, which is usually–but perhaps erroneously–associated with extreme right-wing political groups. The experience of a thousand years on the frontier and particularly

of the Ottoman occupation have engendered reflexes that inevitably cause the Eastern orientation, like an underground stream, to spring to the surface from time to time, but it has never seriously challenged the country's western alignment and commitment.

Having looked at Hungary's general situation in Europe and the search for its true place, now let us look at the fundamental institutional and structural elements that have ensured continuity and stability among the constant changes of Hungarian history.

The Building Blocks of Continuity

The form of state and system of laws

In 1191, the English court chaplain Giraldus Cambrensis wrote a chronicle about a journey to Wales made by Archbishop Balduin some time previously. He wrote that the journey took place when Urban was pope, Frederick was the German emperor, Isaac was Byzantine emperor, Philip was king of France, Henry was king of England, *Béla ruled in Hungary*, and Saladin took Jerusalem. The list illustrates the respect enjoyed by the Hungarian state founded by Saint Stephen, a respect that seems astonishing from today's perspective. In the Árpádian and Angevin ages, the Hungarian state wielded greater power in its own territory than Western states did in theirs. This power was based on a system of castles, castle domains and royal counties that the king granted to his main followers *(barones)* as "official fiefs" *(Amstlehen)*. The castle domain was a form of administrative organization that afforded the kings almost absolute power, but it began to disintegrate in the second half of the fourteenth century, whereupon the nobles made determined progress towards feudal organization. The Hungarian state organization followed the opposite route to its Western counterparts: in France, for example, the king gradually built up control over the country between 1200 and 1500 by extending the royal *domaines* and absorbing feudal estates, while in Hungary, the estates with political rights—the "country"—extended their influence over the state. The ideology for the changeover to feudal dualist government was drawn from the doctrine of the Holy Crown. This was one of the earliest and longest-lived symbolic conception of state in Europe (and in many respects survives in the present), expressing rule abstracted from royal power, a kingdom that transcends dynasties, and territorial unity. After the middle of the fifteenth century, the crown of St Stephen was not the possession of the king but the "holy crown of the country." A king could be legitimate only

if invested with this crown by the consent of the inhabitants of the country (the estates). Hungary thus became an elective monarchy and developed a two-pole legal and political system based on cooperation between the king and the estates, the court and the noble diet. It survived as such right up to 1918. The principles underlying the system were laid down by István Werbőczy in his famous *Tripartitum opus* in 1514, the "original Hungarian constitution," defining the legal equality of magnates and lower nobility and of the ecclesiastical and secular estates, and the fundamental rights of the nobility. Werbőczy thereby took a great strides towards widening the political base, a development regarded as one of the principal ingredients of early modernity. He was similarly innovative in laying down the right of primogeniture, which in some Western states was introduced only in the nineteenth century as a demand of bourgeois democracy (and a device for breaking the aristocracy). Werbőczy set off progress towards legality, constitutionality and national sovereignty by underlining the need for cooperation between the king and the (noble) nation in exercising the power of making laws. The established and still-dominant historiographical assessment, however, does not properly appreciate the true value and novelty of this achievement and tends to regard Werbőczy as the symbol and indeed the main cause of immovability and backwardness. For the historians of Central and Eastern Europe, the strong and sometimes coercive "absolutist state" became the standard, the model, even though only a few early modern states met the–subsequently-formulated–criteria. It is not inconceivable that the Hungarian and Polish road to state-building might have led to a completely different Central Europe if the Ottoman occupation had not constantly diverted the course of political and social change in Hungary.

Having emerged and consolidated in the period between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the system became increasingly ossified under the influence of Ottoman occupation and the constraints imposed by Habsburg rule (of which more later), and by the end of the nineteenth century, it was failing to meet the demands of the age. The next step, which was to extend noble rights to the whole of society, took place later and less completely than elsewhere in Europe. The forms of modern constitutionality–a system of representation, parliamentarianism and legal accountability of government–were put in place in 1848 and 1867, but the crown retained some of its autocratic rights, mainly in military and foreign affairs. The Hungarian parliament worked more or less as it had in the early modern age: the diets remained the forum for negotiations with the king *(dietalis tractatus)*. No parliamentary system of government emerged,

the majority principle was not applied, and the monarch remained on equal rank in the legislature. He decided who to appoint to the head of government and who should be in the cabinet. Whereas in the West, the principle of legal presumption *(die rechtliche Vermuthung/praesumptio iuris)* favoured the individual (where the law did not prescribe, the citizen was free), in Hungary, the rule of law *(Rechtsstaat)* was only partly implemented. Legal presumption stemmed from the right of the state rather than of the individual, and parliament did not fully provide for the rights of citizens. Instead, the representatives and organs of state power (minister, county, etc.) prescribed the rights of individuals and social groups by discretionary decrees. The citizen–to quote Montesquieu–could be forced into something that was "not compelled by law," and prohibited from doing something "that the law permitted." László Péter put it like this: in Hungary, the constitution was free but the individual was not. Not even the post–First World War collapse and revolutions brought meaningful change, even though the loss of the throne deprived the Hungarian constitution of much of its function. The communist regime that took power after 1945 destroyed whatever progress there had been to the division of power and established an Eastern European-type despotic state. Following their reorganization after 1990, Hungarian state institutions now comply with the requirements of the rule of law in every respect. But the thousand-year traditions and reflexes did not, and could not, disappear from one day to the next. A strong, effective state is regarded in some political circles and broad sections of society to be the main guarantee of national sovereignty, self-determination and social peace. Accordingly, Hungarian citizens often tend to look to the state to solve a large part of their problems, which explains the broad public support for the exercise of power in a way that looks authoritarian to outsiders. Another question is why Hungary is customarily judged more harshly for such phenomena than the average European country. A good example is the Horthy era, of which a very dark picture emerged and persists in both Hungarian and international historiography and memory politics. Recent analyses by historians and political scientists by comparison with other European political systems of the time have resulted in a picture that is far from being positive, though much more nuanced.

The multiethnic state: peoples and nations in Hungary

Until it fell in 1918, the old Hungary was always an "empire" of many elements, inhabited by many ethnic groups. The original conquerors were themselves of

mixed origin, and the country constantly received immigrants from the beginning of the rule of the Árpád dynasty onwards. The first groups to arrive from the east were the Jews, the Khwarezmians and the Pechenegs, followed in the thirteenth century by the Cumans, the Jazygians and the Romanians (Vlachs). From the west, successive waves of German, Wallonian and Italian *hospites* were settled on royal estates. The Western settlers were by "right of hospitality" allowed to retain their customs in their chosen land. The *hospites* brought much to the country: the Walloons, for example, laid the foundation for what was to become the world famous grapes and wine of Tokaj, and the Saxons of Transylvania and Upper Hungary (today Spiš, Slovakia) played a defining role in the establishment of towns in Hungary and the adoption of Western urban and ethnic-regional autonomies.

Just when the ethnic Hungarian population of this multiethnic country was undergoing an ethnic expansion in the fifteenth century, the Ottoman conquerors appeared at the borders and, soon afterwards, in the interior. The devastation and population shifts caused by military actions, together with the Ottoman regime established in the heart of Hungary, caused fundamental changes in ethnic distribution. As ethnic Hungarians thinned out where the wars were fought, their place was taken by Serbs moving in from the south, Romanians from the east and Slovaks from the north. In the seventeenth century, large numbers of people of another Balkan ethnic group, the Armenians, arrived in Hungary via Transylvania. A mass of German settlers brought in to make up for the reduced population further colored the ethnic map of the country in the eighteenth century.

Despite this, we rarely find any examples of ethnic clashes in Hungary before the eighteenth century. It was natural to identify with more than one ethnic group (a fine example being the Zrínyi family), and in areas populated by ethnic groups, the lord would normally speak with his peasants in their mother tongue. The section of society that held political rights, the "noble nation" *(natio hungarica)*, imbued nearly every other social and ethnic group with their own worldview and understanding of history, and until the formation of nations, the great majority of the country's inhabitants regarded themselves as *hungarus*, loyal subjects of the kingdom, without feeling any contradiction with their own ethnic identity. Speaking Hungarian was not a condition of belonging to the noble nation. There were substantial groups of Romanian and Slovakian nobility who proudly declared themselves part of the Hungarian nation, which they conceived as a community of origin and values. An illustrative example is the family of

the firebrand leader of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution, Lajos Kossuth. The mother tongue of his forebears was Slovak, although Hungarian was the spoken language in his family. His father László Kossuth chose a German-born wife, which is probably why they kept their Lutheran religion even as the speaking of Slovakian passed out of the family. His uncle, György Kossuth, possessed both Hungarian noble *(hungarus)* and Slovak national identity, and gave real support to one branch of the Slovak national movement. According to Domokos Kosáry, who quotes Slovak historians, György Kossuth "as a defender of noble privileges was angry at his nephew, saying that it would have been better, if he had drowned in the garden pond when he spent his childhood summers with them."[1] Until the modern national ideal began to gain ground (and partly afterwards, as the example of the Kossuth family shows), the Hungarian nobility was an institution capable of providing cohesion in a heterogeneous country. This was neatly expressed by the great Hungarian writer Kálmán Mikszáth at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: "Because the Hungarian nobility was a wise political institution in its time. It was the blood-collecting basin. If somebody earned respect in any area, he piled up some kind of assets, either intellectual or material, that represented strength, be he Vlach or German, he was taken into the fort right away, for if there's strength, let it be inside. That's why this nation has survived so long. Because an outsider who could have done something against it was let in among them. The weak and the impotent stayed outside. Wise men were our forebears, you must give them that. […] The Hungarian nobility was not a sheer, cold wall that kept the privileged class from the people. It had a gate, with a great wide arch, so that all that was of merit would get through it."[2] Even in the nineteenth century, the Hungarian world had an unbelievable power of attraction and assimilation. The world-renowned writer Sándor Márai, whose ancestors came to Hungary in the time of Maria Theresia, had this to say: "These inspectors, counsellors, prefects, treasury domain and mine managers still corresponded in Hungarian at the beginning of last century (when noble Hungarian families, especially the magnates, still preferred to write in German or Latin!), this immigrant clan spoke and felt Hungarian; all the more astonishing

1 Domokos Kosáry, *Kossuth Lajos a reformkorban* [Lajos Kossuth in the age of reform], (Budapest: Osiris, 2002), 27.

2 Kálmán Mikszáth, "Horváth uram három leánya" [Mr Horváth's three daughters], in *Mikszáth Kálmán összes művei. 43. kötet. Elbeszélések XVII. 1898–1903* [Complete works of Kálmán Mikszáth, vol 43. Short stories 17, 1898–1903], edited by Mihály Szegedy-Maszák and Anna Fábri (Budapest, 2015), 203.

because the family owed all of its privileges and positions to the emperor, and it was just a hundred years earlier that they left Saxony!"[3]

This *hungarus* world gradually crumbled in the nineteenth century. The changeover from multiethnic empires to multinational empires invalidated one of the basic doctrines of Hungarian political thinking: that only the Hungarians had the strength and ability to take the political lead in the Carpathian Basin. Elites that were maturing their ethnic groups' national awareness into political movements were not aiming for acculturation or assimilation. They wanted their own political entities. The eastern half of the Habsburg Empire, structured on Hungarian political traditions and political culture, inhibited the growth of their cultural and economic strength and their political influence and social prestige. Their activity contributed to the decline of the dual monarchy. The disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy tore apart an institutional framework that had ripened through centuries of coexistence among peoples of diverse ethnicity, religion and language. The new state system that emerged after 1918, despite the rhetoric of national self-determination, was unable to establish better or more durable structures for the coexistence of peoples in the Carpathian Basin.

Religions and churches in Hungary

The medieval and early modern Kingdom of Hungary had unparalleled religious as well as ethnic diversity. During the rule of the Árpád dynasty, besides the Latin Christian majority and the Orthodox Christian minority, there were several non-Christian groups in the country: Jews, Muslims and "pagans." These came in voluntarily, and continuously, between the tenth and twelfth centuries, finding a place they could live and practise their religions with a freedom that was unknown elsewhere. The Jews served the ruling house as merchants and men of finance; some Muslims had similar functions and others served as soldiers. In exchange, they enjoyed royal protection against the clergy and the Christian Church in Hungary. Around 1150, King Géza even allowed Muslims to practise polygamy and keep concubines. There is a record from around 1220 that Muslim students from Hungary visited the schools of Aleppo in Syria. These groups had assimilated by natural processes by the end of the thirteenth century. Relations between Latin and Orthodox Christians were similarly harmonious. Everyone was aware of, and accepted, the differences in ritual and language, and landlords

3 Sándor Márai, *Egy polgár vallomásai* [Confessions of a citizen] (Budapest, 2000), 36.

chose priests for the churches under their patronage according to the faith of the local inhabitants. Before the Reformation, religion and language were not a matter of power, and no conflicts arose from the dissimilarities.

