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Essays:

(relating to North American themes)

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(relating to Hungary and neighbouring states)

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Also: Book reviews

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CONTENTS

North America:

- “A Perennial Problem”: Canadian Relations with Hungary, 1945-65
GREG DONAGHY 5
- Escape into Emigration: Christian democratic social welfare politician
Béla Kovrig and the Hungarian State Security, 1946-1948
ÉVA PETRÁS 23
- Nicholas L. Deak, the Hungarian “James Bond of the world of money”
SUSAN GLANZ 39
- The Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Roman Catholic Parish of Toronto:
Nine Decades of Evolution
NÁNDOR DREISZIGER 59

East Central Europe:

- Caught between Independence and Irredentism: The “Jewish Question”
in the Foreign Policy of the Kállay Government, 1942-1944
BÉLA BODÓ 83
- Ágnes Zsolt’s Authorship of her Daughter Éva Heyman’s
Holocaust Diary
GERGELY KUNT 127
- Identity Shift in the Literature of Vojvodina’s Hungarian Community,
1992-2010
OSZKÁR ROGINER 155

Contents (continued):

Book Reviews

Marius Turda, <i>Eugenics and Nation in Early 20th Century Hungary</i> . Reviewed by Boglárka Kiss	183
H. David Baer, <i>The Struggle of Hungarian Lutherans under Communism</i> . Reviewed by Nándor Dreisziger	186
Books received	190
Our Contributors	191

“A Perennial Problem”: Canadian Relations with Hungary, 1945-65

Greg Donaghy¹

2014-15 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Canadian-Hungarian diplomatic relations. On January 14, 1965, under cold blue skies and a bright sun, János Bartha, a 37-year-old expert on North American affairs, arrived in the cozy, wood paneled offices of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Paul Martin Sr. As deputy foreign minister Marcel Cadieux and a handful of diplomats looked on, Bartha presented his credentials as Budapest’s first full-time representative in Canada. Four months later, on May 18, Canada’s ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Malcolm Bow, arrived in Budapest to present his credentials as Canada’s first non-resident representative to Hungary. As he alighted from his embassy car, battered and dented from an accident en route, with its fender flag already frayed, grey skies poured rain.

The contrasting settings in Ottawa and Budapest are an apt metaphor for this uneven and often distant relationship. For Hungary, Bartha’s arrival was a victory to savor, the culmination of fifteen years of diplomatic campaigning and another step out from beneath the shadows of the postwar communist take-over and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. For Canada, the benefits were much less clear-cut. In the context of the bitter East-West Cold War confrontation, closer ties with communist Hungary demanded a steep domestic political price in exchange for a bundle of uncertain economic, consular, and political gains. Few Canadian policy-makers thought the price was worth it. Though sometimes tempted by the lucre of trade, ministers repeatedly rejected Hungarian overtures for closer relations until the early 1960s, when they judged the balance of interests to shift in Canada’s favour. They were wrong.

¹ I would like to thank Ryan Shackleton, Patrick Belanger, Marcel Jesenský, and Michael Stevenson for their help with this paper. The views expressed are mine alone, and do not represent the views of my Department or the Government of Canada.

It would be hard to exaggerate Canada's disdain for Hungary in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. An enemy state during that conflict, by the late 1940s, communist Hungary was well on the wrong side of the worsening Cold War divisions between the democratic West and the Soviet Union's East Bloc empire. Its human rights violations, especially Cardinal József Mindszenty's show-trial and imprisonment in 1948, left Canadians "bitter" and "hostile."¹ Indeed, when Canada's UN diplomats championed a resolution targeting Hungary in November 1949, their UN office switchboard lit up with almost a hundred calls of support.² Editorial backing was equally strong. Canadian UN speechifying on Hungarian human rights, gushed the *Toronto Daily Star*, was "of exceptional importance and confirmed Canada's reputation as one of the principal exponents of the Western powers."³

Nor was it likely that the miniscule trade between the two countries would offset these deep political tensions and justify closer diplomatic relations. Canadian exports to Hungary declined from \$1,063,000 in 1947 to \$35,000 in 1954. Imports hardly kept pace with inflation, creeping up from \$103,000 in 1948 to \$124,000 in 1955.⁴ Similarly, there was little demand for consular or immigration services. Hungarian immigration, mostly postwar refugees drawn from the displaced person camps of Western Europe, peaked in 1951 at just over five thousand (from an influx that year of 194,391) before dwindling to less than 700 in 1955.⁵

Among Canadian diplomats, there was little appetite to take on Hungary. Canada's small Department of External Affairs had just gone through a period of rapid expansion that was simply unsustainable. From 1946 to 1948, the department grew from 26 posts with 67 officers to 44 posts with 216 officers, leaving it without experienced staff or funds to open any new missions.⁶ This was especially true of missions behind the Iron Curtain, which involved extra security costs. Moreover, the prospect of reciprocal missions spooked the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), which worried that a Hungarian embassy might be used to spy on or intimidate the expatriate Hungarian-Canadian community. Thus, when Hungarian diplomats, seeking trade opportunities and diplomatic legitimacy for their newly-erected communist regime, sought to establish relations with Canada in 1949 and again in early 1955, they were turned firmly aside.

By the end of 1955, however, Ottawa's attitude had softened significantly. Much of the impetus for change lay abroad. Stalin's death in 1953, the Korean peace conference of May 1954, and the July 1955 East-

West summit in Geneva signalled reduced Cold War tensions. Canada's leading Soviet expert, Robert Ford, back in External Affairs after two long stints in Moscow, encouraged Canadian policy-makers to see the Soviet Union as a conservative and satiated power, ready to accept the status quo in central Europe. What Moscow wanted, he argued, was a "workable division of the world more or less along the present lines."⁷ External Affairs Minister L.B. Pearson agreed. Indeed, he returned from his own trip to Moscow in the fall of 1955 fearful of Soviet isolation and Moscow's dangerous ignorance of the outside world. "Canada should meet Soviet overtures halfway," he told cabinet, "and indicate a willingness to settle problems as they arose."⁸ In late 1955, ministers agreed to a stepped-up program of official exchanges and opened talks with Moscow on a trade agreement.

Improved relations with Moscow quickened Canada's contacts with the East Bloc satellites, including Hungary. Pressure for a shift in Canadian policy came primarily from Ford, who had tracked political and social unrest in Eastern Europe since the 20th Soviet Party Congress in February 1956. Ford's hopes were restrained, and he warned that Moscow would insist on maintaining some form of control over the satellites for the foreseeable future. Even so, he argued that Khrushchev's rapprochement with Tito, the denigration of Stalin, and the rehabilitation of nationalist leaders in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia were evidence of a "liberalization" that "may offer some degree of Titoism." Ford urged the West to abandon its rhetorical commitment to the liberation of the satellites, which only alarmed communist authorities and raised impossible expectations in Eastern Europe. Instead, Canada and its allies should increase contacts with the satellites, encouraging closer commercial, cultural, and scientific ties. "Our object," Ford told Pearson, "is to wean them away to some degree from extreme dependence on the Soviet Union and to encourage any developments which will ameliorate the lot of the satellite peoples."⁹

There were new domestic pressures to justify closer relations with Eastern European as well. Through the mid-1950s, politicians and farmers from Western Canada were growing evermore concerned at aggressive American efforts to protect the over-extended agricultural sector in the United States. They were especially alarmed at Public Law 480 and US agricultural disposal policies which gave away huge amounts of American wheat as foreign aid, often displacing Canadian wheat from many of its traditional markets.¹⁰ Between 1954-55 and 1956-57, Canada's share of the world market for wheat and flour fell sharply from 27.4% to 20.6%,

while the American share rose from 31.2% to 41.9%.¹¹ Net farm income in Saskatchewan, whose rural economy was based on wheat, plummeted from \$531 million in 1951 to \$179 million in 1957.¹² Suddenly, Eastern Europe represented a potentially important and contested market for prairie wheat. Thus, when the Hungarian government, which bought 150,000 tons of Canadian wheat in March 1956, proposed exchanging “most-favoured-nation” (MFN) treatment in April, External Affairs sniffed a deal.¹³

Ottawa refused a straight-up exchange of MFN treatment. Mutual tariff reductions were meaningless when trading with communist countries, which normally imposed no tariffs but relied on the state’s economic apparatus to manage imports and exports by fiat. Instead, cabinet demanded annual purchases of 150,000 tons of wheat on a cash basis in exchange for granting Hungary its lowest generalized tariff, or MFN status. Officials in External Affairs, who suspected that Budapest would also seek to exchange diplomatic representatives, steeled themselves to resist. A trade office “of some sort” was possibly legitimate, they admitted. But, it would involve no privileges or immunities, be severely limited in size, and be located under the watchful eye of federal security authorities in Ottawa.¹⁴

The Hungarians were tough and canny negotiators. Canadians Mitchell Sharp and Ed Ritchie liked the delegation and its personable leader, Tibor Barabas. The East European visitors were able, flexible, pleasant, and surprisingly independent in their judgements. They were openly thrilled that a Hungarian-Canadian had been chosen as “Miss Rough Rider,” notwithstanding her outspoken anti-regime views.¹⁵ It helped too, perhaps, that the Hungarian minister in Washington issued 30 exit visas as the talks began in mid-October “to create a good impression in Canada.”¹⁶ During ten days of discussions, Barabas slowly whittled down Hungary’s proposed purchase commitment to just 300,000 tons over three years, convincing Ottawa to extend credit to his cash-strapped country as well. By the time the deal was approved by cabinet on October 28, he and Pearson had even quietly agreed that Canada and Hungary would open reciprocal diplomatic missions within 12-18 months.¹⁷ “Trade motives take priority in this,” deputy foreign minister Jules Léger told Pearson, “though the rapid changes in the political situation in Hungary also argue in favour of a more forthcoming attitude... than would have been possible a few months back.”¹⁸

The Hungarian uprising and the brutal Soviet intervention of 1 November 1956 spelled delay, but, remarkably, they did not immediately

upset the bilateral arrangement. As Russian tanks rolled into Budapest, Canadian officials, skittish about appearing to side with Moscow, and Barabas, unsure if his mandate still stood, agreed to defer signature.¹⁹ But wheat was a powerful motivator, and by 3 January 1957, the grain trade and its potent cabinet advocate, Trade and Commerce Minister C.D. Howe, were pressing External Affairs to conclude the deal. Pinned between principle and national self-interest, squirming diplomats temporized. "I did not see how we could take any action that might seem to be bolstering up an unpopular regime in Hungary," assistant under-secretary John Holmes explained to deputy trade minister Fred Bull over lunch. But if János Kádár, Moscow's new puppet in Budapest, showed any signs of broadening his regime's popular support, Holmes offered, "we would probably favour the wheat deal as soon as possible."²⁰

That was not enough for Howe, grown short-tempered and autocratic as he aged. The trade minister brought the issue to cabinet a few days later. Even as Immigration Minister Jack Pickersgill rallied Canadians to welcome large numbers of Hungarian refugees to Canada, Howe insisted that the wheat deal would "feed the people and help the victims" in Hungary.²¹ His colleagues were clearly unimpressed, and when Pearson cited strong US objections to any business "whatever" with the Kádár regime, they quickly deferred the trade deal.

But, by May, wheat sales were back on the agenda. Amid reports of Belgian efforts to sign a civil aviation treaty with Budapest and French bids to sell wheat to Hungary on soft credit terms, fretful trade officials and diplomats told Pearson that there were "strong commercial" grounds for reviving the deal.²² The pragmatic minister thought so too. But doubtless aware of continued popular hostility toward Kádár's Hungary, Pearson was taking few chances as Canadians headed to the polls on June 10. Sure, he minuted, let's have "another look at it on, say, June 15th!"²³

Pearson and his Liberal colleagues were swept from office on June 10, and replaced by a Progressive Conservative ministry under an untested and largely unknown leader, Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker. Few issues mattered more to the Saskatchewan parliamentarian than wheat sales and the welfare of prairie farmers, who turned out en masse to back Tory candidates. Intellectually, Diefenbaker grasped the importance of reaching out to Moscow and its allies to defuse dangerous Cold War tensions. These concerns were offset in Diefenbaker by a strong emotional commitment to political and economic freedom, and a deep sympathy for the captive nations of Eastern Europe. Just as important, he was acutely sensitive to the voting preferences of their anti-communist compatriots in

Canada.²⁴ Diefenbaker and his ministers would soon have their chance to tackle the “perennial problem of Hungary.”

Through the late 1950s, Kádár’s post-revolutionary regime remained a global pariah, even denied full standing at the UN General Assembly, where its credentials were questioned and rejected. Isolation provided Budapest with strong incentives to continue seeking closer diplomatic relations with Canada (as well as other Western powers). In addition to enhanced international respectability, better relations would give Budapest access to the 40,000 Hungarian refugees, who had poured into Canada following the revolution. On a practical level, these were already straining the limited consular services provided by the Polish Embassy in Ottawa, which handled Hungarian interests in Canada, and were reportedly gnawing at Polish-Hungarian fraternal relations. They doubtless represented a tempting target for Hungarian intelligence too. Moreover, Budapest still looked eagerly at the Canadian market and government credit facilities to bolster its economy. In December 1957 and January 1958, Hungarian officials in Ottawa and in Europe revived the notion of a trade deal and diplomatic exchange.²⁵

The reaction in Ottawa was divided. Naturally, the salesmen in the Department of Trade and Commerce were pleased with the renewed interest.²⁶ Indeed, by mid-January, a Wheat Board agent had quietly slipped into Paris for preliminary talks with Hungarian state officials, who offered to buy “substantial quantities” of prairie wheat in exchange for a trade deal and diplomatic ties. Associate deputy trade minister Mitchell Sharp was clearly in support: “In view of the continuing serious difficulties facing our wheat exports, even on credit terms, we in this Department would strongly favour such a decision.”²⁷ Moreover, he added in justification, several European countries had recently re-established normal trade with Hungary. It was time for Canada to act.

External Affairs diplomats in their East Block headquarters were doubtful. Diefenbaker had made no secret of his scepticism about official advice on foreign policy, and they were carefully attuned to the prime minister’s strong anti-communist instincts and his prairie populism. They worried about the grim news from Hungary. The political situation in Budapest remained tense, insisted A. J. Pick of European Division, and there were rumours of a renewed campaign of repression.²⁸ The foreign ministry was irked too by Budapest’s hostile and unfriendly references in the press to Canada’s reception of Hungarian refugees, a nasty dispute that had erupted openly in late December.²⁹ The department was upset as well that Hungarian refugees in Canada were encountering obstacles in obtain-

ing exit visas for family members anxious to join them.³⁰ Any rapprochement, they cautioned, would “cause unrest” among Hungarian refugees in Canada.³¹ The prospect of wheat sales and a trade agreement effectively died when External Affairs insisted on sending the question to cabinet in April 1958. There was no chance of cabinet support once deposed premier Imre Nagy was summarily executed in June, and the ministers were never asked their views.³²

It frustrated Hungarian policy-makers that Canada remained so unyielding while its Western allies, including the US, eased their sanctions against Budapest. What, probed Tibor Zádor, the top man in Hungary’s Washington Embassy in March 1959, was the problem? Politics, veteran diplomat Henry Davis, whispered in response. With 40,000 Hungarian refugees on its hands, Ottawa could hardly improve relations so long as communist apparatchiks prevented dual nationals from visiting freely and ignored the humanitarian claims of families wishing to reunite in Canada. Perhaps, Zádor offered, Budapest might review its emigration policies if Ottawa would favourably consider a limited “package deal,” which would resolve Hungary’s outstanding debts in Canada and Canadian claims for nationalized properties in exchange for the release of blocked Hungarian assets in Canada and permission to open a small consulate-general with two staff members.³³

The small step offered a basis for “testing” Hungary’s desire for better relations and it was greeted warmly in External Affairs. “This seems sensible,” approved the powerful under-secretary, Norman Robertson.³⁴ East Block officials weighed the proposal fully in April, endorsing the full exchange of diplomatic missions provided there was progress on emigration.³⁵ Support for the “package deal” grew through the summer. External Affairs could count on Trade and Commerce, which hoped to open the Hungarian market to Canadian wheat. The mission in Prague, whose officers had visited Budapest regularly since 1955, also backed the plan. The consular case was “incontestable” and there were obvious geopolitical reasons to encourage Hungarian trade with the West. More important, a mission offered the prospect of direct, if discreet, relations with Hungarians themselves. “I am sure a Canadian mission would be welcomed,” insisted Arthur Andrew, chargé d’affaires in Prague, “not least by those Hungarians who are most out of sympathy with the regime.”³⁶ Indeed, by August, progress seemed virtually certain as Budapest issued a rare and unexpected exit visa to a Hungarian-Canadian dual citizen long trapped in Hungary.³⁷

But just as quickly, the door slammed shut, and remained so for the next three years. Comfortably slumped before their TV screens on Sunday, 25 October 1959, North American viewers learned that 150 Hungarian students languished in prison, waiting to be executed as they turned eighteen. TV Host Ed Sullivan urged his viewers to act, “to save these Hungarian kids.”³⁸ The plea passed unnoticed in Washington, but sparked a minor panic in Canada. The student council president at the University of British Columbia quickly championed the cause and forced the prime minister to issue a supportive statement.³⁹ External Affairs Minister Howard Green, who represented the riding of Vancouver Quadra, took notice. Ignoring departmental advice to avoid a futile Cold War “set-piece” in New York, Green insisted on debating Hungary at the UN General Assembly that fall.⁴⁰

Though short-lived, the furor was searing enough for those involved, and it scotched any prospect of reviving relations with Hungary. When Trade Minister George Hees resurrected the 1956 trade agreement in March 1961, Green refused to endorse the scheme, ensuring that cabinet turned it down “on political grounds, particularly because of the reaction... which must be anticipated from the Hungarian community.”⁴¹ Hees tried again, in the spring of 1962, but Green simply ignored him, instructing his officials to “let this ride.”⁴² Hungary was clearly off this government’s agenda.

Conditions changed in April 1963, when L.B. “Mike” Pearson’s Liberals replaced Diefenbaker’s shattered Tories. Pearson’s government was less inclined to see the world in grim shades of black and white, and it was quick to welcome evidence of East-West détente after the dangerous Cuban missile crisis the previous October. The Liberal prime minister rejected the idea that Canada might pursue the Soviet bloc’s “diplomatic and economic ostracism.” The only “reasonable” policy, he argued, was “to maintain as close contact as possible with the Soviet bloc leaders with a view to seeking and exploiting openings for negotiations on major east-west issues.”⁴³ The ultimate goal, he added, was “the evolution of the thinking of Soviet bloc leaders.”

Canadian diplomats in Vienna and Prague, who continued their periodic visits to Budapest, were likewise encouraged by local evidence of progress. The marginalization of Stalinist hardliners following the 8th Congress of the Hungarian Communist Party in November 1962, the profile attained by non-party candidates in local elections in February 1963, the March amnesty for participants in the revolution, and increased emigration pointed towards a “general trend toward greater tolerance,”

making Hungary “one of the most liberal [countries] in the Soviet bloc.”⁴⁴ With one eye cocked for adverse Hungarian-Canadian reaction, Foreign Minister Paul Martin signalled the change in Canadian perspective, approving orders to abandon the fight over Hungarian credentials at the UN special session in May 1963.⁴⁵ Thus, when Hungarian trade officials arrived in Ottawa in August 1963 for exploratory discussions, Canadian officials were primed to listen.

Progress was much slower than anticipated. Early talks foundered on Hungary’s refusal to accept the principle of a firm purchase commitment (as it had done in 1956) in exchange for MFN treatment and permission to open a trade office. By the time the Hungarians were ready to accept a commitment in October, the Canadian perspective had shifted dramatically.⁴⁶ Inspired by their recent success settling trade and outstanding financial issues with weaker Bulgaria, East Block officials raised their sights and aimed for a similarly broad arrangement with Hungary. Budapest’s persistent pursuit of trade and diplomatic relations had convinced them that the time was ripe to wrest additional concessions from Budapest on its defaulted pre-war debts, some stretching back to the First World War, war damages, and postwar compensation claims. Consequently, in late December, External Affairs insisted seeking Hungarian assurances that Budapest was ready to discuss these claims to the negotiating agenda.⁴⁷

Trade and Commerce, which had hoped to lead narrowly focussed trade talks, where Canada enjoyed an advantage, took a dim view of this effort and proved uncooperative in the difficult interdepartmental discussions required to hammer out the Canadian offer. Amid reports of concessionary US wheat sales to Hungary, Maurice Schwarzmann, an assistant deputy minister, resented making solid trade prospects dependent on an uncertain claims agreement.⁴⁸ He also questioned Canadian tactics. “The moment we sign a trade agreement,” the veteran negotiator insisted, “our bargaining counters will have been spent, and if in the process we have not achieved a settlement... our chances of doing so may well be gone.”⁴⁹

But Finance backed External Affairs. “Our bargaining position with the Eastern European countries seems to be particularly strong at the present time,” argued Rodney Gray, head of its international relations division. “Countries like Hungary appear anxious to improve their trade relations with Canada and to impress us with their credit worthiness... the time would appear propitious for us to try and settle as many of our outstanding claims as possible and on as good — or better — terms as other countries such as the US, the UK, and France have obtained.”⁵⁰

Perhaps, External Affairs wondered, Canada should sweeten its offer? Officials agreed to do so in late January 1964, adding the exchange of diplomatic representatives as well as emigration and consular issues to the proposed agenda.⁵¹ Eventually, in March 1964, with Budapest hinting impatiently that it would boycott Expo '67 if a trade agreement was not forthcoming, a Canadian package headed to cabinet.⁵² Assured by confident officials of an attractive outcome, Liberal ministers approved a broad Canadian negotiating offer without discussion in April 1964.⁵³

But bilateral talks opened on a sour note. Péter Mód, Hungary's first deputy minister of foreign affairs, arrived in Ottawa upset by recent Canadian demands for still more advance assurances of Budapest's purchase commitment. Until the crucial trade question was settled, he shrewdly told Under-Secretary Marcel Cadieux, the rest of the Hungarian team was staying home. For almost a week, the two countries were deadlocked. In exchange for a trade agreement and the right to a trade office, the Canadians demanded annual wheat sales of \$12 million over a three year period; the Hungarians offered just \$5 million and demanded a Montreal trade office with full consular facilities. The gap seemed unbridgeable. Perhaps, Cadieux hinted to Mód, more progress might be made by simultaneously engaging the full agenda, allowing greater trade-offs.⁵⁴

For the next two weeks, negotiating sub-committees tackled consular affairs, trade, diplomatic representation, and claims issues. Max Wershof, who handled the consular work for External Affairs, easily secured promises that dual citizens using a Canadian passport could enter and leave Hungary freely, an important victory for Hungarian-Canadians though not as much as the ministers had expected. The trade dispute, too, slowly gave way as each side moderated its demands. Canadian negotiators eventually settled for annual guaranteed sales of wheat and barley worth \$8 million, much less than the \$10 million minimum that cabinet had wanted, but not an insignificant sale. To achieve this settlement, Canadian diplomats dropped their opposition to a Hungarian trade office with consular status in Montreal.⁵⁵

There was more trouble over diplomatic representation and the claims agreement. Cabinet had approved the exchange of diplomatic representation on the cheap, favouring dual accreditation on a non-resident basis. The pressure for missions in the newly independent states of Africa and Asia was enormous in the mid-1960s, and External Affairs saw few benefits in a mission in Budapest. Moreover, a Hungarian resident mission in Ottawa might mean security issues. The Hungarians, who wanted access to their large expatriate community in Canada and greater diplomatic

legitimacy, demanded more, firmly insisting on their unfettered right to a resident mission.⁵⁶

They rejected Canada's position on claims too. The Pearson government had hoped for language that would commit Hungary to review debts and claims in a speedy and wholesale manner and to pay them in convertible funds, thus setting solid precedents for subsequent negotiations with Poland and Czechoslovakia, where the Canadian stake was much larger. M6d refused to yield even a little, insisting that these were precisely the kinds of issues that ought to be settled in the negotiations themselves. At most, Hungary would agree to give Canada terms no less favourable than it gave to other states. Given Budapest's interest in obtaining a trade agreement and exchanging diplomatic representatives, this was probably as good a deal as Canada would ever get, admitted Cadieux. "Our leverage is now at a maximum point," he warned Martin, and "our bargaining power on both the trade and diplomatic questions may deteriorate as time goes by."⁵⁷ With M6d hinting that American wheat sales were readily available, Ottawa would have to give in if it wanted to sell its wheat.

Ministers were clearly disappointed in the result. It was, Martin and Sharp admitted to their cabinet colleagues, "not possible to reach a full agreement."⁵⁸ In an unusually frank statement, Sharp blamed the unsatisfactory debt and claims settlement on earlier governments (of which he had not been part) for being "remiss" in not pressing Hungary to settle in the 1940s. There were likely to be security issues with the new Hungarian offices to be opened in Ottawa and Montreal, Martin warned gloomily. Neither Hungarian-Canadians nor the Opposition would like this limited deal, which they would denounce "as a betrayal of the goal of freeing Eastern European peoples from Soviet domination."⁵⁹ But with a wheat sale in the offing, ministers consoled themselves with the lofty geopolitical notion that "relations with countries such as Hungary was essential if there was to be any hope of exercising influence over their policies."⁶⁰ Cabinet approved the deal, which was signed in Ottawa on 11 June 1964.

Though Hungary and Canada traded diplomatic representatives in early 1965, and Ottawa sent a resident consular official to Budapest in 1966, it is hard to conclude that these exchanges generated any real interest in better or closer ties. The tough negotiations and Ottawa's disappointed hopes cast a pall over, and provided little momentum to, a basic mercantile connection. Indeed, implementation of the 1964 agreement soon began to undermine relations, which stumbled fitfully during the late 1960s. As Martin feared, one of the obstacles was domestic, as the

Canadian Hungarian Association and its tireless spokesman, Paul Villányi, stepped up their close surveillance of bilateral interactions. The group remained upset over ongoing consular problems and barriers to family reunification, reminding Liberal ministers that they had “prematurely” allowed Budapest to open missions in Ottawa and Montreal without “a firm quid pro quo.”⁶¹ The 10th anniversary of the Hungarian uprising in late 1966 amplified domestic doubts, especially when Cadieux stirred a fuss among cabinet members by asking Transport Minister Jack Pickersgill, who had played a prominent part in welcoming Hungarian refugees in 1957, to limit his commemorative activities lest he compromise bilateral ties. Pickersgill refused.⁶²

There were other substantive reasons for Ottawa’s lack of enthusiasm for pursuing relations with Hungary. As anticipated, Hungarian embassy officials were soon spying on Canada and its Hungarian-Canadian expatriate community, practices confirmed by both the RCMP and Hungarian defectors in the US. Indeed, to the disappointment (and irritation) of External Affairs, by mid-1968, over 50 percent of mission staff, including some senior representatives, were engaged in “illegitimate functions.”⁶³ And the return to Canada remained depressingly minimal. Bumper crops in Hungary prompted Budapest to delay, and later suspend, its purchases of Canadian grain, leaving the agreement’s key trade component unfulfilled. By the time the deal expired in June 1967, Hungary had purchased only 100,000 tons of its 250,000 ton commitment.⁶⁴ Budapest was similarly unresponsive in negotiations over unsettled debts and claims. Despite three rounds of talks, where they enjoyed little leverage, frustrated Canadian diplomats failed to convince the Hungarians to increase their initial \$300,000 offer, while they slashed Canada’s claim from \$70 million to \$25 million, and then, to \$10.5 million.⁶⁵

Most important, the renewed Cold War tensions that accompanied the escalation of the Vietnam War after 1965 reinforced the basic geopolitical reality that divided Canada and Hungary. When the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968 to crush its recent political and economic reforms, Budapest marched with Moscow. Though sympathetic to Hungary’s unhappy predicament — External Affairs labelled it the “least guilty” — there would have to be repercussions to appease domestic and allied opinion. Ottawa quickly suspended general political and social contacts, adopting an attitude that was “correct but cool.”⁶⁶

That ought not to have surprised anyone. Budapest and Ottawa were always on different sides of the 20th century Cold War dividing the communist East from the Democratic West, a fundamental division that

defined their postwar relations. For the regime in Hungary, in 1948 as well as 1958 and 1964, Canada promised access to the expansive possibilities of postwar capitalism and a pathway to international respectability. Better relations with Canada was a prize worth winning. For Ottawa policy-makers the benefits of closer ties with Budapest were less obvious. Certainly, the European nation represented a small but not insignificant outlet for Canadian wheat, an important consideration as world markets grew more competitive. There were consular and immigration benefits to be gained too. But the dismal human rights record of Hungary's communist authorities meant that the risk of alienating Catholic voters and anti-communist refugees, especially after the influx of Hungarian refugees in 1956-57, was very high. Strategic rather than bilateral tactical considerations tipped the balance, as successive Canadian governments narrowed their view of relations with Hungary to a gambit in the East-West contest. Burdened with the overblown hopes that accompanied this view, it is hardly surprising that Canadian-Hungarian bilateral relations often disappointed in the decades after 1945.

NOTES

¹ Robert Ford to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (USSEA), 7 April 1949, and SSEA to London, telegram 605, 12 April 1949, Record Group (RG) 25, vol. 6258, file 9959-40, Library and Archives Canada (LAC).

² Greg Donaghy, *Grit: The Politics & Life of Paul Martin Sr.* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 103.

³ "Mr. Martin's Great Speech," *Toronto Daily Star*, 17 November 1949.

⁴ Figures taken from *Canada Yearbook for 1950* (Ottawa: 1950), 913 and 973; and *Canada Yearbook for 1955* (Ottawa: 1955), 911, 971.

⁵ Figures taken from *Canada Yearbook for 1951* (Ottawa: 1951), 145-47; and *Canada Yearbook for 1957-58* (Ottawa: 1958), 180.

⁶ A.D.P. Heeney, Memorandum for the Minister, 10 October 1950, RG 25, vol. 6505, file 8589-40, LAC.

⁷ R.A.D. Ford, "Memorandum by European Division: Relations with the USSR - A Re-Assessment," November 1954, re-printed in Greg Donaghy (ed.), *Documents on Canadian External Relations [DCER], Volume 20: 1954* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 1997), 1569-91. See also John Holmes, *The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order, Volume 2* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 382-83. These paragraphs are drawn from my article, "'An Unselfish Interest?': Canada and the Hungarian

Revolution 1956-1957,” in Christopher Adam, Tibor Egervari, Leslie Laczko and Judy Young (eds.), *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: Hungarian and Canadian Perspectives* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010), 256-74.

⁸ Cabinet Conclusions, 16 November 1955, re-printed in Donaghy, *DCER, Volume 21: 1955*, 1173-74.

⁹ Jules Léger, “Memorandum to the SSEA, 12 June 1956 and attached Memorandum from Head of the European Division (Ford), 12 June 1956,” re-printed in Donaghy (ed.), *DCER, Volume 23: 1956-57, Part 11*, 867-77.

¹⁰ Public Law 480, or the Agricultural Trade Development Assistance Act, was signed into law on 10 July 1954. On this problem in Canadian foreign policy see Greg Donaghy and Michael Stevenson, “The Limits of Alliance: Cold War Solidarity and Canadian Wheat Exports to China, 1950-63,” *Journal of Agricultural History*, vol. 83, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 29-50.

¹¹ Charles F. Wilson, *C.D. Howe: An Optimist Responds to a Surfeit of Grain* (Ottawa: Canadian Wheat Board mimeograph, 1980), 50.

¹² F.H. Lacey (ed.), *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 2nd Edition (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1983), Series M 119-128.

¹³ Léger, Memorandum for the Minister, 30 July 1956, RG 25, vol. 6285, file 9959-40, LAC.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ E.A. Ritchie, Memorandum for Defence Liaison Division, 8 November 1956, reprinted in Donaghy, *DCER, Volume 23*, 1080-73.

¹⁶ Léger, “Memorandum to the SSEA,” 3 October 1956, reprinted in Donaghy, *DCER, Volume 23*, 1069-70.

¹⁷ J.B.C. Watkins, “Memorandum to the SSEA,” 25 October 1956, RG 25, vol. 6258, file 9959-40, LAC.

¹⁸ Léger, “Memorandum to the SSEA,” 18 October 1956, reprinted in Donaghy, *DCER, Volume 23*, 1073-74.

¹⁹ Donaghy, ““An Unselfish Interest?”,” 262.

²⁰ Marginal notes by Holmes on Jim Grandy, Memorandum to the USSEA, 3 January 1957, RG 25, vol. 7171, file 9376-A-40, LAC.

²¹ Cabinet Conclusions, 7 January 1957, PCO Records, LAC.

²² NATO Paris to Ottawa, telegram 260, 15 February 1957, and Léger, Memorandum for the Minister, 7 May 1957, RG 25, vol. 7171, file 9376-A-40, LAC.

²³ Pearson’s marginal notes, *ibid.*

²⁴ These remarks rely heavily on H. Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World: A Populist in World Affairs* (Toronto: UTP, 1989), 4, 26, 35, 48.