Although the Reformation started up a completely new era, the Hungarian Reformation resulted in a multi-confessional model that has no parallels outside the Carpathian Basin. The Habsburg-ruled Kingdom of Hungary, the Ottoman-vassal Principality of Transylvania, and the Ottoman-controlled central part of Hungary accommodated four different confessions, each with its own organization and a large number of adherents. The Catholic Church survived in all three areas, in differing forms and under different conditions. Alongside it, church organizations were established for the Lutheran, Reformed (Calvinist) and–except in the Kingdom–Unitarian faiths. These forged a peculiar state of balance, and by European comparison lived together in relative peace, if under varying legal and institutional constraints. There was never a religious war in Hungary and the very rare violent incidents mainly broke out between Protestant confessions. In Transylvania, the Torda Diet of 1568 was the first in Europe to proclaim the freedom of worship for Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran and Unitarian confessions and grant free choice of priests. The Transylvanian Diet of 1594 was the first to recognize the four churches as "accepted" *(recepta)* confessions. Such a sustained multiconfessional system, safeguarded by legal and institutional guarantees, did not exist in any other country of Europe. That was because the Transylvanian state was established just at the time that the confessions were forming up, so that as the prince was consolidating his power, he inherited more or less established churches on which he could perhaps impose constraints, but he could not destroy them. The Kingdom of Hungary was a frontier state entity in a complex monarchy that had Catholicism as its state religion. The ruler was obliged to give concessions to his Lutheran and Calvinist subjects, mainly to ensure the operation of the defensive system against the Ottomans and the voluntary recognition of Habsburg rule. In Ottoman Hungary, a community's choice of confession was of interest to the occupiers only to the extent that it affected their consolidation efforts and economic interests. The Hungarian Reformation, and in the wider sense the formation of confessions in the country, may be described as a curiosity of world history. Hungarian society learned about the ideals of European Reformation, but the frontier situation and the unique division of political control caused it to adopt this raw material very creatively and produce something qualitatively new, by permanently instituting and never abolishing multiconfessionality within the state. This caused a great

many direct influences to be incorporated into Hungarian culture. Although the same multiconfessionality undoubtedly weakened national solidarity for centuries and intolerance remained, coexistence of dissimilar religious groups at least nurtured the capability to cooperate and–by encouraging a receptive and above all reflective attitude–to perceive things in a more nuanced way.

In the period between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, the contradictions that beset the relationship between state and society in general also showed up in religious and church affairs. The monarch had broad powers in religious affairs, and the Catholic Church was closely bound to the crown through the right of patronage *(ius patronatus)*. Protestant communities were self-governing but subject to supervision by the crown, and the same was true for the Orthodox Church. Protestants in Hungary were popularly associated with the national cause and Catholics were associated with Habsburg interests. Churches did not achieve equal status, and the hierarchical system of privileges that resulted from a combination of common law, royal decrees, ministerial instructions and legislation strengthened rather than relaxed the grip of the state. Consequently, by the end of the nineteenth century, confessions in Hungary were tacitly divided into the categories of "accepted," "recognized" and "tolerated." The "accepted" religions basically comprised the Catholic and Orthodox churches and the three Protestant denominations. The "recognized" religions were Judaism (1867), the Baptist denomination (1905) and, unusually for a European country, indeed only the second time on the continent, Islam (1916). The Jewish religion was "promoted" to an accepted religion in 1895, but "demoted" to "recognized" in 1942. Finally, the "tolerated" religions comprised "sects" such as the Nazarenes, which the authorities viewed with suspicion and issued decrees that attempted to shift them towards legality. This system put the churches at the mercy of the secular authorities, which played them off against each other and prompted them to develop ways of playing the system rather than a critical attitude. The churches therefore adapted to social changes with difficulty, if at all. State control engendered dependence and a false sense of security, for which the churches paid a double price after 1945. It also explains why the churches in Hungary put up less resistance than might have been expected to the ruthless anti-church and anti-religious policies of the communist authorities. After 1990, the pre-1945 condition returned to some extent, although this was partly because the churches had lost their financial base and needed state assistance to perform their social role.

Now we have seen the structures and institutions that underpinned stability and continuity, let us look at the forces that have challenged or broken Hungary's links to the West since the early modern age. The first and most important of these was Ottoman expansion.

Fault Lines and Interruptions

Ottoman occupation: three countries, one homeland

Hungary suffered its first Ottoman attack in 1390, after which war raged in some corner of its territory almost without pause until the Peace of Passarowitz in 1718. Hungarian resistance was broken at the battle of Mohács in 1526, and the country suddenly found itself the frontier territory of two great powers. In the ensuing stalemate, they divided Hungary between them. The Habsburg monarch ruled as king of Hungary in the north and west, the Ottoman state in the center, and the eastern regions became a Hungarian-ruled Ottoman vassal state, the Principality of Transylvania. This shifted the border between East and West to the heart of Hungary, and the system of defensive forts that kept the two powers apart cut right through the middle of the ethnic Hungarian population. Nearly every part of the country became a battleground. Incessant fighting and the militarized way of life destroyed much of the built environment, tore apart the structure of settlement, caused the decline of most urban centers, shifted the centers of economic activity, and resulted in the loss of between seventy and ninety per cent of the population in some regions, mainly in the south. The losses were mainly to the Hungarian population, allowing gains by the ethnic groups living in border areas. These losses reduced the proportion of Hungarians in the multiethnic country from seventy-five or eighty per cent to under fifty per cent by the end of Ottoman rule. It is not without reason that many see the division of Hungary after the First World War as being rooted in these changes. There were similar losses to the Hungarians religious and cultural centers and their institutions. Enormous numbers of noble manors and monasteries were destroyed in lands under Ottoman and Hungarian control, and many parishes also disappeared.

One positive phenomenon was the resilience to the political divisions displayed by the Carpathian Basin economy. In the late sixteenth century, Hungary was the greatest exporter of meat in the world. By the time these exports reached their peak, however, Western demographic expansion had stopped, leading to over-supply and falls in price. Farmers had a reliable market

for their grain among the soldiers stationed in the country. The agricultural boom conserved the product structure, however, slowing the growth of manufacturing. The guild system persisted for a long time. The break-up of the country did not destroy the unity of the market in Hungary, and trade widened the horizons of the peasantry and the newly-forming rural middle classes. The openness resulting from trade helped the spread of Protestantism, which as we have seen took place peacefully even amongst the many theological disputes. Overall, the economic, linguistic and intellectual-religious links maintained a sense of unity in the divided country. The Hungarians, as was later observed, lived in three countries but a single homeland.

There were further items on the debit side, however. The ascent of the Habsburgs to the throne of Hungary, despite its long-term dividends, caused the royal court to move out of the country, a severe break that could only partly be made up for later. This denied the Hungarian people a center of organization of the kind that provided other Western countries a framework for the modern nation-state in the early modern and modern ages, homogenizing the people and the language and providing cultural patronage. To make just one comparison: in France, the use of French, the language of the court, was made obligatory in state administration in 1539, whereas in Hungary, Hungarian became the official language only in 1844.

The other loss was intellectual, and to understand it is to gain an insight into the Hungarian mind. The Ottoman conquest ruined the political and cultural self-confidence of the Hungarian elite. The religious and political leaders and the thinkers of the time were gripped by a mixture of guilt and self-accusation. They could not work out how a country that had been the "star of Europe" could have sunk to being the plaything of other countries. They could not forgive themselves for having frittered away an "empire." This is the root of a persistent current in the Hungarian search for identity and political thinking: the tradition of denying responsibility and seeking scapegoats. According to Gáspár Károli, the author of the first full Hungarian Bible translation, the catastrophe was the result of the Hungarians' general sins, while according to the chronicle of peasant-born György Szerémi, it was the fault of infighting among the "lords." According to a Lutheran preacher of Sárvár, the followers of the "stained papist faith" were the main perpetrators, while the leading Hungarian figure of the Counter-Reformation, Péter Pázmány, saw the hand of God in punishing the people for the Reformation.

Given all this, we can say that the collapse of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary was the severest break in the history of the Hungarian state and people. It was a fault line that can be compared only to the collapse following the First World War. Gyula Szekfű may be understood for stating that "This Ottoman rule was the greatest, and perhaps the only, catastrophe in Hungarian history."[4] The next great challenge in the second five hundred years of national and state existence was thus to defend the interests of Hungarian society and a state that had been forced to give up some of its independence, and to develop a relationship with the defining dynasty of the region, the Habsburgs.

Constraints and opportunities in the Habsburg Empire

The Hungarian national consciousness and collective memory harbor highly contradictory, or simply negative, views of the Habsburg dynasty. In the dominant *"kuruc"* historical approach traditionally ascribed to the Calvinists, one basic doctrine is that the Habsburg acquisition of the crown was at least as big a blow to the Hungarians as the Mongol Invasion or Ottoman or Soviet rule. In this view, the Hungarian state lost is independence in 1526 and regained it in mutilated form between 1918 and 1920; the medieval Hungarian state continued in the Principality of Transylvania, which also became the home of Hungarian-speaking culture, and the anti-Habsburg uprisings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mostly led by Transylvanian princes, were fights for liberty, national independence, and survival.

Over recent decades, Hungarian historiography has fundamentally revised the account that emerged during the National Romantic era. The new narrative describes Habsburg-Hungarian relations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a successful compromise deriving from the interdependence of the dynasty and the Hungarian estates, and the uprisings to be enterprises that corrected occasional disturbances to the sensitive political and religious balance. Relations are therefore much better characterized by the series of successful compromises between 1606 and 1867. The "empire of St Stephen" did not come to an end in 1526. On the contrary, it remained a separate body within the Habsburg Empire, its prestige indicated by its place in political symbolism– second after the Holy Roman Empire.

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4 Gyula Szekfű, *Magyar történet: A tizenhetedik század* [The seventeenth century], in Bálint Hóman, Gyula Szekfű, *Magyar történet* [Hungarian history], (Budapest, n.d.), vol. 5, 108.

The Hungarian political elite, although they basically accepted–or were forced to cooperate with–the system, were constantly seeking an arrangement that was more beneficial to themselves. The great dilemma of Hungarian politics and political thinking in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was whether to aim for a separate Hungarian state or to further national interests within the Habsburg Empire, and it is still a subject of dispute in modern Hungarian historiography. Although Habsburg economic policy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is widely held to have been adverse for Hungary, Hungarian historians of the period produce more and more arguments that the imperial framework provided the best conditions for the development of modern Hungary. Géza Pálffy, for example, gives this assessment of the 1711 "compromise": "From being a decaying frontier land between two world powers for two hundred years, the Kingdom of Hungary once again became a prominent country in Central Europe, operating within the framework of the monarchy… In spring 1711, [after the failure of Francis Rákóczi's war of independence] […] decline finally gave way to the long-awaited renewal."[5] The truth of this is not diminished by the fact that the territorial integrity of the pre-Mohács country was restored only in 1867, when Transylvania was once more made part of Hungary.

Homeland and Progress

From the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the Ottomans were expelled and the state of Hungary was integrated into the Habsburg Empire, right up to the end of the Second World War, or in another sense, until the last Soviet soldier left the Hungarian territory in 1991, Hungarian politics were dominated by the conflicting interpretations of Hungarian national interest. Put most simply, the national issue boiled down to four principle sources of conflict:

Hungary's place in the Habsburg Empire;
Hungary and the great powers;
Hungarians and non-Hungarians in the Habsburg Empire, and after 1918,
Hungarian minorities in the successor states of the Habsburg Monarchy;
The tension between liberalism and nationalism.

5 Géza Pálffy, *Magyarország két világbirodalom határán, 1526–1711* [Hungary on the border between two world empires], in *Magyarország története* [History of Hungary], edited by Ignác Romsics (Budapest, 2010), 486.

Four years are of key significance to all of these sources of conflict: 1848, 1867, 1918 and 1945.

Two phenomena brought the conflicts to come to a head in the revolutionary year of 1848: the Croatian, Serbian, Romanian and Slovakian national movements, and the recovering strength of the counterrevolutionary political forces in Vienna. The confrontation reached its peak with the dethronement of the Habsburgs on April 14, 1849: the form of state was left open, but Lajos Kossuth was elected governor.

In the new international situation following the suppression of the Revolution and War of Independence in 1849, a period marked by Habsburg reprisals, the lower nobility, who had formed the basis of the age of reform and the Revolution, were deprived of their economic, social and political strength. The Habsburgs' modernization measures (such as the implementation of the emancipation of the serfs, which had been decided by the revolutionary parliament, and the dissolution of the guild system) was held by many contemporaries, and not without reason, to be aimed at breaking "the backbone of the nation" and engendered very strong–but largely passive–resistance.

Until 1867, political activity in pursuit of national objectives was closely linked to modernization objectives. In the period of dualism, however, the two objectives often came into conflict. In his description of dualist-era Hungarian society, Péter Hanák often uses the expression "dual structure." This refers to two Hungarian social hierarchies that existed side by side during these years: the traditional feudal hierarchy with its high prestige, and the bourgeois hierarchy with its burgeoning economic strength. This prevented the emergence of a coherent national middle class, a necessary pillar of modern society. Often regarded by the public as alien and un-Hungarian, the attempts at bourgeois reform often came into conflict with political currents that regarded themselves as representing the interests of the nation. These parties and movements wanted to protect the traditional feudal structures and thereby opposed attempts at modernization, which involved largely assimilated sections of society. This had serious consequences: very few major figures in Hungarian cultural and political life succeeded in reconciling modernization plans with national aspirations, and even they usually got no further than theorizing and planning. The central focus of political life was to promote Hungarian national sovereignty against the Hapsburgs and the domestic national minorities. Those who criticized this view for any reason were often accused of "betraying" the interests of the nation. This was experienced by anybody who was positive about elements of Habsburg

policy or who proposed moderation in the assimilation policy towards ethnic minorities.

The Compromise of 1867 was the overture to a period of real consolidation in Hungarian history, one that brought prosperity to most sections of society. By the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, Hungarian national liberalism was no longer the driving force of social and economic modernization but increasingly an ossified ideology stubbornly defending the old political and social structures.

Continuities and Discontinuities in the Twentieth Century

The tension between continuities and discontinuities, our main theme here, is best studied through events of the twentieth century, and so we will approach it through the debates in the politics of history and memory following the political transition.

For a nation that experienced, during the twentieth century, nine changes of system, six forms of state, four border revisions, three revolutions and two world wars, and whose country was invaded three times, history is not some abstract academic discourse but a matter of direct public experience that politicians must take into account if they want to succeed. In Hungary's political transition, positions taken on historical themes made definitive contributions to the formation of political parties and their programs, and to the elucidation of differences between political groups and schools of thought.

Trianon

There is general agreement among politicians of the most diverse ideological stance and historians of all kinds of theoretical and methodological approaches that the decisive event in the twentieth-century history of Hungary was the signing of the Trianon Peace Treaty on June 4, 1920. The Treaty of Trianon forced Hungary to renounce two-thirds of its pre-war territory (its area decreasing from 282,000 to 93,000 square kilometers, not counting Croatia) and one third of the Hungarian-speaking population, 3,327,000 people, in favor of other successor states of the Habsburg Empire. (The population of the country was reduced from 18.2 to 7.6 million). The imposed treaty, which largely ascribed to Hungary the responsibility for starting the war, destroyed the "empire" of Saint Stephen. Hungary's economic and trading system collapsed,

and it was even forced to pay reparations. In the 1920s, Hungary had to rebuild its state and its economy from almost nothing. The Hungarian minorities were not given the promised rights of self-determination in any of the successor states. The imposed treaty inevitably engendered revisionist aspirations, leading the countries leaders to a serious of bad decisions in the second half of the 1930s. The communist regime established after the Second World War made the trauma of Trianon a taboo subject, and it was only mentioned in attempts to make the Hungarians agree with the victors. Following the political transition, the suppressed feelings of national grievance erupted with elemental force. Since 1990, this national tragedy has been regarded in many circles as the source of all of the country's subsequent social and economic tragedies, and attribution of responsibility for the loss of a country that was built up through many centuries of effort has been treated as a key historical and political question. Attempts to find the culprit, however, have tended to underestimate the extent of the Hungarians' own responsibility for the catastrophe. There are also some loud if not dominant voices in public life who continue the pre-1990 rhetoric, and offend many Hungarians by contending that the Trianon punishment was deserved, and unworthy of discussion. Mainstream political thinking, however, is in agreement with the most recent scholarly analysis by Ignác Romsics, which concludes that the Treaty of Trianon, and the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty that replaced it, were unjust to the Hungarians. Hungarians are indisputably justified in demanding rights of self-determination for their minority communities in neighboring countries. To hope for any more is surely an illusion, and to demand any more would be ill-considered.

Voluntary or forced? Hungary in the Second World War

The assessment of Hungary's political system between 1919 and 1945 and the part it played in the Second World War have been among the most prominent historical themes in the political discourse since the political transition of 1989–90. The Horthy era has also generated questions of continuity and discontinuity. Miklós Horthy, "regent" and head of state between 1920 and 1944, is one of the most controversial figures of modern Hungarian history. For those on the right wing, Horthy's system, despite the lack of democracy, was much more legitimate than the communism imposed on Hungary from outside and may stand as an antecedent of the democratic system created in 1990. Those on left wing regard Horthy and his regime as a dead end and do not want any

continuity with it, particularly because of the responsibility it is said to bear for the killing of the majority of Hungarian Jews. They prefer to look on the short "democratic" period between 1945 and 1948 and 1956 as the direct antecedents of today's democracy, although some recent research challenges this assessment concerning the 1945–1948 period.

The most oversimplified, schematic assessments started to be reviewed by Hungarian historians in the 1980s. They assessed the nationalism and irredentism of the Horthy era in comparison with similar phenomena in other small states in the region. Leading historians have given accounts of the authoritarian political system and the broad powers of the regent not as steps towards totalitarianism but as a show of strength against political movements that were infused with extreme right-wing, Fascist and Nazi influences. Few, however, dispute that in pursuing his revisionist aims, the close ties Horthy forged with Germany were not in Hungary's long-term interests.

The Rákosi system and the 1956 Revolution

In 1944, it was agreed that Hungary would be taken as booty by the victorious Soviet empire. For the first time in its history, the country would belong not to the West but to an autocratic Eastern European civilization. Within a few years, exiled communists returning from the Soviet Union in 1945 ruthlessly built up a Stalinist dictatorship under the leadership of Mátyás Rákosi, "Stalin's best pupil." This process can best be summed up as a war waged by the state against its own citizens masked by an illusion of rapid, all-encompassing modernization. Deprived of its economic independence and personal freedoms, nearly every section of Hungarian society was kept under permanent police terror. Everything was pervaded by centrally-controlled messianic communist ideology, one aspect of which was a total reinterpretation of the past. The new view of history involved a fixation on Hungary's belonging to Eastern Europe and an interpretation of the previous four hundred years as nothing more than the story of independence struggles against the Ottomans, Habsburgs and the Germans.

On October 23, 1956, the people of Hungary rose up in rare unanimity against the oppressive system. As the leading Western powers remained passive, the Soviet Union brutally suppressed the movement on November 4. The assessment of the event and what led up to it are still subjects of controversy in Hungary and abroad. We certainly regard it as a turning point in world history,

because in the long term it made an irretrievable breach in the wall of the communist world system. In addition to being a reaction against oppression, it was a moral act: a fight to protect human dignity. 1956 was also a fight for Hungary's internal and external self-determination, and Hungarians are still very sensitive to what they see as attempts to restrict the independence that was recovered with such a struggle. Consequently, we do not agree with the views that 1956 was an "uprising," "rebellion" or "counter-revolution." We take the side of those who see the Hungarian people as effecting a "revolution" and a "fight for freedom" in 1956, because–as observed by Norman Davies–they did indeed want to overthrow a system of government together with its social and cultural foundations. For Hungarians, the real tragedy of 1956 is not just defeat by the Soviet Union but the still-unrepaired damage done by the Kádár system that was then put in place. It is a great pity that commemoration of 1956 has become divisive over the last thirty years. In summer and autumn 1989, it was the common foundation that prompted action by highly diverse political currents critical of the communist regime. However, since the early 1990s, interpretations of the causes, course and consequences of the 1956 revolution and struggle for freedom have been frequently exploited for political goals to suit the needs of constructing historical legitimacy.

The Kádár system

Although the Kádár system is looked on by many Hungarians as different from the Rákosi system it replaced, the two systems shared the same theoretical principles, long-term objectives and system of government. Their tactics, however, were very different: what his predecessors effected by force and open terror, Kádár, after the initial bloody reprisals, did by bribery and gradually wearing down the real opponents. Over a period of thirty years, the "Goulash Communism" system, which built up living conditions on shaky foundations, guided the traditionally highly nationally-minded Hungarian society towards the acceptance of pragmatic survival strategies and broke up the Hungarian middle class and rural society (by the enforced introduction of the cooperative system). Hungarian society has still not shaken off the consequences of this. His apparent liberalism, so unusual in the communist world, made Kádár a favourite in the West, but was much criticized within the Soviet Bloc.

An assessment of the continuities and discontinuities of the Kádár system (1956–1988) is an essential part of the search for the antecedents of post-

communist democratic political systems. The academic and political-social debate on the Kádár era centers around two politically-motivated areas. One involves the social base of the state party: prior to the transition, about twenty per cent of the active working population of Hungary were members of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP). The question is: does this large number reflect coercion and fear of reprisals, the number of "real" communists being no more than 30,000 (the number of members of the Hungarian Communist Party in spring 1945 and of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party at the end of 1956; the successor to the MSZMP, the Hungarian Socialist Party and the Workers' Party had a similar combined number of members at the end of 1989) or–at least during the period of stabilization of the system (from about 1962 to 1980)–not only the steadily-expanding party membership but also a large part of Hungarian society, even if they did not necessarily support it, did not actively oppose the objectives and political methods of the Kádár system. The other question concerns the decline and fall of the system, the "hierarchy" of the four main causes: 1. The fundamental rearrangement of the international political and economic environment. 2. The structural faults and deficiencies in the pillars of the socialist-communist system. 3. The activity of the opposition, the various groups of dissenters. 4. The work of reform communists within the party. Which factor contributed to what extent in the demolition of the monolithic party state? There is not yet a consensus on the answer.

The Power of Continuity and Tradition

Returning again to the main theme of our talk, the continuities and discontinuities in Hungarian history, we present as a closing example the first political debate following the political transition that affected fundamental questions of our history.

When parliament became the real center of Hungarian politics after the first free elections for four decades, it had to deal with questions of historical legitimacy. Some members of our profession who had been elected to parliament or appointed to important political posts made a considerable contribution to this debate. One of the first items on the agenda of the new parliament was a decision on a new coat of arms for the state. This prompted a clash of widely varying viewpoints. Several historians favored the coat of arms without the crown that was approved in 1849 at the proposal of Lajos Kossuth, because it represented the changes during later revolutions as well as in 1849. It was under

these armorial bearings that the republic was proclaimed on November 16, 1918, following the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, and the same happened when it was proclaimed again on February 1, 1946 and during the 1956 Revolution. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority of parliamentary deputies (228 out of 291) voted for the arms with the royal crown at the top. Their principal argument was that the crown represented the continuity of Hungarian statehood and not royal power. A similar question that demanded a decision was to set the date of the official state holiday. There were three candidates: March 15, commemorating 1848, August 20, recognizing the merits of the founder of the state, Saint Stephen, and October 23, commemorating the outbreak of the 1956 Revolution. In line with the government's proposal and the decision on the coat of arms, the deputies declared Saint Stephen's work, the creation of the Christian Hungarian state in the year 1000, as the most important event in Hungarian history, and this was made the symbol of the Hungarian state and nation.

Most liberals, socialists and "Young Democrats" chose March 15, because they considered it to better symbolize modern Hungarian statehood, national unity and democracy. The parliamentary decision, however, did not mean that March 15 and October 23 would not have been recognized as state and national holidays, days of rest. It is reasonable to say that the majority of lawmakers showed a good sense of history. March 15 and October 23, despite their emotional and moral significance, are commemorations of what were, at least in the short term, failures. By contrast, August 20 is the symbol of unmatched continuity and unmatched persistence. Few statesmen anywhere in the world can boast what Saint Stephen can: his creation, the state of Hungary, has survived for more than a thousand years.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Antemurale Christianitatis: Zur Genese der Bollwerksrhetorik im östlichen Mitteleuropa an der Schwelle vom Mittelalter zur Frühen Neuzeit. By Paul Srodecki. Historische Studien 508. Husum: Matthiesen, 2015. 532 pp.

In 2013, when Paul Srodecki defended his dissertation (which bears the same title as the book published two years later) at the University of Giessen, even he probably did not realize how relevant the theme he had chosen for his work would come to be over the course of the next few years. And yet he may have had some guess. In the preface to the book, he puts the changes which the traditional images of Europe have undergone in context in connection with the expansion of the European Union in 2004. He notes that even in the first years of the new millennium, the governments in Central and Eastern Europe made frequent use of Late Medieval and early modern topoi, such as the concept of "bulwark of Europe and Christianity."

In addition to the relevance of the subject of the book, it is also worth noting that Srodecki examines the evolution of the topos which figures in his title according to the tradition of the classical German schools of history, first and foremost in the Kingdom of Hungary and the Kingdom of Poland. His methodology shifts between an investigation from the perspective of the history of ideas and political science explanation patterns. Only rarely does one find arguments based on conceptual or discursive history. Following a thorough explanation of the corpus of sources under examination and his methodology, Srodecki offers eight chapters of varying lengths in which he presents the subject of his research and his findings.

Not surprisingly, he begins with a chapter on conceptual history in which he examines ideological tenets, one by one, and presents the terms he will discuss *(antemurale, propugnaculum, murus,* and *scutum)*, which reflect traditional warlike rhetoric. In a discussion of the opposition, rivalry, and even conflict between East and West, one cannot avoid offering an overview of the Ancient and Medieval history of the asymmetrical counter-terms. Beginning with Gog and Magog from the Old Testament and concluding with the East–West schism in 1054, Srodecki presents the most important historical nodes, putting his investigation into this larger context. For the bulwark rhetoric *(Bollwerksrhetorik)* was already present in Antiquity (one need merely consider the citation taken

from the Vulgate as a kind of slogan for the book), but it was used with varying intensity in different periods.

Though Srodecki draws particularly heavily on sources relevant to the Hungarian and the Polish Kingdoms, he nonetheless cannot avoid beginning with a discussion of the roles of the Teutonic Order, which he characterizes as a kind of a trailblazer in the spread of the revived trope of the bulwark. In the course of the Crusades, the Teutonic Order rose up as a defender of Christianity. Then, when Andrew II of Hungary had them settle in Burzenland in the course of the wars against the Cumans, they soon again characterized themselves, *mutatis mutandis*, as the defenders of Christianity, though they were fighting not to liberate the Holy Land, but rather against the pagan Cumans. Srodecki offers a brief presentation here of how this image became a familiar and widely used trope in the kingdoms on the eastern edges of the Western Christian world, first and foremost the Kingdoms of Poland and Hungary.