²⁵ SSEA to the Minister of the United Kingdom in Budapest, 13 December 1957, RG 25, vol. 6743, file 232-BG-40, LAC.

²⁶ Mitchell Sharp to Léger, 17 January 1958, RG 25, vol. 7171, file 9376-A-40, LAC.

²⁷ Sharp to Léger, 20 March 1958, RG 25, vol. 7171, file 9376-A-40, LAC.

²⁸ A.J. Pick/European Division to Economic Division, 23 December 1957, RG 25, vol. 7171, file 9376-A-40, LAC.

²⁹ The initial verbal assault was made by the Deputy Chief of the Press Section of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at a press conference on December 7, 1957, who claimed 6,000 Hungarian refugees were waiting to return home, and that another 10-15,000 were unemployed. Canada immediately protested through the British Minister in Budapest. See Minister of the United Kingdom in Hungary to SSEA, Despatch 6, 19 March 1958, RG 25, vol. 6744, file 232-BG-18-40, LAC.

³⁰ SSEA to the Minister of the United Kingdom in Hungary, 13 December 1957, RG 25, vol. 6743, file 232-BG-40, LAC.

³¹ Peter Dobell to Pick, 22 January 1958, RG 25, vol. 6258, file 9959-40, LAC.

³² Doug LePan to John English, Acting Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, 14 April 1958, RG 25, vol. 7171, file 9376-A-40, LAC.

³³ Henry Davis, European Division, to USSEA, 16 March 1959, RG 25, vol. 6258, file 9959-40, LAC.

³⁴ Norman Robertson's marginalia on *ibid.*

³⁵ Davis to USSEA, 4 May 1959, RG 25, vol. 6258, file 9959-40, LAC.

³⁶ Prague to USSEA, Letter 544, 14 July 1959, RG 25, vol. 6258, file 9959-40, LAC.

³⁷ Robertson, Memorandum for the Minister, 10 August 1959, RG 25, vol. 6744, file 232-BG-40, LAC.

³⁸ Holmes, Memorandum for the Prime Minister, 29 October 1959, RG 25, vol. 7579, file 9959-40, LAC.

³⁹ Holmes, Memorandum for the Prime Minister, 30 October 1959, RG 25, vol. 7579, file 9959-40, LAC.

⁴⁰ Robertson, Memorandum for the Minister, 5 November 1959, and European Division to File, 18 November 1959, RG 25, vol. 7579, file 9959-40, LAC.

⁴¹ O.G. Stoner/Economic Division to European Division, 19 September 1961, RG 25, vol. 7579, file 9959-40, LAC.

⁴² Green's marginalia on Robertson, Memorandum for the Minister, 9 March 1962, RG 25, vol. 5302, File 9376-A-40, LAC.

⁴³ Cited in Charlotte Girard, *Canada in World Affairs, Vol. XIII: 1963-1965* (Toronto: CIIA, nd, [1980]), 131, n86.

⁴⁴ Belgrade to SSEA, Despatch 216, 21 May 1963, and Ottawa to Washington, telegram S-130, 17 May 1963, RG 25, vol. 5269, file 8619-40; Prague to SSEA, Despatch 613, 7 November 1963, RG 25, vol. 8957, file 20-Hungary-1-4, LAC.

⁴⁵ Robertson, Memorandum for the Minister, 7 May 1963, RG 25, vol. 5269, file 8619, LAC.

⁴⁶ Ottawa to Prague, telegram E-876, 11 May 1964, RG 25, vol. 13845, file 37-3-1-Hungary, LAC.

⁴⁷ European Division to Legal Division, 27 December 1963, RG 25, vol. 13845, file 37-3-1-Hungary, and O.G. Stoner to Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, 31 December 1963, RG 20, vol. 1978, file T20-1349, LAC.

⁴⁸ Maurice Schwarzmann to USSEA, 22 January 1964, RG 25, vol. 13845, file 37-3-1-Hungary, LAC.

⁴⁹ Draft letter from A/Deputy Minister of Trade to USSEA, RG 20, vol. 1978, file T20-1349, LAC.

⁵⁰ Rodney Grey, Director, International Economic Relations, Department of Finance to Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, 14 January 1964, RG 20, vol. 2641, file T20-1542, LAC.

⁵¹ Consular Division to Economic Division, 20 February 1964, RG 25, vol. 13845, file 37-3-1-Hungary, LAC.

⁵² Vienna to Ottawa, telegram TC-46, 12 March 1964, RG 25, vol. 13845, file 37-3-1-Hungary, LAC.

⁵³ Canadian confidence is reflected in Marcel Cadieux, Memorandum for the Minister, 3 April 1964, G 25, vol. 13845, file 37-3-1-Hungary; and Cabinet Conclusions, 16 April 1964, LAC.

⁵⁴ Cadieux, Memorandum for the Minister, 26 May 1964, RG 25, vol. 13845, file 37-3-1-Hungary, LAC.

⁵⁵ O.G. Stoner (for Cadieux), Memorandum for the Minister, 4 June 1964, RG 25, vol. 13845, file 37-3-1-Hungary, LAC.

⁵⁶ Cadieux, Memorandum for the Minister, 1 June 1964, and *ibid*, RG 25, vol. 13845, file 37-3-1-Hungary, LAC.

⁵⁷ Stoner (for Cadieux), Memorandum for the Minister, 4 June 1964, RG 25, vol. 13845, file 37-3-1-Hungary, LAC.

⁵⁸ Cabinet Conclusions, 9 June 1964, PCO Records, LAC.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

⁶¹ Donald MacDonald to Paul Martin, 16 February 1966, RG 25, vol. 10049, file 20-1-2-Hungary, LAC. See also Stanley Haidasz to Martin, 19 February 1965, *ibid*.

⁶² Cadieux to J.R. Baldwin, 21 October 1966, and J.W. Pickersgill to Paul Martin, 27 October 1966, RG 25, vol. 10049, file 20-1-2-Hungary, LAC. In his letter to Martin, Pickersgill firmly rejected Cadieux's "gratuitous and unsolicited advice" and refused to let External Affairs vet his speeches for "their political purity." Pickersgill proposed to proclaim in anniversary activities "that the Hungarian refugees were justified in coming to Canada and that they are better off in this free country than they would be in a country which is still a police state."

⁶³ Confidential Source. On this general subject, see Christopher Adam, "Spying on the Refugees: The Kádár Regime's Secret Agents and Canada's Hungarians, 1956-1989," *Hungarian Studies Review* 35, 1-2 (2008): 109-124.

⁶⁴ Draft Memorandum to Cabinet, 28 April 1967, RG 25, vol. 13845, file 37-3-1-Hungary, LAC.

⁶⁵ Max Wershof, Chairman, Interdepartmental Committee on Claims, Report to Ministers, 27 April 1967, RG 25, vol. 13845, file 37-3-1-Hungary, LAC.

⁶⁶ Briefing Note on the People's Republic of Hungary, 23 September 1968, RG 25, vol. 8661, file 20-1-2-Hungary, LAC.

**Escape into Emigration:
Christian democratic social welfare politician
Béla Kovrig and the Hungarian State Security
1946-1948**

Éva Petrás

“A dissident from the intelligentsia”

In his poem *A Sentence on Tyranny* the Hungarian poet Gyula Illyés wrote: “where there is tyranny, everyone is a link in the chain.”¹ This “link in the chain” existence, by virtue of their position as intellectuals, is most often used to characterize members of the intelligentsia. Any discussion of the relationship between the intelligentsia and the state security apparatus in communist Hungary should always take this situation into account. Éva Cs. Gyimesi, a Hungarian-Romanian literary historian who died in 2011 under tragic circumstances, came up with a term while reading the surveillance reports the Romanian Securitate had on her. She said that because their designation was problematic “dissidents from the intelligentsia” should be assigned to a separate category.² Gyimesi also suggested that leaving the country is not the beginning of defection, and not all circumstances result in a dissident’s emigration. A dissident may go into an internal or inner emigration — when the decision doesn’t necessarily involve the dissident’s actual departure from his or her country. However, the communist state security agencies, for simplicity’s sake, preferred to define defection as the act of crossing a border. Certainly, “internal emigration” often ended in real emigration but it was usually preceded by a shorter or longer period when the decision to leave had been taken but, on the surface, the life of the would-be defector continued as if nothing had happened.

For some people this transitional period lasted for decades — or never ended — and offered a certain opportunity to a thoughtful intellectual: an opportunity for the freedom of decision, however limited. That

is why Gyimesi introduced the third category to totalitarian society's offenders and victims — the “intellectual dissidents.” For Gyimesi the individual deliberating on inner or actual emigration cannot be called simply a victim: he makes his own free decision, since he believes that when “living under tyranny, a passage between, over, or under the visible and invisible barriers is always possible through political devices.”³ Such individuals therefore cannot be seen simply as “victims, insofar as they — through their own free will — embraced an ideological system, world-view, belief, or religion,... and they accepted the consequences of their own views and deeds.”⁴

Our present study traces the life of Béla Kovrig — a professor of sociology, Christian democratic politician, and a prominent member of public life in Hungary — from the First World War to the Second and after. We follow the course of his life to see whether his role as an “intellectual dissident” can be reconstructed and how long it lasted. Though the nature of the documentation makes this difficult, we outline his career using state security records, biographical sources, and his own scholarly writings.

What can be known for certain is that Béla Kovrig left Hungary in October 1948, and, after a short stay in Italy, emigrated to the United States. With his escape he intended to put an end to a two-year-long dead-end situation: his career as an agent of the state security apparatus. Leaving Hungary was a turning point in Kovrig's life that was preceded by two-and-a-half decades of activity as a bureaucrat, politician and scholar, and was followed by a decade-and-a-half of existence as an émigré intellectual. His emigration, however, cannot be strictly connected to the point when he left Hungary. It includes personal and political experiences of the interim years starting with the end of World War II, which led to his decision to leave. These experiences also left their mark on the second half of his life and on his existence as an émigré.

Béla Kovrig's career and work

Kovrig was born in Budapest on April 8, 1900, into a Transylvanian family of Armenian-Hungarian stock.⁵ His career began in 1920 when he got his diploma from Budapest's Péter Pázmány Catholic University. He earned his doctorate in political science and law in 1921 and then went on a study-tour abroad that took him to the *Hochschule für Politik* in Berlin and the *Sorbonne* and the *École des Sciences Politiques* in Paris.⁶ After returning to Hungary in 1923 he became Prime Minister István Bethlen's

private secretary while also working in the Bureau of Nationalities and Minorities of the Prime Minister's Office. During the same period he also served as editor of two journals: *Társadalompolitika* [Social Policy] and *Munkaügyi Szemle* [Labour Review]. From 1927 on, he was employed by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour where he was deeply involved in affairs relating to social welfare. Following this he became Deputy Director of the National Institute of Social Security [Országos Társadalombiztosítási Intézet, "OTI"]. As one of the drafters of the 1928 XL law on old-age and disability insurance,⁷ he reviewed Hungary's social insurance situation as well as trends in European welfare policy, which he and his colleagues then applied to Hungary's conditions. Because of the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, many reform ideas on welfare could not be realized.

In the second half of the 1930s Kovrig's career reached new heights. In 1938 Prime Minister Béla Imrédy appointed him director of the newly-formed V., the so-called Social Policy Department of the Prime Minister's Office. The Social Policy Department was not a sociological or social policy advisory body, rather it dealt mainly with the government's propaganda.⁸ In addition to the propaganda however, Kovrig never gave up pushing his ideas on welfare policy, towards the achievement of which he saw social propaganda as the most effective instrument. It was under these circumstances that he drew up the bill for old-age insurance for people working in the economy's agricultural sector. The bill was then enacted by Parliament as the 1938 XII Law.⁹ After Prime Minister Pál Teleki merged the Social Policy Department with the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, Kovrig took part in establishing the National Policy Office and became its director. After Teleki's suicide in April 1941, the National Policy Office was closed down and Kovrig left government service. He became first the dean, then the rector of the newly-established Hungarian university in Kolozsvár/Cluj in Northern Transylvania that Hungary had re-annexed the previous year.

In the history of Hungarian scholarship, the activities of the Ferenc József University during the years that Northern Transylvania was again under Hungarian rule (1940-44) were particularly important.¹⁰ Until Kovrig's appointment as chief administrator there, the only Hungarian professorship of sociology had been in Budapest. As a result of his work, modern sociology education found a new location in Transylvania. Kovrig was also instrumental in introducing to Northern Transylvania organizations that had been successful in the promotion of public welfare in Hungary proper. An outstanding example of such an institution was

KALOT [National Association of Catholic Agrarian Youth Organizations].¹¹

Kovrig was not only a social policy bureaucrat — he was also a scholar. As a productive and talented writer he published continuously from the early 1920s on. His writings included *A munka védelme a dunai államokban* [Employment Protection in the Danube States], which utilized a comparative approach, and *Szociálpolitika* [Welfare Policy] which was a theoretical overview. He also produced a plethora of other volumes, articles and papers.¹²

Kovrig's role in Catholic reform politics

Béla Kovrig was a Catholic social scientist. In Hungary in the period between the two World Wars, but mainly in the 1930s, Catholic social and political thought developed in circumstances that made it possible for certain intellectuals to work out a program that was intended to be politically neutral. This group of Catholic sociologists, publicists and politicians followed, above all, the papal social doctrine of Pope Pius XI's 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*.¹³ Under the influence of such ideas and through an analysis of the Hungarian situation, Kovrig arrived at conclusions that differed from the ideas held by Hungary's political elite, the advocates of the "Christian national course" regarding the country's social and political set-up, or the Catholic Church's role in society.¹⁴ Distinguished other representatives of this reform movement were the sociologist Vid Mihelics, the Jesuit philosophers Elemér Csávossy and László Varga — the latter being the founder and principal editor of the reform Catholic journal *Korunk Szava* [Voice of Our Age] — Count György Széchenyi, and István Barankovics the future leader of the Democratic People's Party (the Christian Democratic party formed after the war). In this circle of reformers, Kovrig was the pre-eminent scholar.

Because of his station in life, Kovrig was the government's bureaucrat, but as a scholar he was also the government's critic. Originally he had been a conservative, then a reformed conservative, finally in his Christian Democratic period he came to believe in reforming the Horthy regime — which he, unlike many of his contemporaries, considered possible. As a bureaucrat and politician Kovrig had direct contact with national welfare policy; as a scholar however he envisaged its further development. Thus we shouldn't be surprised that on August 23, 1943 he played a key role in a meeting called together by Vilmos Apor, Bishop of Győr, where those gathered decided to form the organization called the

Catholic Social People's Movement — which can be considered the predecessor of the Christian Democratic People's Party that was established on 13 October 1944 — only two days before the removal from office of Horthy by the Nazis and the assumption of power in Hungary by the right-radical Arrow Cross movement.¹⁵ Earlier, at a secret meeting of the Party's founders, Kovrig had been tasked with working out the Party's social program, thus he can be considered instrumental in establishing the Christian Democratic People's Party, which later changed its name to the Democratic People's Party (DPP).¹⁶ At the time, Kovrig was working on the volume *Magyar Társadalompolitika* [Hungarian Social Policy], a compendium of Hungary's welfare and social policies between the wars. This work became the basis for the DPP's platform after the war.¹⁷

Throughout these years Kovrig, in tune with his views, fought against the relentless advance of the extreme right in Hungary and kept in contact with anti-Nazi political and public figures. Thus it is not surprising that during the war he took part in the anti-fascist resistance as well. After Prince Primate Jusztinián Cardinal Serédi gave Catholics permission to take part in the anti-fascist movement known as Hungarian Front, which worked together with the Communists, Kovrig became active in the Front's operations — printing and distributing leaflets and hiding people.¹⁸ In the winter of 1944–45 he himself was forced into hiding, but already in January of 1945, after a new government was established behind Red Army lines, he reported to its Ministry of Religion and Public Education. He worked there for a while, then in the Reconstruction Ministry. Still later he returned to teaching, first at the Royal József Nádor Technical and Economic University, then at the University of Agriculture, and finally from 1947 on, in Eger at the city's law-school.

Kovrig's induction as an agent for the State Security Agencies

Because of Kovrig's prominent past activities as well as his central role in founding the Democratic People's Party, already in 1946 he aroused the interest of the Budapest Headquarters of the Political Investigation Department of the Hungarian State Police. His irreproachable conduct and anti-fascist stance, at the same time, didn't give the police an immediate opportunity to blackmail him. For the time being, Kovrig's main concern was the illness of his mother rather than being investigated by the police.

By 1946 changes in Hungarian domestic politics had already occurred, which despite the existence of a coalition government, indicated that the country's Communist Party would use every possible tool to seize

power. The Communists' "get the people's enemies out of the coalition" campaign, announced in the fall of 1946, was unequivocally aimed at the Smallholders Party. The denunciations and assaults through the press began — all intended to rankle relations within the coalition. The Communists also tried to weaken the Smallholders' influence with the country's electorate.¹⁹ They systematically accumulated information on the Party's leaders, and later also on members of Hungary's clerical elite who were considered opponents of the Communists' ambitions.

In 1945 the Hungarian State Police had formed two Political Investigation Departments [PROs], one for Budapest and one for the countryside — both of which were under communist control from the very beginning. At the outset their declared tasks did not include intelligence and interception work focusing on the Churches. In September of 1946 the two departments were merged and became the State Security Department [*Államvédelmi Osztály* or ÁVO]. One of the new agency's overt tasks became the surveillance of the Churches.²⁰ Because the Churches were so deeply embedded in Hungarian society, the battle against the "clerical reaction" as the Communists called it, soon became the Communist Party's chief preoccupation. The starting point was the claim that the majority of the Hungarian people's enemies were "hiding behind the cloaks of the church; mainly the Roman Catholic Church."²¹ Understandably under these circumstances the ÁVO's anti-church activities were viewed more and more as valuable.

In this atmosphere of political hysteria, on 9 September 1946, Kovrig was taken to ÁVO headquarters at 60 Andrásy Avenue for questioning. According to the State Security Agencies' reports, the ÁVO had investigated Kovrig for two months prior to this event.²² His interrogators accused him with having harmed the Hungarian people "as a result of his wartime and anti-democratic activities."

According to a report prepared a few days after his interrogation, "in the first phase of his questioning we only asked about the subject at hand, while the special group leader observed his behavior. But he still held out. Later when we revealed to him the severity of his situation and the group leader asked him what would happen to his sick family members, that's when he broke a bit..."²³ Kovrig soon realized that the ÁVO agents wanted something special from him. According to the report, "after questioning him for about an hour, he offered his services."²⁴ At that point they had him sign a statement of co-operation and fill out a data sheet documenting his induction, on which the method of induction was listed as

having come “under pressure.” They attached his *curriculum vitae* to his induction file.²⁵

From the point of view of the emerging new order, Kovrig’s *curriculum vitae* had only one flaw: his anti-Soviet attitudes; and the secret police — according to their working reports — had precise data on this matter.²⁶ In his *CV* Kovrig had made strenuous efforts to play down his own earlier anti-soviet writings mainly his monograph entitled “*Az új Oroszország (1917–1926)*” [The new Russia],²⁷ his chapter on the Russian revolution in a 1940 volume entitled *Korfordulón* [At the turning point of an era],²⁸ and a booklet from 1942 entitled *Embersors a szovjetéletben* [Man’s fate in Soviet life]. In these writings it was made perfectly clear that as a social thinker he was absolutely sure of the differences between socialism and communism, as well as among Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism. Perhaps we are not too far from the truth if we surmise that in his *curriculum vitae* he emphasized his role in the anti-fascist opposition and stressed his original social commitment, in an effort to counter-balance his anti-Soviet stance.

For the next two years until his defection, Kovrig produced reports for the ÁVO on events and trends in Hungarian ecclesiastical life and policy, and on certain Catholic public figures.²⁹ His cover-name was “Bihari”, though he never used this name in his reports; he always signed with his own name. His tasks were mainly to strengthen the line against Cardinal Mindszenty, and do surveillance of Catholic politicians and clerics around István Barankovics and the Democratic People’s Party.

With the accusation of having “committed war-like and anti-democratic acts to the detriment of the Hungarian nation” hanging over his head, a leading intellectual from the Horthy era became an eminent agent. Kovrig must have known that several dozen public figures (among them four previous prime ministers) similarly charged had paid for their “crimes” with their lives.³⁰ This explains why the terror-stricken Kovrig lived in continual fear, and his surveillance reports were always precise and accurate. It must have appeared to the secret police that they had entered into what could be called a “successful collaboration.” Already in the late fall and early winter of 1946 Kovrig supplied his masters with a great deal of detailed information on matters relating to the churches, which must have been appreciated by men who knew little on the subject. However, with only one or two exceptions, his reports on particular individuals do not contain negative information.³¹ On the pages of such reports one couldn’t really find any more information than someone familiar with Catholic public life would have known anyway: the personalities in

Catholic public life were depicted as irreproachable people who led exemplary lives — they were anti-German, anti-fascist, Catholic–Christian champions of progressive ideas.

Kovrig’s liaison officer, János Tihanyi, praised his work: “I have been in touch with him regularly for about half a year. His helpfulness and activity are outstanding. I have learned a lot from him with respect to the Catholic line. Beyond this, through debate-like conversations I think his view has become clearer, he is politically a realist, deeply religious, but to his benefit, he has changed a lot.”³²

Regarding Kovrig’s true state of mind, Jenő Kerkai, one of the Jesuit leaders of the KALOT movement who was under Kovrig’s surveillance, knew the most. According to Kerkai “Kovrig suffered from paranoia”. When, for example, he visited Kerkai, “he put his coat over the telephone in the room and pulled out the plug of the radio, to avoid being bugged.”³³

In this period fear permeates Kovrig’s writings. This also characterizes his reports to his liaison officer. Not long after his induction, he was asked to submit a report entitled: *A progresszív katolicizmus és a munkáspártok viszonyáról* [The Relationship between Progressive Catholicism and the Labour Parties] in which he shared his views with his liaison officer in scholarly detail.³⁴ As other historians have also noted, particularly in cases when a member of the intelligentsia came in contact with the secret police, besides the fear that what he says may hurt him, there exists a hidden desire to influence the organization. This can be considered political tactic:³⁵ a way of finally getting appreciation for their own views, getting certain things done,³⁶ or getting their narcissistic manifestations into the “secret company of the wise analysts”³⁷ — or probably a combination of some or all of these factors.

In any case, given Béla Kovrig’s outstanding intellect, from the beginning he twisted the message of his reports so that keeping the “terrorized professor” as a state security agent could only seem successful to a certain degree, and from a certain point of view. At the same time Kovrig did not simply provide incriminating information on the people under his surveillance. With his scholarly discussions he not only put the secret police’s literacy to the test, but he tried to turn the “offered opportunity” around to his own benefit and that of his political allies — the Christian democratic politicians and the Democratic People’s Party. In his first report for the secret police, Kovrig already spoke with a different voice — as a politician. He submitted a plan on how the intellectual Christian

democratic movement could be widened into a social movement supporting the left and what steps would be necessary towards that.³⁸

Kovrig also used “the opportunity” to characterize Mindszenty (whom the Pope had appointed Hungary’s Prince Primate in September of 1945) and his politics, as being in opposition to the Democratic People’s Party. The conflict between Mindszenty and the Democratic People’s Party, Mindszenty and Barankovics, and Mindszenty and Kovrig was an older issue, and also sprang from actual theoretical and personal differences of opinion — as it comes clear in the report Kovrig wrote for the state security. With the Hungarian Communist Party’s defeat in the 1945 parliamentary elections, Mindszenty came to be seen by the secret police as an individual opposed to the Communist Party’s goals.³⁹ It can therefore be said that Kovrig, on the basis of the “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” theory, designated Mindszenty as a common enemy.

How the state security agencies used the information they got from Kovrig differed somewhat from what he assumed. His background-politicizing through the medium of the secret police wasn’t very successful. It probably wasn’t clear to Kovrig that it actually wasn’t possible to undertake consensus-building political discussion between the Democratic People’s Party and the Communist Party. In the struggle for the control of ecclesiastical policy, Kovrig’s machinations amounted to being merely a sideshow, though the information provided by him was used by the secret police. In the meantime he caused Mindszenty to be considered as an enemy who could be blackmailed,⁴⁰ while over time he himself, according to reports made on him, “became more and more nervous.”⁴¹ As he wrote in a letter to his mother after he emigrated: he defected because “he started to hate politics.”⁴²

Kovrig continued producing surveillance reports until 1948. A 1950 summary of these lists 24 important reports, only some of which can be found. The earliest report was on the day of his induction, September 9, 1946, and the last one was dated August 7, 1948.⁴³ Kovrig must have seen the discrediting propaganda and campaign against the Catholic leaders and politicians he had reported on. The result was a rapid deterioration of his nervous condition.

Finally at one point in early or mid-1948 he decided to leave the country and in October of the same year he and his wife were successful in escaping. Steve Koczak (an advisor to the Budapest Embassy of the United States) helped them to get out.⁴⁴ Kovrig left a farewell letter to János Tihanyi who (under the cover name of “Mirkó”) was still his liaison officer. In it he apologized for leaving the country. He explained that the

reason for his escape was that he could no longer teach in Eger, and in Hungary there was no professorship where he would be able to teach in Catholic mentality.⁴⁵ He said he had been invited to the United States in 1947, but state security hadn't permitted him to go; on the basis of which he concluded that a legal departure would not be possible.⁴⁶ The fact that he left a farewell letter to his liaison officer shows that Kovrig hadn't yet escaped from his psychological dependence on the secret police.

There is no indication in the files that the secret police were prepared for Kovrig's defection, or that after he left any quick investigations were made. It is possible that Kovrig's role as an agent had become superfluous,⁴⁷ given that the Hungarian Communist Party led by Mátyás Rákosi, had already decided to destroy the Catholic Church. Less than a month after Kovrig left, Cardinal Mindszenty was arrested. Then, after István Barankovics also left the country, the Democratic People's Party disintegrated. Altogether eleven members of the Party's leadership defected.⁴⁸ Koczak helped many of them to leave the country.

The circumstances of Kovrig's escape were only reconstructed in 1950 on the basis of Jenő Kerkai's statements made when he was also put under arrest. According to this, Ágoston Takáts helped with the defection's technical arrangements. Takáts and Kerkai had both worked with the Jesuits and that is how they knew Kovrig. In a confession made to the secret police on February 20, 1949, Takáts stated that in the late summer of 1948 Kovrig told him he had met Koczak to plan the escape. After that Takáts himself spoke to Koczak about Kovrig's planned escape. On a Friday, Takáts accompanied Kovrig and his wife to Hidegkuti Street in Budapest. Before that the Kovrigs had placed their luggage in baggage storage at the city's Keleti Train Station. Takáts gave the baggage storage voucher to Koczak. Next, Kovrig and his wife got into Koczak's car. The car was driven by a US Embassy employee. Koczak took Kovrig and his wife out of the country hidden in the car's trunk.⁴⁹

In this manner Kovrig was successful in leaving the country. For a while he stayed in Italy, from where he wrote letters to his mother who had remained in Budapest. He apologized for leaving her alone in her old age.⁵⁰ Finally he took up residence in the USA, where he became a professor of sociology at the Jesuit University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He probably thought that he had left his mother and his country, along with its secret police behind, but he was wrong about the latter.

The emigration years

Upon learning of Kovrig's activities in America after his emigration, in 1950 state security investigator Lieutenant Sándor Vadócz proposed that he should be re-recruited. Because of Kovrig's close contacts with prominent émigrés including Károly Peyer, Ferenc Nagy, Béla Varga and István Barankovics, the security men thought he would be ideal not only for getting information on the Hungarian emigration, but also on science, economics and politics in America.⁵¹

The first step in trying to re-recruit Kovrig was an evaluation of his old reports, with particular attention to finding information that would could be used to blackmail him. The secret policemen who re-read his reports, however, came to the conclusion that there were few reports whose contents could be construed as being embarrassing to him in the eyes of the American or the Hungarian-American public.⁵² Therefore the ÁVO turned its interest to Kovrig's mother in Budapest, and they made a study of her circumstances. They found that she, now Mrs. Imre Drehr (after her second husband), lived in poverty and was "under the influence of the church." "Before the war she had been amongst the upper 10,000," but by the early 1950s she was in the process of selling her possessions in order to make ends meet. They guessed that, judging by her circumstances, it was probable that through an intermediary she was in touch with her son and that he contributed to her support.⁵³ Next they ordered that she be put under surveillance whenever she left her home. Through such means the ÁVO learned for example that Kovrig's mother, on a certain day went to church, then visited someone in a hospital, then did some shopping. On the pages of the surveillance reports the daily life of the unsuspecting elderly woman roll out before us dramatically. In the reports we can follow the process of the ÁVO fabricating an image of the enemy, since she had been named "an enemy of the people's democracy". Because of her advanced age, she was not considered an "active enemy" and her person was handled as an object and thus she was dehumanized as well.

In the meantime a proposal was made to acquire Kovrig's home address in Milwaukee, which they wanted to get from his mother in a conspiratorial fashion. What this meant was that the communist authorities arranged that her eligibility for an old-age pension be reviewed. Next she was informed that she was not entitled to receive it. Further, she was frequently called into the pensions office, where amongst many other things they asked her what her son's address was. They also tried to inform themselves with regards to the university where Kovrig taught.

Today it is difficult for us to imagine the scope of this “intelligence” operation, how many man-hours were invested, for how long the surveillance went on and how much money was spent on it. Kovrig’s mother didn’t give the Communists her son’s address, though they most likely harassed her for it for years. It is possible that she really didn’t know it, and knew only the address of her brother-in-law in Munich, through whom she corresponded with her son. In any case, for years János Tihanyi, who had been Kovrig’s liaison officer, visited her pretending to be an employee of the Welfare Ministry. She sometimes got heating fuel for free, and after a while they even reinstated her pension, so that she would continue to trust Tihanyi who kept in touch with her. It seemed that when Kovrig’s mother became seriously ill and was hospitalized in March 1952, the ÁVO was given an opportunity to obtain Kovrig’s address. Tihanyi had a letter sent to Kovrig’s address at his place of work, in which a doctor informed him of his mother’s condition and warned him that if it was important that “his mother be in good hands for her remaining days,” so he should go to a meeting at a place in Washington D.C. The letter was signed with the cover name “Mirkó”, from which Kovrig would have known immediately that Tihanyi was behind the whole operation. Kovrig did not answer — at least not directly to Tihanyi, but he wrote a letter to his mother that contained messages to the security people who would be reading what he wrote: in spite of the fact that the authorities in Hungary — thanks to Tihanyi’s intervention — restored her pension, provided her with fuel, and paid for her hospital treatment, he would not write a letter to anyone else but to “dear mother.”⁵⁴

In the end the secret policemen were not able to establish contact with Kovrig through his mother. Therefore on October 31, 1952, two years after they began trying to contact Kovrig, a new proposal was made for accomplishing this aim. The trivial manner in which they solved the “mystery” of his home address is comical: with the help of a Washington resident, they got a copy of the Milwaukee city telephone directory and simply looked up his address and telephone number. Nevertheless, it wasn’t until quite a bit later, in June 1955, that they finally made another move to make contact. They posted a letter to him from New York — inviting him to another meeting.⁵⁵ But Kovrig did not show up for this meeting either, nor did he respond to the letter even though they threatened to cancel his mother’s pension. He had come to the point where he was independent from the pressures of being a link in the Hungarian “tyranny chain.” The price of his freedom however, was that his mother remained at the mercy of Hungary’s state security apparatus.⁵⁶

Kovrig's example shows that escaping from a mentally and physically destructive collaboration with the communist secret police invited great risks for the victims, and that defection brought further burdens to the life of a "dissident from the intelligentsia" from which it was hardly possible to escape.

Kovrig actively participated in the American-Hungarian émigré community's politics. In the letters he sent to his mother, on the other hand, he talked mainly about his work at the university. He probably knew that the security people were reading his letters. In 1954 the Hungarian National Committee, an umbrella organization of the Hungarian expatriate community, published a new version of the 1944 *Magyar Társadalompolitika* [Hungarian Social Policy] re-written in emigration and with a foreword by István Barankovics.⁵⁷ To this day, this work stands alone in Hungarian social science as an important documentary source material for historians and sociologists on Hungarian social policy in the interwar period and the immediate aftermath of World War II. The book was re-published again in Budapest in 2011.⁵⁸

Béla Kovrig died in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1962. His wife was the only member of his family who was able to attend his funeral.

NOTES

¹ In English: Gyula Illyés, A sentence on tyranny. "Where seek tyranny? Think again: / Everyone is a link in the chain, / Of tyranny's stench you are not free: / You yourself are tyranny." Translated by: Vernon Watkins. In *Hundred Hungarian Poems* (Manchester, 1976).

² See Éva Cs. Gyimesi, *Szem a láncban. Bevezetés a szekusdosziék hermeneutikájába* [A link in the chain. Introduction to the hermeneutics of the Romanian Securitate's files] (Kolozsvár [Cluj-Napoca, Romania]: Komp-Press Kiadó, 2009).

³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵ He was a descendant of the Armenian Kovrig family whose members settled in Transylvania during the 17th or 18th centuries. Jenő Kerekes, "Kovrig Béla," in *Az erdélyi magyar gazdasági gondolkodás múltjából* [Transylvanian Hungarian economic thought of the past] Volume II, ed. József Somai (Kolozsvár: Romániai Magyar Közgazdász Társulat, 2004), 263.

⁶ István Borbély, "Kovrig Béla társadalompolitikája. Szociálpolitikai hivatás" [Béla Kovrig's social policy. The welfare mission], in *Félbemaradt reformkor. Miért maradt el az ország keresztény-humanista megújítása?*

[Uncompleted reform period. Why did the country's Christian-humanist renewal fail to occur?], ed. Ferenc Babóthy (Rome, Italy: [n.p.], 1990), 359–367.

⁷ 1928: XL. tc. „az öregség, rokkantság, özvegyesség és árvaság esetére kötelező biztosításról”. [On compulsory insurance for old-age, disability, widows and orphans.] The whole text of the law can be found at: 1000 év törvényei [Laws of 1000 years], www.complex.hu/1000, downloaded on June 12, 2015.

⁸ Péter Hámori, “Kísérlet egy „propagandaminisztérium” létrehozására Magyarországon. A Miniszterelnökség V., Társadalompolitikai Osztályának története 1938–1941” [An attempt at setting up a propaganda ministry in Hungary. History of the Prime Minister Office, V., so-called Social Policy Department, 1938–1941] *Századok*, 1997/2: 356–357.

⁹ 1938: XII. tc. „a gazdasági munkavállalók kötelező öregségi biztosításáról” [On compulsory old-age insurance for agricultural employees] in www.complex.hu/1000, downloaded on June 12, 2012.

¹⁰ Miklós Incze, *Magyar történet- és társadalomtudományi műhelyek a kolozsvári magyar egyetemen (1940–1949)* [Hungarian history and sociology workshops at the Hungarian university in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca (1940–1949)], *Erdélyi Múzeum*, 1997/3–4, offprint.

¹¹ Péter Hámori, “Magyar társadalomszervezési kísérletek Észak-Erdélyben, 1938–1944” [Experiments in Hungarian social organization in Northern Transylvania 1938–1944], *Korall*, 2004/December: 65–97.

¹² Other important works by Béla Kovrig: *Az új Oroszország: 1917–1926* [The New Russia: 1917–1926] (Budapest: Franklin Kiadó, 1926); *Az antiszociális áradattal szemben* [Against the anti-social current] (Budapest: Atheneum, 1930); *A magyar szociálpolitika igaza a liberális és szocialista eszmerendszerek küzdelmében* [The truth of Hungarian welfare policy in the struggle between liberal and socialist systems of thought.] (Budapest: A Munkaügyi Szemle, 1932); *Korfordulón* [At the turning point of an era.] (Budapest: Egyetemi Nyomda, 1940).

¹³ See his text in Miklós Tomka and János Goják, *Az egyház társadalmi tanítása: dokumentumok* [The church's social teachings: documents] (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1993), 57–103.

¹⁴ Péter Hámori, “A katolikus jobboldal eszméi” [Notions of the Catholic Right.] *Valóság*, 1996/2: 100–106; Éva Petrás, “Társadalmi tanítás és szociális kérdés. A Quadragesimo Anno enciklika recepciója a katolikus újságírásban, 1931–1938” [Social teaching and social question. Reception of the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* in Catholic journalism, 1931–1938], in *Szociális kérdések és mozgalmak Magyarországon, 1919–1945* [Social questions and movements in Hungary 1919–1945], ed. Csaba Szilágyi (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó – Barankovics István Alapítvány – Faludi Akadémia, 2008), 113–130.

¹⁵ Jenő Gergely, “A Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt előtörténete” [Pre-history of the Christian Democratic People's Party], *Műhely*, 1984/3: 3–21; and Margit Balogh, “A keresztényszociális mozgalmak az 1930-as években és a kereszténydemokrácia” [The Christian social movements of the 1930s and Chris-

tian democracy], in *Az élő hagyomány. Barankovics István és a magyarországi kereszténydemokrácia öröksége*. [The living tradition. István Barankovics and Hungary's Christian democratic heritage] (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó – Barankovics István Alapítvány, 2007): 87–125.

¹⁶ Lajos Izsák, *Pártok és politikusok Magyarországon 1944–1994*. [Parties and politicians in Hungary] (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2010), 98–105.

¹⁷ See Lajos Izsák, *Polgári pártok és programjaik Magyarországon, 1944–1956* [Bourgeois parties and their programs in Hungary 1944–1956] (Pécs: Baranya Megyei Kvt. – Ferlingpress, 1994), 40–53.

¹⁸ László T. László, *Egyház és állam Magyarországon, 1919–1945* [Church and the state in Hungary] (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 2005), 268–74.

¹⁹ György Gyarmati and Tibor Valuch, *Hungary under Soviet Domination 1944–1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, Atlantic Research and Publications Inc., 2009), 56–63; and Mária Palasik, *Chess Game for Democracy: Hungary between East and West 1944–1947* (Montreal, Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill–Queen's University Press, 2011), 88–93.

²⁰ Géza Vörös, „A palotában lévő kapcsolatunk jelentette...” Mindszenty József megfigyelése, 1945–1948 [“Our contact in the palace reported...” József Mindszenty's surveillance] *Betekintő*, 2011/3. <http://www.betekinto.hu/node/176>. Downloaded on June 12, 2014.

²¹ Mátyás Rákosi, *Válogatott beszédek és cikkek* [Selected speeches and articles] (Budapest: Szikra, 1951), 180. Cited by Vörös, “A palotában.”

²² Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára [the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security] (hereafter ÁBTL), 3.2.4. K-384-1. 19.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 14–16.

²⁶ The following comment was added to the bibliography prepared by the State Security: “Make notes on the above mentioned books, write out certain important passages word for word, produce general descriptions of his books.” ÁBTL 3.2.4. K-384-1. 21.

²⁷ Béla Kovrig, *Az új Oroszország, 1917–1926* [The new Russia] (Budapest: Franklin, 1926).

²⁸ Béla Kovrig, *Korfordulón* [At the turning point of an era] (Budapest: Egyetemi Nyomda, 1940), 5–55.

²⁹ ÁBTL 3.2.4. K-384-1. 54.

³⁰ Gábor Tabajdi and Krisztián Ungváry, *The Suppressed Past: The Dictatorship and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Activities of the Secret Service in Hungary, 1956-1990* (Budapest: Corvina–1956-os Intézet, 2008), 194.

³¹ With his description of Cardinal Mindszenty and his analyses of ecclesiastical policy and environment, Kovrig over-fulfilled the expectations of

the secret police. From his lines one can read political tactic, pressure to perform under intimidation, as well as a personal aversion to the Cardinal.

³² ÁBTL 3.2.4. K-384-1. 20.

³³ *Ibid.*, 55–56.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 60–92.

³⁵ Tabajdi and Ungváry, *The Suppressed Past*, 196.

³⁶ Mária Palasik, “Az értelmiség az értelmiségről – a politikai rendőrség iratai alapján” [The intelligentsia on the intelligentsia — on the basis of secret police writings] *Történelmi Szemle*, 2009/4: 585–602.

³⁷ Dorothee Wierling, “A Stasi az emlékezetben” [Remembering the Stasi.] *Betekintő*, 2010/4, <http://www.betekinto.hu/node/22>, downloaded on June 12, 2014.

³⁸ ÁBTL 3.2.4. K-387-2. 87.

³⁹ Margit Balogh, *Mindszenty József, 1892-1975* [József Mindszenty, 1892-1975], vol. I (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2015), 544-57.

⁴⁰ When they tried to renew contact with him in the United States, they tried to use this to blackmail him. ÁBTL 3.2.4. K-384-1. 58.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁵ The Catholic School of Law in Eger was taken over by the state in 1948, and then closed in 1949.

⁴⁶ ÁBTL 3.2.4. K-384-1. 55.

⁴⁷ Tabajdi and Ungváry, *The Suppressed Past*, 197.

⁴⁸ Zoltán Frenyó, ÁVH-jelentések a Demokrata Néppárttól [State Security reports on the Democratic People’s Party] *Magyar Szemle*, XX/9–10.

⁴⁹ ÁBTL 3.2.4. K-384-1. 56–57. Koczak had also retrieved the Kovrigs’ luggage from the baggage storage room at Keleti Train Station and brought it out with them.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 57 and 108.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 58–59.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 63.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 66–67.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁵⁶ Tabajdi and Ungváry, *The Suppressed Past*, 200.

⁵⁷ Béla Kovrig, *Magyar társadalompolitika* [Hungarian Social Policy] (New York: Magyar Nemzeti Bizottmány, 1954).

⁵⁸ Béla Kovrig, *Magyar társadalompolitika* [Hungarian Social Policy] Edited with notes and a postscript by Éva Petrás (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó – Barankovics István Alapítvány, 2011).

Nicholas L. Deak, the Hungarian “James Bond of the world of money”

Susan Glanz

An article on Nicholas Deak published in the June 12, 1964 issue of *Time* magazine is the source of this sobriquet. What was/is the popular view of the characteristics of James Bond? According to *Vanity Fair* the goal of Bond’s creator was “to show audiences how stylish and thrilling life could be.”¹ Yes, there are similarities between James Bond and Nicholas Deak, e.g. the languages spoken: English, French, and German, and the stylish life, e.g. expensive ski vacations, but the “perils” faced by Deak were not created by guns, but by the financial markets and then later by the US government. It is worth noting that Deak’s resume shows several similarities to that of Ian Fleming’s, the creator of Bond: they were about the same age, both were born in the early 1900s, had worked for intelligence services, had one son born to each of them in their 40s, and both were very successful in their careers.²

A brief biography of Nicholas Louis Deak

Most of the information on Nicholas Deak’s life and his US military carrier comes from files kept on him by the Office of Strategic Services or OSS. The files had been declassified and were sent to me when I requested them through the Freedom of Information Act. Nicholas Louis Deak was born [to Louis Deak and Malvin (Billitz)] on October 8, 1905 in Hátszeg (today’s Hateg, Romania), Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. He earned his doctorate in economics in 1929 from the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland.³ In his completed Personnel Placement Questionnaire filed with the War Department in 1943 he claimed to have served in the Romanian Air Force as a pilot in 1933 and 1936. On the same form he lists his college studies to have been completed in Vienna, Austria and Nancy, France, before earning his Ph.D. Deak also lists his employment history to

include running the foreign exchange and bank security department of the Bucharest branch of the British-Hungarian Bank (1934-1938) (*Angol Magyar Bank Részvénytársaság*) and being an employee of the Romanian Government at the League of Nations in Geneva (1937- October 1939) assigned to writing economic analysis. Deak gave the reason for leaving the League as the breakout of the war. Parallel to his assignment at the League, Deak taught, as an adjunct, two classes in economics, and international affairs at the Universal Esperanto Association.

He entered the USA on a Romanian quota in 1939, arriving in New York on October 15, 1939, sailing from Genoa on passenger ship *Rex*. Deak married Liselotte Maria Potter on Dec. 21, 1939 (born on Dec 13, 1919). In the 1940 census Deak and his wife appeared twice. Once living in Larchmont, in the household of John Potter who declared his birthplace as Austria, and his residence on April 1, 1935 to have been in Romania and a then current occupation as importer, owning his own business. Deak is listed as a son-in-law with 2 years of college education and occupation of foreign exchange (dealer). Deak and his wife were also listed as renting an apartment on Riverside Drive, in Manhattan, NY where he gave his occupation as a banker and she as a student. In this filing he reported 4-years of college education and an income for 1939 of \$2,300. Although all later newspaper reports list Deak entering the USA in 1939, according to the manifest of the ship *President Harding*, Deak entered (visited?) the USA on March 27, 1937. His occupation then was recorded as lawyer and that he spoke English, Romanian, French and German.

Deak's first employment in the USA was in the field of education. He was a part-time teacher ("visiting lecturer") at the Perkiomen School, a traditional college preparatory school in Pennsburg, PA between 1940-1942, where his annual pay was \$3,000. (\$50,578.16 in 2014 dollars — not bad!) In 1941, Deak was also a faculty member at City College, NY, where he earned \$3.25/hour. We know this from three sources, the membership lists of the AAUP (American Association of University Professors),⁴ the AEA (American Economic Association)⁵ and his military personnel form. In September 1941, Deak became VP and financial advisor in a part-time basis, to Korody and Co., Inc. (44 Beaver Street) for an annual salary of \$6,000 (\$96,211.81 in 2014 dollars).

In October 1942 he registered for the draft and was originally classified as 3A (deferred service; men with dependents, not engaged in work essential to national defense). In December, as an officer candidate, he started training at the OSS Paratrooper School at Fort Benning, Ga.

(Deak was naturalized on April 10, 1943 and his wife became a naturalized citizen on May 11, 1944.)

In September 1943 he was promoted to the rank of First Lieutenant and was assigned to the Middle East Theater. The original "assignment" he was given on September 27, 1943, was that from Cairo, he "will enter Romania, promote and organize partisan groups... and supply necessary weapons for resistance." This did not happen. Deak's service was not without blemish. His *Theater Service Record* completed on November 25, 1944 states that his "use in the OSS" should be terminated because of his unsatisfactory rating with working with others. His leadership qualities were also only rated "satisfactory." The report also mentions, in one sentence, that Deak did some intelligence work for Special Operations in Syria and Palestine, but did not do Special Operations work in the Middle East. At the end of December 1944, Deak was assigned to the Research and Analysis Outpost of the Chinese Burma India (CBI) Branch. The memo of this transfer states "it is our opinion that his present assignment will probably utilize his abilities and that one major criticism of his behavior in his previous assignment is unlikely to become apparent in his assignment with this Branch." Deak's name was first mentioned in the American newspapers in connection to this posting to the Chinese Burma India Theater. He was assigned to safeguarding American holdings in Singapore. He was also credited with the discovery of insurance industry files.⁶

William J. Casey, who worked for the OSS and then was the head of the SEC (1971-1973), then was under-secretary of economic affairs (1973-74), then was the chairman of the Export-Import Bank (1974-76) - in his introduction of Deak in 1975, to The Newcomen Society sponsored lecture, recounts the story that Deak "was in charge of an OSS unit... that accepted the sword of surrender of the Commanding General of the Japanese forces in Burma."⁷ (Sep.13, 1945 (?))

The postwar successor to the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) was the S.S.U. (Strategic Services Unit, established on October 1, 1945). In November 1945, the China branch established itself at General Wedemeyer's China Theatre headquarters in Shanghai.⁸ Deak, now ranked as captain, was assigned to this theater March 1946.

Nicholas Deak returned to the USA in May 1946 and was "separated" on August 17, 1946 with rank of captain.⁹ His son, Robert Leslie, was born on January 22, 1951. In early December 1984 several of the Deak's firms filed for protection from creditors under Chapter 11 of the US bankruptcy laws.

Nicholas Deak was murdered on 18 November 1985 by a 44 year-old homeless woman, Lois Lang.¹⁰ Conspiracy theories abound on the internet that the murder was either organized by the CIA, because Lois Lang was a subject of various brain experiments, or that it was directly organized by the CIA because Deak did not go along with his CIA handlers. Although no proof exists that the CIA was directly implicated in his murder, Deak, even in his life time, was accused of and a proven participant to several shady CIA actions.

The firm... building an empire

Deak & Co., Inc. was incorporated on September 26, 1946 as an export-import firm. The firm took over Korody and Co. Inc., Deak's employer before his enlistment.

Deak & Company first made news in 1947 when it announced that the Hungarian Weiss Manfred Steel and Metal Works wanted to enter the US markets through them.¹¹ The following year seemed to be a successful year for Deak's firm; Hungarian freight car sales to Germany were negotiated through the firm¹², as were the trade agreements with Argentina for \$300,000 worth of goods.¹³ The firm acted as middleman in aiding American firms to attend the Budapest Industrial Fair in 1948.¹⁴ In 1949 an optimistic Deak represented Hungarian interests to sell low quality manganese in the US, and stated that his firm represented Hungarian interests in the Americas and the Far East.¹⁵

The concentration of political and economic power in the hands of the Communist Party in Hungary, and the falling iron curtain, forced Deak's firm to look for additional avenues to make money. In representing Hungarian interests Deak realized that businesses were hindered by foreign exchange restrictions, had difficulties in sending remittances between countries and felt that he had "comparative advantage" with his knowledge of languages and the financial landscape in Europe. Currency exchange business seemed to be a logical next step. In 1949 Deak was interviewed on the market rate of the new Eastern European currencies which were handled in the US by foreign exchange firms (like his) and gave the example that the 10Forint which was officially worth \$0.87 was sold for \$0.36.¹⁶ Deak did not specialize in Eastern European currencies, his firm bought and sold all currencies; for example, from 1950 the *Times of India* reported the price of the rupee in New York every week by quoting Deak & Co.¹⁷

The currency exchange business was not developed to help the tourists travelling from one country to another, but to help businesses get around strict currency controls imposed by virtually every country after World War II. In each country capital controls were sanctioned to prevent currency crises, but the growing volume of trade made the official system untenable and avenues had to be found for financing and paying for trade and for surplus capital to earn higher interest rates.

The currency exchange businesses facilitated the flow of 'hot money' around the world. 'Hot money' are funds that are held in one currency but are liable to switch to another currency quickly in search of the highest available returns. It is often used to describe the money invested in currency markets by speculators.¹⁸

Economists often talk of two kinds of hot money, "speculative capital movements" meaning movement due to anticipated changes in exchange rates; while "flight movements" are movements of funds because of anticipated war, communist insurrection, new higher taxes, capital levies, and/or imposition of exchange restrictions, etc.¹⁹ The hot moneys in this period represented capital flight.

Deak's business must have been doing well, as the company opened its first office outside NY in Washington DC in 1950 which was reported by the Washington Post on October 14, 1950 and a new, second office was opened in NYC, the following year, as reported by the New York Tribune on June 30, 1951. The January 2, 1954 issue of *The New York Tribune/Herald* announced the sale of Perera Co. to Deak & Co. Inc.²⁰ Over the following years this new firm opened offices at airports all over the world. Some examples: New York (Idlewild), Miami, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Hawaii, Toronto, San Juan, PR, Toronto, London, Macao, and Hong Kong. In an article by Bernard Kalb in 1955, Deak is touting the safety and the great rates offered by his firm for travelers needing foreign currencies.²¹ A natural outgrowth of this business was the sale of foreign currency denominated travelers' checks.

As the business expanded the Deak offices made the headlines a few times because of burglaries in their offices in 1957 and 1958.²² While the thieves took off with relatively small sums, more significant events in the company's history were ignored by the American press.

The foreign exchange units were operated like banks, but were non-banks.²³ They accepted deposits from foreigners, paid interest and transferred funds between various points in the world. But as the American definition of a bank required, they did not make loans, and they accepted money only from foreigners. To attract more funds, to provide "full-

service” to his customers, Deak entered the banking business. In the USA he purchased a small national bank, First National Bank of Fleischmanns²⁴ in 1957, and founded the Foreign Commerce Bank in Zurich, Switzerland in 1958.²⁵ This small American bank, renamed Deak National Bank, attracted a “lot of depositors from Latin America because of the devaluation of their currencies”²⁶ said the head of the international division in an interview. Deak claimed that this Swiss bank was established because the commissions paid to handle their business was more than it cost to do it themselves.²⁷

To add to his empire, Deak purchased another European bank, in 1966. This was an old Viennese bank, Bankhaus Mayer-Loos and this bank’s name was changed to Bankhaus Deak.²⁸ In an interview given to the *New York Times*, Deak explained the need for this new bank: were the changing Swiss bank laws due to central banks and government pressures, “foreign tax collectors and anti crime forces”... making “Austrian banks... even more effective in protecting foreign money from prying eyes than those of Switzerland.”²⁹ In this interview Deak enumerated how Austrian laws encouraged the flow of funds into the country as they allowed interest payments on accounts larger than \$10,000, which the Swiss did not; did not force account holders to convert funds into the local currency, again which is something the Swiss often did; the negative interest rates that the Swiss charged on large deposits and taxed interest earned on large savings accounts were also avoided by depositors in Austrian banks.

Another benefit of this new Austrian bank, and Deak’s other foreign subsidiaries, was that they could participate in underwriting as shown in 1972 and 1974 tombstone ads,³⁰ as in America the laws separating investment and commercial banking were still on the books. In 1972 Bankhaus Deak who is one of the underwriters for Lafayette Academy’s stock offering; in 1974 it was Deak and Co (Ontario) helped bring the Hungarian National Bank’s euro-currency borrowing to the market.

To attract business Deak advertised in trade publications. For example, an ad in the American Bar Association’s Journal in June 1963 read “FOREIGN FUNDS, BLOCKED ACCOUNTS, Foreign Money Transfers, Financing of International Transactions. Deak & Co., Inc., 26 Broadway, New York 4.” This ad appeared monthly in the journal.

Deak did not hide his methods of money transfer. In an interview published in the March 3, 1966 issue of the Wall Street Journal, Deak was quite open about the way he transferred funds between countries. Two examples were cited in the article, one method was to accept payment in local currency into Deak’s account in the country with blocked funds, then

finding a foreign partner who needs the local currency and can pay in USD to Deak. Another method used was buying and selling airline tickets. The airline tickets were purchased in countries with nonconvertible funds, then smuggled out of the country and then sold to individuals or cashed in at airline offices outside the purchase country. Deak is quoted in the article that "most of the rubles he was selling went to Latin American diplomats, who smuggled them into Moscow and used them for private purchases."

But by the end of the 1960s the world was changing, more and more players entered and competed for funds. As a 1971 Federal Reserve Bank publication explained:

In the 1960s, European and Japanese exports became more competitive with US exports. The US share of world output decreased and so did the need for dollars, making converting those dollars to gold more desirable. The deteriorating US balance of payments, combined with military spending and foreign aid, resulted in a large supply of dollars around the world. Meanwhile, the gold supply had increased only marginally. Eventually, there were more foreign-held dollars than the United States had gold. The country was vulnerable to a run on gold and there was a loss of confidence in the US government's ability to meet its obligations, thereby threatening both the dollar's position as reserve currency and the overall Bretton Woods system. With inflation on the rise and a gold run looming, Nixon's administration coordinated a plan for bold action.³¹

President Richard Nixon ended international convertibility of the US dollar to gold on August 15, 1971. The Smithsonian Agreement of 1971 allowed the dollar to be devalued and the boundaries in which exchange rates could fluctuate increased to 2-¼ percent. In 1973 under the so-called Smithsonian Agreement II, the exchange rate boundaries were eliminated altogether. This change effectively allowed exchange rates of major currencies to float freely. To allow businesses and individuals to participate in this new world of freely floating currencies, the Chicago Mercantile Exchange opened a futures trading floor for currencies in 1972.³²

Deak reacted to the regulatory changes in two ways, on one-hand he continued to advocate for hard currency, on the other, he introduced new financial certificates backed by precious metals. This was 'offered' to individuals who do not want to deal with the "cost of storage, assay, fabrication, shipping, security and sales taxes."³³

In 1976 in a speech given to the Empire Club of Canada, Deak summarized his views, by saying that the answer to the double deficit and the loss of value of the dollar “smart people... have already put their money into better currencies, or in gold or silver or some other form of investment.”³⁴ To emphasize his point on the loss of value of the US\$, in the July 6, 1973 issue of the *Los Angeles Times*, Deak was quoted as saying “that his gardener has asked to be paid in Italian lira because ‘the dollar is bound to sunk lower.’”

Of course, his firm has acted previously, for example, to aid flight capital, the Deak National Bank and the Bankhaus Deak offered checking accounts denominated in gold in the late 1960s. (For US citizens the private ownership of gold certificates was legalized in 1964. They could be openly owned but were not redeemable in gold. The limitation on gold ownership in the U.S. was repealed by President Gerald Ford in December 31, 1974.) After Americans were legally allowed to own gold bullion, the firm advertised its ability to buy and sell both bullion and coins. While owning gold and silver coins exempted the owner from sales taxes, the owners of gold deposit certificates do not have to report their holdings to the IRS.³⁵

Americans could participate in the gold market in several ways, by buying bullion, gold coins, or jewelry. The July 22, 1979 issue of the *New York Times* explained that investors could also participate in the gold market by using the options or futures markets or by buying gold certificates. Gold certificates represented gold deposits in the issuers’ banks (Deak was one of the issuers). Gold bank accounts were regular checking or savings accounts based on the value of the underlying gold value the bank purchases or sells for the account holder. Deak National Bank was one of the banks offering this type of account. On January 21, 1982 Amex started trading in gold coins “many of its members in the securities business have customers who want to buy coins now and then as part of their investment portfolios.”³⁶

The closing of the gold window in 1971 and the opportunity for Americans to own gold opened a new money making avenue for Deak. He was favored speaker at several seminars on gold, for example in February 1974 (advertised in *Barron’s*), several seminars and investor workshops advertised in the *Wall Street Journal*. In 1979 both *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* ran articles about the booming business of investment seminars. On discussing the goal of the seminars, Deak, said “I prefer to be a gold bug rather than a paper worm.”³⁷

Another avenue for gold ownership was by buying gold coins, especially Krugerrands initially. The Krugerrand is a South African gold coin, first minted in 1967 to help market South African gold and produced by the South African Mint.³⁸ It was legal tender in South Africa. On January 1, 1975 Americans could again legally own bullion and parallel to the changing US laws, the South Africa's Chamber of Mines began an advertising campaign to convince Americans of this "unique" hedge against "currency fluctuations and inflation."³⁹ Deak was one of the first companies to advertise the availability of this new "product." As the public sentiment against the apartheid regime increased, protests and rallies were held all over the country. In 1985 there were several protests in front of Deak's various offices against the sales of Krugerrands.⁴⁰ On August 8, 1985 Deak & Co suspended the sale of Krugerrands "due to public pressure."⁴¹ (President Reagan banned the importation of Krugerrands after October 11, 1985.⁴²) Of course, after the introduction of gold coins by other nations, like the Canadian Maple Leaf, in 1979, and the US Gold Medallions in 1982, Deak added them to his firm's portfolio.⁴³

While on one-hand the late 1960s not only meant competition for funds for the banks, but because of the double "menace" of inflation and increasing deficit, on the other, foreign banking institutions came under scrutiny. The one day hearing on December 9, 1968 held by the House Committee on Banking and Currency defined its goal as a "number of court cases, newspaper stories, and other reports of proceedings against individuals, involving the illicit manipulation of huge sums of money. We are especially concerned about the number of instances where the use of foreign bank accounts in countries with strong bank secrecy laws constitute an important phase of the illicit operation."⁴⁴

Based on the hearings, Wright Patman, the committee's chair, introduced the "Banks Records and Foreign Transactions Act," popularly known as the Bank Secrecy Act, which was passed in 1970. The focus of the act was, on one hand to regulate the record keeping of domestic banks and financial institutions, and on the other, the use of Americans of secret foreign bank accounts outside US jurisdiction.⁴⁵ The Act required that cash movements of \$10,000 or more be reported. This Act, and its amended versions, together with the Congressional hearing leading to the passage of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act will be the downfall of Deak & Co.

The first scandal to involve the firm is yet to be reported in the press, it will be in the mid 1970s (the Lockheed scandal), the coverage of the firm is still positive; e.g. the formation of the new Deak Investment Corporation, a real estate company, which was founded in 1972, with a

goal of buying and developing properties in California, New York State and Hawaii.

With the end of the direct U.S. military involvement in Vietnam in 1973 and the capture of Saigon by the North Vietnamese Army in 1975, Vietnamese refugees were in the news. Wealthy refugees brought out their life savings in gold. The refugees were housed in camps in Guam and on several air force bases in the USA. The *Christian Science Monitor* reported that “air force officers... expressed concern that they might run some risks on the street of American cities. The officers advised the Vietnamese to convert their gold into dollars...”⁴⁶ One of the firms participating in this gold buying program is Deak & Co. In the same article Deak was reported to have admitted that on the first day in Guam the company purchased \$500,000 worth of gold. Two months later, in July, the *New York Times* reported that business was still brisk.⁴⁷

A sign of respect and success in the banking world that in 1974 Deak is one of the invited guests at the Ford White House for the dinner in honor of Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky.⁴⁸ In 1975 Deak was one of the candidates for the regional Federal Reserve Bank’s Class A directors’ spots.⁴⁹ He lost the election.

Another development as a result of the changing US bank laws were the rapid rise in offshore financial centers (OFC). These “are broadly defined as markets in which financial operators are permitted to raise funds from nonresidents and invest or lend the money to other nonresidents free from most regulations and taxes. Most commonly, the designation “offshore” financial market is used to describe the wholesale international financial market, previously known as the Eurodollar market.”⁵⁰ For North American banks, doing business in London was expensive and the Caribbean OFCs offered a cheaper and equally attractive regulatory environment free of exchange controls, reserve requirements, and interest rate ceilings, and in the same time zone as New York. In a letter to the editor to *The New York Times*, on Apr 11, 1979, Deak argued that New York City should create a “bankers’ trade zone” as this would achieve several goals. It would make New York a more important banking center than London, and it would “create additional employment” in New York, as facilities maintenance and records for transactions would be completed here. Deak also argued that this new zone would “help our balance of payments” and would also allow the Federal Reserve Bank to supervise and regulate American banks. As he wrote “it is not dignified for respectable American banks to set up quasi-banking operations on small islands,... in order to circumvent the Federal Reserve Q regulations and

reserve requirements." This letter was signed by Deak, as an adjunct professor of international banking at NYU's Law School. In 1981 the Federal Reserve approved the creation of International Banking Facilities (IBF) on American soil, which allowed American banks to offer services to foreign residents and institutions free of some Federal Reserve requirements and some state and local income taxes.

In 1980 Nicholas Deak and Yehudi Menuhin were the George Washington Awards winners given by the American Hungarian Foundation.⁵¹ Forbes magazine started publishing the wealthiest 400 list in 1982. In 1983 and 1984 Nicholas Deak made this Forbes list, with a personal wealth of \$400 million.^{52, 53}

The scandals that brought down the firm

In August 1975 *Time* magazine reported that Lockheed Corporation "admitted under prodding by the Securities and Exchange Commission that it has slipped at least \$22 million under the table to foreign government officials and political organizations." The Deak firm was investigated for facilitating this bribery, which became known as the Lockheed Bribery Scandal.⁵⁴ A detailed investigating report tying Deak to Lockheed was published by Tad Szulc in the April 10, 1976 issue of the *New Republic*. In the Interim Report to the President and the Attorney General, subtitled *The Cash Connection: Organized Crime, Financial Institutions and Money Laundering* (1984) summarized the Lockheed case as follows: Lockheed was accused of bribing Japanese officials. On page 12 of this Interim Report the following summary is found: "Lockheed Aircraft's illegal payments totaling \$25.5 million between 1969 and 1975 were disguised through false accounting entries and the utilization of cash and "bearer" drafts payable directly to the foreign officials. Deak-Perera Company in Los Angeles facilitated the Japanese bribes by wiring \$8.3 million to its Hong Kong office, where the US dollars were changed to Japanese yen and presented to Deak personnel for delivery in Japan." In the US press more salacious details were reported, namely that in "Hong Kong, where a Spanish-born priest representing Lockheed took the cash and carried it to Japan in a flight bag or in cardboard boxes labeled "oranges."⁵⁵ In Japan, the scandal resulted in the criminal conviction of a former Prime Minister, Kakuei Tanaka. Leslie Deak, Nicholas Deak's son, as the company's VP, reacted to the scandal by saying "Lockheed Corporation came in and asked us to make a payment ... We made a payment. The fact that the money was used later for bribes is Lockheed's shame, not ours."⁵⁶ Deak's firm was not

fined or punished in this case, as the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act will only be passed in December, 1977, but the damage to the firm was devastating.⁵⁷ “In 1995 Lockheed Corp. agreed to pay a record \$24.8 million in penalties and pleaded guilty to violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act — a federal law that stemmed from a Lockheed overseas bribery scandal in the 1970s.” *Los Angeles Times*, January 28, 1995. In 1976 the IRS began probing the Deak’s San Francisco office for “possibly illegal currency dealings....The investigating was begun here when currency totaling \$1,233,988 was found in envelopes labelled ‘documents’”.⁵⁸ In 1977 the San Francisco Office manager and the Deak firm was indicted by the Grand Jury for transferring \$10.9 million from the Philippines to the USA.⁵⁹ The company was found guilty and was fined a total of \$20,000.⁶⁰

In a frank interview, following the reports on the IRS investigation, with the *Washington Post*, Deak detailed how exchange controls were broken by his firms (and others). Controls are broken three ways, Deak was quoted as saying. The three methods were: “the most obvious method is to try to smuggle cash out of the country either on your person, through the mail or by courier. Another method would be to locate a broker who would exchange dollars for local currency and profit either by discounting the local currency or by marking up the cost of the dollar. The individual seeking the dollars would be responsible for smuggling the cash out of the country. The last method is that commonly used by Deak. An individual would inform Deak, possibly by mail, that he has a certain amount of local currency that he wants to exchange for dollars and that he also wants Deak to help him remove the dollars from his country — in violation of controls. Deak then will quote a rate of exchange and instruct the individual whom to contact in his country. The contact, or broker — in effect a Deak agent — makes money by discounting or marking up the rates, and so does Deak.”⁶¹

Luckily for Deak & Co. the 1977 Koreagate faded fast from the headlines. “In 1977, Mr. Park was charged with 36 counts of conspiracy, bribery, mail fraud, failure to register as a foreign agent and making illegal political contributions. A long investigation found that he had concocted a scheme, with the help of high-ranking Korean Central Intelligence Agency officials, to collect inflated commissions from sales of American-grown rice to South Korea, and to use some of the money to buy support for South Korea in Congress. The charges were later dropped, after Mr. Park agreed to testify at Congressional hearings and in front of federal grand juries. His testimony led to ethics proceedings and criminal charges

against several members of Congress."⁶²The Nov. 2 1978 issue of the *Wall Street Journal* reported that an American company paid \$200,000 to a Korean official through Deak & Co., Hawaii.