In the use of the bulwark rhetoric (as in the case of uses of other asymmetrical counter-terms), sometimes the same parties who regard and interpret themselves as the embodiments of the allegory disagree among themselves and begin to differ, and a very chaotic warlike situation comes about, particularly on the level of rhetoric. It is, after all, simple to say that a Christian group that forms the bulwark of Christianity is good and the pagan enemy is evil. However, as soon as two groups each of which considers itself the bulwark of Christianity come into conflict with each other, the question inevitably will arise as to which of them is the *authentic* bulwark of the one true faith. Srodecki discusses this interesting question in the chapter in which he presents the long battles between the Teutonic Order and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and in particular between the Order and the Kingdom of Poland up until the first third of the fifteenth century.

Then begins the section of the monograph that really constitutes its spine. The few pages concerning Humanist topoi, the (anti-)Turcicas, and the image of Humanist Europe offers the backdrop for the chapters on the rhetoric in Hungary and Poland concerning the two kingdoms as the bulwarks of Christianity. Srodecki attributes considerable importance in the spread of this topos to Humanist orations and in particular to the work of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, who, following the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and then his selection as pope, was ever more impassioned in his efforts to urge common action against the Turks in the name of Christianity and Christian Europe. In the first of the two longest chapters in the book, Srodecki offers an overview of

the history in Hungary of the period associated with the rulers of the Hunyadi family from the perspective of the evolution of the trope of a defensive bulwark. While John Hunyadi rose as the "scourge of the Turks" *athleta Christi*, his son Matthias waged campaigns over the course of his rule not only against the pagan Turks but also against heretics, in other words, the Hussites, or at least Srodecki puts the battles he fought for the Czech crown (i.e. the crown of another Christian people) into this narrative. Srodecki notes the importance of the roles played by Matthias's court chroniclers (Ransano, Bonfini) in interweaving the political legitimacy of the ruling house and the rhetoric of a defensive bastion into their historical narratives and thereby furthering the acceptance of both in the wider circles. By the end of the chapter, Srodecki has completely separated the crusade fought in the realm of rhetoric and the actual crusades fought on the battlefield, and at this point, it again becomes difficult for the reader to disregard the actual political bearings and implications. The longest and most thoroughly thought-through chapter of the monograph addresses the spread of the *antemurale* concept in the Europe of the Jagiellonian dynasty. As he did in his discussions of the rulers of the Hunyadi family, here too, Srodecki presents the history of the use of the term alongside the histories of the dynasties and the dynastic battles. The narrative of the history of the two dynasties and the kingdom culminates in the Battle of Mohács. With the fall of the kingdoms, the notion of a defensive bulwark also begins to crumble and fall out of use.

In harmony with the concept of *translatio imperii*, there were heirs to this rhetorical tradition and enemies of these heirs, but these were relatively small outbursts which flared up in isolated pockets compared to earlier cases. Of them, it is worth mentioning perhaps the denominational conflicts which broke out in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Srodecki makes only brief reference to later use of the concept, and quite rightly. He does not undertake in this monograph to examine the defensive bulwark rhetoric in the modern era. What he has undertaken he has admirably achieved, namely to offer an overview and a readable narrative of the history of the topos he has chosen in the Late Middle Ages and the early modern era.

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Az indigenák [The indigenae]. Edited by István M. Szijártó. Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2017. 235 pp.

The volume is based on a conference held on September 19, 2014 at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest by a group of scholars focusing on the social history of early modern and modern Hungary. The conference dealt with a particular group of the society of estates between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. As the laconic title of the book probably sounds unfamiliar and even enigmatic to most readers, it is worth beginning with a definition. In short, the traditional legal institution of *indigenatus* served as a form of ennoblement through which someone of foreign origin was incorporated into the Hungarian political nation *(natio Hungarica)*. Originally, naturalization was a royal prerogative, but during a diet, it required the consent of the Hungarian estates as well. Between the legislative sessions, the king was eligible to decide with the collaboration of his Hungarian counsellors. Although the bestowal of the title was an established practice, it was not always used. Foreigners could be settled in the country and naturalized "tacitly," without the solemn procedure, though this did not mean that they could enjoy noble liberties and privileges.

As István M. Szijártó, the editor of the volume emphasizes, while *indigenatus* as a legal category is unambiguous, from the viewpoint of social history it appears as a more complex and intriguing phenomenon. As Szijártó points out, the question of who could be considered an *indigena* was determined not by legal status, but by the political contexts and interests. Consequently, the real starting point for historical research must be the inconsistent practices of the period, i.e. when and why somebody was labelled an *indigena*, as well as the attitude of the rest of the Hungarian estates towards these individuals. The use of this label clearly served as a form of social and political discrimination until the middle (or rather the end) of the nineteenth century.

As Szijártó writes in his introduction, "far more myths have circulated in Hungarian historiography about the *indigenae* than actual research endeavors dealing with them." Fortunately, most of the studies in the volume are founded on genuine archival research, which compensates for the field having fallen into neglect for a long time. Furthermore, though the articles were written by an array of graduate students, early career researchers and experienced scholars, they set an evenly high standard, and some of the younger authors make essential contributions to the field. The time scope of the collection is rather broad, as the first study deals with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the

last two with the post-Compromise (1867) years. However, the focal point of the volume is the era of the "constitutionalism of the estates" (as pointed out by Szijártó), i.e. from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth. It is not surprising that this question was particularly important in the period of the social, economic, and political ascent of the wealthy gentry *(bene possessionati)* and the long-lasting political practice of dualism between the king and the estates.

In the first article of the volume, Tatjana Guszarova discusses the process of *indigenatio solemnis*, the official and solemn naturalization of foreigners at the diets during the reign of the first Habsburg kings. Guszarova presents this act as a means with which the Habsburgs cemented their political position in the kingdom. Article LXXVII of 1550 specified the rules of *indigenatio solemnis*, establishing the conditions of the process for a long time. By offering an overview of the naturalizations which occurred in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Guszarova demonstrates that the efforts of the Habsburgs in this field proved successful, since they managed to increase the number of Hungarian nobles of foreign origin.

András Forgó investigates a subgroup of *indigenae*, the members of the prelates and the middle-ranking members of the clergy who were naturalized, with emphasis on the superiors of the monastic orders. Forgó emphasizes that many monastic superiors arrived in the country after the Ottomans had been driven out, and they had been sent to reorganize the monastic centers. However, the Hungarian estates were distrustful towards them and accused them of using the monastic institutions merely for personal gain. Consequently, in the eighteenth century, it became customary for the monastic superiors to make efforts to attain naturalization. Forgó concludes that by obtaining *indigenatus*, the monastic orders could take the wind out of the sails of the Hungarian estates, even if the operation of the monastic communities remained in foreign hands, headed by an abbot or a provost of foreign origin.

To my mind, the subsequent three studies written by historians who are in the earlier phases of their careers are the most thorough and even trailblazing contributions to the volume. Tamás Szemethy examines the ways in which people managed to become part of the Hungarian aristocracy. There were essentially two means of entering this group: the bestowal of a title by the king (the people who belonged to this category were the so-called "new aristocrats") and naturalization. Szemethy's study compares these two subgroups with regard to their number and occupations (soldiers, officials, and clergymen) between 1720 and 1799. He points out the problems of clarifying the separation of the

two subgroups and the terminology regarding them. Szemethy's investigations are based primarily on the *Corpus Juris* and the Hungarian Royal Books *(Libri Regii)*, though he points out that these sources are not sufficient in and of themselves as the foundations for a proper analysis. By examining the relevant legal sources, one could offer a plain definition of the process of naturalization, but the actual legal practice appears to have been more complex. Szemethy shows that, in addition to the formal process, it was possible to obtain *indigenatus* in an alternative way. According to Béla Kempelen and Zoltán Fallenbüchl, in the periods between the sessions of the diet, following a proposal by the king, the incorporation of a foreigner had to be announced in a county assembly and reported to the Archbishop of Esztergom, and a diploma had to be issued by the Royal Chancery *(Cancellaria Regis)*. Szemethy emphasizes that while it is possible to define the group of "new aristocrats" legally, in the case of the *indigenae*, the legal approach should be replaced or at least complemented with social historical analysis.

In comparison to the other contributions to the volume, the approach adopted by Zsolt Kökényesi is an exception. Kökényesi examines the other side of the coin, the ceremony of *Erbhuldigung*, the solemn pledge of fidelity in Lower Austria in the first half of the eighteenth century. This ceremony was significant, because it was a public act made by an archduke ascending to the throne. The ceremonies meant the formal handover of the Lower Austrian estates, and they were spectacular events. Due to their significance, descriptions of the proceedings and detailed lists of participants were published. After an enumeration of the participants, Kökényesi examines the presence of Hungarians. A Hungarian aristocrat could take part in the *Erbhuldigung* either as an *Inkolat* (one who was incorporated into the Lower Austrian estates) or as a foreign guest of the festive banquet. Kökényesi's study concludes that most of the Hungarian participants in the ceremonies were magnates who maintained good relations in Austria and who wanted to be integrated personally into the upper elite of the Habsburg Monarchy. Thus, their participation in these events can be considered part of a conscious strategy.

In his case study on the 1751 diet, János Nagy looks at the political aspects of naturalization. He analyzes a unique and promising group of archival sources: the requests for *indigenatus* and the documents produced by the commission of the diet investigating the process. Nagy points out that that the *indigenae* were self-supporting actors who had legitimate social claims. Consequently, he deals with their role in the debates in the diet, their image in prevailing public opinion,

and also how they argued in their requests addressed to the diet. Nagy shows that the strategies they used when they were trying to convince the Hungarian estates differed slightly from the strategies they used in their requests addressed to the king. The requests addressed to the estates applied four basic modes of argumentation: note military merits, note service to the common good, enumerate Hungarian ancestors and relatives, and refer to possession of lands in the kingdom. Nagy contends that, in the context of the diets, labeling somebody an *indigena* was essentially political.

In the next chapter, Adrienn Szilágyi deals with the *indigena*-families of Békés County in the first half of the nineteenth century, approaching the question from the standpoint of local society. In Békés County (today in southwestern Hungary), following the expulsion of the Turks, Johann Georg Freiherr von Harruckern acquired two-thirds of the lands as a royal donation. He played a crucial role in local politics, and after his death in 1742, his son Franz followed in his father's footsteps. However, when the son died in 1775, the male line of the family died with him, and the heirs divided the lands into five parts. Consequently, in the following decades a few naturalized families were able to establish connections in the county. Szilágyi points out two characteristic strategies used by the naturalized magnate families in this specific county: some families were absent and remained affiliated with the imperial center, while others integrated into the life of the county as active agents in local political and economic life.

Béla Pálmány draws attention in his study to the wave of naturalizations during the diets of the Reform Era. He emphasizes that during most wartime diets at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, no naturalizations occurred, but after the Napoleonic wars, many foreigners obtained status as *indigenatus*. The French Wars and the 13-year break in legislation impacted the number of naturalizations. Pálmány shows that the merits of those involved in the wars were stressed upon naturalization (traditional military merits, office-bearing in the service of the court and country, and as a new element, appeals to various activities undertaken as civilians). During the diets of 1839–40 and 1843–44, the legal-constitutional aspects of *indigenatus* were also disputed, and with the April Laws of 1848, the significance of the issue decreased remarkably.

Although with the vanishing of the old political system of the estates, the political significance of *indigenatus* was weakening, the question was still on the agenda because of the personal legislative right of the members of the House of Magnates. The last two studies focus on this period. Veronika Tóth-Barbalics

investigates the *indigenae* of the House of Magnates between 1865 and 1918. The House of Magnates was reformed in 1885, resulting in considerable changes in the composition of the chamber. With Article VII of 1885, membership was now bound to a tax census of 3,000 forints per year and to the constraint of opting, meaning that naturalized magnates had to make a statement confirming that they practiced the right to legislate exclusively in the Hungarian Parliament. The study complements the investigations of Károly Vörös, demonstrating that of the *indigena*-families which dropped out of the House of Magnates, only a small number found their way back into a legislative body.

Finally, the study of Dániel Ballabás discusses the same period, but from a more comprehensive and problem-oriented viewpoint. His study deals the *Corpus Juris* as an authentic source on the process of naturalization, claiming that between 1542 and 1840, 594 people obtained *indigenatus* in total. After delineating the heritage of the previous period, the study investigates the relationship between the *indigenae* and the changes to the citizenship law in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ballabás also studies the question of membership in the House of Magnates, citing some peculiar arguments against *indigenae*. As had been the case in the Reform Era, the opposition presented the archetypical *indigena* as an absent foreigner, unable to support national interests.

All in all, the findings of the studies complement those of earlier studies and refute some long-lasting political and historical myths. The volume provides deeper insights into the field through thorough study of primary sources. It enriches first and foremost our knowledge of the social history of the upper elites of the Kingdom of Hungary, though the praiseworthy presence of both social and political viewpoints notwithstanding, the approach of quantitative social history dominates, while the "interpretive" attitude focusing on the political discourses and legal practices of the age remains in the background.

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The Grand Strategy of the Habsburg Empire. By A. Wess Mitchell. Princeton: University Press, 2018. xiv + 403 pp.

This is an ambitious, bright, fluent book. It represents an interdisciplinary challenge for historians. It brings the methodology of strategic studies to bear on the Austrian state as it had grown to great-power status by the early eighteenth century, emerging from the carapace of the Holy Roman Empire and negotiating the extinction of the Spanish line of its ruling family.

"All Great Powers need a grand strategy to survive," we are told (p.304). So, what was the secret of the Habsburgs' success in the century and a half after 1700? Mitchell begins with the geographical determinants of their realms: an exposed situation in the center of the continent, but with mountain ranges providing protection and river systems securing internal lines of communication. Mitchell makes repeated references to these factors, although neither Frederick of Prussia nor Napoleon was much hindered by orographic obstacles, while the waterways, even those within the Danube's hydrological network, were grievously underexploited for a long time. Mitchell stresses how well Austrian governments came to understand their terrain thanks to the unrivalled quality of their cartography (a pity his own maps are so crude, illegible, and generally feeble). Essentially, Austria, as a satiated land power surrounded by threats, adopted defensive military postures. It did not risk its main body of troops unless absolutely necessary. That is also the message of a recent book by Richard Bassett entitled *For God and Kaiser*, in which Bassett makes the same argument in a more facile and anecdotal way. Mitchell points to the Habsburgs' successful "sequencing," as he calls it, of time and space. They needed, on the one hand, barriers and buffers: fortified redoubts in their own border areas or, better still, beyond them, but in friendly hands; and client states, earlier especially in southern German and northern Italian territories, later also in the western Balkans. On the other hand, they needed alliances. In the 22 wars fought by Austria during this period, it almost always (19 times) stood on the side which had more allies.

That involved a balancing act, directed first against France, with support from the German lands, Great Britain, and elsewhere; then the construction of a coalition against Frederician Prussia; then decades of struggle with shifting power groups to resist France again in its revolutionary and Napoleonic mode. For a century from the 1750s, the Habsburgs' chief alliance was with Russia, but that would prove costliest in the long run. The (for Mitchell willful) alienation of Russia during the Crimean war began the rapid erosion of Austria as a great

power, combined as it was with a loss of buffers, a new offensive mentality in the high command, and a neglect of earlier operational prowess (by the 1860s, Habsburg troops in Germany were reduced to using Baedeker guides to find their routes). Emperor Francis Joseph, revered by some as the conserver of the Monarchy, rightly appears here, in a strong final chapter, as its foremost gravedigger.

The broad international backing, or at least neutrality, that Austria long enjoyed has often been attributed to recognition of it as a "European necessity." Mitchell resists this notion, especially for the eighteenth century. He emphasizes Austria's agency and the influence on its decision-making of a stream of local military theorists, from Montecuccoli to Archduke Charles and Radetzky. Predictably, Mitchell's appreciation of Habsburg foreign policy culminates in a rosy presentation of the Vienna settlement and the age of Metternich. He shows (in the footsteps of Henry Kissinger and Paul Schroeder) how a *pax Austriaca* was secured by the fruitful deployment of international alliances, *puissances intermédiaires*, and localized low-cost interventions. At this point we may, however, begin to wonder how complete or even accurate this analysis is. What of Metternich's woeful mishandling of the domestic affairs of the Monarchy? Did not that count towards the strategic reckoning? Yes, but only on the credit side of the ledger: "The greatest geopolitical success of the Metternich system came in 1848" (p.251). In other words, Austria was particularly effective at fighting its own, largely unarmed people. "General Windischgrätz put down the Prague uprising" (p.252): all in a day's work, no doubt, for an accomplished Austrian strategist. And we are told how well some fortresses held out against the revolution at home (no mention of the fact that others, in the hands of the Hungarian rebels, held out even longer).

Mitchell's lack of interest in actual governance goes with some carelessness about detail. He uses the doubtful term "Erblände" throughout for the hereditary lands. He names the wrong Schwarzenberg in 1813 (it was Karl, not Felix). Forms like "Clam-Martinez" and "Menningen" (Memmingen), "Württemburg," "Witelsbach," and "Freiburg on the Danube" arouse unease. And even in the grand geostrategic scheme of things, Mackinder's forename was Halford, not "Harold." Thus, Mitchell cannot be trusted for a full picture of the determinants of Habsburg decline in the nineteenth century. But that is not what strategic studies are about. Rather we may see his contribution as heuristic. It suggests that in the last phase, we can usefully distinguish *two* Habsburg empires. One was the popular and progressive construction subscribed to by many people of the

Monarchy and much rehabilitated in recent scholarship (notably the American school around Pieter Judson). The other was the strategic Austria, the machine for making foreign policy. The people's empire was aspirational and emergent; the dynastic empire was real and degenerative. From the 1860s onward, the latter's crisis undermined the former. Revealingly, the Austria-Hungary decades form no part of Mitchell's story, since from his perspective, the Monarchy by then was already a spent force.

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"Engesztelhetetlen gyűlölet": Válás Budapesten (1850–1914) ["Implacable hatred": Divorce in Budapest, 1850–1914]. By Sándor Nagy. Budapest: Budapest City Archives; HAS–Momentum Family History Research Group, 2018. 503 pp.

Sándor Nagy, a senior archivist at the Budapest City Archives, summarized the results of his nearly two decades of research in this volume, which is impressive in many ways. Although the question of divorce, prohibitions against divorce, and licensing of divorce under certain conditions has already been actively studied by contemporaries, a comprehensive analysis of the topic has not yet been written. Sándor Nagy's work fills this gap. Although most of the concrete examples offered in the book are drawn from urban contexts, the volume offers the reader much more. In the first two parts, which come to about 250 pages, Nagy meticulously explores the evolution of divorce in Hungary, including the perceived or real differences between cities and rural settlements. From confession to confession, he examines the room for maneuver that couples who wished to terminate their marriages had, the interaction between social attitudes to divorce, and the evolution of the legal environment. The reader can also follow the process of the secularization of divorce and the consequences of this process. In addition to examining opinions concerning divorce prevailing in Hungary at the time, Nagy also presents and evaluates earlier findings on the topic in an international context or refutes stereotypes that have become widespread in the secondary literature. For example, he explains in detail why statistics show many more divorced women than men in Budapest. He also throws into question the view according to which the degree of urbanization and modernization is directly proportional to the number of divorces. In some cities in Hungary, such as Kolozsvár (Cluj), which was considered more of a mid-city, couples were more likely to divorce than in Budapest or the much more populous Paris. The stereotype that women benefited from the introduction of civic divorce and it helped them to assert their interests is also questioned. Nagy draws attention to the methodological and computational flaws in the data compiled by contemporary statisticians, which confirmed the preconceived notion that the introduction of civil divorce would bring about an increase in the number of cases. The number of divorces, reconstructed by Nagy, on the basis of court sources, does not prove this. Rather, the number of divorces in Budapest declined significantly in 1896, followed later by a steady but slower increase compared to the number of divorces in towns in rural parts of the country.

In the earlier secondary literature, the question of divorce was primarily discussed by historical demographers, but the sources and methods they employed dealt only with a few aspects. By contrast, the court files that Nagy focuses on and also the other related sources (private letters, recollections etc.) he uses, adopting methods from the field of legal history which so far have been neglected, offer a completely new picture. For example, there is a compelling larger chapter on "alternative solutions" (the "ante-room" of divorce), in which Nagy writes about abandonment and concubinage, paradoxically, on the basis of the subsequent court files. Furthermore, in similar detail, he explains how one could become a legitimate or illegitimate child.

Several chapters touch on gender differences, not in general, but usually in terms of social affiliation. One of the reasons for this is that women's work, the property rights in marriage, and the financial security of women (and their children) played a crucial role in the initiation and continuation of the procedure. Nagy's investigation of the fates of people involved does not end with the divorce. He tries to follow the parties and determine what happened to them after the divorce, including how they declared their family and social status, whether they remarried, re-divorced, and whether their prosperity was influenced by the dissolution of their unhappy marriage. Particular attention should be paid to the chapter "Relations and Networks," in which Nagy gives concrete examples of how divorces could "spread" with the assistance of relatives, neighbors and lawyer acquaintances in a particular community.

Nagy deals with the sources with exemplary objectivity, and in the introduction, he notes that the expression "implacable hatred" in the title is a contemporary legal term. Parties needed simply to use this term in order to terminate a marriage relatively quickly without greater complications. Accordingly, we learn less about bedroom secrets and the real-life emotional conflicts of the litigant spouses and instead come to know how the lawyers "trained" their clients, what consensual divorce meant, and what happened to someone who was not trained or who did not listen to good advice.

It is evident from the monograph that it is from the pen of a very knowledgeable, recognized expert on the sources held in various archives, who is familiar with the relevant literature and who has given the subject lengthy reflection and reassessed prevailing ideas on the history of divorce in the period discussed.

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Everyday Nationalism in Hungary 1789–1867. By Alexander Maxwell. Berlin–Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2019. 262 pp.

For a few decades, we have been witnessing a reassessment of the workings and the importance of nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe. Innovative scholars rethink the weight of national identity in studies based on solid empirical research and thorough theoretical considerations. The voluminous 2016 book by Pieter M. Judson *(The Habsburg Empire: A New History)* can be regarded as a summary of these new findings. However, this thought-provoking book does not pay much attention to the Hungarian Kingdom. Hungarian critics of the work have pointed out that the case of Hungary does not fit into many of the tendencies that Judson demonstrates. Furthermore, one has the feeling that in this major work, which provides an impressive critical analysis of national identity and indifference in Cisleithania, Hungary is presented as an "oasis" of the national idea, where it was able to flourish in a way that nationalists from Cisleithania could only dream of. Fortunately, in the past few years, some works have been published which treat Hungary in a way that is worthy of the abovementioned historiographical trend. These works focus not only on Hungarian (Magyar) nationalism, but also on the different minorities in the country and their responses to the challenges posed by an increasingly powerful Magyar nationalism. One thinks, for instance, of the remarkable book by Alexander Maxwell, which is one of the most recent in this trend.

The purpose of the book is to examine the beginnings of nationalism as a lived experience in the Hungarian Kingdom between 1789 and 1867. The work focuses on certain aspects of nationalism that the secondary literature has tended to ignore, namely the nationalization of banal objects and practices of ordinary people, such as national drinks or national marriage customs. The book can be divided into three main parts. The first (chapters 1 and 2) presents a thorough study of terminological and theoretical aspects. The second part (chapters 3 to 7) provides an analysis of the aforementioned nationalization of everyday phenomena. Finally, in the conclusion, Maxwell evaluates his findings from the point of view of nationalism theories, though some discussion of this question is found in every chapter.

Although, as already stated, the book's main focus is on the nationalization of everyday life, the first two chapters, which offer a consideration of terminological problems, are just as significant and original as the subsequent ones. In the first chapter, Maxwell analyses the word "Hungarian." He points out that this kind of

analysis is essential to any book dealing with the nationalism(s) in the Kingdom of Hungary, though it is worth noting that many substantial works published in Hungary and abroad fail to offer any rigorous discussion of such a fundamental term and use the word as if its meaning were self-evident. This is a grave mistake, in particular given that the term featured prominently in national rhetoric. Maxwell shows how the distinction between Hungarian (signifying all inhabitants of the Kingdom) and Magyar (meaning exclusively the linguistic community) was developed among the non-Magyar communities. This distinction signified a more tolerant approach, as it listed Slovaks, for example, and Magyars as equal inhabitants of their common country, Hungary. No surprise that Magyar nationalists were harshly against this differentiation. Concerning Maxwell's own usage of the words, knowing that a perfect solution does not exist, he uses the term "Magyar" in cases in which there was a conflict between Magyar nationalists and the other communities. This solution seems to be more adequate than that of Judson, who only declared briefly and bluntly that the distinction between "Hungarian" and "Magyar" made "little intellectual sense" to him, and so he deliberately avoided using the terms "Magyar" and "Magyarization."

The notion of "nation" is very similar to that of "Hungarian" in the sense that it was an eminent element of nationalist rhetoric, yet several scholarly works use the term as if its meaning were self-evident. First, Maxwell presents the complicated history of how Magyar and "minority" (another highly problematic term) intellectuals defined the notion of "nation" and "nationality" up to the 1868 Nationalities Law. One might regret, however, that he fails to offer a similar analysis of the so-called "Hungarus consciousness," which is considered in the secondary literature as a widespread form of collective identity that transcended ethnicity and based self-definition on loyalty to Hungary as a territorial unit. Second, Maxwell also examines the applicability of the definitions of nation offered by different nationalism-theorists. Maxwell's method is highly recommended: instead of using the definition of one particular theorist and superposing it to the nineteenth century, he proposes an empirical research strategy which consists of analyzing the notion as a rhetorical device, putting emphasis on how historical actors themselves interpreted and used the notion of "nation." This strategy fits into a trend which is gaining prevalence today, as scholars choose an empirical method instead of being absorbed by the overwhelming array of nationalism theories.