The most damaging charges against the firm were the money laundering accusations. In 1982 nine firms, including Deak-Perera were accused of laundering more than \$100 million in drug sales. The lead "launderer", Eduardo Orozco, (and six other Colombians living in NY and one woman living in Columbia were named in the indictment) was arrested in November 1982. Orozco was accused of running two money laundering schemes, one for Colombian coffee merchants to help them avoid paying taxes, and one for washing cocaine money. His cover was that he was a New York commodities trader. He was charged and convicted running the largest money laundering operation to that date.⁶³

The Presidential Commission found that "more than two-thirds of the money moved by Orozco — approximately \$97 million — went through his accounts with Deak-Perera... In fewer than sixteen months, this account received 232 cash deposits totaling almost \$97 million. These deposits were carried in cardboard boxes to Deak-Perera New York City branch." Orozco was sentenced to eight years and was fined \$1 million on June 30, 1983. (President's Commission, p.36) Although Deak refused to testify before the Presidential Commission, which had no subpoena power, on money laundering, as "he had given all the information [the investigators] had asked for."⁶⁴ In 1986 when the company was coming out of Chapter 11 bankruptcy, Arkadi Kuhlman the president and CEO of the "new" Deak International, said the money laundering charges "were gross distortions."⁶⁵

When the newspapers began reporting on the findings of the President's Commission Deak-Perera was tied to another money laundering case, that of Isaac Kattan. The report said that an IRS audit discovered several irregularities regarding Kattan's account, which were held in the name of Jose Vega. (President's Commission, 42). Deak's attitude towards money laundering was best summarized by him "You don't refuse a customer just because his money isn't clean."⁶⁶

On December 7, 1984 Deak & Co, filed for bankruptcy protection "citing severe liquidity problems." (The holding company's assets were \$62.2 million, while its liabilities were \$95 million.) The firm's securities trading (Deak-Perera Securities Inc.) and futures trading units (Deak-Perera Futures), and the Deak National Bank were not included in the bankruptcy filing. The bankruptcy-court petition also didn't include Deak-Perera U.S., the firm's non-bank currency and metals trading unit. The

connections between the parent and the subsidiaries were murky, wrote *BusinessWeek* in 1984.⁶⁷ In a 2012 interview reexamining the Deak murder, published by *Salon.com*, on the company organization the then chairman said “the company was compartmentalized in a way that only the CEO fully understood.”⁶⁸ The firm explained the need for bankruptcy protections: “Mr Deak said many of the clients of the two Deak subsidiaries covered in the court filing withdrew their money after a U.S. presidential commission claimed that a subsidiary was used for money laundering by South American drug dealers.” He further charged that “the firm’s competitors used news articles about the commission report to panic our clients, causing a run.”⁶⁹

Even after the firm filed for bankruptcy protection, the firm made negative news, Deak & Co. Macao Ltd and the company’s Hong Kong subsidiaries were “under fire” in late 1984.⁷⁰ The Macao operations were closed, the Hong Kong government revoked the license of Deak-Perera Finance and the court ordered the liquidation of Deak-Perera Far East and the police issued a warrant for Nicholas Deak’s arrest.⁷¹

Nicholas Deak did not see his firm re-emergence from bankruptcy. He was murdered on Monday, 18 November 1985 by a 44 year-old homeless woman, Lois Lang. The AP wire reported that the murderer was “claiming some financial injustice was done to her in the past by this company.”⁷² The *London Times* reported that Lois Lang supposedly “claimed she was a part owner of the company and was owed money.”⁷³

What happened to the best known entities in the Deak empire?

On May 6, 1986 the Deak companies emerged from bankruptcy. The *Washington Post* reported that “creditors will receive 48 cents for every dollar owed to them. Deak-Perera U.S. which was not involved in the bankruptcy proceedings will be called Deak International and will become the parent company. The former holding company, Deak & Co., becomes a subsidiary.... former subsidiaries Deak-Perera Wall Street Inc. and Deak-Perera International Banking Corp., both of which were part of the Chapter 11 proceedings, become subsidiaries of Deak International.”⁷⁴

Deak National Bank changed its name to American National Bank on June 17, 1985. In spite of the name change, the mostly South American depositors withdrew their money, the bank failed and closed its doors on January 24, 1992. Foreign Commerce Bank, Zurich was sold in 1985 to a Singapore investment group.⁷⁵ Bankhaus Deak was purchased by Foreign Commerce Bank in 1983. In 1988 Royal Trust Bank of Canada took over

the bank and then it was sold to the Anglo Irish Bank in 1995. In 1998 the bank was again sold to the Austrian subsidiary of Credit Lyonnais Bank. In September 2008 Valartis Group purchased the bank; the new company is called Valartis Bank.

110-branch North American Deak foreign exchange, travelers check and precious metals retail network merged with Thomas Cook Currency Services, Inc. in 1990,⁷⁶ and parts of this new firm were taken over by Travelex Currency Services in 2001.⁷⁷ This is still an active company today.

Deak International Inc. started its new life with acquisitions. In 1987 it purchased far-east gold-refining subsidiary and precious metals operations and the metal dealing operations of Johnson Matthey Commodities Inc. in London and New York to be able to produce bullion and precious metal products under its own hallmark and to have 24-hour trading capability in the world's three major metals and currency trading markets.⁷⁸ After several bad decisions, the company merged out in 1994. Barclays Bank PLC acquired the precious-metals and copper trading operations of Deak International Trading in 1991.⁷⁹

Conclusions

In the already mentioned 1964 Time article, Deak was compared to James Bond because of his ties to the secret service. But, maybe, there are other comparisons that should be made to a James Bond story, esp. to his 1964 nemesis, Goldfinger. In this movie James Bond must outsmart and outgun the Goldfinger, a bullion dealer and gold smuggler, who plans to raid Fort Knox and irradiate the American gold supply. Goldfinger was supposedly named after "the architect Ernő Goldfinger, the husband of a cousin of Ian Fleming's golfing partner,"⁸⁰ a Hungarian; James Bond was assigned to fight to keep gold pure and the existing trading system safe.

In the movie, Colonel Smithers of the Bank of England explains the gold market to Bond:

Supposing you have a bar of gold in your pocket about the size of a couple of packets of Players. Weight about five and a quarter pounds. Never mind for the moment where you got it from – stole it or inherited or something. Now, the law says you have to sell that to the Bank of England at the controlled price of twelve pounds per ounce. That would make it worth around a thousand pounds. But you are greedy. You've got a friend going to India. Your friend flies to Bombay and goes to the first bullion dealer in the bazaar. He will

be given about one thousand seven hundred pounds and you're a richer man than you might have been.

A more detailed explanation of the method used is given in the book.⁸¹

Goldfinger, in the movie, is more like Deak than Bond, and not only because they are both eastern Europeans. (In the movie Goldfinger is Latvian.) Goldfinger arrived in England in 1937; Deak arrived in the USA in 1939. Goldfinger used the system by getting the necessary licenses to do his business and by employing middlemen, so did Deak. Deak and Goldfinger exploit the existing system of currency controls by moving gold and currencies around the world, and both believed currency control systems should be abolished.

Had Goldfinger achieved the destruction of Fort Knox, the fixed exchange rate system would have had to be reevaluated, as the dollar price of gold would have had to be raised. When the dollar gold fixed exchange rate was abandoned by Richard Nixon this is exactly what happened. In the movie, Goldfinger was killed, and so was Deak.

Nicholas Deak was a believer in hard money, money backed by precious metal. As the banking regulations changed Deak's business model also changed; the firm expanded from being a money changer to owning full-service banks in New York and in Europe. The company can be credited with several financial innovations, like free travelers checks and the creation of gold certificates. Deak also minted gold and silver ingots taking advantage of his "name" was an assurance that these ingots did not have to be assayed. The complicated web of interconnected companies was brought down by changing US and foreign laws and Deak's arrogance.

An interesting side-note to the Deak saga

On googling Nicholas Deak on the internet, a gold coin with Deak's likeness pops up. What is its history? Deak & Co. did issue gold and silver ingots; but it did not produce this gold coin, called 'Deak Fivepiece'. This coin was issued by the Gold Standard Corporation, which was founded in 1976 by Conrad J. Braun in Kansas City, Missouri. Between 1979 and 1984 the company minted five gold coins, named after famous people/economists, Harwood, Hayek, Hazlitt, Adam Smith and Deak, all believers — to a certain degree — in the gold standard. The Deak Fivepiece

contained 1/20th ounce of gold, and it was the smallest gold coin minted by the company. It had promotional statements/slogans on each side; around Deak's portrait the coin said "The internalization of sound money", while on the 'tail' — "For integrity there is no substitute." The coins were advertised in Barron's and other papers. If an ounce of gold is valued at \$1,200, then the melt value of this coin is about \$60.

NOTES

¹ <http://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2012/10/fifty-years-of-james-bond>

² <http://www.ianfleming.com/ian-fleming/>

³ Dissertation: *Österreichs Holzindustrie*. Email information received on June 25, 2014 from the University's Librarian.

⁴ *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Oct., 1942), pp. 557-561

⁵ *The American Economic Review* 33, 1, Part 2, Supplement, *Papers and Proceedings of the Fifty-fifth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association* (Mar., 1943), pp. 1 and 3-15

⁶ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 7, 1945.

⁷ Nicholas L. Deak, *Deak-Perera Group: Story of the Nation's Oldest and Largest Foreign Money Exchange Firm* (Newcomen Society, 1975), Introduction. p. 7.

⁸ On October 27, 1944, General Wedemeyer was assigned command of U.S. forces in China. He was also named Chief of Staff to the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

⁹ [U.S., Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, 1850-2010](http://www.dva.gov/birls-death-file-1850-2010)

¹⁰ http://articles.latimes.com/1985-11-19/news/mn-7575_1_nicholas-deak
Los Angeles Times, November 19, 1985.

¹¹ *The New York Times*, May 10, 1947.

¹² *The New York Times*, Sep. 16, 1948.

¹³ *The New York Times*, Aug. 2, 1948.

¹⁴ *The New York Times*, Aug. 18, 1948;

¹⁵ *The New York Times*, Jan. 27, 1949;

¹⁶ *The New York Times*, Aug. 5, 1949.

¹⁷ See an example at: *The Times of India*, Nov. 28, 1950.

¹⁸ <http://www.economist.com/economics-a-to-z/h/node-21529795>

¹⁹ Bloomfield, Arthur, *Speculative and Flight Movements of Capital in Postwar International Finance*. Princeton: Princeton U. Press. 1954.

²⁰ The Perera firm has a long illustrious history. It was founded by Lionello Perera as a private bank in 1914 and folded in 1932. The Perera Corporation was founded in 1928 by his son.

²¹ *Los Angeles Times*, Apr. 17, 1955.

²² *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, Feb. 25, 1957; *New York Herald Tribune*, Jan. 29, 1957; *The New York Times*, Dec. 25, 1958.

²³ In the USA, the Glass-Steagall Act, also known as the Banking Act of 1933, defined a bank that both accepts demand deposits (deposits that the depositor may withdraw by check or similar means for payment to third parties or others) and is engaged in the business of making commercial loans.

<http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Glass-Steagall+Act>

²⁴ This is a bank with a very long history. It was established in the late 1890s as the Bank of Griffins' Corner. In 1910 it became the Citizens' Bank of Griffins' Corners, which was merged with First National Bank of Griffins' Corner. This bank becomes a national bank — First National Bank of Fleischmanns in 1930.

²⁵ <http://zeitungsarchiv.nzz.ch/neue-zuercher-zeitung-vom-28-10-1958-seite-a8.html?hint=55910473>

²⁶ *Baltimore Sun*, Dec. 16, 1984.

²⁷ Deak, *Deak-Perera Group*, 15.

²⁸ This bank has quite a history. It was founded as Bankhaus Rosenfeld in 1890. Sigmund Rosenfeld was born in 1847 in (Zsolna) Žilina in Slovakia and died in 1900, in Vienna. Bankhaus Rosenfeld became Bankhaus Mayer-Loos in 1942. In 1966 the owners of Bankhaus Mayer-Loos sold the bank to Nicholas Deak, and the bank's name was also changed to "Bankhaus Deak". Swiss Focobank (Deak's Swiss bank — Foreign Commerce Bank) purchased the bank in 1983. In 1988 Royal Trust Bank of Canada took over the bank. Anglo Irish Bank took over banking business of Royal Trust Bank in 1995. 1998 Anglo Irish Bank acquired Austrian subsidiary of Credit Lyonnais Bank. In September 2008 Valartis Group purchased the bank; new company name: Valartis Bank (Austria) AG. <http://www.valartisbank.at/en/About-Valartis-Bank-Austria/Facts-Figures/>

²⁹ Maidenberg, H.J., INVESTING: The Appeal of Vienna Banks, *The New York Times*, July 15, 1979.

³⁰ *The New York Times*, January 28, 1972. Lafayette Academy, Inc. owned and operated a vocational home-study school, which participated in the Federal Insured Student Loan Program (FISLP). In 1979 Lafayette Academy and its two subsidiaries came under investigation and were sued by the US G. for possible fraudulent practices in connection with their participation in FISLP. The Academy won on technicalities.

³¹ Sandra Kollen Ghizoni, "Nixon Ends Convertibility of U.S. Dollars to Gold and Announces Wage/Price Controls." <http://www.federalreservehistory.org/Events/DetailView/33>

³² *Wall Street Journal*, May 16, 1972.

³³ <http://tinyurl.com/kykymb>

³⁴ <http://speeches.empireclub.org/61997/data>

³⁵ *The New York Times*, Oct. 17, 1977.

³⁶ *The New York Times*, January 21, 1982.

³⁷ *The New York Times*, Apr. 7, 1979.

³⁸ https://www.bullionvault.com/gold-news/buy_gold_coins_Krugerrands_081720073

³⁹ *The New York Times*, Oct. 9, 1976.

⁴⁰ *Boston Globe*, May 2, 1985 and *The Washington Post*, Feb. 13, 1985.

⁴¹ *The New York Times*, Aug. 9, 1985.

⁴² *The New York Times*, Oct. 2, 1985.

⁴³ *Washington Post*, Oct. 20, 1981

⁴⁴ Legal and economic impact of foreign banking procedures on the United States. Hearing, Ninetieth Congress, second session ... December 9, 1968.

⁴⁵ <http://www.aba.com/Compliance/Documents/07cbe87f05f94aa8b84faa573c790ba5AppendixC.pdf>

⁴⁶ *Christian Science Monitor*, May 8, 1975.

⁴⁷ *The New York Times*, July 6, 1975.

⁴⁸ *Washington Post*, November 13, 1974.

⁴⁹ *The New York Times*, December 9, 1975. Each Federal Reserve Bank has 9 directors, the 3 Class A directors are bankers elected by member banks, 1 representing large banks, 1 representing medium sized banks, and one representing small banks. Deak was in the running for the small bank "spot." The 3 Class B directors represent agricultural and/or commercial interests and the 3 Class C directors cannot be bankers, they represent the public.

⁵⁰ A. Nesvetailova and R. Palan, "Offshore Finance and Shadow Banking: Regulation of the Dark Corners of the Financial System," *Banking & Financial Services Policy Report*, 2014

⁵¹ http://hstrial-pfazekaz.homestead.com/gw2011_inv-rsvp.pdf

⁵² <http://newsok.com/magazine-lists-400-wealthiest-americans/article/2040956>

⁵³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Deatonjr/Forbes400>

⁵⁴ <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/bribe/2009/04/timeline.html>

⁵⁵ *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 16, 1984.

⁵⁶ *The New York Times*, Dec. 10, 1984.

⁵⁷ "In 1995 Lockheed Corp. agreed to pay a record \$24.8 million in penalties and pleaded guilty to violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, a federal law that stemmed from a Lockheed overseas bribery scandal in the 1970s." *Los Angeles Times*, January 28, 1995.

⁵⁸ *Wall Street Journal*, 1976, May 14.

⁵⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 1977.

⁶⁰ *The New York Times*, May 17, 1978.

⁶¹ *Washington Post*, Aug. 22, 1976

⁶² *The New York Times*, April 15, 2005.

⁶³ *Wall Street Journal*, November 17, 1982

⁶⁴ *The New York Times*, March 15, 1984.

⁶⁵ *Wall Street Journal*, May 7, 1986.

⁶⁶ Jeffrey Robinson, *Laundrymen* (New York: Arcade, 1996), 24

⁶⁷ *Business Week*, Dec. 24, 1984

⁶⁸ <http://www.alternet.org/news-amp-politics/amazing-investigation-how-real-life-james-bond-got-whacked-bag-lady-assassin>

⁶⁹ *Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 7, 1984.

⁷⁰ *Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 17, 1984.

⁷¹ R.T. Naylor, *Hot Money and the Politics of Debt* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 324, and *Wall Street Journal*, March 28, 1985.

⁷² <http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1985/Woman-Claimed-Injustice-In-Death-Of-Financial-Firm-Chief-Police-Say/id-c59f61900aa1f82399044be64e39bd70>

⁷³ *Times* [London, England] 20 Nov. 1985: 8

⁷⁴ *Washington Post*, May 7, 1986.

⁷⁵ <http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1985/Bankruptcy-Judge-Approves-Deak-Sale/id-1bd918f7661924cd0bec678588561591>

⁷⁶ *Toronto Star*, Dec. 4, 1990.

⁷⁷ *Financial Times*, Nov. 30 2001.

⁷⁸ *American Banker*, Aug. 31, 1987.

⁷⁹ *American Banker*, Apr. 9, 1991

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⁸¹ Ian Fleming, *Goldfinger*, (California Books, 2014) <http://tinyurl.com/o9f9h2q>

The Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Roman Catholic Parish of Toronto: Nine Decades of Evolution

Nándor Dreisziger

Tibor Horváth S.J. (1927-2008) of Toronto's Regis College, and later also of the University of Toronto's Saint Michael's College, was a noted theologian, distinguished teacher, journal editor, and a tireless organizer. When he started his Hungarian church history project a quarter century ago, he was thinking very much in terms of an encyclopaedia that included among other things entries on the individual parishes of Hungarians in the Magyar homeland and in the Hungarian diaspora. The compilation of such dictionary of Hungarian church history however would have been an extraordinarily time-consuming task. For this reason the book project I inherited from Father Horváth became a different undertaking: it transmuted into a synopsis of the literature that has been published on the Christian churches of the Hungarians. Accordingly our project became not an encyclopaedia but a historical synthesis with the title *Church and Society in Hungary and in the Hungarian Diaspora*. Nevertheless, in deference to Father Horváth's original ideas, we had at first planned to include in this book a chapter on the history of one Hungarian parish, written not — and not only — from the existing secondary literature but also from archival sources. The choice as to which parish to select for such a case study was easy: there were good reasons for selecting the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Toronto. First of all it was this parish that Father Horváth, during the decades he spent in Canada, had been associated with most — though not in an official capacity. More importantly however we thought of this parish because today it is probably the largest and most active of the Hungarian overseas diaspora's religious institutions. These were our plans,

until we heard from the editors of our book's would-be publisher, the University of Toronto Press, to the effect that they did not want any parish histories in the volume they would produce for us. So, we included a few paragraphs about the story of Toronto's Hungarian Catholics in the chapter the book has on Canada and we decided to publish the history of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church in Toronto separately, in fact in the present volume of the *Hungarian Studies Review*.

The Origins of Toronto's Hungarian R.C. Community

The Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish serves Roman Catholic Hungarians of the metropolitan area of Greater Toronto in Canada's economic and cultural heartland. Today's Toronto is a bustling city that is home to the largest urban population in Canada and occupies an enormous area, over 5,600 square kilometres. Toronto also serves as capital city of the Province of Ontario, Canada's most populous province.

Relative to the age of capital cities in Europe, or even in some cases on the North American continent, Toronto is a newcomer. Quebec City, the capital of the neighbouring province of Quebec, is nearly two centuries older. Toronto's roots may not go very far back in time, but they are interesting. During the French regime, it was a trading post located on the northern shores of Lake Ontario near the mouth of the Humber River. The early days of British rule witnessed its birth as a very small settlement, originally named York, within the fledgling British colony that emerged in the interior of British North America after the British were ousted from their traditional colonies in the War of American Independence. The future Toronto got a big boost when Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe made York the capital of Upper Canada — because it was not so close to the American border as was for example the larger village of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Some two decades later the town still had a population of only about 700 people, but the settlement kept growing and still two decades later, when it was incorporated as the municipality of Toronto, it had 9,000 inhabitants. Toronto's growth continued, especially as it gradually became an important industrial and financial centre.

The First World War resulted in the expansion of some of the city's existing industries and the birth of new ones. Large-scale meat-processing came to Toronto as did the manufacture of munitions. Although the latter activity declined steeply after the war, meat-processing remained and manufacturing in general expanded during the prosperous second half of the 1920s. The Great Depression hit Toronto too, but proportionately

less severely than it impacted many other Canadian cities. The Second World War led to a further acceleration of economic activity in the city, especially in the manufacturing of precision instruments, electronics, and in particular, military aircraft. In the post-war years Toronto's economy continued to expand, bolstered by the post-war baby-boom and the influx of tens of thousands of immigrants. By 1951 the population of Greater Toronto had reached over a million. Soon the city would overtake Montreal as the premier commercial and manufacturing centre of Canada.

A Hungarian community was slow to emerge in Toronto. At the turn of the last century Winnipeg acted as a centre of Hungarian cultural and political activity in the country. Some twenty years later it was Hamilton, Ontario, that was considered the "Hungarian capital" of Canada; but by the second half of the 1920s, Toronto's Hungarian community began growing, mainly as the result to two developments. One of these was the trans-migration of earlier Hungarian immigrants — or, more likely, their children — from Canada's prairie provinces to the manufacturing centres of Central Canada, and the other was the fact that many of the immigrants who came to Canada starting with 1924 found only disappointment in the Canadian West and in a few short years relocated to cities such as Toronto where economic opportunities were more plentiful. We can suspect that, for the growth of a Hungarian community in Toronto, this second phenomenon was more important than the first. We do not know for sure what percentage of the post-1924 arrivals ended up in Toronto, but we know that by 1931 nearly two-thirds of them had migrated from the rural districts they had been directed to originally, to live in urban centres.¹

The members of the post-1924 immigration wave of Hungarians were probably not the first Hungarian-speakers to settle in the city. Before the war, and even possibly before 1900 a few craftsmen had come, as well as Jewish shopkeepers and tradesmen. After the introduction in the wake of the First World War of the American quota laws that kept Hungarians out of the United States, Toronto might have been a way-station for those people who wanted to get into the United States one way or another, legally or illegally. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that organized life for Hungarians in the city was slow to emerge. After the middle of the decade, however, it did start to appear. In 1926, for example, the Presbyterian Church of Canada established a mission for members of the Hungarian Reformed Church living in the city and its environs. Their visiting pastor was the Reverend Ferenc Kovács of the already established Hamilton congregation. The move was followed two years later by the Lutheran Church of Canada and the United Church. Soon Catholic priests

from already established Hungarian parishes in the Niagara regions of the United States and Ontario also began visiting the Roman Catholic families of Toronto, and occasionally celebrating mass for them in homes or rented premises. Among these itinerant priests were István Nyíri and Jermos Hédly, the first and second pastors respectively of the Hungarian R.C. parish of Welland.²

The Beginnings of a Parish

One Hungarian family that had been living in Toronto for some time was that of István Leskó Sr. His Canadian-born son István Jr. became a dentist and established a practice in Toronto. In 1925 he attended a lecture by the visiting Hungarian elder-statesman Count Albert Apponyi. At the lecture he met a couple of recent Hungarian newcomers and learned from them that there were several Hungarian R.C. families living in town. Soon Leskó Jr. became one of the community leaders of Toronto's Hungarians. He approached Archbishop Neil McNeil of the Toronto Archdiocese and got him interested in the plight of the city's Hungarians and their hopes for religious services in their own language.³

These aspirations were not entirely an unrealistic ones as other ethnic groups in the city, in particular the Italians and the Poles, had pioneered the creation of ethnic parishes in the Archdiocese of Toronto. The Our Lady of Saint Carmel parish had been established in 1908 and was followed by the founding of the parish of Saint Agnes in 1914. Both were Italian. The city's Polish immigrants established the Saint Stanislaus parish in 1911 and the Saint Mary's parish three years later. Both of these Polish parishes were served by members of the Oblate Order. In the inter-war years the creation of ethnic churches in Toronto continued. Among the groups that were the recipients of this privilege were the Lithuanians in 1932 and the Slovaks two years later.⁴

In the spring of 1928 Archbishop McNeil wrote to Jusztinián Cardinal Serédi, the Prince Primate of Hungary, asking him to send a priest to Toronto to serve as the spiritual leader of Toronto's R.C. Hungarian community. Serédi was unable to find a priest for the task, but he recommended a seminarian by the name of László Forgács who was close to completing his preparation for the priesthood. Forgács arrived in Toronto late in September of the same year and resumed his studies of the priesthood at the city's Catholic Seminary. At Christmas time Archbishop McNeil summoned Forgács and told him that he should start serving his

countrymen in the capacity of a missionary — even though he had not quite completed his preparations for the priesthood.⁵

Forgács went to work immediately. As a result of his efforts — and of others including István Leskó Jr. and a Hungarian priest living in Toronto, Kelemen Burka — in 1929 Toronto's Hungarian Catholic Club was established. By this time Forgács had completed his theological studies. Not having a church building of their own, for the purpose of church services the members of Toronto's Catholic Club had to be satisfied with renting houses or, whenever possible, the buildings of non-Hungarian parishes. From 1930 on, the Club operated in a large home on Beverly Street and began using it for the celebration of masses — as well as for various social and cultural activities. The place served as a mission to Toronto's Roman Catholic Hungarians. It also became an important focal point for the social and cultural life of the city's entire Hungarian community. Later the club's premises were moved to a house on Grange Road, still in the heart of Toronto's immigrant neighbourhood. By this time the deepening economic recession made life for the fledgling Hungarian Club difficult. As one contemporary commentator put it, only the dedication and sacrifice of a few R.C. families managed to save the Club from disintegration.⁶

According to official church records, by 1928 a Hungarian parish had become part of the network of Roman Catholic ethnic parishes in the Archdiocese of Toronto. The date of its establishment was given in some documents as 19 March 1928, a time when the community was still being served by visiting priests from elsewhere. Mass was celebrated in various R.C. churches, or premises rented by the Hungarian Club, for a long time. The parish might have been founded in 1928, but it was apparently not recognized officially until 1933, when Father Forgács (who by then had Anglicised his name to Forgach) announced its official establishment — and the recognition of the Hungarian Club as its lay sub-unit.⁷

In the mid-1930s the Our Lady of Hungary parish in Welland, one of the oldest and largest Hungarian R.C. parishes in Southern Ontario, started to experience problems when no Hungarian priest was found to replace its parish priest, Father Olivér Horváth. To solve the crisis in December of 1935 Forgach was transferred to Welland and the Toronto parish was left without a priest. The following year the parishes' problems escalated to such extent that at a meeting of the parish council in September the members present offered to resign and dissolve the parish. At the October meeting, however, the decision was reversed. The council also decided to appeal to the Archbishop again and to ask him to help them find

a Hungarian priest. Soon the parish members' wish came true when a new priest by the name of Vilmos Szöllőssy was assigned to the parish. A crisis was avoided and the parish resumed its usual routine: holding Sunday masses that now became well-attended, as well as organizing picnics in the summer and dinners and theatrical performances at other times. Unfortunately this renaissance did not last long for in 1938 Szöllőssy decided to abandon the priesthood. Once again the parish was left without a Hungarian pastor. A compromise was found that saw John V. Harris, the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Toronto, becoming the official pastor, and a young priest-in-training, József Horváth, visiting regularly from Montreal and celebrating mass in Hungarian. The arrangement lasted till mid-1939 when Horváth was transferred to Welland to replace Forgách who in the meantime had also abandoned the priesthood. At that time a Canadian priest, the 25-year-old Leo Austin, was appointed pastor of the Toronto parish, even though he couldn't speak Hungarian. In all probability, his appointment was seen as a stop-gap measure, to last until a Hungarian-speaking priest could be found, but with the outbreak of the Second World War bringing a pastor from Hungary became a difficult proposition and Father Austin's tenure lasted for an entire decade. With his appointment a new and eventful chapter started in the parish's history.⁸

At this point it might be appropriate to ask the question why priests such as Szöllőssy and Forgács abandoned the priesthood. The sources are reticent about this issue. At the time it would have been considered bad manners for anyone to suggest in public, let alone in writing, that a young pastor could have fallen in love with a woman. And such a development may not have been the cause. We really don't know what the reason or reasons were for these priests' abandonment of the priesthood. But, Forgács's reminiscences give a hint. While serving in Welland, for example, he received no salary, not even any money for out-of-pocket expenses, from either his parish or the mother Church. "Not a cent" — as he recalled later. He had lodging in the pastor's residence but had no money for food. What kept him from starving was the fact that every day (almost every day?) he was invited to one or another of the families associated with the parish for a meal.⁹

By the time Father Austin had assumed the spiritual leadership of the parish in Toronto, conditions were more auspicious. The economic depression that did not strike Toronto with the vicious force that it hit many other Canadian cities, began lifting. The outbreak of the Second World War had some traumatizing impact on the city's Hungarian community, but it also resulted in heightened economic activity — and the

abatement of the misery that the depression had caused. By 1942 the very high unemployment of the 1930s had given way to nearly full employment — as well as higher wages especially for skilled workers. It was under such conditions that the parish received notice that it had to vacate its premises on Grange Road. This development precipitated a search for a real church building for the parish.¹⁰

A Church Building for the Parish

After a few months' search the leaders of the parish set their sights on a church building that went up for sale near the city's immigrant quarters and in walking distance of its Hungarian neighbourhood — in fact just a few blocs west of several of the rented premises the city's Catholic Hungarians had used for church services and social activities during the previous decade. The building in question was Saint Philip's Anglican Church, located at the intersection of two major arteries in downtown Toronto, Spadina Avenue and Dundas Street West.