With the third chapter, Maxwell arrives to the main object of his work. Chapters three and four proceed from a Marxist inspired base-superstructure

model to explain the phenomena of national tobacco and national wine. Maxwell also presents the limits of this model by showing that although economic interest played a key part in advertising these items as "national goods," the items themselves became cultural phenomena and started a life of their own. To describe this transformation, Maxwell uses the notion of "banal nationalism," which he takes from the works of Michael Billig, and he adapts this notion to the Hungarian Kingdom. Maxwell also presents the different prejudices concerning the other nationalities' preferred types of alcohol. The fifth and sixth chapters present elements of everyday nationalism that have gender implications. Maxwell points out that the cult of the "national moustache" meant the exclusion not only of other nationalities but also women. The chapter on national marriages presents how Magyar intellectuals urged their compatriots to choose Magyar women and disapproved of cross-national marriages. Using Carole Pateman's terminology, Maxwell shows how the rhetoric of national endogamy presented women as collective possessions of the national brotherhood. Though Pateman's work does not explicitly deal with nationalism, Maxwell considers it useful, as in his view, other gender works do not address nationalism as such, but only its effects on women. The seventh chapter examines national clothing, a topic which is mostly approached from the sociological and gender point of view, neglecting its implications for nationalism. Maxwell, using first and foremost the theory of Grant McCracken, who treats clothing as a sort of language, analyses the spread of *díszmagyar* (Hungarian national festival clothing for men) and the reaction of the nationalities (mainly Croats) to this trend.

In the conclusion, Maxwell considers what lessons can be drawn from the Hungarian case for nationalism theorists. For we are facing an overwhelming number of nationalism theories which need empirical testing. Maxwell is especially hostile to Anthony D. Smith's approach, showing that not only is Smith poorly informed about Hungarian history, but his ideas are not even fit to grasp the complexity of the Hungarian case. And he does not limit himself to Smith, but calls into question the notions put forward by all the scholars (Anderson, Hobsbawm, and Gellner among others) who consider nationalism as something which emerged from gradual social transformation. Instead, the history of everyday nationalism turns us to Rogers Brubaker, who has argued that one should see nationness as an event, something that suddenly crystallizes rather than develops. Furthermore, Brubaker's theory also emphasizes the agency of patriots and the question of reception, an approach which proves more fruitful than the suggestions posed by his predecessors'. Maxwell concludes

that Brubaker's ideas prove the most suitable in dealing with nationalism in an empirical study. It is worth noting that it was also Brubaker's ideas that helped the notion of "national indifference" gain traction in the secondary literature as a useful concept.

One might argue that, in view of its main sources, Maxwell's book is more about the *idea* of everyday nationalism in the first half of the nineteenth century than everyday nationalism itself. However, this would be a rather idealistic and even naïve criticism which would reveal a certain inexperience in dealing with the very few available reliable historical sources, which is a burden every historian seeking to study the reception of nationalist ideas in the period faces. Maxwell's approach offers a solution which is naturally not perfect, but remains one of the best available: the study of national commodities and nationalized practices may be able to bridge "the intellectual history of national ideas and the data available to social historians."

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Magyarok a bécsi hivatalnokvilágban: A közös külügyminisztérium magyar tisztviselői 1867–1914 [Hungarians in the Viennese bureaucracy: Hungarian officers in the joint Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1867–1914]. By Éva Somogyi. Budapest: MTA BTK TTI, 2017. 268 pp.

At first glance a collective biography of Hungarian officers in the ranks of the (in)famous Viennese bureaucracy, the book by Éva Somogyi offers far more than that, namely an empirical investigation of the very functioning of dualist Austria-Hungary. This insight is all the more appreciated, since recent literature concerning Cisleithanian integration and imperial (rather than national) identity would fill libraries, but the roles played by Hungarians in operating the dualist state are rarely investigated. However, the way they conceived their duty as civil servants in the Joint Ministry of Foreign Affairs sheds light on a peculiar kind of imperial loyalty and state patriotism which is often analyzed in connection with their Austrian colleagues but which is implicitly regarded as quasi non-existent in the more nation-state-like Hungarian part of the dual Monarchy. By meticulously uncovering the daily work done by officers to maintain the empire and ensure it prospered, the book makes up for this shortcoming on the one hand and draws a precise picture of how the establishment of the state (which is almost impossible to define from the perspective of its political essence) functioned in practice on the other.

After a short but comprehensive overview of the Viennese administration, Somogyi offers an investigation of the Joint Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then uses this as a foundation for a discussion of the aforementioned aspects. The Ministry was the most specific institution of the dualist state. As the prevailing minister was also president of the Joint Cabinet Council, it was something like a common government of the *Gesamtstaat*, though needless to say it was not acknowledged as such. This was the institution within the framework of which the multiple interests of the multiethnic empire were reconciled and a livable compromise was found between the two parts of the Monarchy. Members of the staff of this institution who had Hungarian citizenship formed a circle which took part in the exercise of executive political power. As a result, their numbers, roles, careers, visions of Vienna and the Empire, and their national, imperial, and other loyalties and social positions are not only interesting from a mere prosopographical point of view but also help us understand how everyday efforts and dialogues filled out the terms of the Settlement, which at times were vague, with practical content.

Following a presentation of the imperial institutional structure and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within in detail, Somogyi offers another chapter on the backdrop to her story, a chapter which brilliantly depicts the *milieu* of late-nineteenth-century Vienna, or more precisely what Vienna meant to Hungarians who were engaged in the civil service. Some kind of *genius loci* existed in the Ballhausplatz, a tradition institutionally cultivated, characterized mainly by an unconditional loyalty to the emperor and a class-identity of gentlemen in his service. Though imperial state patriotism is a commonly used term in Habsburg historiography, it is new to read about a disciplined corps which behaved in lines with its values.

In the fifth chapter, Somogyi provides a thorough presentation of her protagonists. At this point, the monograph truly benefits from the uniquely rich personal files of the Foreign Service, preserved in the Viennese Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv. Based on these sources and other personal sources, such as diaries, letters, family documents, etc., Somogyi reconstructs the walk of life of nearly a hundred bureaucrats. Given Somogyi's precision and consistency in her use of analytic categories, this work could also be used as a handbook or a database, and it will be exceptionally useful for future research endeavors. Somogyi has also documented the constantly increasing number of Hungarians in the Foreign Service until the reach of parity (in dualist Austria-Hungary, this meant a proportion of 30% Transleithanian officers). This growth was an answer to the need for Hungarian speakers, which was a consequence of the structural and constitutional reforms of the Settlement and also a tool with which the *Ausgleich* was made more attractive to the Hungarian public. From a methodological point of view, the number of cases allows Somogyi both to draw statistical conclusions and to make her story charmingly personal. While the bureaucrats considered impartiality and detachment virtues, in Somogyi's book, they take on the personalities of social climbers, misunderstood lovers, conflicted patriots, or spoilt dandies.

Beginning with the next chapter, the text shifts from political, structural, and ideological questions to strictly social-historical analyses. From generation to generation, a detailed picture is offered of the bureaucrats' family backgrounds, educations, and lifestyles. We see that although this corps never really lost its aristocratic nature, it became more and more professional as expertise became an increasingly important qualification if someone sought to hold such a position, and at the same time it began to enjoy a prestige comparable to that of the diplomatic body. As family background became less important in career

advancement than professional achievements, the seemingly unchanged circle of aristocrats underwent significant changes in attitude. As a result, if the Foreign Service did not turn into a civil institution, it became nonetheless professional and modernized in many ways. This sophisticated social-historical conclusion is one of the many in this book. They all remind us that neither social transformation nor modernization is a simple category in historiographical analysis. Both are the sum of processes of varying rapidity and rhythm.

The next chapter, which deals with the marital practices and constraints of Foreign Service officers, puts the Austro-Hungarian conditions in an international context. Contrary to most of the other European powers, the dualist state did not forbid officers from taking a foreigner as a spouse, as the main Ballhausplatz-tradition was explicitly loyalty to the emperor and *not* to national interests.

This unconditional loyalty to the dynasty and the ability to represent the *Gesamtstaat* abroad, regardless of a given bureaucrat's other ties, was assured by professional education and common culture. Somogyi's examination of the specific education in which officials in the foreign service had taken part is rich with findings. Indeed, her discussion suggests that national indifference survived not simply in blind spots where national activists exerted little influence. Rather, it was at least in part one element of a deliberately cultivated outlook and political program. It is useful to keep in mind that Hungarians were also part of this project.

Whether this project was successful is the main question of the next chapter and the book in general. To avoid simplistic answers, Somogyi sketches several personal variations and strategies to overcome loyalty conflicts. Reconciling different identities was not always a perplexing challenge. Many of the officers thought that strengthening the Hungarians' position in the existing institutions was more effective than waging dubious symbolic struggles for more autonomy. The problem was not always as urgent for the different generations of bureaucrats either. Approaching World War I, however, we have to ask the question: was imperial identity a sustainable self-definition in the middle of national conflicts. Was this special elite a narrow and isolated group, or did they represent competent leadership over a multiethnic society? Could the state patriotism of this group have been a viable model for a wider public, or did this elite constitute an exception? Do we have to face the fact that the creation of an imperial identity was a failure, or do we have to seek the reasons for the Monarchy's dissolution elsewhere? Do multiple identities work in times of crisis, or do they become prioritized and force everyone to choose? One could certainly have read more

about these questions, even knowing that it is probably impossible to answer them. Somogyi does not enter into speculation. She remarks simply that she could not find any officer who would not have clarified that his first and most important duty was protecting Austria-Hungary's integrity during World War I.

Éva Somogyi's book investigates the most intriguing questions of current Habsburg studies based on micro-level examinations of exciting archival material. Her familiarity with both the institutional structure of the Empire and a number of personal details allows her dynamically to change scopes whenever needed, resulting in a monograph that is both precise and highly entertaining.

As a German translation is in the making, one can hope for a worthy international reception.

Veronika Eszik
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Traumatársadalom: Az emlékezetpolitika történeti-szociológiai kritikája [The society of trauma: The historical-sociological critique of memory politics]. By Máté Zombory. Budapest: Kijárat, 2019. 248 pp.

Máté Zombory's new book consists of an introduction and six chapters, most of which were originally published in different fora between 2012 and 2016 and have been partially revised since. The diverse studies included here share an agenda of dissecting problematic aspects of memory politics while reflecting on the larger political-moral transformation behind the growing impact of memory politics. Ultimately, the book aims to describe and critique what Zombory calls "our dominant moral economy" based on representations of victimhood, which he labels "the society of trauma" (p.38).

The volume as a whole offers testament to Zombory's theoretical and interdisciplinary proclivities and his wide-ranging erudition, especially when it comes to the secondary literature published in English and French. While the individual studies offer numerous critical insights, they unfortunately also contain some rather misleading assertions and a number of unfounded generalizations.

Partially drawing on Samuel Moyn's recent reinterpretation of human rights history, Zombory argues that it is on the ruins of future-oriented political experiments promising collective liberation that a new politics of moral sentiments directed at the remembrance and reduction of physical and psychological suffering could develop. As Western societies have transitioned from party-based representative democracies to media-based "populist democracies" since the 1970s, their attention has increasingly shifted to the suffering of innocent and passive victims. As Zombory perceptively notes in this context, the remembrance of the Holocaust may not have been truly globalized, but the moral imperative to recognize victims practically has (p.39).

Combined with the ever more frequent use of concepts suggesting sameness across time, such as memory, identity, and recognition, this new attention to victims, Zombory maintains, has resulted in an increasingly fierce competition for the public recognition of specific victim groups. Drawing on the writings of American sociologist Thorstein Veblen in particular, the original theorist of status competitions which know no upper limit, Zombory presents memory politics as the conspicuous and decontextualized representation of suffering where the public visibility of the sufferings of one's group amounts to a form of prestige. The result of this is a hierarchical society of trauma, which is a sort of inverted society of the spectacle (Guy Debord).

The volume thereby articulates a more general criticism of reconciliation efforts in so-called "post-conflict societies." The author maintains that, despite popular assertions to the contrary, conflicts over remembrance cannot be resolved within the "paradigm of recognition": he points out that, unlike what propagators of reconciliation such as (perhaps most prominently) Aleida Assmann wish to make us believe, conflicts over remembrance are not merely epistemological, but are ultimately of a social nature. Zombory also adds, in a rather one-sided fashion which overlooks the possibility of mutual recognition, that there is something "inherently narcissistic" in the desire for recognition.

The introduction covers previous criticisms which began to be directed at "victim competition" in the 1990s. The first half of the volume (chapters one to three) addresses issues in the history of Holocaust remembrance and aims to dissect the key moral principles that acts of Holocaust remembrance tend to propagate. In the first of these chapters, Zombory covers mainstream approaches to, debates about, and critiques of the turn to remembrance and the rise of transnational discussions of the Holocaust in particular. The subsequent chapter focuses on an even larger and more general issue, the globalization of remembrance. It aims to describe norms, witnesses, and the representation of victims in transnational spaces of remembrance. As in the introduction, these two chapters summarize key arguments of established Western scholars without sufficiently clarifying the author's contribution (beyond a sharp sociological critique).

If these early chapters essentially amounted to perceptive literature reviews addressed at a Hungarian audience, the third chapter adds an original case study regarding Shoshana Felman's interpretation of the Eichmann trial and, more specifically, Yehiel De-Nur's dramatic contribution to it in order to explore how one of its major propagators has applied her theory of cultural trauma. By offering a nuanced reading of Yehiel De-Nur's (pen name Ka-Tsetnik 135633) various statements over time, Zombory convincingly shows how a dehumanizing depiction of actors may result from the forceful reduction of past subject experiences to the traumatic and current behavior to mere acts of repetition.

The second half of the volume in turn explores the entry of new actors into transnational spaces of memory politics in Europe and the ways in which these authors have adapted what Zombory calls the "moral paradigm" in Holocaust remembrance. Chapter Four reflects on the shared rules of memory competition to argue that, under the unequal conditions of EU enlargement, the political legitimacy of "accession countries" could be increased if they were able

to assume the position of victim and present their history as a *Leidensgeschichte*. Zombory shows, very much in accordance with Jelena Subotić's new book *Yellow Star, Red Star*, that the new nationalistic remembrance of communism in Eastern Europe was modelled on practices of Holocaust remembrance and claimed an additional layer of suffering as a regional specificity.

What Zombory unfortunately does not discuss here is that the critical impetus behind European Holocaust remembrance—which, contrary to what he appears to suggest, has not only been about the remembrance of innocent and passive victims, but has also constituted a profound grappling with patterns of exclusion and mass violence in modern society—could be largely lost in such new anti-communist attempts at renationalization made across Eastern Europe. Despite his own critical agenda, Zombory appears to take for granted the absence of such a critical impetus behind current memory cultures.

The last two chapters of the volume offer Hungarian case studies. Alongside chapter three, chapter five offers Zombory's most detailed and convincing engagement with a specific discussion and debate regarding the recent past. Zombory aims to show that the House of Terror may have been repeatedly and fiercely criticized in Hungary, but both mainstream propagators and critics of this complex, confusing, even confounding initiative drew on shared moral notions. He explains through relevant examples that agreement with the House's basic intention to commemorate the victims of communism and focus exclusively on the violently repressive nature of past regimes ultimately made it impossible for liberally-minded professional historians to meaningfully contest the conservative-anticommunist reinterpretation of history that the House powerfully displayed. Moreover, the chapter insightfully shows how the House's creators and representatives cleverly used the process of Europeanization and even the unclear nature of their own project to defend themselves against various accusations and further their radically conservative goals in memory politics. Chapter six in turn draws on some of Zombory's oral history interviews to discuss how discursive frames and counterstrategies regarding the German past have developed with regard to the German minority in Hungary since 1945.

There is much to admire about Máté Zombory's critical insights and much to reflect on when it comes to his rather bold theses. He is correct to point out that participation in historical debates has increasingly come to depend on self-identification with victims and that, concurrently, possibilities to question the (over)abundance of political-moral efforts centered around the recognition of victimhood have diminished. He is also right to critique how the oft-declared

"duty to remember" has at times yielded reductive-mythical images of the past. Indeed, the moralizing insistence on remembrance may have made complex and properly contextual historical discussions more difficult. These worrisome tendencies call for the kind of courageous scholarly intervention which Zombory's polemical volume offers.

There is, however, also much to disagree with in these pages. The book repeatedly asserts that memory political interactions revolve around grievances, mutual accusations of non-recognition, and shaming through inequality, though it offers no empirical documentation in support of this claim. Zombory seems to assume, rather unusually and in fact contrary to mounting evidence, that the broader political culture around memory politics is by default non-democratic and political-moral agency aimed at the recognition of victims cannot possibly contribute to the cause of social justice. Rather tellingly, the volume presents an unduly homogenized image of Holocaust remembrance without discussing the highly varied and always contested Holocaust lessons various people have drawn (and which Michael Marrus, among others, has recently studied).

Last but not least, the book's rather categorical assessment, according to which recent trends to prioritize victim narratives have fueled a solipsistic and narcissistic form of politics, obfuscates the key distinction between the recently emerged and highly specific realm of memory politics and politics as such. Ultimately, *Traumatársadalom*, insightful and inspiring though many of its claims and arguments indubitably are, aims to explain more than a better focused and more adequately documented exploration of memory political contests would have allowed.

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Making Ethnicity in Southern Bessarabia: Tracing the Histories of an Ambiguous Concept in a Contested Land. By Simon Schlegel. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2019. 276 pp.

Simon Schlegel's *Making Ethnicity in Southern Bessarabia* poses a series of interrelated questions about the growth of ethnic boundaries and the rising importance of ethnicity in southern Bessarabia over the last two centuries. The region has proven a well-suited ethno-geographical laboratory or "nook" for researching how individuals and communities can "belong" to an ethnic minority (or majority). The book is structured chronologically, albeit with several theoretical or thematic interludes, offering a survey of state policies and actors that ruled Bessarabia beginning in early nineteenth-century Tsarist Russia and ending with the Maidan protest movement in early twenty-first-century Ukraine. The first part describes how ethnic categories superseded religious categories in the tsarist state's synoptic view of its inhabitants. A chapter on Romanian Bessarabia during the interwar period and World War II showcases important new primary sources on the inscription of ethno-national identities through state-mandated but locally issued identity certificates. The following chapter, intended as a "theoretical insertion" or "interruption," appraises diverging concepts of ethnicity and the ascription of identities and borders so as to better contextualize the previous chapters and set up the next. The book also covers the forty-seven years of Soviet rule in Bessarabia, showing how the shifting concept of ethnicity and language use became preconditions for social mobility; it then details the years since Ukrainian independence, which have been marked by the recurrence of ethnic rhetoric, entrepreneurs, and associations within a system of political clientelism. Schlegel concludes with two more theoretical chapters that function as a kind of coda, meditating on the ways that religion, memory, narrative, and folklore serve as "techniques" or "tools" to delimit ethnic groups and maintain ethnic boundaries. The book highlights the congruence of ethnic boundaries with fluid social boundaries created by local and regional politics, including corruption, clientelism, mismanagement, and economic hardship. Schlegel argues convincingly that putative ethnic differences or boundaries, as well as language barriers and disputes over history, are frequently epifocal to internecine conflicts.

Methodologically, the book is perhaps most at home in the genre of historical anthropology, "in which the readers start out with a tour through local history and then, as the account moves closer to the present find gradually more

ethnographic insight, until they find themselves reading an ethnography" (p.31). Drawing on Fredrik Barth, James C. Scott, and the usual suspects in the literature on nationalism and ethnicity, with a passing nod to the Italian microhistorians, Schlegel weaves his social-anthropological case study into a much broader historical examination about the ways present-day ethnic boundaries and understandings of ethnicity are firmly, if not inextricably, rooted in the past. But the book is ever mindful that history, society, and identity oscillate through time and space, in a multiplicity of contexts, continually informing one another.

Most of Schlegel's fieldwork and archival research was undertaken in the Odessa oblast, not far from the city-municipality of Izmail in southwestern Ukraine, from mid 2012 through 2013. Although the four villages selected for interviews were chosen for their collective ethnic diversity (Ukrainian, Moldovan or Romanian, Gagauz, and Bulgarian), all interviews were conducted in Russian. The archival research was also based solely on the Izmail State Archive. The book contains a handful of maps and images, the latter of which date from the author's fieldwork in the area. Considering the book's sweeping chronological scope and historical treatment of four successive regimes, the two-page index of subjects and names is inadequate. And while generally well written—Schlegel is dutiful in his role as a narrator of his own story—the book could have benefited from additional copyediting for punctuation. But these are minor imperfections in a worthy contribution to the scholarship on the region. That the author completed this in under three hundred pages is no small feat.

Self-reflective and both microhistorical and macrohistorical in scope, *Making Ethnicity in Southern Bessarabia* focuses not so much on ethnic boundaries as actual dividing lines or demarcations but rather on the actors and motivations that create ethnic boundaries. Moreover, it spotlights the techniques used to maintain these boundaries across space and time, from one regime to the next. While historians of the Soviet Union, Ukraine, Moldova, and Romania might gloss over some (if not much) of Schlegel's wider historical narratives on various states and regimes, they should find fruitful analyses of these topics in the embedded anthropological framing of competing ethnicizing and territorializing paradigms. Experts on Russia and Ukraine might also find rich comparative material in the chapter on Romanian rule, as might scholars on Romania in the chapters on Russian, Soviet, and Ukrainian rule, which comprise the bulk of the story. Likewise, anthropologists and social scientists researching this area will benefit from the book's insistence on situating niche fieldwork and locales in the longue durée. The author's social-anthropological approach to a historical

subject therefore improves what would otherwise be a typical if also peripheral history, while the sweeping historical framework broadens the relevance of what would otherwise be a typical if also peripheral anthropological case study. In this respect, it brings to mind the pathbreaking books by Katherine Verdery and Kate Brown. Schlegel's contribution is an adroit scholarly treatment of ethnicity and ethnic boundaries in the social, political, and historical palimpsest that is Southern Bessarabia.

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Hungarian Religion, Romanian Blood: A Minority's Struggle for National Belonging, 1920–1945. By R. Chris Davies. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2018. Xxvii + 249 pp.

Using the example of the Csángós, a Catholic group in Moldova, eastern Romania, whose origins and nationality are subject to debate, R. Chris Davies contributes to the historical literature on the sociological phenomenon of ethnicity. Following the path set out by Pieter Judson, Tara Zahra, and Jim Bjork (among others), he analyzes the struggle of national activism to define a group's nationality and align it with either of the two rival nations. However, he cautiously mainly sidesteps the issue of how individuals really reacted to these attempts and concentrates less on the recently contested notion of national indifference. Instead, he deliberately focuses on the discourses and their sources, situated in the context of a radical change of nationalisms in interwar East and Central Europe. Thus, he presents a story triangulated, with Hungarian, Romanian nationalist, and Romanian Catholic intellectuals, whose efforts were instrumental to the fate of the group.

Davies' main claim is that the idea of the Romanian origins and subsequent Magyarization of the Csángós, which is today the cornerstone of Romanian arguments in the debate over their national belonging, was canonized not by anti-Hungarian Romanian intellectuals but by Catholic priests among the Csángós themselves (Iosif Petru Pal, Dumitru Martinaş etc.), who feared that if they could not shed the stigma of Hungarian-ness in Ion Antonescus's violently ethnocratic Romania, the fate of the Csángós would be deportation. In this effort, they found help and support from ultranationalist Romanian intellectuals who promoted a new, biologized definition of Romanian-ness (most importantly the serologist Petre Râmneanţu), and to make this new claim credible, they were ready to align themselves with extreme Romanian nationalism and even sometimes to join the Iron Guard. Thus, through their unholy alliance with materialist scientific practices (like blood group analyses) and mystical political Orthodoxy, which were both at odds with their Catholic faith, these clergymen, were helped by the turn of the tide in World War II. The resulting willingness of the Antonescu regime to present a less ugly face to the Allies changed the stance of the government, which earlier had deprived the Csángós of their citizenship. The regime fended off Hungarian efforts to achieve a population exchange, which would have meant moving the Csángós to enlarged Hungary in exchange for Romanian speakers from the territory of Hungary after the Second Vienna Awards.

To make this admittedly somewhat narrow story more relevant to the secondary literature on nationalism, Davies offers extensive contextualization, including intellectual and political developments in Hungary and Romania. After an overview of the most important concepts and theories, he provides an outline of the political and intellectual conflicts caused in interwar Romania by the efforts of a group of Orthodox intellectuals and politicians to define Romanian-ness as essentially equal to the Orthodox Christian Church. This effort certainly would have affected Catholics and, among them, the Csángós negatively. Nevertheless, as Davies argues, the late 1930s bore witness to a radical break with earlier conceptualizations of Romanian-ness, not least due to the introduction of what was thought to be cutting-edge science (eugenics, blood group analysis, etc.) to the toolkit of definitions concerning individual membership in a nation. Finally, the state endeavored to assign an unambiguous nationality to all of its citizens (and eventually depriving them of citizenship), as it wanted to purge the national body of anything considered (or defined as) alien and reinvigorate it from the source of the alleged authentic ethnic group.

In the meantime, many Hungarian intellectuals tried to cope with the losses of Trianon with a new concept of the nation which promised rebirth and reinvigoration on the basis of the peasantry, the allegedly purest layer of the national stock. Efforts to salvage the Csángós first aimed to prevent their linguistic assimilation and later to return them to the "homeland," as was done with Székelys from Bukovina. This was part of a larger effort to redefine the people of Hungary in terms of ethnicity. Thus, the conflicting efforts came to a head regarding the Csángós during World War II and resulted in wider acceptance of their Romanian origins by Romanian academia.

Although sometimes the story seems to be a bit narrowly focused, it is highly readable, and it offers an excellent example of the ways in which national activists of all stripes competed for people whom they wanted to put on their account books. The broad contextualization helps to understand how all these efforts were situated within the contemporary milieu and trends, and the focus on Romanian Catholics and the Catholic Church instead of the Hungarian state or clergy actors is welcome, as it adds more than just nuance to the debate. But the characterization of the changes in nationalism at the end of the 1930s seems to gloss over significant affinities between trends in nationalism before and around that time, and it also obscures how policies and ideas were rooted in earlier contexts. Just to give one example, most of the Hungarian policies towards the Csángós were not based on a reconceptualization of the nation, but

rather had roots which lay in undertakings of the late nineteenth century, which were later abandoned as inopportune in the context of the friendly relations between Romania and the Triple Alliance. Thus, more traditional ideas of the nation could often be surprisingly easily reconciled with the novel and more radical ones, as they bore affinities and this reconciliation also helped foster political alliances.