St. Philip's Church had a distinguished history. Its historic roots went back to the times when militia-colonel George T. Denison (1839-1925) was a key figure in Toronto's social circles and city politics — he was, among other things, Toronto's chief police magistrate. Denison was also part of Canada's political and intellectual establishment. Among his achievements was a prize he won from the government of Tsar Alexander II of Russia for a book he wrote on military tactics. Denison and his son Robert B. Denison were also involved in Toronto's organized religious life. They were the founders of Saint Stephen-in-the Fields Anglican Church on Bellevue Avenue. When the Denisons had a disagreement with the church's rector and the city's Anglican ecclesiastic establishment, they had Saint Philip's Church built on the corner of Spadina Avenue and Dundas Street. The main part of the church was completed late in 1883 and services were started in early 1884.¹¹

This part of Toronto already had four Anglican churches and the addition of a fifth was a risky undertaking. Nevertheless for some time Saint Philip's was a success. Being a "low" Anglican parish it catered to a different clientele than the other Anglican parishes and for a few decades it prospered. The Toronto of the times was predominantly British and Protestant, and it was famous for its great many churches. The first pastor of Saint Philip's, James Fielding Sweeny, was one of the most influential Anglican priests in the city. He served till 1909 when he became the Anglican bishop of Toronto. In the second and third decades of the new

century, things began to change. Many residential homes especially south of Saint Philip's were demolished and were replaced by shops and textile factories. Immigrants from Eastern Europe began moving in, and the previously mainly Anglo-Saxon residents moved to newer, quieter and nicer areas. Their parish followed them. It was resurrected under the new name Saint Philip the Apostle Church in the city's northern outskirts, on Caribou Road near the intersection of Bathurst Street and Lawrence Avenue.¹²

Once the Hungarian Catholics of Toronto decided to put in a bid on Saint Philip's Church downtown, they launched a major fundraising campaign. The lion's share of these efforts can be credited to the newly arrived (from Stockholm, Saskatchewan) nuns: Sisters Columba and Sylvia. Sister Mary Schwartz of the Hamilton R.C. parish also assisted. Father Austin went on a fundraising tour that included stops in some of the more prosperous American R.C. parishes. The campaign was expected to yield at least \$10,000, an amount that was to be matched by the Archbishop. The building's purchase price was \$23,000 and after the monies collected were applied to it, the parish was left with a debt of \$9,300, owed to the Bank of Commerce. The figures suggest that neither the parish nor the Archbishop was able to raise the amount of money originally contemplated. To make the situation more difficult, soon after the building's purchase, it became evident that expensive repairs were needed, the most serious being the need for a new heating system. The renovations started not long after the transfer of ownership. To help out, many parish members donated their time and labour. The spruced-up church was blessed by Archbishop James C. McGuigan on March 19, 1944. It should be mentioned here that the purchase of a church building by Toronto's Catholic Hungarians served as inspiration for those of Hamilton. There too efforts were started to form a separate, Hungarian parish and to purchase a church building. At first they had to convince the city's sceptical church hierarchy that they would be able to achieve their aim. Their quest was successful, although the Hungarians of Hamilton took a long time to see it through. The Saint Stephen's Church of the city became a reality only in 1949.¹³

The fact that Toronto's Hungarians established a Catholic Parish complete with a church building before their brethren in Hamilton were successful in doing so speaks volumes about the evolving place of these two cities in the evolution of Canada's Hungarian community. In the 1930s Hamilton was the city in Canada with the largest and most influential Hungarian community. Toronto's Hungarian colony at the time served as a kind of a satellite of other, older Magyar colonies such as

Hamilton's. Pastors came to visit Toronto from places such as Welland and Waterloo. The Hungarian fraternal sick-benefit associations of Brantford and Hamilton had branch offices in Toronto. All this would change by the 1950s, and the transition had started in earnest already during the war. As historians of Toronto point out, during the second half of the World War II the city experienced a huge expansion in manufacturing that resulted in thousands of new jobs being created. The new economic climate brought prosperity to many immigrant Hungarian families and no doubt resulted in Hungarians flocking to the city in greater numbers.

This growth in economic prosperity also had some detrimental impact. The upturn in economic activity did not benefit all members of the Hungarian community equally: some families prospered while others were bypassed by the new wealth. As a result socio-economic divisions among Toronto's Hungarians increased. Furthermore, these developments helped to destroy the residential concentrations of Hungarians in Toronto, just as they promoted the disintegration of the neighbourhoods of other immigrant groups. What happened was that families that prospered tended to leave the immigrant ghettos, in particular the one that had existed for many years just east of the new Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Church. The better-off families bought homes in the more prestigious Madison Avenue-Bedford Road-Huron Street area just north of the city's main east-west commercial artery, Bloor Street. The area was still in walking distance of the new church, but not in easy walking distance, especially for the elderly and families with young kids. In the meantime the poorer members of the community continued to live in the immigrant ghetto. It is difficult to estimate to what extent and in what ways this socio-economic and residential differentiation in the community impacted the organized religious life of Toronto's Hungarians.¹⁴

While the war had mainly indirect impact on life of Toronto's R.C. Hungarian community, the post-war years had greater impact, some of which was direct and long-lasting. This would be the result of the coming of two more waves of Hungarian immigrants to Canada. That process, however, didn't start till the late 1940s and until then two memorable events took place in the life of the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish. One of these was the visit in July of 1947 of the Prince Primate of Hungary, József Cardinal Mindszenty. He came to Canada for a world congress of Roman Catholics that was held in Ottawa that year, and he made a side trip to see the Archbishop of Toronto, as well to visit the city's Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish. It was on this occasion that he is alleged to have made an unflattering remark to the parish's pastor. He told

Father Austin that he had no business to lead a Hungarian spiritual community if he didn't learn Hungarian. The remark, if indeed the leader of the Hungarian church could utter such statement, suggests that Mindszenty was ignorant of the situation of Canada's Hungarian Roman Catholics, in particular of their inability to attract Hungarian-speaking priests. The Cardinal seems also not to have been aware of the fact that most people, even those with a good education, were unable to learn a language so different from English as Hungarian. Despite these remarks, if they were indeed ever made, Austin soldiered on with serving his parish, and probably also with his in the end unsuccessful efforts to learn the Magyar language. In December of the same year, a ceremony was held in the church where the document of the parish's debt was burned after all debts incurred in the building's purchase and renovation had been discharged.¹⁵

The Coming of Jesuit Priests

The year 1948 would bring another change in the parish's history. Archbishop McGuigan must have been aware of the problem at Saint Elizabeth's and was probably anxious to remedy it. He learned from Sister Mary that in Boston, MA, in the New England Province of the Jesuit Order, there were a few Hungarian Jesuits — and he requested a pastor. In Boston the choice fell on a young visiting priest by the name of István Békési. He was told to go to Toronto and help the parish priest there. Békési arrived in November and began celebrating mass, in his native Hungarian, very soon after. In July of the following year he assumed the parish's spiritual leadership.¹⁶

These were propitious times for the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary church. The Second World War, unlike the First, was followed by general economic prosperity in Canada, especially in Toronto. The unemployment and misery of the 1930s was long gone and had been replaced by "good times" for most of Toronto's Hungarians. Still more important was the fact that the immigration of Hungarians to Canada resumed in the late 1940s. The newcomers were the refugees of the war who in 1948 began to be admitted to Canada from European refugee camps. These were the so-called "displaced persons" or DPs, and they came by the thousands. During the 1948-49 fiscal year, 1,400 of them came and in the following fiscal years more and more of them arrived. In 1951-52 some 4,500 of them reached the country. Unlike the previous wave of immigrants from Hungary most of whom began their Canadian lives in the Western Provinces, the latest newcomers ended up in Central Canada, most of them in Ontario's cities.

According to the 1951 census, Toronto received by far the largest influx, some 1,100 people. Hamilton got far smaller contingent, a fact which sealed the competition between these two cities as to which one would be the “Hungarian capital” of Ontario. Eventually Toronto would surpass even Montreal as the home to the largest number of Hungarian Canadians.¹⁷

As has been explained in the previous chapter, as a group the DPs were different from previous waves of Hungarian immigrants. More of them were of middle- and in some cases even upper-class origin and members of the skilled trades and of the professions were more common among them. Although initial contacts between the new arrivals and the members of the “old” immigrations were cordial enough, as time passed relations often became strained. The tables had been turned on Hungarians. The poor immigrants of earlier ages were now often living comfortable lives, while the newcomers, former members of Hungary’s upper and upper-middle classes, were the impecunious new arrivals. The situation was not conducive to friendly cooperation between the two groups — and, indeed, relations were not always amicable, especially as far as the newcomers’ participation in Hungarian immigrant institutions was concerned. The fact was that the newcomers, rather than joining the organizations of the old immigrants, tended set up clubs and institutions of their own. Organized religious life was an exception to this trend.

In one respect the members of the new wave of arrivals were no different from those who came in the 1920s, or in fact before the First World War. Most of them were no doubt keen to resume their religious lives, and even attendance at churches that had been interrupted for them when they left Hungary. Undoubtedly too, they preferred to do this in their own Hungarian cultural environment. For the Roman Catholics among the DPs, this could be done only in the already existing religious organizations of the “old” Hungarian immigrants, in the case of Toronto, in the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary church.

What was an even more important development for Hungarian Canadians in general and for this parish in particular was the fact that among the thousands of DPs there were several priests. Their arrival would help to reduce the scarcity of spiritual leaders in Hungarian-Canadian society. In a short time the situation in this respect got even more promising for Hungarian R.C. parishes in this country: by the late 1940s the persecution of the churches in Hungary had gotten progressively onerous. As a result in the spring of 1949 the Superior General of the Jesuit Order issued a call to all young members of the order in Hungary to

leave the country. In the months following dozens of these young men made their way to Western countries. As a result by the mid- or late 1950s several of Hungarian Canada's R.C. parishes would come under the leadership of recently-arrived Jesuit priests.

In the meantime the active community life in Saint Elizabeth Parish that members had become accustomed to during the last years of the war continued. On Saturdays there were Hungarian classes for children, on Sundays there was mass celebrated in the morning and recreational activities took place in the afternoon. In the evening there could be a dance where music was provided by a live band. This was unusual as in Toronto of the times no public entertainment was allowed on Sundays; however, churches were permitted to host such events. Completing the community life around the church were the Catholic Club and a few other lay organizations.¹⁸

In 1951 Father Békési took leave to do missionary work overseas and he was replaced by a more experienced pastor, Father Mihály Szeder. During his tenure the house next to the Church on Dundas Street was purchased and became used as a rectory: parish office and quarters for the pastor and his assistants. The property filled a great need as by this time the number of priests serving the parish had increased first to two and then to three. Improvements were made to the church building as well. Some windows were replaced by stained-glass depicting notable episodes told in the Bible. The collection a funds was also started for the purchase of a new organ. Next Békési returned to serve another stint as parish priest. Soon thereafter another property was purchased, this time on the outskirts of the city near the village of Streetsville (now in the city of Mississauga). It was named Mindszenty Park and was used from the spring to the autumn for picnics, camping trips and other outdoor activities. During the tenure of the next parish priest, György Simor (pastor from 1953 to 1958), the life of the park was enriched by the creation of a swimming area in the creek that ran through the property. Weekend activities in the park were popular with members of the parish and their children.¹⁹

The Arrival of the Refugees

The years 1956 and 1957 brought great changes in the life of the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, just as they wrought a huge transformation in the evolution of most Hungarian-Canadian communities. This was the time of the arrival of the largest wave of Hungarian immigrants to Canada, the refugees of the 1956 revolution in Hungary. The coming of the refugees

resulted in the increase in the size of most Hungarian-Canadian communities. This was especially true of Canada's cities where more than 90 percent of the refugees settled. By the time of the next census nearly half of them were found living in Ontario. Among the Canadian cities that received the refugees Toronto got the largest contingent, nearly 8,700 individuals. Montreal was second with little over 7,000 newcomers, and Vancouver was a distant third. This influx of newcomers resulted in the doubling, tripling and even in some cases the quadrupling of the Hungarian communities of these and other Canadian cities.

Almost from the very outbreak of the revolution in Hungary, Toronto's Hungarian churches, including the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, became beehives of activity. In response to the news from the old country, Toronto's Hungarians undertook various ventures, ranging from organizing protest demonstrations to the collection of funds to be sent to Hungary in aid of the country's population. Or, people just congregated to discuss events and receive news from Hungary. When it became obvious that the revolution would be crushed by the Soviets, efforts to help the revolutionaries were transformed into attempts to aid the refugees who were flooding across the Austro-Hungarian border. The collection of funds and clothing was continued. Soon the first refugees began arriving in the city. From this time on the parish became a veritable aid agency. The refugees were helped to find food and lodging — as well as in filling out English-language forms needed to start their Canadian lives. It was about this time that the parish received a fourth priest. The number of church attendees increased so much that four masses had to be scheduled each Sunday morning to accommodate everyone.²⁰

Although as time passed Canadian authorities took over much of the work of helping the refugees, many tasks remained in which the parish was able to assist the newcomers. The refugees needed loans to pay for the purchase of large items such as appliances, cars and, eventually, houses. To help in this the parish was instrumental in establishing a credit union independent of the parish but still under its umbrella. The institution paid higher-than-usual interest to depositors and it gave loans and mortgages to those members of the parish who needed them. The increase in the number of families with children in the parish required an expansion of school facilities. For this purpose still another nearby house was purchased, this time on Spadina Avenue, and was converted into a school complete with an auditorium.²¹

In the meantime important events were taking place in the parish's leadership. In 1958 Father Simor was transferred to the Jesuit Order's New

York head office. He was replaced as parish priest by Lajos Horányi, under whose guidance the enhancement of the parish's complex of properties at the Dundas Street and Spadina Avenue site continued. He in turn was replaced in 1964 by József Bieleck who remained at the parish's helm for seven years. During his time it became necessary to replace the old rectory on Dundas Street next to the church with a modern building. This project, along with some of the others before then and later, resulted in an increasing the parish's debt burden. The cost of the new rectory alone amounted to over \$120,000.²²

Still another event of significance in the early 1960s was the purchase by the Jesuits of a large recreational property near the village of Orono. Although nearly an hour's drive east from Toronto the place was easily accessible via major highways (nos. 401 and 35). Named Loyola Park, the property was made available to the parish and its various social and youth organizations. It also hosted local and international scouting jamborees. A few of these were attended by scouts and scout leaders from all over North America and even overseas.²³

In 1971 Father Bieleck was followed as parish priest by another Jesuit, István Király. Improvements to the church, the rectory, and the adjacent parking lot continued — and the parish's debt continued to grow and eventually amounted to nearly quarter million dollars. Király made efforts to reduce this debt (during his tenure one of the church's properties on Spadina Avenue was sold) and, more importantly, he restructured the parish's administration and streamlined the role of the various lay organizations played in the parish's life. By this time the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish had started functioning according to the guidelines issued to all R.C. parishes by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).²⁴

The Church's leading administrative organ was the Parish Council. It had 24 members and was in charge of planning, directing and supervising the parish's activities. Its members were elected from the parish community. In the case of the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Church, the Council of Catholic Men, the Council of Catholic Women, the Married Couples Club, the parish school, the scouts and the Youth Club attached to the church, and the Altar-boys' Club each had a representative on the Council. The rest of the members were elected by the membership at large. The priests assigned to the Church were ex-officio members. There were provisions for the removal of council members (by a 2/3rds majority), for example for neglect of duties or inappropriate behaviour — as well as for appeals against such decisions. The Council's chief official was its president. There was also a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer and a mar-

shal — all elected by the Council's membership. The president presided over the Council's meetings and, in consultation with the parish priest, determined the council meeting's agenda. The Council had to meet at least three times a year.

The Parish Council had seven regular committees, each consisting of three to five council members. One of these was in charge of pastoral matters, others respectively of finances, property maintenance, recreational matters, charitable activities, youth activities and communicating with the membership at large. The pastor also had important functions. He reported to the Council, communicated with the Archbishop, and approved — or did not approve — the Council's decisions. There was also a nominating committee that set up a list of members who were eligible to be elected by the parish's members, as well as an election committee that oversaw the election of those members of the Council who were not entitled to be Council members as representatives of the clubs and other groups associated with the parish. Elections were held every December. If a parish priest died or left the parish, the Council was suspended and the newly appointed pastor could either re-activate it or call for the election of a new Council.²⁵

A New Era in the Life of the Parish

The mid-1970s were times of new developments in the parish's life. In 1973 Hungarians celebrated the millennium of Hungarian Christianity. The occasion was the 1000th anniversary of the birth of St. Stephen, the first Christian king of the Hungarians. The celebrations coincided with another visit to the parish by Cardinal Mindszenty. This visit happened two years after Hungary's Prince Primate had left the American Embassy in Budapest. The visit was part of an extended pastoral tour by the Prince Primate that included England and North America. It was intended, according to the Cardinal, "to bring comfort and encouragement to Hungarians in foreign lands;"²⁶ and his visit did bring joy and happiness to the members of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish. A procession was organized from Toronto's city hall to the nearby Saint Michael's Cathedral. Along the way the masses of Hungarian and other Catholics sang religious hymns and on arrival in the Cathedral, celebrated high mass. In the evening a dinner was held that was attended by prominent churchmen and civic figures.²⁷

In the meantime mundane problems kept intruding into the parish's life. During 1973 it became obvious that the 300 chairs the church had purchased in 1954 were defective and new ones, and a greater number

of them, had to be ordered, at the cost of nearly \$4,000. The matter of a new organ was also still hanging over the Parish's leadership. The estimated cost of this update was \$55,000. The Parish was short on cash for such a large expenditure and a loan of \$30,000, had to be sought — to be paid back in three years. The loan was approved in the summer of 1977.²⁸ Father Király also saw to it that the Parish's school building was enlarged. By this time it was becoming increasingly obvious to some members of the Parish's leadership that the present church was too expensive to maintain and was not large and modern enough for an ever more populous congregation. A debate emerged that saw those who were inclined to look for another, a larger church building, pitted against those who favoured renovating and updating the present one. The debate ended this time in the victory of the latter group. As a result further funds were expended for the renovation and re-decoration of the church at Dundas Street and Spadina Avenue. About this time Father Kiraly helped to organize a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in which many members took part. This would not be the last of such pilgrimages sponsored by the Parish. Unfortunately for everyone, in 1976 Father Király fell ill and died early in the following year.²⁹

Király was followed as parish priest by Balázs M. Jaschkó. He had come to Toronto in 1970 from the United States where he had been teaching since his arrival there in the mid-1950s. From 1971 he had been associate parish priest at Saint Elizabeth. One of his priorities as parish priest had been the enhancement of the school programs associated with the Parish. An important event, or series of events during the early phase of his tenure was the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Parish' beginnings. The golden jubilee mass was held on 19 March and was presided over by Bishop Paul McHugh. A gala dinner was also held. There was so much interest in this event that it could not be accommodated by the Parish's own hall but had to be held on the much larger premises of the new Hungarian-Canadian Cultural Centre at 840 St. Clair Avenue West. 700 people were in attendance, including Bishop (later Cardinal) Aloysius Ambrozic who represented Toronto Archbishop Philip F. Pocock (1906-1984). The celebrations were a gentle reminder that perhaps the Saint Elizabeth Parish had outgrown the facilities at the corner of Spadina Avenue and Dundas St. West.³⁰

It was at this time that the "old" church at Spadina and Dundas received its new organ, with 1120 pipes. In the quest to acquire this organ important role was played by György Zadubán, a highly-trained musician and conductor who had been the church's organist almost since his arrival in Canada in 1957. Zadubán was also responsible for establishing and

training the parish choir that put on special performances in the church on high holidays such as Christmas and Easter.³¹

A New Church for the Parish

It may be recalled that a debate in the mid-1970s about whether the existing church facilities should be renovated or a search for a new church building should be started ended in the decision to keep the old church. In the years following it was becoming more and more obvious that the existing building and, especially, the parking facilities around it, were inadequate. In the meantime the exodus of Hungarians from Toronto's downtown area continued. It must have been also increasingly evident that the existing premises, being located near the city's rapidly expanding Chinatown commercial district, would fetch a handsome price. As a result, the question of selling the old church and acquiring a larger one elsewhere re-surfaced during the second half of 1983 — and soon a decision was made to look for a building site where a new, bigger church could be built. A committee was struck to take on the task of selecting a site. Beginning with January, 1984, Father Jaschkó, along with his advisor, the Reverent Nicola De Angelis the Vice-Chancellor of the Archdiocese, began visiting various sites around the city that were available for purchase.³²

Several sites were considered. Six building lots were available for sale at the corner of Yonge Street (Toronto's main north-south thoroughfare) and Finch Avenue. The site was quickly rejected by the committee as being too busy and noisy and because there was very little chance of expanding the property on a future occasion if conditions required such expansion. Another site was also on Yonge Street, at the intersection of York Mills Road. Here four building lots were available, and the price was \$1,200,000. This site too, had a number of disadvantages: a part of the lot was on a hill, there was a creek on the property, the entrance to the lot was somewhat hidden, and the city's building codes required a large set-back from the street. Obviously this site also didn't recommend itself highly for the committee. Still another available site was on the corner of Dufferin Street and Lawrence Avenue. Here 2.75 acres were available at the hefty price of three-and-a-half million dollars. Aside from the high price there were two objections to this site. One was that its location was "not central" to the Hungarian community, and the other was that it was too close to another Roman Catholic church: Saint Charles.³³ In the end the site that was selected in June of 1984 was a large building lot on Sheppard Avenue East (nos. 430-432), a block-and-a-half west of Bayview Avenue. It was

large enough to have a courtyard as well as a fair-sized parking lot, accommodating well over hundred cars. Access to this property was convenient and there was public transportation on both Sheppard Avenue and Bayview Avenue. Much later the site would also be served by a subway line along Sheppard.

Four construction companies submitted bids for the building of the church, along with parish offices, a hall and other facilities. The lowest (not by a wide margin) came from Delaney Construction and it was accepted and work on the site soon started. According to the records, the architect was Domenic Amato. Before the year was out, "Invoice No. 3" arrived from the company: it was for \$185,386.62 (about a tenth of the eventual cost). By the end of July of next year, the move from the Spadina/Dundas premises was completed. At one point in August the "old" church was no longer available for Sunday services while the new one could also not be used as there was a delay with the inspection of the church for fire safety. In early September the fire inspection was completed. The church was consecrated on October 5. The new Archbishop, Emmett Cardinal Carter officiated, assisted by Bishop László Irányi representing the Hungarian Roman Catholic Diaspora.³⁴

It is not easy for an outsider to get an accurate grip on the financial aspects of the move of the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish from downtown to the Sheppard and Bayview site. According to one internal memorandum of the Archdiocese the proceeds from the sale of the old church amounted to \$5,800,000.00. Of this sum \$4,000,000.00 were applied to the purchase of the new site and the construction of the new church and affiliated structures. The transaction left a difference of \$1,800,000.00, and it was felt by the leaders of the Archdiocese that this "profit" should not entitle the Hungarian community for special consideration. After all, the Archdiocese had promised only to replace "their facilities" with new ones, and in fact, the new facilities were a third larger than what the Parish had before. In other words, 70 percent of the proceeds from the sale of the old church were applied to the purchase and construction of the new one, and 30 percent were left for covering the Archdiocese's "other needs".

Soon after the new church building's opening it became evident that the church's parking lot was inadequate and pastor Jaschkó suggested that a part of the balance of the proceeds from the sale of the old church be applied to the acquisition of additional land for the purpose of parking. The Archdiocese ruled any such deal "absolutely out". In fact, Father Jaschkó was advised to remain silent on the matter of the financing of the transfer of Saint Elizabeth Church to the new site. He was told that over-

flow parking should be diverted to the parking lot of the “nearby” (not-so-nearby ?) Saint Gabriel Catholic School. The memorandum on this subject concluded that the whole deal with the Hungarians had become a “scandal” in the eyes of other communities in the diocese that were obviously unable to understand why the Hungarians received such a favourable deal, i.e. why so much money was lavished on them by the mother church.³⁵

The opening of the new church revitalised parish life. According to one document, attendance at some church functions went up by almost 100 percent — no wonder parking became a problem. Everything was larger than in the old church. Especially important was the hall in the church’s basement where now social and cultural functions could accommodate several hundred people — far more than in the old church. There was also the new, large and modern school building. Then there was the courtyard between the two — where those who had attended mass could congregate, linger and gossip after church services. In fact the school facilities soon proved too small and a third floor had to be added to the structure.³⁶

The 1970s and 1980s were the true “Golden Age” of the Hungarian community of Toronto. The masses of Hungarian immigrants who had arrived in Canada in the 1950s were still young, or at least not too old to give up active life. Their children were growing up and many of them remained in contact with immigrant institutions, including the churches. The city was prosperous, a truly cosmopolitan centre where immigrants could feel at home. By this time Toronto had definitely become the “Hungarian capital” of Canada. It had surpassed Hamilton a long time ago and Montreal more recently. In fact there was an influx of Hungarians from the latter city where Hungarians, especially those who had not learned French, sometimes felt ill-at-ease with rising Quebecois nationalism. There was also an influx of new Hungarian immigrants from Transylvania where Hungarians, and just about everyone else, felt being oppressed by the regime of Nicholas Ceauşescu.

Under these circumstances the people of the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish could feel confident and comfortable. In 1989 they received another boost to their pride when Pope John-Paul II selected a priest from Toronto, Attila Miklosházy, a professor of theology and past rector of St Michael’s College of the University of Toronto, as Bishop of Hungarians in the Diaspora. He would be the last of such bishops appointed by a pope. After his retirement a decade-and-a-half later his “successor” would be named by the by then free Catholic Church hierarchy in Hungary.

The freeing of the churches from communist domination in Hungary was a mixed blessing for the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish — and in fact for other Catholic parishes in the Hungarian diaspora. While it assured freedom of travel and communications between them and the Church in Hungary, it also resulted in the departure for the mother country of many individuals who had been serving them, in cases where a greater need was seen for their services and talents in the new, democratic Hungary.³⁷

The 1990s witnessed several other important events in the Parish's life. In October of 1993 the members of the Parish celebrated the golden jubilee of the acceptance into the order of the Society of the Heart of Jesus of Sister Columba. She had been serving the Parish's people since the 1940s and had earned the respect and love of a great many of them. A year later a different event transpired. It was the publication of a historical monograph dealing with the Parish. Its author was historian Sándor Kostya. Although the book's title talked about the history of the Parish, the work itself touched on a great many themes including the history of the Jesuit Order, the story of Hungarian Catholic priests in Canada, and the activities of Bishop Mikósházy in the years after his appointment by Pope John-Paul II. In 1997 Csaba Cabafi was ordained as a priest of the Saint Elizabeth Church. This was only the second time a priest was ordained in the new building, and the event called for celebrations. In 1997 he became associate pastor and three years later he assumed the role of the church's pastor.³⁸

The new century would see a continuation of the trends of the 1990s. In the life of the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish not much would change for the time being. Celebrations, anniversaries and special events would continue. In 2002 the 17th World Youth Congress of the Catholic Church was held in Toronto. A quarter million participants took part in it, coming from all parts of the world. Some 180 of these pilgrims came to from Hungary and the Hungarian-inhabited districts of Romania. The people of the Parish coordinated the hosting of these participants. A year later the Parish celebrated the 75th anniversary of its beginnings. Many events were held and still another parish history was published, this one full with colour illustrations. In 2006 the then parish priest Cabafi was transferred to Hungary to assume a high position at the headquarters of the Jesuit Order in that country. He was replaced by László Marosfalvy. Under him the Parish celebrated the 800th anniversary of the birth of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. Then Marosfalvy was replaced by Szabolcs Sajgó as parish priest.

The Parish's everyday life continues today. There are Sunday masses, weekend school program, meeting of the various lay clubs associated with the Church, weddings, baptisms and funerals — and more funerals.³⁹ In the meantime, the community the Parish serves continues to age. The immigrants keep getting older and their children and grandchildren are less and less inclined in participating in the Hungarian community's institutional life. Still the Parish remains the most active of the R.C. parishes in North America — and has been free of the problems that have plagued some of the much older and more famous Hungarian parishes in the United States.⁴⁰

NOTES

¹ See my article "Immigration and Re-migration: The Changing Urban-Rural Distribution of Hungarian Canadians, 1886-1986," *Hungarian Studies Review* 13, 2 (fall 1986): 20-41, in particular p. 26. For the pre-World War I arrivals this particular figure was about half of what it was for the immigrants of the 1920s.

² Jenő Ruzsa, *A kanadai magyarság története* [History of the Hungarians of Canada] (Toronto, by the author, 1940), 156-7.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 157-8. See also Nándor Dreisziger *et al.*, *Struggle and Hope: The Hungarian-Canadian Experience* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1983), 104.

⁴ "Parish History," undated manuscript, in a file entitled "canonical documents," in the Records of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, part of the record collections of the Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto (hereafter ARCAT), in Toronto, Ontario.

⁵ The recollections of László Forgács, made in an interview, printed in *Hungarians in Ontario*, ed. Susan M. Papp, a special double issue of *Polyphony, The Bulletin of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario*, 2, 2-3 (1979-80): 33-5. Forgács's interviewer is not named but we know that it was Carmela Patrias

⁶ Some of the houses rented also served as the homes for impecunious members of the city's Hungarian community. See *ibid.*, p. 33. See also Ruzsa, *A kanadai magyarság*, pp. 158-60.

⁷ Emma Perlaky and László Perlaky, eds. *Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet Egyházközség/ St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish* (Toronto: St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, 2003), 24.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 25-26. Ruzsa, *A kanadai*, p. 160. See also a typed history of the parish by an unknown author [ca. 1978] entitled "Our History", in the file "St. Elizabeth Hungarian Parish," at ARCAT.

⁹ Forgács left the priesthood and took a job. See Forgács's recollections, *cit.* (note 5 above), pp. 34-35.

¹⁰ “Our History” *cit.* What must have happened was that the rent the parish was paying for the Grange Road property had increased beyond what the parish could pay.

¹¹ Edward Jackman, “Notes Concerning the Anglican Heritage of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Roman Catholic Church,” mss, 9 March 1978, file on the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church, ARCAT.

¹² *Ibid.* Jackman notes that by the time the parish moved, its neighbourhood, known by then as Kensington market, had become mainly Jewish. Interestingly, a few decades later, the new Philip’s Anglican Church found itself on the edge of the city’s new Jewish district. Today the Spadina-Dundas area is part of Toronto’s Chinatown, while the neighbourhood of the new Philip’s Church is close to Forest Hill, one of the city’s ritzy residential areas full with multi-million dollar homes.

¹³ Perlaky and Perlaky, *Árpád-házi*, p. 27. Dreisziger, *Struggle and Hope*, p. 180. Also, “Our Church,” *cit.* On the financing of the purchase of the church see the memorandum by L.J. Austin, 26 October 1943, in the file “Financing the purchase of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church,” in the church’s records, ARCAT. Apparently the parish raised only \$8,000 and the Archbishop, as of October 1943, contributed only \$6,000. In his memo Austin estimated the cost of renovations to be about \$7,000, said that he could borrow \$5,000 “from Hungarians” interest free, and asked for the balance (\$4,000) of the monies promised by the Archbishop. We found no record as to when these were paid to the parish.

¹⁴ Dreisziger, *Struggle and Hope*, pp. 182-3. Some of the families were attracted to the Madison Avenue-Huron Street area by the fact that homes there were much more spacious and could be turned into rooming houses. The appearance of rooming houses in turn caused the neighbourhood’s remaining “old” owners, mainly WASPs (white Anglo-Saxon Protestants) to flee to suburbs “uncontaminated” by immigrants from Eastern Europe. This trend depressed property prices in the area further — and made the move of more Hungarians to the neighbourhood easier.

¹⁵ Perlaky and Perlaky, *Árpád-házy*, pp. 29-31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 31. Also, Sándor Kostya, *A torontói Árpád-Házi Szent Erzsébet Egyházközség és Plébániatemplom története* [The history of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary parish and church of Toronto] (Toronto: St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, 1994), 444. Father Austin became a parish priest in the nearby town of Whitby.

¹⁷ Dreisziger, *Struggle and Hope*, pp. 195-6.

¹⁸ “Our Church,” *cit.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.* Also, Perlaky and Perlaky, *Árpád-házi*, pp. 32-3. The purchase of a property on the city’s outskirts testifies to the increasing prosperity of the parish’s members. By then most Hungarian families living in the city had automobiles. Mindszenty Park was later sold. Its role was taken over by Loyola Park, a large property the Jesuits purchased in 1962 near the town of Orono, some 80 kilometres east of Toronto.

²⁰ Perlaky and Perlaky, *Árpád-házi*, p. 33; Dreisziger, *Struggle and Hope*, pp. 204-08.

²¹ Perlaky and Perlaky, *Árpád-házi*, p. 33. The parish's credit union functioned till 2003. By then few members needed help with their financial arrangements.

²² Various memoranda, including a "final report" 10 Dec. 1969, in the file "Construction of a new rectory, 1967-1969", the financial records of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, box 2, ARCAT. Cited hereafter as "financial records". The old rectory was apparently deemed to be a hazard by city authorities.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 33. In the meantime the parish's previous, smaller recreational property west of Toronto was sold.

²⁴ On Király's efforts to expand the school and reduce the parish's debt see especially the document "Our History," *cit.* (ARCAT).

²⁵ A 7-page memorandum in Hungarian in the file Guidelines of the Parish Council, in the records of the parish, ARCAT. An appendix to the document names the 12 associations functioning within the parish: 1. the men's club; 2. the association of women; 3. the club of married people; 4. the Mária Congregation (of women); 5. the prayer group; 6. the members of the Third Order of St. Francis; 7. the school and the daycare; 8. the Altar-boys Club; 9. the girls scouts; 10. the boys scouts; 11. a committee for scout activities; and 12. the youth club. The St. Elizabeth of Hungary Credit Union was independent of the Parish and therefore had no representation on its council.

²⁶ József Mindszenty, *Emlékirataim* (Tirol: Thaur, 1988), 250. For an English version of Mindszenty's memoirs see Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty, *Memoirs* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1974), p. 243.

²⁷ Perlaky and Perlaky, *Árpád-házy*, p. 34.

²⁸ Notes in the file "Furnishings", the records of the Parish, ARCAT.

²⁹ "Our History" *cit.* Father Király was buried in the Hungarian cemetery of Saint Ladislav Church of Courtland, the by then traditional burial ground of Hungarian Jesuit priests in Central Canada.

³⁰ See Edward Jackman's notes on the pamphlet published for the occasion by the Parish, in the Records of the St. Elizabeth Parish, Canonical Files, ARCAN. Also, Perlaky and Perlaky, *Árpád-házi*, p. 35.

³¹ Perlaky and Perlaky, *Árpád-házi*, pp. 35-6.

³² File on the construction of the new church, box 2, Records Relating to the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church, ARCAT. Among the members of the committee György Birinyi focused on matters of construction while Rudolf Vlassák on those concerning finances. Kostya, *A Szent Erzsébet*, p. 118.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*; Perlaky and Perlaky, pp. 36-38; also, Kostya, *A Szent Erzsébet*, pp. 118-19.

³⁵ Internal memorandum by L.J. Wall, 29 January 1986, file: Further land acquisitions for parking lot, Records Relating to the St Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, ARCAN. Despite the negative response to his early pleas for the solution

of the parking problem, Jaschkó kept returning to the issue with appeals for further funds to solve the problem. The Archdiocese's response to these continued to be negative. Parking remained a problem at St. Elizabeth for a long time. On Sundays and other occasions cars inundated nearby streets raising the ire of local residents who had been already at odds with the neighbouring People's Church — whose parking lot was also often overflowing.

³⁶ See documents in the file listed in the previous note. Also, Perlaky and Perlaky, *Árpád-házi*, p. 38.

³⁷ The case that comes to mind is that of Rita V. Göcsei. She had come to Canada as a child with her family after the 1956 revolution. In 1990 she joined the Society of the Heart of Jesus Order and began serving the people of Saint Elizabeth parish. Two years later she returned to Hungary — and soon became the leader of her order there. See the *Országos Katolikus Névtár*, 2 (Budapest, 2001), 111-14, and the internet bulletin *Hirös Naptár* (Kecskemét), 7 January 2012, http://www.hirosnaptar.hu/index.php?oldal=cikk&cikk=vallomasok_gocsei_rita

³⁸ Kostya, *A Szent Erzsébet*, pp. 136-37 (re. Sister Columba). See also Perlaky and Perlaky, *Árpád-házi*, pp. 140.

³⁹ See the Parish's monthly reports. In recent times these are distributed mainly via the internet — and Father Sajgó has taken to using e-mail. On one occasion I sent him a question in the middle of the night (was it at 4 a.m.? I don't recall precisely) — and received his answer within a few minutes.

⁴⁰ I discuss the recent problems of one American-Hungarian Catholic parish, the Saint Emeric Church of Cleveland, Ohio, in chapter 13 of my book *Church and Society in Hungary and in the Hungarian Diaspora* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

Caught Between Independence and Irredentism: the “Jewish Question” in the Foreign Policy of the Kállay Government, 1942-1944

Béla Bodó

The deportation and genocide of the Hungarian Jews in 1944 and early 1945 has been well documented and studied. However, relatively few scholarly monographs and articles deal with the road to genocide in Hungary, particularly with the events of the preceding three war years. This earlier period, which is the focus of this article, differs significantly from the last stage of the Holocaust. The German Wehrmacht conquered Western Europe with relative ease in 1940 and, until the Battle of Stalingrad in late 1942 and early 1943, it seemed to have been winning the war in the East, as well. Even in the summer of 1943, since a compromise settlement between the Germans and the Russians was still possible, no one could predict the final outcome of the military conflict with certainty. Although information about the mass and increasingly mechanized killings had periodically reached the West since 1941, the leaders of the “free world” and their political and military advisors were reluctant to accept the news, not to mention to adjust their war-time strategies to stop the killings.¹ The British and the Americans had long given up on Hungary as a possible ally or even as a neutral state. Located deep in the German sphere of influence and behind enemy lines, what transpired in this small nation state largely escaped the attention of leaders in London and Washington until the late spring of 1944. The fate of the intensely patriotic Hungarian Jews, who, for decades, had shunned foreign ties, concerned as well only a few people in the West. Hungarian Jews fully expected to survive the war, and were secure in the knowledge that their government and nation at large would never surrender them to the Nazis. They proved to be wrong.

The goal of the following investigation is to examine the multiple functions, and measure the relative importance, of the so-called Jewish question in Hungary's relations with Nazi Germany, Romania and Slovakia between 1942 and 1944. The first part discusses revisionism, perceived as the cornerstone of Hungarian foreign policy, and its impact on domestic policy in the 1930s and during the war. The second part explores the relationship between Hungary and two of its Eastern European neighbours in the context of their alliance with Nazi Germany and their participation in Hitler's wars of aggression. It highlights the propensity of the heads of the satellite states to resort to anti-Semitic arguments to curry favour with the Nazi dictator; diminish the reputation of their rivals; improve the position of their countries in the new Europe and, most importantly, obtain a favourable settlement of the outstanding territorial disputes. The third, final part, of the essay, draws attention to the Nazi reaction to Prime Minister Miklós Kállay's attempt to find a way out of the war and save the lives of Hungarian Jews. The article touches on a whole range of relevant issues, such as the role of humanitarian considerations in foreign policy, the relationship between small and big states, dependency, imperialism versus sub-imperialism, and the tendency of small countries to manipulate the fears and exploit the obsessions of their more powerful allies and friends. What role revisionism and anti-Semitism played in Hungarian foreign policy and how foreign policy events contributed to the genocide of Hungarian Jews are the subjects of this article.

Hungarian Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period: Caught Between Revisionism and the Desire for Independence

Based on the values and *modus operandi* of nineteenth-century *Realpolitik*, Hungarian foreign policy in the interwar period pursued limited goals. Trained in Vienna before the war or in Budapest after 1919 by diplomats who had started their careers in the capital of the Dual Monarchy, Hungarian statesmen continued to see the territorial states, rather than so-called races or social classes, as the basic units of the international order. They believed in the primacy of foreign policy: Hungarian statesmen perceived nation states as independent actors motivated by geopolitical interest, tradition, national character and *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the time) rather than conflicts between social groups. Nation states, unlike modern empires, had limited interests, which could be defended or advanced by forming temporary alliances with like-minded actors. Alliances were to be based on

shared geopolitical concerns rather than ideological affinities or common values. The domestic order, that is the social and political structure, of prospective allies remained a secondary issue. The practitioners of *Realpolitik* regarded war as the last resort, and a means to an end rather than an end in itself: as a tragedy, rather than a fortune or an opportunity to establish a new social and political order or create a new man and a superior race. The goal of *Realpolitik* was to restore balance in the international order and preserve peace.

Many, indeed the majority, of European states in the interwar period continued to conduct their foreign affairs according to the norms of *Realpolitik*. What made the Hungarian case different, in some sense unique, was that the country had been defeated during the war and humiliated in its aftermath. Hungarian foreign policy was a product of the "culture of defeat."² In the interwar period, the country was reeling under three traumas, which coloured the perception of its politicians and limited the *Spielraum* of its diplomats. The failed communist experiment of 1919 traumatized the Hungarian middle classes and made cooperation with the Soviet Union, even on shared concerns, exceedingly difficult. Second, the Romanian occupation of 1919, perceived as one of the worst humiliations in their history, combined with the huge territorial losses to Romania, dramatically increased hostility between the two countries, precluding normal contact between their elites.³ Finally, the Treaty of Trianon, which most people attributed to France and Britain, erected a mental and emotional barrier between Hungary and the Western democracies. That the Western countries failed to make amends, and continued to act as the protector of Hungary's neighbours and the guarantors of their borders, naturally frustrated the political class in Budapest, and make them look elsewhere for support.

The two guiding principles of Hungarian foreign policy during the Horthy regime remained independence and irredentism. Both ideas were the products of the nineteenth-century nationalism and liberalism and the political conflicts with the Habsburg dynasty and the ethnic minorities. Compared to the objectives of the major powers, such as imperial expansion; conquest of *Lebensraum* (living space); ethnic cleansing; world revolution and creation of a global dictatorship of the proletariat, these were conservative and moderate goals. Although not obvious to the contemporaries initially, independence and irredentism were difficult to reconcile. The truism that the sovereignty of countries, particularly that of small states, can be only be relative in the modern era rang especially true for

weak states, such as Hungary, which needed the support of the great powers to realize their dreams of revenge and territorial (re)conquest. The support of the great powers, if it had been forthcoming at all, always came at a heavy price. Hungarian statesmen and diplomats during the Horthy regime had to navigate between subservience and resistance. They had to convince the great powers that Hungarian revisionist goals were not only just but they were also in their interests to support them. They had to be attractive, without surrendering too much. Hungarian statesmen wanted to regain their pride without losing self respect; change the country's borders but preserve its status as an independent state.

Hungarians, irrespective of their social and political background, rejected the Treaty of Trianon of 1920, which sanctioned the loss of two-thirds of country's territory and placed one-third of the Magyar-speaking population under foreign rule. As many objective foreign observers also noted, the Treaty was unfair and vindictive. Yet, had the Western powers and the neighbouring states been prepared to make amends, apologize for their misdeeds and perhaps even hold referendums in the ethnically mixed regions, the government in Budapest, not to mention the more extremist elements in the Hungarian population, would still have not been satisfied. The revision of the borders, in other words, was as much a rational demand as it was a psychological problem; as much a domestic-policy issue as it was a foreign-policy goal. Irredentism in Europe was an ideological issue. With the foundation of the League of Patriots and Boulangism, starting in France in the 1870s and 1880s, the revision of the borders though force became a standard theme in the propaganda, and an important weapon in the ideological arsenal, of the European radical and fascist Right.⁴ In Hungary, too, the almost universal desire for the restoration of the old borders benefited mainly the conservative and radical Right. The leader and the radical and fascist Rights demanded not only the abrogation of the Treaty of Trianon, they also rejected liberalism, democracy, Marxist socialism and Western humanitarian traditions. The radical and fascist Rights did not seek to restore the pre-war conservative liberal regime; rather they wanted to renew society and build a state on the basis of martial values; the veneration of strong leaders; the cult of youth, violence and death; anti-Communism and, perhaps most importantly, anti-Semitism. After 1921, the right-wing version of revisionism was complemented with, and competed with, a more moderate conservative variety (popular among professional diplomats), which took political realities more into consideration. However, the conservative brand of irredentism

enjoyed, along with the even more moderate, democratic, liberal and socialist versions of the same idea, only limited support: public opinion in Hungary, until the end of the Horthy regime, dreamt of full restoration, and it saw the revision of the Treaty of Trianon on the basis of democratic principles as, at best, a temporary solution.⁵

The tension between independence and irredentism, the desire for full sovereignty in domestic and foreign affairs and the restoration of the old borders, were already palpable in the 1920s and early 1930s. After 1925, Mussolini and his Foreign Minister, Ciano, tried to spread Italian influence into the Danubian Basin. Determined to turn Hungary into an Italian dependency, the fascist leaders made many promises, albeit no concrete commitment to the revision of the new borders.⁶ The Nazis were even more cautious. In June 1933, less than six months after the Nazi takeover of power, Prime Minister Gyula Gömbös was the first European head of state to visit Hitler in Berlin.⁷ He was received with great fanfare; yet, even in this early stage, the Nazis courteously rejected his idea to create a German-led block of revisionist states and sign a treaty of eternal friendship with Hungary. Hitler and his coterie wanted to have nothing to do with the idea of a multi-ethnic Kingdom of Saint Stephan, which they saw as an anachronism; in addition, they did not want to alienate the small states in the region by openly supporting the Hungarian claims.⁸

Nazi Germany refused to make any commitment to Hungarian revisionism; Hitler and his colleagues wanted free hand in reshaping the map of East-Central Europe. On the other hand, they expected that the small states in the region would do their bidding: Hungarian statesmen would willingly renounce their independence by adjusting their goals and behaviour to Nazi plans. Simmering under the surface for years, the conflict between the Nazi desire to subjugate Hungary, and Hungarian ambition to regain the lost territories via German help, became acute during the Czechoslovak Crisis of 1938. Fearing international isolation and military defeat, Regent Miklós Horthy and his advisors refused to play the role of an agent provocateur, even though Hitler promised the entire Slovakia as a reward. Because of the Hungarian refusal to attack Czechoslovakia, Berlin had to give up its plan to dismember its hated neighbour in the fall. Still, the First Vienna Award of November 1938 restored Hungarian sovereignty over southern Slovakia, which had an overwhelmingly Magyar-speaking population. Since the new borders more or less followed ethnic lines, Great Britain also recognized the First Vienna Award as legitimate. Six months later, in March 1939, the Hungarian army occupied Sub-

Carpathian Ruthenia to create a common border with Poland, Hungary's historical ally. The British government, significantly, did not protest against the Hungarian occupation of the region. London registered with satisfaction that Hungary had refused to participate in, or indirectly aid, the German attack on Poland in the fall; British statesmen were particularly impressed by the generosity with which the government in Budapest received the tens of thousands of Polish refugees who fled across the border in the wake of defeat. Many of these refugees soon left the country to join Polish units in the British, French and even American armies to liberate Europe from the Nazi yoke.⁹

These first successes reinforced the Hungarian political elite's conviction that they could manipulate the Nazi threat to their advantage; remain Germany's ally without losing their independence; regain territories without firing a shot, and profit from German expansionism without losing face with the West. However, the Second Vienna Award of August 1940, which returned one-third of Transylvania and 2.5 million people, one half of whom were Magyar-speakers, to Hungary, exposed the limits and contradictions of this "cherry-picking" approach to foreign policy. Hungary owed its last great foreign-policy success to the Soviet-Romanian conflict and Fascist Italy rather than to Hitler, and the Nazis, who would have preferred minor changes along the existing border. The Award predictably satisfied neither Hungary nor Romania, which remained in a quasi state of war with each other the next four years. The real winner of the Second Vienna Award was Nazi Germany. The conflict between Hungary and Romania over Transylvania facilitated the economic exploitation of both countries, reinforced their dependence on the Third Reich, in both the political and military spheres, and made their departure from the Nazi-led alliance exceedingly difficult.¹⁰

The partial restoration of the old border demanded a heavy price: Hungarian statesmen were rapidly losing control over the country's foreign and domestic policy. In November 1938, in the wake of the First Vienna Award, at Nazi Germany's insistence, the Hungarian government sanctioned the setting-up of the first *Volksbund* groups. Conceived as the self-governing body of the German minority, the *Volksbund* looked to Berlin, rather than Budapest, for guidance, instruction and support. By 1942, it had become a state-within-a-state, one of the most important engines of right-wing radicalization and an agent of German imperialism. Under German pressure, Hungary also left the League of Nations and joined the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1939. By joining the Tripartite Pact in

November 1940, Hungary officially abandoned its neutrality and became a military ally of the fascist states and Japan against the West. Deliveries of food and animal fodder to Germany had increased significantly in the late 1930s and early 1940s, while Hungarian industry became almost completely dependent on the Third Reich for technology, investment and markets. In 1940, Budapest allowed the transit of German troops to occupy the Romanian oil fields. In early April 1941, a week after the German invasion and in the wake of Croatia's declaration of independence from Yugoslavia, Hungarian army units, with German permission, occupied the northern part of the defunct state. The occupation was done independently and not on Nazi orders; yet it also suited well the German plans. On her own, without German request but in the climate of intense anti-Bolshevism and pro-Nazi sentiment, Hungary declared war on the Soviet Union on June 27, 1941.¹¹ Great Britain, as the ally of the Soviet Union, returned the favour on December 7, 1941. Herbert Pell, the American Minister to Hungary, and a friend and admirer of the country, suggested to Prime Minister László Bárdossy that he should attach a letter to the Hungarian declaration of war on the United States to explain that the Hungarian government had acted under duress. However, Bárdossy (who, until his appointment as Prime Minister had been much more cautious and pro-Western) rejected Pell's advice and abruptly responded that the Hungarian government had acted independently of Berlin. Hungary in due course declared war on the United States on December 12, 1941.¹² However, President Roosevelt did not consider the declaration from a small East-Central European state important enough to notify the Senate for several months. The Senate finally declared war on Hungary in early June 1942.¹³ Meanwhile, in January 1942, the Budapest government, hoping that its services would be rewarded with the restoration of Hungarian sovereignty over Transylvania in its entirety, dispatched a 200,000-man strong army to the Eastern front. Simultaneously, it gave Berlin the right to recruit ethnic Germans, many of whom did not speak their ancestors' language, into the Waffen SS.¹⁴

The gradual loss of sovereignty implied German involvement in what the Nazis considered the most important issue in the world: finding a radical solution to the so-called Jewish Question. The link between Hungarian foreign policy and the growing influence of the Third Reich on domestic policy, in general, and on anti-Jewish legislation, in particular, was first indirect. The victory of Nazism strengthened the radical and fascist Right in Hungary, and made anti-Semitism more respectable. The First and the Second Anti-Jewish Laws of 1938 and 1939 had to do with

domestic rather than foreign policy considerations; these legislations served to solve deep-seeded social problems at the expense of Jews, and to take the wind out of the agitation of the national socialists. Yet it is unlikely that these laws would have been passed, had Great Britain rather than Germany become Hungary's new neighbour in 1938. The first two laws limited the number of Jews in businesses and the liberal professions; excluded them from the civil service, and deprived the majority of Hungarian citizens of Jewish background of the right to cast their votes in local and national elections. Even though there were still loopholes in these legislations and corruption often saved lives and livelihoods, the social and psychological impact of these legislations cannot be overstated: by the end of 1940, more than 200,000 people had lost their jobs and tens of thousands of families had been reduced to poverty. The relation between foreign policy and anti-Jewish legislation was more obvious in the case of the Third Anti-Jewish Law of 1941. The law, which forbade marriage and sexual relations between Jews and Gentiles, was passed in the wake of the Nazi attack and Hungarian declaration of war on the Soviet Union. A result of self-*Gleichschaltung* rather than direct demand from Berlin, the Third Anti-Jewish Law reflected the increasing Nazification of large segments of the Hungarian political elite. This process was fuelled by the physical proximity of the Third Reich, German victories in the first phase of the war, and the success of Hungarian irredentism thanks to the support of the fascist states.¹⁵

From Patriots to Traitors and War Criminals: The Extreme Right during the War

The greatest threat to the lives of Jews in Hungary came from the leaders and members of the national socialist parties and their open or clandestine supporters in the army, the gendarmerie and the civil service. The extreme Right supported the German alliance for political and cultural reasons. Racism, anti-Slavic and anti-Russian sentiments pushed many to take the side of Nazi Germany in its struggle against 'eastern races.' Nazi Germany, in this interpretation, represented Western civilization; Hungary, as an integral part of this civilization, had the duty to support the Germans in their life-and-death struggle against the 'subhuman' Slavs. As one of the architects of the Hungarian phase of the Holocaust, the Minister of the Interior, Andor Jaross explained to his judges at his trial in 1946, "in the Danubian Basin, two currents collide: the Germans and the Slavs. I have

no doubt that there is only road open to Hungary: it has to support fully its ally Germany, which represents European culture."¹⁶

The support of the Hungarian extreme right for Nazi Germany was far from automatic. Many Hungarian national socialists were originally attracted to Italian Fascism rather than to German Nazism; the majority found Teutonic racial doctrines too rigid, the Nazis too arrogant and German imperialism and expansion into East Central Europe too dangerous to cast their lot with the Third Reich and embrace the Nazi model.¹⁷ Only under the impact of German military victories during the first stage of the war, and the partial success of Hungarian revisionist goals did they convert fully to the Nazi cause. As László Baky, Eichmann's friend, and one of the three Hungarian architects of the Holocaust put it during his trial in 1946, "we attributed the return of the territories to the strength of the German Reich."¹⁸ Hungarian national socialists were grateful to the Third Reich, and could not imagine that, under any circumstance, they would betray their benefactor, ally and friend. Some feared Nazi imperialism; yet they still preferred German victory to Western triumph, not to mention, to Russian conquest. The West, the national socialists contended, had never supported Hungarian revisionism: were the Anglo-Saxon powers to win the conflict, they would surely penalize the country for choosing the Third Reich and Fascist Italy as its allies. A Soviet victory, on the other hand, would spell the end of the Hungarian nation and state. After Stalingrad, the leading national socialists (with the exception of a handful of fanatics, such as Baky, who believed in German victory until the spring of 1945) recognized that Nazi Germany could not win the war. However, at least until the summer of 1944, they thought that a negotiated settlement, a deal between Hitler and the Allies that would leave Hungary and East Central Europe in German hands was still possible. In any case, the majority was prepared to die for the cause in which they believed. They saw no way out of the ideological and political trap into which they had fallen, and preferred honourable death, and even national suicide, to the eternal shame of betrayal.¹⁹

National socialists, as Jaross explained during his trial in 1946, did not consider Jews Hungarian, but members of a different and hostile race. Even the most assimilated and patriotic Jews, Jaross argued, preferred the company of their coreligionists to that of non-Jews; when the interest of the two groups collided, they never failed to side with their own kind. In the national socialist interpretation antisemitism, including pogroms and other forms of violence, was only a natural reaction of the host nations to

Jewish greed, pretention and arrogance. The national socialists wanted to find a “civilized solution” to the so-called Jewish Question, which, after 1941, meant deportation to the Third Reich or occupied Poland and Ukraine and mass murder. It was “civilized” only to the extent that the killing was done by others, and out of sight of the Hungarian population. National socialist antisemitism was part and parcel of “palingenetic ultra-nationalism,” which perceived war as an opportunity to revive the nation and create a new man.²⁰ In time of war, the national socialist in Hungary believed, one had to focus on individual and national survival; he or she could not display empathy for the weak and the unfortunate, not to mention, for the real or alleged enemies of the race. Western humanism, as an ideology, was dead, Jaross told his audience in Nagyvárad during the Holocaust; he then asked his listeners of what they considered more important: “the fate of 13.5 million Hungarians... of a few hundred thousand people who have never belonged to the Hungarian community? Our goal cannot be the protection of... goodness at any price; rather our goal is to serve life.”²¹

The national socialists’ antisemitism was home-grown: their demand to expropriate, segregate and deport Jews was motivated by native prejudices and interests. The Hungarian national socialists used the war and their country’s close ties to Nazi Germany to put pressure on the government to bring about the radical solution of the so-called Jewish Question. Thus, in the wake of the Hungarian declaration of war on the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, parliamentary representatives of the Arrow Cross Party demanded that every Jew be placed under police surveillance, since “it is well known that they actively participate in the war and work against both the Third Reich and us.” In December 1941, at least six months before the German government raised the same issues, they insisted on the introduction of the yellow star, full segregation, the setting up of ghettos, forced labour and prohibition of sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews.²² In March 1943, in a memorandum, the national socialist deputies asked Regent Horthy to replace the parliamentary system with a modern, and allegedly efficient, dictatorship.²³ In early May 1943, the same group of parliamentary representatives sent a memorandum to Regent Horthy demanding that “the Jewry must be isolated from the body of the nation, and preparation must be made for their final expropriation, when reparations will be made by the Jews for all the intellectual and financial damages they have done to Magyardom.”²⁴ In the second half of 1943 and early 1944, radical right-wing politicians, such as Béla Lukács,

Ferenc Rajnis and ex-Prime Minister, Béla Imrédy gave several rousing speeches in the parliament, expressing their unwavering support for the war and the Nazi alliance. In the same breath, they urged the government to take steps to immediately deport, or at least make preparations for the deportation of, Hungarian Jews. Jewish black-marketers and speculators increased misery and destroyed public morality; wealthy Jewish landowners, bankers and manufacturers stood in the way of serious social, especially land, reform, and the Jewish community as a whole represented a grave threat to the country's security, radical right-wing politicians argued.²⁵ In March 1944, less than two weeks before the German occupation of the country, the news agency of the state, the conservative Hungarian News Agency (Magyar Távirati Iroda or MTI), passed on to Regent Horthy and his advisors a secret report. It stated that:

there are then those on the Right, and not a few of them, who are determined to settle scores (*elintéz*) with the Jews. It is not only the extremist members of the Arrow Cross but also, often enough, the followers of Imrédy who speak openly about the [need for] pogroms. They say that we have to exterminate the Jews now, lest they create chaos and Communism if the situation turns from bad to worse. In these circles, the hatred of the Jews is stronger and bitterer than it was when the anti-Jewish laws had been debated.²⁶

Beside the national socialist parties, it was the officer corps of the Army and the rural police, the gendarmerie, who counted among the most fanatical supporters of the war and the German alliance in the early 1940s; the same institutions played an important role in the Jewish genocide. Born in a civil war after the collapse of the Council Republic in 1919, the independent *Honvéd* was never able to shed its counterrevolutionary origins: its officers remained fiercely nationalistic, anti-communist and, with a few notable exceptions, anti-Semitic in the interwar period.²⁷ This was even truer for the gendarmerie, which provided a haven for leaders and the rank-and-file for the murderous right-wing paramilitary groups after 1923.²⁸ Impressed with the *élan* and technological superiority of the German army and the rapid militarization of German society, the officer corps became, after 1935, increasingly pro-German and pro-Nazi as well. Yet, despite their admiration for the Wehrmacht, the Hungarian military elite, as we have seen, still opposed direct participation in the Czechoslovak conflict in 1938, and made their opinion known to the political leaders.²⁹ The military elite abandoned this cautious approach only under

the impact of Nazi victories in Poland in 1939 and in the West in 1940. Under the leadership of Henrik Werth, the Chief of the General Staff and Károly Bartha, the Minister of Defence, the Army became the main proponent of the war and of alliance with Nazi Germany. The two men helped to persuade the Regent to declare war, on false pretences, on the Soviet Union at the end of June of 1941. Werth's and Bartha's enthusiasm for the German and Nazi cause in 1941 knew no limits; they were even prepared to transport the entire Hungarian Army to the Russian front, if requested by Hitler. Their unquestioning support for the Nazi cause was too much even for Regent Horthy, who had also become more pro-German in the early stages of the war. In September 1941, the Regent replaced Werth with the more cautious Ferenc Szombathelyi, who represented the more pro-Western segment of the military elite.³⁰ Szombathelyi was unable to reverse the course set by his predecessor, however; if anything, in the next sixteen months, the Hungarian army became even more entangled in the war in the East. In spring of 1942, Horthy and his advisors sent 200,000 soldiers, the entire Second Army, to the Eastern Front, which, like the German Sixth Army, would be completely destroyed during the Battle of Voronezh in early 1943.³¹

Contemporary intelligence reports paint a grim picture of the political allegiance and activities of the Hungarian military elite during the war. According to one of these reports, the overwhelming majority of high-ranking officers was both pro-German and supported the Arrow Cross or other fascist groups.³² As for their political orientation, pro-German and pro-Nazi officers in Horthy's entourage outnumbered their pro-British and politically less radical counterparts by three to one.³³ Anti-Semitism became all-pervasive, too. Many officers used the new anti-Semitic laws to get rid of unwanted colleagues and competitors. On the basis of denunciations, between 1939 and 1942 the Ministry of Defence dismissed from their jobs hundreds of part-Jewish officers (there were no fully Jewish officers in the Army) and professional soldiers whose spouses had descended from Jewish families.³⁴ The participation of the officer corps in the anti-Jewish campaigns did not end with the expulsion of *Mischlinge* from the Army, however. In the spring of 1939, Hungarian army and paramilitary units committed dozens of atrocities against Jews and Ukrainians in Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia.³⁵ Typically, the Hungarian authorities tried to silence the Zionist leader in Ruthenia, Cháim Kugel, who, during his foreign trips, had allegedly sought to draw the attention of international organizations to the plight of local Jews and to Hungarian

policy to rob thousands of Jews of Hungarian citizenship and expel them from the region.³⁶ With barely disguised joy, Hungarian officials reported that many Orthodox Jews had been trying to find refuge in Soviet-Siberia. Others headed for Palestine. According to the report, recent Jewish immigrants from Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia deeply resented British support for the Arabs in Palestine, and did not hide their sympathy for Italy in its war against the Western allies.³⁷

The mistreatment of Hungarian and Ukrainian Jews in the recently occupied Ruthenia did not represent an isolated incident, but only the first step on the long road to genocide. In the spring of 1941, Hungarian authorities expelled tens of thousands of Serbs, mainly immigrants and the representatives of the defunct state of Yugoslavia, from the recently occupied territories. They also killed hundreds of Romanians who resisted the occupation, and prompted thousands to flee Northern Transylvania after the summer of 1940. With the declaration of war on the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Bárdossy government ordered the deportation of foreign Jews. In the summer, the rural police, the infamous gendarmerie, collected between 15,000 and 18,000 people, not only "illegals" but many Hungarian citizens and lawful immigrants, and transported them, first to the border-town of Kőrösmező, and then to the southern Ukrainian towns of Kamenets-Podolsk, Stanislau and Horodenka. On route, the sadistic guards had robbed, beaten and tortured many of the prisoners; according to the witnesses' accounts, mutilation and murder were also common. Upon arrival, the Hungarians handed the deportees over to a German *Einsatzgruppe* to massacre them.³⁸ In January 1942, in the village of Zsablya and the town of Újvidék (Novi Sad), Hungarian army and gendarmerie units murdered, as part an anti-insurgency operation, thousands of civilians, including women and children; many hundreds of their victims were Jews.³⁹

Under the ministerial decree of 1941, and the Military Service Act of 1942, Jewish men of military age were excluded from conscription; instead of regular formations, they were forced to serve in unarmed auxiliary labour battalions, which could be employed both at home and at the front. The officers who commanded the labour battalions were of very low quality; army leaders often put sadists, violent anti-Semites and Nazis into positions of power and these used their commission to torture, work or starve to death or outright murder their subordinates. Between 1941 and the summer of 1943 more than 42,000 Jewish soldiers died of mistreatment, became wounded or fell into Soviet captivity on the Eastern

front. Thanks to the appointment of General Vilmos Nagy as Minister of Defence, their situation finally began to improve in late 1942. From then on, abuses became less common and, and they claimed fewer lives.⁴⁰ Fifteen labour companies were sent to work in Serbian copper mines in the framework of Organization Todt in the second part of the war. The majority of the detainees died of mistreatment or were killed, like the famous poet Miklós Radnóti, who died during the death march of 1944.⁴¹

By 1944, ideological penetration had gone so far that the conservative political elite could no longer count on the Army to fulfill its duties. Even though there were plenty of signs of an impending invasion, military leaders failed to prepare the country for a German attack in March 1944.⁴² The military leaders considered resistance against German occupation futile; yet, paradoxically, they were prepared to defend the Carpathian Mountain Ranges against the much larger and, by 1944, much stronger Red Army.⁴³ The Hungarian Army, unlike the German Wehrmacht, played only a limited role in the genocide. On the other hand, the gendarmerie, which had been army-trained and stood, in part, under the control of the Ministry of Defence, not only helped to collect Jews, which was their original order, but it also, 'proactively,' participated in the deportation. The Army failed to defend the country against the invaders and prevent the deportation of Hungarian citizens. Yet what they did was not only a matter omission but also that of commission. In the summer and fall of the same year, the military elite betrayed Horthy and his conservative advisors in their desperate attempt to find an honourable way out of the war. The majority of officers refused to abandon their German ally; on October 15, on the day of an attempted coup, they also violated their oath to Regent Horthy by siding with the new Arrow Cross government. Many continued to fight against the Soviet troops, thus prolonging the country's suffering, until the spring of 1945.⁴⁴

Yet it was not only the radical rationalists in the national socialist parties and the armed forces, who were prepared to sacrifice full sovereignty on the altar of revisionism, and accept the country's status as Nazi Germany's satellite.⁴⁵ Irredentism, the just desire to re-gain at least some of the lost territories and liberate fellow Hungarian from foreign rule drove large segments of the population into Hitler's arms. Until 1942, with a few notable exceptions, such as Endre Bajcsy Zsilinsky, everyone in Hungary, from underground Communists to traditional liberal conservatives, supported the German alliance. The Communists worried only about the growing political influence of the national socialist and fascist parties at

home.⁴⁶ Yet popular support for the Nazis in Hungary also remained shallow and proved to be transient; like Hitler's charisma, it depended on continued German military successes.⁴⁷ As the war turned sour for the Nazis after the Battle of Stalingrad in early 1943, the majority of Hungarians, too, began to have second thoughts about the Nazi alliance and the war. According to a German embassy report, by 1943, the social political and cultural elite, including the leaders of the Christian churches, had become pro-British and anti-German; only the members of extreme right-wing parties and young military officers in Hungary had still supported the war.⁴⁸ The Hungarian public appraised the political situation more realistically, and did not regard leaving the Axis alliance a moral issue. That there was still relatively little resistance, in the forms of sabotage, destruction of infrastructure and attacks on German troops, to the Nazi invasion in the spring and summer of 1944 should not be attributed to cowardness or widespread sympathy for the Axis cause, not to mention popular support for the German-led Jewish genocide. The sight of German soldiers on Hungarian soil was not new: the Wehrmacht had been using Hungarian railways and roads for years to transport their soldiers to the front. The Hungarian public had been taught to think that German soldiers were allies and friends, who came to help to defend the country's eastern frontiers against the Bolshevik archenemy. Finally, the conservative political elite not only failed to secure the support of the officer corps and organize the army to defeat the invasion; it also failed to prepare the public psychologically for the invasion. Fragmented into small groups and pre-occupied with survival, the Hungarian public watched the unfolding of events from the sidelines, or were swept away, either as victims or perpetrators, by them.