Finally, Davies claims that the Csángós are an example of how small groups which seemingly divide can connect and unite states which have been brought into perpetual dialogue over their fates (p.164). While this constitutes a provocative claim which I also find appealing, I do not find much substantiation for it in the case of the Csángós. The Csángós were a minor, almost negligible concern for both states and especially for Hungary for most of the 20 years of the interwar period, and during World War II, there were larger issues at stake and forces in play in bilateral Hungarian-Romanian relations which helped the two states avoid armed conflict. These forces could have helped averting the clash only until Romania switched sides and war with Hungary followed, irrespective of the fate of the Csángós was. This does not diminish the value of this book, which will be of interest to anyone, laymen included, interested in nationalism, obscure people, and the history of Romania and Hungary in the twentieth century.

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The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia. By Zsófia Lóránd. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. 270 pp.

Zsófia Lóránd's *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia* is an intellectual history of feminist thought, artistic practice, and activism in Yugoslavia from the early 1970s to 1991. Published in 2018 in Palgrave Macmillan's series "Genders and Sexualities in History," it speaks to multiple scholarly audiences. To those interested in the global history of second wave feminism and its relationship to the state and the political left, it offers a challenging view from the semi-periphery. To those interested in the postwar history of political thought, it presents a compelling case for the intellectual prowess and versatility of feminist thought in state socialist Europe. And for those interested in the history of former Yugoslavia, it reconstructs in rich detail the biographies, works, and institutional connections of the members of new Yugoslav feminism, a group critical of the unfulfilled promises of the Yugoslav state in terms of women's equality.

Several main theoretical and historiographical claims run through Lóránd's account of the development of feminist thought and practice in Yugoslavia beginning in the early 1970s. First, drawing on the theoretical tradition of intellectual history and especially the insights of the Cambridge School, Michael Freeden, and Lucy Delap, Lóránd analyzes feminism as an ideology. The focus is on concepts, ideas, meanings, and the struggles around them and with other ideologies, most notably Marxism. To Sara Ruddick's definition of feminism as an acknowledgement that gender divisions are socially constructed, detrimental to women, and should be changed, Lóránd adds emphasis on woman's agency (p.18), which is at the core of the most recent debates on women's organizing and feminism under state socialism.

Second, feminism is defined not as dissidence, but as "a critical discourse and a form of dissent" (p.9). Yugoslav feminists worked within the state to challenge one of its core claims, specifically the achievement of equality for women. This positioning distinguished them both from the state's political mainstream (including the official women's organizations) and from the Central European dissidents working against or outside the state, publishing in samizdat, or facing direct oppression.

Third, Lóránd works within a multilayered comparative framework which places new Yugoslav feminism in dialogue with the "second wave feminism" of the West but also with other oppositional discourses under state socialism. Most

promisingly, her work lays out the conceptual and methodological framework for an intellectual history of feminism and women's rights discourses in East Central Europe under state socialism. This project has already brought together numerous researchers from the region over several workshops and will result in a collection of source texts translated into English for the first time.

The Feminist Challenge is organized thematically and chronologically along mediums of critical expression, from the academia to art and literature to popular mass media to activism. Based on published materials, archival sources, and interviews, the chapters balance historical detail, analysis, and participants' accounts of their experiences. There are inevitable overlaps and frequent cross-references among the chapters, but overall the book structure corresponds to the development of new Yugoslav feminism itself over the course of two decades.

The chapter on feminism in the social sciences and humanities introduces the arguments of (mostly) women working in the academia, who reflected on contemporary feminist ideas in the United States and Western Europe and engaged critically with the mainstream class-based approach to the "women's question" under state socialism. Drawing on critical Marxism and French post-structuralism, their work resulted in conceptual innovation, most notably the integration of gender and sexism as key terms of the new feminist language they were developing, first in private around kitchen tables and then in public discourse.

In literature and art, feminist discussion revolved around the topics of creativity, motherhood, and the body. Lóránd introduces the concept of "writing of sisterhood" as different from *écriture feminine*, a major source of theoretical inspiration for feminist literature in Yugoslavia. This "technique of sympathetically reflecting on the lives and fates of other women through one own's story" (p.107) is identified in works by Irna Vrkljan, Slavenka Drakulić, and Dubravka Ugrešić, among others. Lóránd also grapples successfully with the issue of female artists' refusal to identify with feminism while nevertheless engaging with deeply feminist issues, as most famously was the case of Marina Abramović.

The chapter on feminism in the popular mass media unpacks the contradictions of publishing feminist texts in popular publications which offered a wide readership but at the same time encouraged self-censorship. The most striking example is that of the debate on pornography carried out in and around *Start*, a magazine published as a local version of *Playboy*. Yet another place where the tension between medium and content is apparent is women's magazines and

TV shows, where important feminist issues were brought up in a tamed language and appeared alongside patriarchal views of women's roles. Genres like advice columns, for example, nevertheless opened up space to discuss private issues publicly, most notably sexuality and domestic violence.

It was precisely around the issues of sexuality and violence that feminist groups were reorganized in the 1980s. The chapter on feminist activism follows the discussions around women's health and violence against women, the know-how gathered by plugging in to global networks, and eventually the establishing of SOS helplines first in Zagreb and then in Belgrade. "Through the discourse about VaW [violence against women]," argues Lóránd, "the place of feminism was explicitly rethought in a human rights framework," opening a new era in which "women's political participation and role in democracies were the focal point" (p.208). Not long thereafter, the landscape of feminist thought and activism was radically reshuffled by ethno-nationalism, war, and the breakdown of Yugoslavia, which is where the timeline of the book ends.

Zsófia Lóránd writes with clarity, nuance, and feminist commitment, and with this book, she offers a fundamentally important work of scholarship which persuasively argues that feminist thought needs to be recovered not just for the sake of historical justice, but also because it reshapes the very view of history that we currently have. *The Feminist Challenge* must also be praised for its many illustrations, which further ensure that the representatives of new Yugoslav feminism, their works, and their activities, which have been so masterfully presented in this book, are seen, in all meanings of the word.

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Enyhülés és emancipáció [Détente and emancipation]. By Csaba Békés. Budapest: Osiris, MTA TK, 2019. 397 pp.

Csaba Békés's new book offers a detailed analysis of Hungarian foreign policy in the Cold War, from 1945 until the collapse of the communist regime in 1989. It primarily aims to present a synthesis of Békés's ideas and arguments that were put forward in his extensive scholarship of the past few decades, but it also introduces new claims on the basis of new source material. Given its ambition to provide a synthesis, the book's emphasis remains on advancing broad arguments in relation to Hungary's entanglement with the Cold War, systematically supported by empirical evidence. The manuscript follows a chronological structure and it presents an in-depth discussion of the key events in the history of Hungary's international relations, starting with the Sovietization of the country after World War II and ending with the gradual collapse of the Kádár regime in the late 1980s. The individual chapters offer invaluable contributions to our understanding of the international dimensions of Hungarian historical events (such as the 1956 uprising and the events of 1989 in Hungary) and the role Hungary played in the shaping of international developments, most importantly the Prague Spring of 1968, the Helsinki Accords of 1975, and the process of détente, in general.

The most laudable aspect of the book is that it brings together—in a coherent narrative—the most important and most original claims and theoretical reflections which Békés has constructed over the years concerning the Cold War and Hungary's involvement in it. The two keywords that link the various arguments are the concepts that make up the title of the book: détente and emancipation. In the book, Békés proposes a new interpretation of one of the central notions of postwar international history and argues in support of the need for a new periodization of the Cold War. According to the central argument in the book, the process of détente started soon after Stalin's death in 1953, and it remained the key paradigm that fundamentally shaped international relations until the collapse of the Soviet Union. This proposition breaks with the traditional view in historiography, according to which the emergence of détente was tied to the second wave of de-Stalinization in the early 1960s, and it also refutes interpretations that consider détente to have ended in the late 1970s as a result of international tensions following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In critiquing views that break up the history of the Cold War into multiple phases, Békés claims that the Cold War could be divided into two main episodes. The period between 1945 and 1953 was characterized by blatant antagonism and

irrational decision-making, whereas the epoch starting with 1953 ("the second Cold War") was fundamentally shaped by détente and a more rational and pragmatic approach to international relations. While Békés does not diminish the significance of international crises—such as the Cuban missile crisis or the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan—he argues that a tacit acknowledgement of the necessity of cooperation after 1953 prevailed over incentives to escalate conflicts further through military means. Interpreting events from this perspective, Békés claims that conflicts within the Soviet bloc never risked subverting the international status quo, and while they provoked tensions, those should be defined as "quasi-conflicts," as they did not result in the radical reconfiguration of the modus operandi between the two superpowers. The book suggests that there were very few actual conflicts between the Soviet Union and the United States that had the potential to undermine the dominant paradigm of international relations: détente. It is argued, for example, that the antagonism provoked by the Afghanistan conflict merely put détente in a "standby mode." In other words, the war did not lead to the total abandonment of the policy.

According to Békés, one of the main reasons behind the gradual (and constant) relaxation of tensions was the idea of "active foreign policy" advocated by the post-Stalin leadership in the Soviet Union. The notion triggered the transformation of the relationship between Moscow and the countries of the Soviet bloc, resulting in the slow but steady "emancipation" of the individual countries in the sphere of foreign policy. Khrushchev's Soviet Union needed allies on the international scene rather more than it needed satellites, and this provoked the gradual decentralization of foreign policy on the peripheries of the Soviet empire. Békés argues that the main forum for negotiations, debates, and conflicts in Sovietized Eastern Europe was the Warsaw Pact. In contrast to traditional perceptions of the military alliance as a tool of Soviet supremacy and control in the region, Békés demonstrates that the organization actually contributed to the emancipation of the various countries and led to the formation of temporary, "virtual" coalitions in the bloc which pursued their own interests, independently of Moscow.

Emancipation and détente are the key themes through which developments in Hungarian foreign policy are interpreted in the period from 1945 to 1989. The book provides detailed and engaging analyses of key events and developments in the postwar era, with emphasis on late socialism in Kádár's Hungary. The discussion revolves around the topic of agency in "the happiest barrack" and the gradual expansion of Hungary's room for maneuver and political leeway as a

member of the Soviet bloc. Békés convincingly supports his overall thesis with an incredibly diverse range of sources, and he demonstrates that the Kádár regime often took—occasionally remarkably bold—initiatives in the international arena and came to occupy the position of an intermediary in East-West relations in the 1970s and 1980s. Hungary's mediating role in the Soviet bloc is explored in a chapter on Kádár's diplomatic efforts to provide a political solution to the Prague Spring in 1968, while the significant growth of Hungary's international reputation in the late socialist period is analyzed most vividly in the chapter on the country's contribution to negotiations culminating in the signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975.

The book relies on a rich pool of source material to support its innovative and unconventional claims. The discussion is informed by a plethora of secondary sources, published mostly in Hungarian and in English, and evidence supporting Békés's claims mostly comes from published as well as unpublished primary sources in multiple languages, including English, Hungarian, German, and Russian. Békés has also consulted an impressive array of archival sources, including collections in Hungary, the United States, and the United Kingdom, which contain material relevant to foreign policy and national security.

The extensive discussion of Hungary's possibilities and constraints in international relations creates a solid foundation for Békés to advance an argument in relation to the multi-faceted (or multi-polar) nature of the late Cold War. Instead of offering a polarized analysis focusing on the theme of antagonism between the socialist East and the capitalist West, Békés claims that Hungarian foreign policy was dependent on three factors. Moscow's role in shaping developments was inevitable throughout the period, but the book also argues that Hungary became increasingly dependent on access to Western markets and technology in the late socialist period. This dependence led to the adjustment of economic and political priorities and turned Hungary into one of the most ardent advocates of détente. At the same time, international dynamics within the Soviet bloc—conflicting agendas and "virtual coalitions"—imposed significant constraints on, but also provided new opportunities for Hungarian foreign policy.

While the book's main emphasis is on the emancipation of Hungarian foreign policy after Stalin's death, the notion of agency remains remarkably absent from the discussion of Stalinism and the Sovietization of Hungary after World War II. Indeed, the concept of Sovietization is not discussed in detail in the book and there is little attempt in the narrative to engage with the term

at a more abstract level in light of recent historiography. The meaning of the term, which is remarkably vague in the first place, changed significantly over the course of the twentieth century, and it meant different things at different times. Although Békés proposes a simple typology of Sovietization (quasi-Sovietization and pre-Sovietization), the book does not reflect on alternative typologies suggested by other scholars or on the notion of "self-Sovietization," which assigns a certain degree of agency to local actors in the implementation of the Soviet model in the countries of the bloc. The somewhat teleological perception of Sovietization in the book could have been refined in conversation with recent works on the subject (most recently, Norman Naimark's *Stalin and the Fate of Europe*), which highlight the importance of local politics and local actors in the immediate postwar years. Despite the slight under-assessment of the concept of Sovietization, the book remains an engaging read which offers a number of original contributions to the study of Hungarian foreign policy and, indeed, the history of the Cold War. This is a book that will remain an important point of reference in the future and should find a prominent place in university survey courses on the subject of postwar Hungarian and (East) European history, the history of the Cold War, or more specific courses on the history of the Kádár regime and the history of Hungarian foreign policy.

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