The Role of the 'Jewish Question' in Hungary's Relations with Its Neighbours and with Nazi Germany

Hungary was not the only the county in East-Central Europe that had to find a balance between independence and irredentism: the desire to maintain its sovereignty in domestic and foreign policy and draw the border in a way to incorporate every member of the ethnic community. Every ethnic group and state was at one point irredentist East-Central Europe between 1860 and 1945 (and beyond). A product of nineteenth-century nationalism, irredentism was exacerbated by the First World War and the blatantly unfair peace treaties in its aftermath. In the old Austro-

Hungarian Empire, minorities could look to the royal house and the cosmopolitan segments of the political and social elite, such as the aristocracy and the Catholic Church, for protection. In the small, more democratic, nation states in the interwar period, however, the new political elite, who hailed from the middle and lower middle classes, cared little about the fate of ethnic and religious minorities. Abandoned and even demonized by the holders of power, the ethnic minorities in East Central Europe had only three options in the interwar period: they could leave their ancestral land; assimilate into the dominant group; seek to revise, with the help of their brethren in the neighbouring states, the borders (betray their new country). This third option was not available to everyone. Jews who did not have a homeland found themselves in a precarious position after 1919. Since they had historically identified, and culturally assimilated into, the dominant ethnic groups, they were even more likely to be accused of disloyalty in the interwar period. Ethnic Germans faced the same dilemma. Dispersed all over Eastern Europe, they were perceived (and after 1933 treated), as the agents of an imperial power, Nazi Germany.⁴⁹

As an alternative to competition and war (and a means to hinder the involvement of imperial power in the business of small ethnic groups and states), Hungary and its neighbours could have forged closer ties with one another; instead of fortifying or re-drawing the existing borders and seeking to assimilate or expel unwanted “aliens,” they could have made the borders permeable. Indeed, after the First World War, the more far-sighted members of the Hungarian and Romanian elites toyed with the idea of a personal union between the two countries with the Romanian ruler as the king. Although it survived well into the Second World War, the idea of a personal union or federation could not be realized for lack of support from the major political parties. Cooperation against the common enemy also remained on the table until the very end of the war. After 1942, the Hungarian government sought contacts with the regime in Bucharest, as well as, with its liberal and conservative opposition in order to coordinate their plans to leave the Nazi camp. These top-level discussions did not go very far, however. The Romanian dictator, General Ion Antonescu, preferred “population exchange,” which implied the expulsion of the Hungarian population from Transylvania, to territorial solutions. His Deputy Prime Minister, Mihai Antonescu, a distant relative of the dictator, also demanded the return of Northern Transylvania as a prelude to any substantive negotiations.⁵⁰ Negotiations with the Romanian opposition also failed to produce any results: no liberal or conservative politician was

prepared to accept the Second Vienna Award. István Bethlen, Horthy's closest advisor, and his fellow Transylvanian aristocrats maintained good relations with Iulio Maniu, the leader of the Conservative opposition in Romania. In the summer of 1943, Hungarian diplomats had intense discussions with Maniu on a whole range of issues from the fate of Transylvania to the possibility of coordinating their policies towards Nazi Germany and the Western Allies. The politically experienced Maniu, who before 1938 had supported the fascist Legionaries, admitted to his Hungarian colleagues that only Nazi Germany had profited from the rivalry between the two countries, Romania and Hungary, and the Nazi alliance hurt both lands. Maniu was less paranoid about the Soviet threat than his Hungarian partners.⁵¹ On the issue of Transylvania, the Romanian politician was not prepared to make any concessions, however. Transylvania belonged to Romania, he argued, and the Second Vienna Award had to be declared null and void before any serious negotiations could begin. Predictably, the talks bogged down in mutual accusations of war crimes and expressions of joy over each other's distress. The Hungarians were convinced that the Romanians were internationally isolated; the West, they believed, would never forget that the Romanian army had turned weapons, which they had received from France, against their Soviet ally. The Western powers allegedly recognized that the Treaty of Trianon left Hungary with no other choice but to join the revisionist powers: Hungary was at least consistently pro-German, while Romania betrayed her friends. The West was also angrier at Romania, Hungarian politicians argued, because it had mistreated Jews. Maniu suggested that Romania still had a friend in the Czech exiled politician, Eduard Beneš, who was highly regarded in London and Washington. The Hungarian response to this was that Beneš as a political figure had passed his time: he was too pro-Russian to be taken seriously either by the British or the Americans.⁵²

The breakdown of talks between Maniu and the Bethlen circle reflected the troubled relations between the two countries during the war. In 1939 and 1940, it was the Romanians who were afraid that the Hungarian army, in alliance with the Soviets and the Bulgarians, would attack them.⁵³ The position of the two countries changed completely after the Second Vienna Award of 1940. Until then, Hungary was the main revisionist power in the region. After the Second Vienna Award, and particularly following the Axis attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, however, Romania became the chief irredentist force in the region. Predictably both countries tried to manipulate the Nazis to their own

advantage. During his first meeting with the German dictator in April 1942, Prime Minister Kállay asked Hitler to prolong the military occupation of Romania to prevent the invasion of Hungary by the Romanian army. He also protested against stationing of battle-hardened Romanian troops in Southern Transylvania, close to the new Hungarian-Romanian border.⁵⁴ The Romanian political elite not only wanted to reassert their sovereignty over all of Transylvania: they also sought to annex additional territories east of the Tisza River (thus realising the oldest dream of Romanian irredentism). They sought to achieve this plan by reviving, now under the patronage of Nazi Germany, the Little Entente, this time as an alliance of Romania, Slovakia, Croatia and Bulgaria, and launching an attack by all members against their arch enemy Hungary. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mihai Antonescu first raised with Hitler the issue of an alliance among the three Balkan states and Slovakia against Hungary in November 1941.⁵⁵ However, the Führer still did not trust the Romanians, who, until 1940, had been a military ally of Britain, enough to take the bait. Berlin wanted peace in South-Eastern Europe; a military conflict between Romania and Hungary would have only disrupted access to the regions' economic resources, such as oil and aluminum, and would have endangered the war effort in Soviet-Russia. German administrators and diplomats complained bitterly about the attitude of Romanian and Hungarian leaders, who, obsessed with Transylvania, allegedly ignored the Bolshevik threat. In a memorandum dated early June 1942, Ernst Woermann, Head of the South-Eastern European Department within the German Foreign Ministry, argued that Germany's role in the region was to exert a moderating influence on both parties.⁵⁶ A few days later in a letter to the Foreign Ministry, Dietrich von Jagow, the German ambassador in Budapest, stated that Hitler, too, had guaranteed the Second Vienna Award, and he would not tolerate military aggression by either party.⁵⁷

Nazi Germany was not a totalitarian state in the classical sense of the word: the foreign policy of the German government towards Eastern and South-Eastern Europe was no more consistent than its approach to education, culture or economic developments. State and party institutions with different visions and interests, such as the Foreign Ministry, NSDAP Office of Foreign Affairs, Göring's Office of the Four Year Plan, the Reich Youth Leadership, the Ministry of Propaganda and the SS all tried to influence, and even sought to set the parameters of, German foreign policy towards the region. This Social Darwinian struggle between state and party agencies only highlighted the role of Hitler both as the arbiter of

conflicts and ultimate decision-maker.⁵⁸ Hitler held the Hungarians, the Romanians and the Slovaks in low regard. He also thought that National Socialism was not for export, and that the fascist parties and movements in the region did not deserve the full attention and trust of Nazi leaders. As a result of Nazi racism, the Third Reich provided only limited financial and political support to fascist parties and movements, such as the Romanian Legionaries and the Hungarian Arrow Cross in the region.⁵⁹ Hitler's goal was to ensure the economic exploitation of the three countries remain smooth during the war, and to end discrimination against, and improve the social and political status of, the German minorities. As we have seen, Hitler never embraced the Hungarian plan to restore the country's pre-1918 borders; yet, he did not side with the Romanian and the Slovak nationalists either. The Nazi dictator deliberately encouraged competition between the satellite states by making vague promises and hinting at compensations at their neighbours' expense after the war. What the post-war map of the region would look like, he either did not know or failed to betray to his allies, however.

Although Hitler and his advisors never renounced the Second Vienna Award, by the spring of 1943, they had begun to tilt towards Romania in its conflict with Hungary. As far as Hitler was concerned, Romania, unlike Hungary, had proven its mettle as a loyal and strategically important ally of the Third Reich: Bucharest contributed more men to the Nazi war effort than any other Eastern European country. Romanian army, gendarmerie and *Einsatzgruppen* units also played a major role in the genocide of Jews in Bessarabia, Bukovina Transnistria and Southern Ukraine in 1941 and 1942.⁶⁰ Bucharest remained the largest exporter of oil to Germany, a strategically vital commodity, the value of which only increased with the souring of the war effort in Russia. Finally, Hitler liked and respected the bright, peevish, arrogant and murderously anti-Semitic Marshall Ion Antonescu more than any other Eastern European statesman, Regent Horthy included.⁶¹

By the fall of 1943, Hitler not only had become more pro-Romanian: he had also warmed up to the idea of the Little Entente under German sponsorship as well. The original Nazi plan to occupy Hungary in early 1944 thus foresaw the use of Slovak, Croat and Romanian troops; the latter were supposed to occupy Northern Transylvania and Eastern Hungary up to the Tisza River, thus bringing one of the oldest dreams of Romanian nationalism to fruition. Overwhelmed with joy, Marshall Antonescu immediately promised "one million men" to defeat the archenemy.⁶² At the

last minute, however, Hitler, on the advice of Ernst Kaltenbrunner, the chief of the Gestapo, and two experts of the Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt), changed his mind. Lest the occupation lead to an armed insurgency in Hungary, the Germans decided to dispense with Romanian, Slovak and Croat troops. Even though the decision had already been made, on March 18, 1944, on the eve of the invasion, Hitler still talked to Horthy as if involvement of the neighbouring states would still be an option. His ruse worked: labouring under the memory of the ill-fated Council Republic and the Romanian invasion of 1919, Horthy ordered the Hungarian Army not to resist the invading Wehrmacht.⁶³

The Nazis growing dislike of Hungary had to do not only with geopolitical and military considerations: Hitler and his advisors were also angered by what they considered the manifest philo-Semitism of Hungarian conservatives, and their refusal to participate in the genocide. In early summer of 1942, Berlin raised, for the first time, the issue of the expulsion of Hungarian Jews from the Third Reich; it also put pressure on the Hungarian government to introduce the yellow star and make preparations for their eventual expulsion from Hungary, as well. The deportation of the Jews, Nazi officials argued, “has to be solved in the same manner as it has happened in the case of Slovakia, Croatia and Romania.”⁶⁴ In early October, German bureaucrats told their Hungarian colleagues that the presence of Hungarian Jews in the Third Reich posed a security threat, and they were determined to deport these alien Jews to the East, unless the government in Budapest arranged for their immediate departure. In regards to domestic policy, Nazi officials advised that Hungary should follow the example of Romania, Slovakia and Croatia, which had carried out the resettlement of the Jews with German help and support.⁶⁵ A week later Jagow received a cable from his superiors in Berlin; he was told that it was “the wish of the Führer to solve completely the Jewish question as soon as possible.” The high cost incurred and the human sacrifices already made would all be in vain and the Third Reich would be humiliated, if the Jews would be allowed to remain in Europe and use their considerable economic and intellectual resources to defeat Nazi Germany and its allies in the war. The Ambassador was asked to put more pressure on the Hungarian government to complete the exclusion of Jews from the economic and cultural life of Hungary and make arrangements for their deportation.⁶⁶ According to Prime Minister Kállay, in the first half of 1943 the Nazi government repeated the same request, falling back each time on the same arguments: Hungary was out of step with its neighbours, and indeed with

the rest of Europe: that only 10,000 out of the original 95,000 Jews had remained in Slovakia; Romanians deported tens of thousands of Jews; the Bulgarian government was planning to introduce the yellow star, and had asked for German help to make preparation for their eventual transport; virtually no Jews had remained in Serbia; only technical problems had prevented the Croats from expelling all their Jews; and the transport of Jews out of Laval's France had also proceeded according to plan.⁶⁷

By the end of 1942, the genocide of the European Jews had become Hitler's main goal and the *raison d'être* of the Nazi regime. Yet, as we have seen, the Nazis also instrumentalized anti-Semitism in foreign policy to ensure compliance with their orders, test the loyalty of their allies and introduce political and social changes in the satellites states. Manipulation and instrumentalization of the so-called Jewish question, however, was a two-way street: the satellites, Hungary and Romania included, also tried to exploit Nazi paranoia and genocidal hatred for the Jews to achieve their geo-political goals. Hungarian leaders thus never tired in emphasizing their anti-Semitic credentials: namely, that Hungary was the first state in Europe to pass anti-Jewish legislation after the First World War. Romanian politicians, on the other hand, rarely missed an opportunity to contrast their treatment of the Jews with the turpitude and "false humanism" of the Hungarian government. Thus, during his trip to Berlin in November 1941, Mihai Antonescu, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Romania, told Goebbels that the Hungarians were too corrupt and non-European even to comprehend, not to mention to act upon, the idea of "pure nationalism free of pro-Semitic tendencies;" he then added that the political elite in Budapest had secretly supported anti-German agitation in their country.⁶⁸

While in Berlin Romanian leaders continued to brag about their "idealism" for the next two years, at home they secretly worried that they might have gone too far. By the end of 1942, even Antonescu had realized that his policy of full compliance did not produce any tangible results: Romanian sacrifices at the front and Romanian participation in the Holocaust did not bring the revision of the Vienna *Diktat* any closer. Beseched by Queen Mother Elena, the Western powers, the Red Cross, the War Refugee Board, members of the old political elite, such as Maniu and the Liberals, and the leaders of the Jewish community, and even by his distant cousin, the equally murderous anti-Semite, Mihai Antonescu, the Conducător decided not to follow through with the deportation order in late 1942.⁶⁹ In 1941 and 1942, the government in Bucharest had abandoned

Romanian Jews living in Nazi occupied Western Europe to their fate; however, in the next two years it sought to repatriate the survivors. Marshall Antonescu also allowed the return of Jews expelled from Bessarabia and Bukovina. In 1944, the Romanian government even provided a refuge for Jews, threatened with deportation and certain death, from Northern Transylvania and Hungary proper. These measures were not motivated by a change of heart or a sense of guilt or any other humanitarian consideration. Romanian leaders recognized that the Nazis might lose the war, and they wanted to use the surviving Jewish population as pawns in their negotiations with the Western allies.⁷⁰

Competition between Hungary and Slovakia for Hitler's good will was equally intense, and it produced similar results. Budapest sought Hitler's support to restore Hungarian control over the entire Slovakia; the Slovaks, on the other hand, sought protection in Berlin against their southern neighbour. Until 1943, Berlin had no reason to complain, especially when it came to Slovak compliance with Nazi policy on the so-called Jewish question. In 1940 and 1941, in a series of legislations, the clerical-fascist regime in Bratislava created a racial state, destroyed Jewish livelihood and even introduced the yellow star. In May 1942, the Slovak parliament accepted the expulsion of the Jews (the only person who voted against the measure was the leader of the Hungarian minority party, Count János Esterházy). As a sign of their total compliance with the Nazis, the Slovak government even paid the Germans 500 marks for every Slovak Jew deported.⁷¹ During their meeting on April 22, 1943, Prime Minister Jozef Tiso assured the German dictator that he and the Slovak people would not rest until the last Jew was deported from their country. Hungary, on the other hand, Tiso told Hitler, "has become Europe's ghetto." Hitler, in his turn, made fun of Regent Horthy's apology that Hungarian Jews might have been treated too harshly in the labour service.⁷²

By the spring of 1943, Tiso's boast began to ring hollow. Chastised by the Vatican and threatened by the Catholic hierarchy at home, the Slovak government, like its Romanian counterpart, slowed down the deportation of the Jews in the fall of 1942. The Nazis suspected foul play, and, to better assess the situation, they dispatched *SS Brigadeführer* Edmund Veessenmayer to Bratislava in the late spring of 1943. In the Slovak capital, Veessenmayer raised the issue of deportation to gauge Tiso's and his colleagues' attitude towards Germany: significantly, to Veessenmayer and the Nazi elite, the willingness to deport Jews remained the surest sign of loyalty to the Third Reich.⁷³ But the dice had been already cast: soon

after the visit, on June 6, 1943, the Conference of Slovak Bishops denounced the persecution of the Jews in an open letter. Still, for the next ten months, Tiso and his colleagues continued to raise the issue of the "Hungarian aberration" to curry favour with, and calm the suspicions of, the Nazi dictator.⁷⁴

Although the German occupation of Hungary led to a drastic change in Hungarian foreign policy in March 1944, competition with the neighbouring states continued until the end of the war and beyond. In June 1944, the Hungarian government reacted nervously to the news that the Romanians had made a deal with the Roosevelt administration to allow Hungarian Jews to enter their country and give permission to Romanian Jews to emigrate to Palestine in large numbers.⁷⁵ The new Sztójay government also took the Slovak racial laws, particularly the anti-Jewish legislation of July 2, 1942, as its model to regulate the emigration and deportation of Jews. Thus the new Hungarian legislation permitted certain categories of converts, Jews with "Aryan" spouses, and professionals working in jobs deemed vital to the war effort to remain in the country.⁷⁶ Foreign governments and dignitaries were aware of the competition between Hungary and its neighbours, and tried to exploit it to save lives. One of the earliest and strongest critics of the deportation, the Papal Nuncio, Monsignor Angelo Rotta, appealed to both the vanity of the Hungarian elite and their paranoia about the neighbouring states. In May 1944, he told Sztójay that Hungary's good reputation as a Christian country and the shield of Western civilization would be permanently damaged, if he persisted with the deportations. The Nuncio also warned the Hungarian leaders that the "enemies of their country" would not miss the opportunity exploit the situation, and accuse Hungary, once again, of using Bolshevik methods.⁷⁷ Besides the intense pressure from the Anglo-Saxon powers, Sweden, Switzerland and international organizations, such as the Red Cross, the fear of being overtaken by Romanians, the Slovaks and the Bulgarians played an important role in the decision of Horthy and the conservative political elite to halt the deportations in early July. Horthy's intervention came too late to save the lives of provincial Jews and the country's reputation. On August 23, Romania switched sides. In a few months, King Michael and his advisors were able to accomplish what Horthy and the Hungarian political elite had tried but could not do for two years: they forged an alliance among the army, the civil service, the political opposition and the population to depose the pro-Nazi government and liberate the capital from German occupation. The successful coup

decided the outcome of the long competition between Romania and Hungary. In return for military assistance, the Soviet Union and the Western powers promised to recognize Romanian sovereignty over the whole of Transylvania — a promise which they kept after the war.

The Road to the German Occupation of the Country

In his memoirs published in American exile in the 1950s, Prime Minister Miklós Kállay cited five reasons why he and his government wanted to leave the Axis camp: to save the country from the worst effects of the war; to forestall a German invasion; to prevent a right-wing coup, which would have led to the destruction of the Left and the genocide of Jews; to avert a Russian occupation and to keep the territories obtained with German and Italian help.⁷⁸ He and his government, Kállay argued, let more than one hundred thousand Jewish refugees enter the country; provided legal protection for Hungarian Jews living in Nazi Germany; refused to introduce the yellow star, rebuffed German demands to hand over 300,000 Jews as slave labourers and declined to set up ghettos as the first step towards deportation. By surrendering the Jews to their fate, he continued, Hungary would have sunk to the level of Nazi Germany's satellites in the region, such as Slovakia, Romania and Croatia. Full compliance with the German demands would have not dissuaded the Nazis from invading Hungary; it would have, however, significantly strengthened the hands of the anti-Semitic Right, and it would have alienated "every honest person" from the government. After the Jews, the Nazis would have demanded the surrender and elimination of "Socialists, left-wingers, pro-Jewish Gentiles, Anglophiles and, indeed, the whole Hungarian elite."⁷⁹

Historians have been generally sceptical in accepting Kállay's self-image as a protector of liberty and civil rights and a defender of Jews. Lacking a strong power base even in his own party, Prime Minister Kállay, they have argued, made too many concessions to the anti-Semitic Right. He was the one who put the Third Anti-Jewish Law into effect and unnecessarily humiliated Hungarian Jews by downgrading Judaism from a "received" (established) to a "recognized" faith. The Kállay government did not allow Jewish men to serve in regular army units but conscripted them into labour battalions. In November 1943, it nationalized more than one million *holds* of Jewish-owned land. Kállay protected parliamentary institutions and kept the press relatively free; yet he also tolerated anti-Semitic agitation in the chambers of the parliament, on the streets and in

the newspapers.⁸⁰ More recently, Krisztián Ungváry and László Karsai have questioned, if not Kállay's courage, at least his argument that he and his government had taken unprecedented risks by opposing the Nazis in 1942. The Nazi government allegedly paid little attention to Hungary and Hungarian Jews in 1942. Eager to complete the Polish and Soviet phase of the Holocaust, the Nazis' goal in Hungary in the second half of 1942 and early 1943 was to place more restrictions on Jews and prepare the ground for their eventual deportation. Hitler and his advisors allegedly began to put more pressure on Kállay and his government only in the fall; yet as late as December of 1942, Berlin still did not react strongly to Kállay's rejections of Nazi demands. At least some of the messages had nothing to do with the Nazi regime; rather they came from the Hungarian ambassador in Berlin, Döme Sztójay, who tried to anticipate the wishes of the German government.⁸¹ In any case, Tamás Stark contends, Kállay's attempt to save Jewish lives was motivated by political interests, such as the desire to gain the goodwill of Great Britain and the United States, rather than by the principled rejection of violent antisemitism.⁸²

The Kállay government's refusal to hand over Hungarian Jews was motivated by practical diplomatic rather than ideological or humanitarian considerations. Yet, Hitler and his advisors perceived non-cooperation on this vital concern as a heresy. In October 1942, the Hungarian government rejected the Nazi demand to withdraw Jews of Hungarian citizenship from the Third Reich, introduce the yellow star, set up ghettos, and hand over 300,000 Jews for labour service in Ukraine. Kállay told the Germans that the Hungarian state could not force its citizens to "undertake work abroad" and the country, too, was not in the position to dispense with the skill and labour of so many people in a time of war.⁸³ In his December response to the same request, he argued the Hungarian government never doubted the pan-European nature of the so-called Jewish question. The Hungarians were pioneers: it was they who passed the first anti-Semitic legislation in Europe in the early 1920s. The Budapest government was determined to reduce Jewish influence, but only on the basis of its interests and cultural and political traditions. The anti-Jewish laws passed since 1938, Kállay argued, had eliminated Jews from the realm of culture and they had also seriously curtailed their influence over economic life; further restrictions in this area, in fact, the Prime Minister contended, would only endanger industrial production and harm the common war effort. Kállay also rejected the Nazi demand to introduce the yellow star. Given the high number of Jews in Budapest and the strong anti-Semitic feeling of certain

segments of the population, he argued, such measures would lead to anti-Jewish riots. Finally, Hungary lacked the capacity and the technical expertise to deport so many people in a relatively short period of time. Half measures, on the other hand, would lead to chaos and civil war, which the government could not afford.⁸⁴

Both the tone and substance of these letters and cables could not but anger Hitler and his advisors, who considered the lack of cooperation in the Jewish genocide as a sure sign of betrayal. As we have seen, both the Romanian and Slovak governments were opposed to further deportation in 1943 and 1944; yet the Nazis vented their anger openly only on the Hungarians. During his meeting with the Regent on April 16 and 17 of 1943, Hitler went out of his way to insult the elderly statesman. He spoke disparagingly about the performance of Hungarian troops in the winter campaign and the loyalty of the Kállay government. He told Horthy that Berlin had learned about the secret contacts between the Kállay government and the Western Allies, and that he would never let Kállay and his ilk backstab Germany by concluding a separate peace with the enemy. In almost the same breath, he accused Hungary of sabotaging the German effort to “solve the Jewish question.” With Sweden and Switzerland, Hitler raved, Hungary remained the only country in Europe that ignored the Jewish menace; instead of taking energetic actions to neutralize this pan-European threat, Hungary became a veritable haven for foreign Jews. Insulted on every level, Horthy responded that he and his government had done everything humanly possible to address the so-called Jewish question; however, he could not simply “club them to death” (*agyonütni*). To add insult to injury, the Regent confessed that he felt bad enough to have sent 36,000 Jewish labourers, the majority of whom had most likely died, to the Eastern front.⁸⁵

The meeting marked a turning point in Hungarian-German relations. In his April report, Edmund Veesenmayer, Nazi expert on Hungary, argued that a “Jewish-clerical-aristocratic clique” formed around Regent Horthy opposed the German war effort at every turn.⁸⁶ After April 1943, Nazi Germany no longer considered Hungary a friendly state. The coup against Mussolini at the end of July 1943, and the Italian armistice with the Allies in September put the behaviour of the Hungarian government in an even more unfavourable light. The Nazis fully expected that the Kállay government would use the first opportunity to leave the Axis. The relationship had soured so much that for almost a year the German ambassador, on the instruction of his superiors in Berlin, refused to have any direct contact

with the Hungarian Prime Minister or any of his colleagues. Thus, when, in the summer of 1943, the Nazis demanded the removal of the pro-British Minister of Defence, General Vilmos Nagy, they submitted their request to Prime Minister Kállay indirectly through Filippo Anfuso, the Italian Ambassador in Budapest. By October 1933, the Nazi regime decided to take action against Kállay. Veesenmayer conducted negotiation with the various fascist parties, such as Hungarian party of Renewal, László Baký's National Socialist Party and Szálasi's Arrow Cross to remove the Kállay government in a coup and grab power. However, tensions among the radical right-wing parties condemned the German attempt to depose the legitimate government of Hungary with the help of their local allies to failure.⁸⁷

Veesebmayer and his superiors in Berlin did not give up, however. In his next report on December 10, 1943, the Nazi expert delivered a devastating critique not only of the Kállay government but also of Hungary and its social and political elite. The letter is of great interest, because the Nazi expert repeated almost verbatim the prejudices that Hitler and his closest advisors harboured towards the Hungarians.⁸⁸ Like Hitler, Veesebmayer described Hungarians as a "non-Aryan," lazy, domineering and culturally sterile race. Everything in Hungary, from bridges, public buildings in Budapest to classical music and poetry, he argued, were the work of Slavs and assimilated, mainly German, immigrants. Hungarians were posers, braggarts, rebels, obstructionists and saboteurs — and completely useless as soldiers. Because of their eastern origins, the Magyars, Veesebmayer continued, had always been favourably exposed towards Jews. The archenemy recognized and took full advantage of their hosts' instinctive philo-Semitism, and soon enough, Jews had come to control the economic, cultural and political life of Hungary. There are, the *SS Brigadeführer* contended, 1.1 million Jews in Hungary and at least two million Magyars are economically depended on them. The Jews and their allies in Hungary maintained an excellent intelligence system, and hindered the war effort at every turn. The Third Reich has tolerated the existence of this center of sabotage too long. Until appropriate measures are taken, the German press has to increase the pressure on the Kállay government by keeping its weak handling of the "Jewish question" in the limelight; at the same time, the Third Reich government should give "the national opposition" in Hungary more support. The Regent should be manipulated through the threat of Habsburg restoration and the peril of Russian occupation, and by making promises that his "Court Jews"

(*Hoffjuden*) would not be harmed. In the case of a popular uprising, the techniques which had been used with great effectiveness in 1919 should be employed to restore order again.⁸⁹

Veesenmayer's recommendations suggest that the decision to attack Hungary had not yet been taken in December: the *SS Brigadeführer* was only "working towards" Hitler, repeating his prejudices and anticipating his moves. Hitler and his military advisors seem to have made the decision to occupy Hungary on the basis of false intelligence in February 1944: the British and the Americans led the Germans to believe that an Allied attack through the Ljubljana Gap in the Julian Alps to Vienna and Budapest was imminent in early spring.⁹⁰ To preclude any surprises on the part of Hungary, which could have endangered the link to Romania, Germany's most important source of oil, the Nazis decided to act. Hitler ordered his military men to commence with Operation Margarethe on March 12, 1944.⁹¹ The desire to exploit the country's economic resources, including its manpower, cheaply and more efficiently and to introduce badly needed social reforms may have also contributed the Nazi decision to invade Hungary.⁹² Some of Hungary's military leaders, such as Géza Lakatos were convinced that Hitler ordered the invasion of the county in order to gain access to its military resources, which he wanted to use to close a strategic gap and hinder the advance Red Army.⁹³ The fourth reason for the occupation was the Nazi obsession with the so-called Jewish Question. After the battles of Stalingrad, the only conflict that the Nazis could realistically expect to win was their war on the Jews. Since *Operation Reinhard*, the murder of the Polish Jews, had almost been completed by October 1943, the Third Reich could now turn its attention to Hungary and the Hungarian Jews. Which of the four reasons was the most important is difficult to determine: in the Nazi mind, they were inseparable and reinforced one another. The Crown Council protocol, prepared on the basis of Horthy's report on the day of the occupation, cited Kállay government's contacts with the Western allies and its allegedly inadequate handling of "the Jewish question" as the reasons for the German invasion.⁹⁴

Conclusions

Questioned by the President of the Court at the Sztójay trial on March 13 1946 if "the solution of the Jewish question was an exclusively German demand, or the demand was raised by the Hungarian government or it was a shared demand," the Hungarian expert and Plenipotentiary of the Third

Reich in Hungary, Edmund Veessenmayer, told the court that “it was first and foremost a German wish, and I am convinced that had it been left to the Hungarians, they would have solved it differently. The measures that they would have adopted, likely, would have been limited to making the First Jewish Laws more rigorous. No doubt, this form [of the solution of the so-called Jewish Question, BB] can be lead back to German pressure.”⁹⁵

As we have seen, Veessenmayer had a very low opinion of Hungarians: like Hitler, he dismissed them as posers, braggarts, lazy, intellectually sterile, cowardly, domineering and bloodthirsty aliens: as ethnic outsiders, who had no place in “Aryan” and German-dominated Europe. Eager to save his own skin, this technocrat and arrogant Nazi, who resembled in many ways Reinhard Heydrich, Chief of the Nazi Criminal Police, was always ready to push the responsibility for the Jewish genocide on others.⁹⁶ Thanks to his talent as a manipulator, and to the gullibility of his prosecutors, this mass-murderer was never punished for his crimes.⁹⁷ His post-war life and career was rather typical: the majority of high-ranking Nazis who had pillaged Greece and participated in the massacre of thousands of civilians also escaped justice in West-Germany.⁹⁸ The fanatical Nazi never forgot, and continued to resent the fact, that the Kállay government, and the conservative segment of the political elite in general, had refused to be drawn into the Jewish genocide. Between 1938 and 1943, the Hungarian political elite sought to adjust their country’s foreign and domestic policy to the requirements of the Axis alliance. Much of this adjustment was voluntary and unconscious: the result of self-‘coordination’ (*Gleichschaltung*), rather than yielding to direct German demands. The conservative political elite understood the complex relationship between foreign and domestic policies: they were aware of the connection between the threat posed by the Third Reich from without and the danger represented by Hungarian national socialists and their fellow travelers from within. The anti-Jewish laws passed in this period were the product of self-*Gleichschaltung*: an attempt to deflate right-wing agitation, reduce social tensions and curry favours with Berlin.

With the war turning sour for the Third Reich, and with the mounting Hungarian casualties, the conservative elite also began to have second thoughts about the Nazi alliance. While not free of antisemitic prejudices, Hungarian conservatives never shared the Nazis’ biological racism and their murderous hatred for the Jews. Having learned about the mass executions in Poland and the Soviet Union, Kállay and his colleagues

repeatedly rebuffed the Nazis' attempt to drag the country into the genocide. On the other hand, the conservatives' sympathy for the Jews was limited; their contempt for the Nazis was never strong enough to change their minds about the importance of the German alliance. As students of the nineteenth-century *Realpolitik*, Kállay and his colleagues continued to subordinate human-right issues to winning the war and revising the borders. It was also not beneath the dignity of Kállay and his colleagues, or by the same token that of their Slovak and Romanian counterparts, to use the so-called Jewish Question to manipulate the Western powers. By providing more protection for labour servicemen and rejecting the German demand to hand over their Jewish compatriots, the Kállay government wanted to attract British American attention and support. By treating Jews more humanly, it sought to establish trust between Budapest and the Western capitals, as a first way towards leaving the war or changing sides. Second, Horthy's conservative advisors hoped that their lenient handling of the so-called Jewish Question would pay off at the negotiating table after the war: the survival of Hungarian Jews would lead to a more equitable peace treaty at the end of the war — a treaty that would leave parts of Transylvania and Slovakia under Hungarian control.

In 1943 most observers realized that Nazi Germany could not win the war. However, it was still possible that the Soviets would make a deal with Hitler, and that the war would end with a negotiated settlement, which would leave Hungary in the German sphere of influence. Determined to avoid the fate of Poland and Yugoslavia, the Hungarian political elite was prepared to switch sides only after British and American troops had landed in the Balkans and Allied troops had entered Hungarian territory or approached the country's borders. The Allies tried to convince Hungary to take a more courageous step: to leave the Nazi alliance and declare war on Germany, even if such a rebellion had little chance of success. Eager to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, Kállay and his colleagues predictably refused to lay everything on one card. In the end, their clumsy attempt to forge ties with the Allies cost them the trust of Nazi Germany; their manifest timidity, on the other hand, prevented them from gaining the friendship and support of the Allies.

Based on the principles and practice of nineteenth-century *Realpolitik*, the Kállay government's foreign policy was too complicated and too cautious to inspire trust in the European capitals. In the 'age of extreme,' ideological extremism, fanaticism, and devotion to a social and political system rather than shared geopolitical interests, formed the basis

of alliances. Their hesitation to embrace fully Nazi anti-Semitism and get involved in the genocide was bound to anger Hitler and his associates. Unskilled in the game of 'gangster politics' as practiced by Hitler and Stalin, Kállay and his colleagues piled on mistakes, one after another, acting as if they had wanted to provoke Berlin. By refusing to recognize the fascist Salò Republic in the fall of 1943, for example, the Kállay government not only showed its colors: given Hitler's well-known attachment to the Duce, such hesitation was rightly perceived in Berlin as an offense, and it invited retaliation. The Hungarian elites needed the Wehrmacht to slow down the Russian advance, and defend the country's eastern frontiers. Yet they not only refused to make any major contribution to the German military effort on the Eastern Front after Stalingrad; to add insult to injury, Horthy also asked for the withdrawal of Hungarian troops from Soviet soil in early 1944. Against the background of the poorly hidden negotiations with the Western powers, such a request was bound to increase Hitler's and his advisors' suspicion: even less paranoid politicians than Hitler would have perceived such request as a sure sign of betrayal.

Hitler and his associates always perceived radical antisemitism and support for the genocide as the litmus test of loyalty to the Third Reich. Contradicting Hitler on the so-called Jewish Question and criticizing, not to mention opposing, the Nazi-led genocide was bound to provoke a strong response from the Dictator. The Kállay government's policy towards Jews angered everyone and satisfied no one. The anti-Semitic laws passed under the Kállay government were meant to undercut support for the radical parties. However, they only emboldened ideologues, and wetted the appetite of opportunists eager to line their pockets at the Jews' expense. Their protestation of loyalty and ideological purity notwithstanding, Kállay and his colleagues could not dispel Nazi suspicion. The Nazis predictably perceived the Hungarian plea for independence as a veiled attempt by a satellite state to distance itself from the Third Reich, and claim moral superiority *vis-a-vis* its master. Kállay's promise to Hitler in January 1944 to deport foreign Jews failed to postpone the German invasion; it also showed the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of conservative foreign policy. The loss of Hitler's trust explains why the Nazi leaders pushed for the 'total' solution of the so-called Jewish Question in Hungary rather than in Romania or Slovakia. Both satellites had a history of collaborating with the Nazis in the Jewish genocide; yet the Nazis judged the political situation in these countries as relatively stable, and the influence of the surviving Jewish population on the political

elite as negligible. It was only in Hungary, where philosemitism and the opposition to the war, the protection of the Jews and the desire to leave the Axis, seem to have gone hand-in-hand. To the Nazis at least, the survival of the Jewish community in Hungary was no longer an ideological issue; its very existence came to be perceived as a security threat.

The success of Kállay's foreign policy was dependent, to some degree, on the state's protection of Hungarian Jews. The Hungarian conservatives were not alone in perceiving such a linkage, however: Hitler and his advisors, too, were convinced that the survival of Hungarian Jews and the country's leaving the Axis camp were intimately connected. Kállay and his colleagues wanted to use Jews as bargaining chips with the Western powers during and after the war. The Nazis, on the other hand, thought that it was the Jews who pulled all the strings; who sabotaged war production; prevented the full exploitation of the country by the Nazis, and wanted to take Hungary out of the war. The Kállay government sought to exploit the survival of the Jewish community to regain its freedom of manoeuvre in foreign policy. Berlin, on the other hand, had come to view the continued existence of a one-million strong Jewish community in Hungary as an imminent security threat. By tying the fate of Jews to the success of its foreign policy, the Kállay government unwillingly hastened the demise of the largest surviving Jewish community in East-Central Europe.

On March 19, 1944, the Wehrmacht occupied Hungary. The population and the armed forces of the Hungarian state put up no resistance. What would have happened if Horthy and his ministers had decided to resist was hotly debated after the war. Had the Hungarian units or the people resisted, Sztójay argued during his trial, the German Army, assisted by the neighbouring states, would have still occupied the land. The Romanian troops, for the second time, would have ransacked Budapest, and Hungary would have disappeared from the map. There would have been still plenty of Hungarians who would have helped the Nazis to deport the Jews, or shot them on the spot.⁹⁹ On the other hand, Holocaust historians, such as László Karsai, believe that, by not resigning from his post, Regent Horthy helped to legitimize the Nazi occupation, the puppet Sztójay government and the anti-Jewish laws that it issued in the spring of 1944. Without a smoothly functioning state and the help and the local 'know-how' of tens of thousands of administrators and rural policemen, the Germans and their Hungarian stooges would not have been able to carry out the deportation. Active or even passive resistance, combined with

the rapid disintegration of the state would have seriously hindered the Nazi effort to complete the genocide. It was not an accident that the majority of Hungarian Jews were deported and killed in the spring of 1944 under the Sztójay government (in which conservatives still held the majority of the posts) rather than in the autumn and winter of 1944, under Ferenc Szálasi's dreaded Arrow-Cross regime. The erratic and somewhat unstable Szálasi, paradoxically, was far less willing to comply with Hitler's wishes than the more rational and bureaucratically-minded Sztójay; more importantly, Karsai argues, political and social chaos, the demoralization of civil servants and the retreat of the state made the collection and transportation of Jews out of the country in the final phase of the war much more difficult. Had the conservatives resisted, chaos and inefficiency, which characterized the Nazi effort in the fall and winter of 1944 would have set in much earlier; the genocide could not have been prevented, but the number of victims would have been much lower.¹⁰⁰ But not only Hungarian Jews, but the country as a whole may have suffered less damage, and fewer deaths. There would have been less resistance to the Soviet invasion, and the battle for Hungary would have been shorter and less devastating. Horthy's refusal to accept the occupation and early resistance to the Nazi invasion would have turned the country into a victim of Nazi aggression, and the country could have been ended up on the winning side of the war.

The Hungarian phase of the Holocaust has been historically explained either as a result of home-grown antisemitism and social tensions or as a product of the war and the German occupation. This article has looked at the origins of genocide from a foreign-policy perspective: against the background of a struggle between irredentism and independence. The Hungarian political elite sought out the friendship of the Third Reich in order to undo the Treaty of Trianon, improve the status of their state and perhaps recapture some of the glory of the defunct Austro-Hungarian Empire. The conservative political elite, which controlled foreign policy, considered Nazi Germany as Hungary's natural ally; although they had misgivings about German domestic policy, their desire to regain the lost provinces exceeded their distaste for Nazi rule. Until 1942, the alliance with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy had paid off: by 1942, the Budapest government restored, with Hitler's approval, Hungarian sovereignty over the southern part of Slovakia, Sub-Carpathian Ukraine, the northern sections of Yugoslavia and Northern Transylvania. These successes, however, came with a price; the gradual loss of independence. Although the country had almost doubled in size between 1938 and 1942,

its standing in the world declined drastically. In 1938, Trianon Hungary was still regarded as a sovereign state; by 1942, the world perceived it as a satellite of the Third Reich. Hungary needed peace more than ever before to solve pressing social problems; yet by 1942, it had found itself at war with the largest and most powerful nations in the world. The lesson that the political elite had drawn from the First World War was that they had to preserve the integrity of the military forces until the end to prevent the outbreak of a revolution and forestall foreign occupation. Yet, by February 1943, the Horthy regime had sacrificed an entire army on the altar of German alliance. The Hungarian political elite hoped that the revision of the borders would bring stability to the region; yet two Vienna Awards only increased tensions between Hungary and its neighbours. Isolated internationally and hated by its neighbours, after 1941 Hungary grew more dependent on Nazi Germany for protection, especially against the better equipped and much larger Romanian Army. The desire to keep the regained territories and the fear of Romanian invasion help to explain why Hungary remained in the Axis camp in 1943 and 1944.

The close alliance with Nazi Germany had serious domestic implications as well. The shifting of the center of political life to the Right, a process that had started around 1932, gained momentum after the outbreak of the war in 1939. Nazi Germany was only indirectly responsible for the anti-Jewish legislation in Hungary between 1938 and 1943. However, it is highly unlikely that, perhaps with the exception of the first one, that any these laws would have been passed, had the Third Reich not become Hungary's patron and most important ally. The physical and political proximity of Nazi Germany emboldened the extreme Right, which, overrepresented in the parliament, pushed for more stringent measures to marginalize Jews and prepare the ground for their deportation. The Kállay government not only enforced earlier laws and created new ones: it also failed to stop the anti-Semitic agitation in the press, in the schools and on the streets. By early 1944, the country had become hopelessly polarized; the leftist and democratic parties opposed the war and denounced the persecution of the Jews; yet these parties either lacked mass support, or had no influence over the conservative elite, the armed forces and the state bureaucracy. The regime's right wing opponents were also divided; yet they were stronger than its supporters, and they had come to dominate public opinion on the so-called Jewish Question. They were particularly popular among military officers, rural policemen and pro-

vincial administrators, all of whom were destined to play an important role in the Holocaust.

On March 18, 1944, Horthy made a deal with Hitler: he promised to remain in power in order to avoid chaos and prevent resistance. The Regent hoped that, by keeping the Army under his control he might be able to influence political events, and perhaps even switch sides. Hitler seems to have promised him to end the occupation, withdraw his Gestapo agents, and stop the arrest of oppositional politicians and public figures soon after a pro-German government had been formed and the so-called Jewish Question had been solved to his liking: the dictator promised independence in exchange for Jewish lives. Horthy honoured his side of the bargain: the next two three months, he watched the unfolding of the tragedy of Hungarian Jews from the sidelines, refusing to get involved, despite the urging of some of his trusted conservative advisors to restrain his underlings and save lives.¹⁰¹ Post-war trial documents suggest that the Regent thought that the Nazis and their local allies were determined to settle the so-called Jewish Question in their own way, and that he was powerless to prevent it. Clearly, Horthy saw himself and his country as a victim of Nazi aggression, and hoped that Western governments would share his view. Instead of ordering state secretary in the Ministry of the Interior, László Baky, to stop the deportation, he thus pleaded with his underling, and Nazi informer, to exempt scientists, war heroes, capitalists, assimilated wealthy Jews and converts from the deportation.¹⁰² The Regent clearly overestimated Hitler's power in Hungary, and what the Gestapo and the German army of occupation could accomplish without the support of Hungarian administrators and policemen. More importantly, however, he felt bound by the agreement that he had made with the Dictator on the eve of the invasion. Hitler, predictably, failed to honour his word: the Gestapo agents not only remained in the country, but also continued to arrest dissidents and terrorize the population. Incensed by the Nazi betrayal, Horthy sent a letter to the Führer in early June 1944, reminding him of his promises.¹⁰³ Skilled in the game of 'gangster diplomacy' as practised imperial states, Hitler did not even give him an answer. The Regent thought that, by remaining in office, he, as *Hadúr* (Commander-in-Chief) could prevent unnecessary bloodshed and keep the army under his control. However, in the spring and summer, he was forced to send hundreds of thousands of poorly armed Hungarian soldiers to the front; the units dispatched to the frontline fell under German command. By October

1944, there were an insufficient number of reliable troops under Horthy's control to affect a switch of alliance.¹⁰⁴

Between 1919 and 1944, Hungarian diplomacy pursued two goals: the revision of the borders and the preservation of national sovereignty. In the first stage of the war, irredentism, i.e. the narrow focus on re-gaining lost territories, led the political elite and the country into a trap from which Hungary was not able to escape. In March 1944, the same elite walked into a second trap: the snarl of independence. It was a trap because in the given circumstances, independence, even if Hitler had fulfilled his promises, would have been nothing more than a chimera, and a cover for Nazi hegemony. The foreign policy-mistakes of the Hungarian governments from Pál Teleki to Döme Sztójay paved the way for the German and Russian occupations, and the genocide of Hungarian Jews.

NOTES

¹ See Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of Truth about Hitler's Final Solution* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1980); Richard Breitman, *Officials Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999).

² Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Traumas, Mourning and Recovery* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003).

³ Tom Lorman, "Missed Opportunities? Hungarian Policies towards Romania, 1932 -1936," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 83, 2 (April 2005), 290-317.

⁴ See William D. Irvine, *Boulangier Affair Reconsidered: Boulangism, and the Origins of the Radical Right in France* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1989). For a survey on the early roots of Fascism, see Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 42-51.

⁵ See János Gyurgyák, *Ezzé Lett Magyar Hazátok: A magyar nemzeteszmé és nacionalizmus története* (Budapest: Osiris, 2007), 291-347.

⁶ György Réti, *Hungarian-Italian Relations in the Shadow of Hitler's Germany, 1933-1940* (Boulder Col.: Social Science Monographs, 2003), 283-287.

⁷ See Jenő Gergely, *Gömbös Gyula. Politikai pályakép* (Budapest: Vince Kiadó, 2001).

⁸ The Nazis had no interest in restoring or creating a large state of 21 million inhabitants along their border. See 7th Report (7. Számú tájékoztató), November 20, 1943, Budapest, in *A szakadék szélén: az MIT bizalmas jelentései*

1943 június 22 – 1944 március 19, ed. Margit Balogh (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2006), pp. 65-66. For a short analysis of German intentions in regards to Hungarian revisionism, see Ignác Romsics ed., *Bethlen István Emlékirata 1944* (Budapest: Zrínyi Kiadó, 1988), 103-106.

⁹ Ignác Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century* (Budapest: Corvina/Osiris, 1999), 197-199.

¹⁰ Manfred Nebelin, *Deutsche Ungarnpolitik 1939-1941* (Opladen: Leske-Budrich, 1989), 77-153.

¹¹ Gyöngyi Kiss Kovács and Ignác Romsics eds., *A mi 20.századunk* (Kolozsvár: Komp-Press Kiadó, 2011), 181-256, especially 204-205.

¹² Circular letter by Andor Szentmiklósi to Hungarian embassies and delegations, December 18, 1941, in Lajos Kerekes ed., *Allianz Hitler-Horthy-Mussolini. Dokumente zur Ungarischen Aussenpolitik (1933-1944)* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1966), 327-328; Pál Pritz, *Bárdossy László* (Budapest, 2001), 181-184; Nandor F. Dreisziger, "A Dove? A Hawk? Perhaps a Sparrow: Bárdossy Defends his Wartime Record before the Americans, July 1945," *Hungarian Studies Review*, 22, 1-2 (1995): 71-90.

¹³ András Bán, *Hungarian-British Diplomacy 1938-1941: The Attempt to Maintain Relations* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2004), 143-148.

¹⁴ Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century*, 200-201; on the fate of the German minority, see Norbert Spannenberger, *Der Volksbund der Deutschen in Ungarn 1938-1944 unter Horthy und Hitler* (Munich: Oldenburg, 2002).

¹⁵ Nathaniel Katzburg, *Zsidópolitika Magyarországon 1919-1943* (Budapest: Babel Kiadó, 2002), 103-180; Mária Ormos, *Magyarország a két világháború korában, 1914-1945* (Debrecen: Csokonai Kiadó, 1998), 233-237; János Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon: Politikai Eszmetörténet* (Budapest: Osiris, 2001), 135-158.

¹⁶ Andor Jaross' testimony. "Endre László és társai," *Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történelmi Levéltára (ÁBTL)*, V-79802/3a, 80.

¹⁷ See Rudolf Paksa, *Magyar Nemzetiszocialisták* (Budapest: Osiris, 2013), 53-60, 230-251.

¹⁸ László Bakó's testimony. "Endre László és társai," 32.

¹⁹ Balogh ed., *A szakadék szélén*, 15-18; András Joó, *Kállay Miklós külpolitikája. Magyarország és a háborús diplomácia, 1942-1944* (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2008), 29, 80-89.

²⁰ See Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 3, 26.

²¹ Andor Jaross' testimony, "Endre László és társai," 77-85.

²² Katzburg, *Zsidópolitika Magyarországon*, 151-153.

²³ Memorandum by the Group of Arrow-Cross Deputies to Miklós Horthy, March 31, 1943, in Miklós Szinai ed., *The Confidential Papers of Admiral Horthy* (Budapest: Corvina, 1965), 227-230.

²⁴ Szinai ed., *The Confidential Papers of Admiral Horthy*, 244-247.

²⁵ Nicholas Kállay, *Hungarian Premier: A personal account of a nation's struggle in the Second World War* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1954), 232-235; 7th Report, November 20, 1943, Budapest, in Balogh ed., *A szakadék szélén*, 69-70.

²⁶ 14th Report (14. Számú tájékoztató), March 10, 1944, Budapest, in Balogh ed., *A szakadék szélén*, 191.

²⁷ Lóránd Dombrády, *A legfelsőbb hadúr és hadserege* (Budapest: Kairosz, 2012).

²⁸ On the gendarmerie, see Sándor Szakály, *Akik a magyar királyi csendőrséget 1919 és 1945 között vezették: történelmi-statisztikai áttekintés a magyar királyi csendőrség felső vezetőiről* (Budapest: Veritas Történetkutató Intézet, 2014).

²⁹ Pál Pritz, "Döntési Folyamatok a Magyar Külpolitikában 1919-1944," in Pál Pritz, *Magyar Diplomácia A Két Világháború Között* (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat 1995), 225-239; especially 231-232.

³⁰ Gyula Kádár, *A Ludovikától Sopronkőhidáig* (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1978), 300-301.

³¹ On the Voronezh tragedy see Krisztián Ungváry, *A magyar honvédség a második világháborúban* (Budapest: Osiris, 2005).

³² "Iván Fekete, "Németbarát és fasiszta érzelmű magyar tisztek névjegyzéke," in *Vallomások a Holtak Házából: Ujszászy István vezérőrnagynek, a 2. Vkf.osztály és az Államvédelmi Központ vezetőjének az ÁVH fogságában írott feljegyzései*, ed. György Haraszi (Budapest: Corvina, Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történelmi Levéltára, 2007), 250-251.

³³ Iván Fekete, "Horthy Környezetében Feltételezett Magasabb Rangú Tisztek Jellemzése," in *Vallomások a Holtak Házából*, ed. Haraszi, 443-459; Pro-Nazi officers tended to be younger than their pro-British counterparts; they had graduated from the Military Academy and the Ludovika Academy in Hungary in the 1920s and 30s rather than from similar institutions in Austria before the war.

³⁴ Kádár, *A Ludovikától Sopronkőhidáig*, p. 316.

³⁵ Béla Bodó, "Iván Héjjas: The Life of a Counterrevolutionary," *East Central Europe* 37 (2010): 247-279.

³⁶ Secret Report, Bánffy, Divison Head, Foreign Ministry, to Foreign Minister, July 5, 1939, 43/10 1939/43/7, in Hungarian National Archive (Magyar Országos Levéltár or MOL), K63, 1940-1943, 413 csomó, 43 tétel, pp. 48-49.

³⁷ Secret Report, Bánffy, Divison Head, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Csáky, Foreign Minister, October 2, 1940, K63 5543/1940/43, in MOL, K63 413 csomó, 1940-1944. 43 tétel, pp. 1-4.

³⁸ Dieter Pohl, *Die Herrschaft der Wehrmacht. Deutsche Militärbesatzung und einheimische Bevölkerung in der Sowjetunion 1941-1944* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2011), 256-258; Tamás Majcsai, "A körös-

mezei zsidódeportálás 1941-ben,” *Ráday Gyűjtemény Évkönyve IV- V.* (Budapest, 1986), 59-86, 195-237; Géza Komoróczy, *A Zsidók Története Magyarországon, Vol. 2: 1849-től A Jelenkorig* (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2012), 623-626

³⁹ Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century*, 207-208.

⁴⁰ Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide: the Holocaust in Hungary* Vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 285-361; Katzborg, *Zsidópolitika Magyarországon 1919-194*, pp. 181-191; for a lower figure, see Tamás Stark, *Hungarian Jews During the Holocaust and after the Second World War-1949: a Statistical Review* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 2000), 14.

⁴¹ See Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, 172-173.

⁴² After the war, many claimed that the small and poorly armed Hungarian Army had been in no position to resist the battle-hardened and well-equipped Wehrmacht units. This was, as military historian Peter Gosztony has pointed out, not true; the Hungarian Army was modern enough to tie down significant German forces for weeks. Peter Gosztony, “Hungary’s Army in the Second World War,” in György Ránki ed., *Hungarian History – World History* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984), 221-258.

⁴³ Ormos, *Magyarország a két világháború korában*, 232-246.

⁴⁴ Mario D. Fenyo, *Hitler, Horthy, and Hungary. German-Hungarian Relations, 1941-1944* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 171-173. See also Sándor Szakály, *Hadsereg, politika, társadalom* (Budapest, 1991).

⁴⁵ They were not the only one. More powerful countries, such as France also tried to find their places in Nazi-dominated Europe. See Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

⁴⁶ Kádár, *A Ludovikától Sopronköhidáig*, 303.

⁴⁷ See Ian Kersaw, The “Hitler Myth.” *Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁴⁸ Memorandum by Feine, Embassy Councilor in Budapest, September 1943), in György Ránki ed., *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország: Német Diplomáciai Iratok Magyarországról* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1968), 733-735.

⁴⁹ For a survey of the region’s problems on the eve of the Second World War, see Joseph Rothschild and Nancy M. Wingfield, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1-22.

⁵⁰ Joó, *Kállay Miklós külpolitikája*, 127-128; 152-153.

⁵¹ Paradoxically, both Maniu and the liberal leader Constantin Brătianu, supported the Romanian invasion of the Soviet Union, and Antonescu’s policy of “first eastwards, by brute force, then westwards, at the green table or by the sword,” see Jean Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust in Romania* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 176-177.

⁵² Secret Reports, August 11, 1943, MOL, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, K 64-1943-27-409, 143-152.

⁵³ See Béni L. Balogh, *A magyar-román kapcsolatok 1939-1940-ben és a Második Bécsi Döntés* (Csíkszereda: Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, 2002), 54-107.

⁵⁴ German Embassy's Confidential Report on the meeting of the Foreign Relations' Committee held on June 11, 1942; June (?), 1942, in Ránki ed., *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország*, 664-665.

⁵⁵ György Ránki, "Hungary and the Statesmen of East Central Europe, 1939-1945," p. 655, in Steven Bela Vardy and Agnes Huszar Vardy, *Society in Change. Studies in Honor of Béla K. Király* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1983), 641-670.

⁵⁶ Memorandum prepared by Woermann, Head of the South-Eastern European Department in the Foreign Ministry on the occasion of Prime Minister Kállay's visit, June 1, 1942, in Ránki ed., *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország*, p. 655.

⁵⁷ Cable by Jagow, German Ambassador in Budapest to German Foreign Ministry, June 12, 1942, in Ránki eds., *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország*, 661.

⁵⁸ For the survey on Hitler's role in Nazi foreign policy, see Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London: Arnold, 2001), 134-161.

⁵⁹ On the lack of Nazi support, financial and political for the Legionaries, see Armin Heine, *Die Legion "Erzengel Michael in Rumänien: Soziale Bewegung und politische Organisation* (Munich: R. Oldenburg Verlag, 1986), 322-341; for a recent book on the Legionaries, see Radu Ioanid, *The Sword of Archangel: Fascist Ideology in Romania* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

⁶⁰ Radu Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania: The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies Under the Antonescu Regime, 1940-1944* (Washington: United States Holocaust Museum, 2000), 110-194; Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust in Romania*, 216-469.

⁶¹ György Ránki, "Hitlers Verhandlungen mit Östeuropäischen Staatsmännern, 1939-1944," in *Deutsche Frage und europäisches Gleichgewicht: Festschrift für Andreas Hillgruber zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Klaus Hildebrand and Reiner Pommerin (Cologne: Bohlau, 1985), 195-228; on Antonescu's anti-Semitism, see Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania*, 259-288, and Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust in Romania*, 139-145.

⁶² Nr. 53: Hitler-Antonescu, February 27, 1944, in György Ránki ed., *Hitler hatvannyolc tárgyalása*, Vol., 2 (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1983), 222-223.

⁶³ Fenyo, *Hitler, Horthy, and Hungary*, 159.

⁶⁴ Memorandum by Luther, Departmental Head in the Foreign Ministry, on the occasion of Prime Minister Kállay's visit, June 3, 1942, in Ránki ed., *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország*, 660.

⁶⁵ Luther's cable to Jagow, the German Ambassador in Budapest, October 8 1942, in Ránki ed., *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország*, 698.

⁶⁶ Luther's cable to Jagow, the German Ambassador in Budapest, Berlin, October 14, 1942, in Ránki ed., *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország*, 699-700.

⁶⁷ Kállay, *Hungarian Premier*, 117-121.

⁶⁸ Joó, *Kállay Miklós külpolitikája*, 122.

⁶⁹ See Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust in Romania*, 486-509.

⁷⁰ On the changes in Romanian-German relations, see Jean Ancel, "German-Romanian Relations during the Second World War," in Randolph L. Braham ed., *The Tragedy of Romanian Jewry* (New York: Columbia University Press/Social Science Monographs, 1994), 57-77; Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania*, 259-270.

⁷¹ On the Holocaust in Slovakia, see Gilah Faṭran, *Ha-im ma'avak 'al hisardut: hanhagat Yehude Slovaqyah ba-Sho'ah 1938-1944* (Tel-Aviv: Moreshet, 1992); Waclaw Długoborski ed., *The tragedy of the Jews of Slovakia: 1938-1945: Slovakia and the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question"* (Oświęcim : Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2002); Andor Sas, *A szlovákiai zsidók üldözése, 1939-1945* (Pozsony: Kalligram, 1993).

⁷² Nr. 44. Hitler-Tiso, April 22, 1943, in Ránki, *Hitler hatvannyolc tárgyalása*, Vol. 2, II, 114-121.

⁷³ Joó, *Kállay Miklós külpolitikája*, 123-124.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁷⁵ The Prime Minister of Hungary, Döme Sztójay to the German Ambassador, Jungerth-Arnethy, June 1944, Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL), K 64 Politikai Osztály Rezervált Iratai, 1918-1944. 100. csomó, 1944, 43 tétel. Zsidókérdés.

⁷⁶ Dr. Kuhl, the Hungarian Ambassador in Slovakia to Döme Sztójay, The Prime Minister of Hungary, May 17, 1944, MOL K 64 Politikai Osztály Rezervált Iratai, 1918-1944. 100. csomó, 1944, 43 tétel. 43. Zsidókérdés.

⁷⁷ The Apostolic Nuncio, Bishop Angelo Rotta to General Döme Sztójay, the Prime Minister of Hungary, May 15, 1944, MOL, K 64 Politikai Osztály Rezervált Iratai, 1918-1944. 100. csomó, 1944, 43 tétel. 43. Zsidókérdés.

⁷⁸ Kállay, *Hungarian Premier*, 349-352.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 121-124

⁸⁰ Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, pp. 159-168; Joó, *Kállay Miklós külpolitikája*, pp. 133-135; Thomas Sakmayster, *Admirális fehér lovon, Horthy Miklós, 1918-1944* (Budapest: Helikon Kiadó, 2001), 261-264.

⁸¹ Krisztián Ungváry, *Kállay Zsidópolitikája* (manuscript), pp. 10-12; cited Joó, *Kállay Miklós külpolitikája*, p. 115; László Karsai, "Magyar zsidók sorsa Nyugat Európában 1942-1943-ban," in *Tanulmányok Ormos Mária 70. Születésnapjára: Magyarország a(nagy)hatalmak életterében* (Pécs: University of Pécs Press, 2000), 343-366.

⁸² Tamás Stark, *Hungarian Jews During the Holocaust and After the Second World War, 1939-1949* (Boulder : East European Monographs, 2000), 15-16.

⁸³ Kállay, *Hungarian Premier*, pp. 112-113.

⁸⁴ Memorandum by the Hungarian Embassy to the German Foreign Ministry, December 2, 1942, Berlin, in Ránki ed., *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország*, 701-702.

⁸⁵ Kállay, *Hungarian Premier*, 117-121.

⁸⁶ Ribbentrop's letter to Jagow, German Ambassador in Budapest, Fuschl, May 26, 1943, in Ránki ed., *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország*, 720-722.

⁸⁷ István Bárczy's testimony, "Endre László és társai," pp. 86-89.

⁸⁸ See Hugh Trevor-Roper ed., *Hitler's Table Talk 1941-1944: His Private Conversations* (New York: Enigma Books, 1988), 33; 446-446; 654; 668.

⁸⁹ Veessenmayer's report about the political situation in Hungary, Berlin, December 10, 1943, in Ránki ed., *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország*, pp. 743-745; on Veessenmayer, see Pál Pritz, "Horthy Miklós and Edmund Veessenmayer," in Pál Pritz, *Magyar Diplomácia A Két Világháború Között* (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1995), 334-343.

⁹⁰ Gyula Juhász, "Some aspects of relations between Hungary and Germany during the Second World War," in Ránki ed., *Hungarian History – World History*, pp. 209-219.

⁹¹ Fenyő, *Hitler, Horthy and Hungary*, 160.

⁹² Christian Gerlach and Aly Götz, *Az utolsó fejezet: Reálpolitika, ideológia es a magyar zsidók legyilkolása 1944/1945* (Budepest: Noran-Kiadó Kft., 2005), 88-105.

⁹³ Géza Lakatos' testimony, in *A magyar quisling-kormány. Sztójay Döme és társai a népbíróság előtt*, ed. László Karsai and Judit Molnár (Budapest: 1956-os KHT, 2004), 462-465.

⁹⁴ Hitler allegedly told Horthy that he and his government did not do enough to solve the so-called Jewish question; he also mentioned that Finland had only 6,000 Jews and they still had done incredible damage to the Axis alliance. Protokoll of the Crown Council, Budapest, March 19, 1944, Lajos Kerekes ed., *Allianz Hitler-Horthy-Mussolini. Dokumente zur Ungarischen Aussenpolitik (1933-1944)* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1966), 368-375;

⁹⁵ Karsai and Molnár, eds. *A magyar*, 459.

⁹⁶ For the best biography on Heydrich, see Robert Gerwarth, *Hitler's Hangman: The Life Of Heydrich* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

⁹⁷ He spent only two years in prison between 1949 and 1951. Veessenmayer died as a respectable citizen in democratic West Germany in the late 1970s. On his life and career see Igor-Philip Matic, *Edmund Veessenmayer. Agent und Diplomat der nationalsozialistischen Expansionspolitik* (Munich: Oldenbourg 2002).

⁹⁸ See Mark Mazower, *Griechenland under Hitler. Das leben während der deutschen Besatzung 1941-1944* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2016).

⁹⁹ Sztójay's testimony in Karsai and Molnár eds. *A magyar*, 654-655. Horthy had the same opinion. Miklós Horthy, *Emlékirataim* (Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1990), 284; 304-310.

¹⁰⁰ László Karsai, *Szálasi Ferenc: Politikai életrajz* (Budapest: Balassi, 2016). In the so-called Braham debate, the participants sought to address the issue: what would have happened if Horthy and the state had resisted. For the summary of the debate see Judit Molnár, *Zsidósors 1944-ben az V. (szegedi) csendőrkörületben* (Budapest: Cserépfalvi, 1995), 15-16, cited by Karsai and Molnár, *A magyar Quisling-kormány*, 55.

¹⁰¹ The question of what Horthy knew, wanted to know or had to courage to acknowledge to know is still debated among Hungarian historians. Some think that that Regent was fooled to believe that the Jews were taken to work in the Third Reich. After the truth had become known, at the end of June, about Auschwitz and the deportation he got immediately involved to save the life of the Jews of Budapest. See Gábor Bencsik, *Horthy Miklós. A kormányzó és kora* (Budapest: Magyar Mercurius, 2001), esp. 79-92; Countess Ilona Edelsheim Gyulai, *Becsület és Kötelesség*, I. Volum. (Budapest: Európa, 2003-2007), 324; For the critique of what many historians see as a new Horthy myth see Dávid Turbucz, "A Jobboldali Radikálisok Horthy Képe a Rendszerváltás Után," in *Búvópatakok mélyfúrások: Magyar Jobboldal -1945 után*, ed. János M. Rainer (Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár 1956-os Intézet Alapítvány, 2014), 249-273. Other think that Horthy had to know about the ongoing genocide, and adopted the ready-made justification, created by the Nazis, that the Jews were to be taken to Germany only to work as a excuse his inaction and shift responsibility onto others. See Géza Komoróczy, *A Zsidók Története Magyarországon, Vol. 2: 1849-től A Jelenkorig* (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2012), 701-724; Sakmyster, *Admirális fehér lovon*, 351-358; Gerlach and Götz, *Az utolsó fejezet*, 343-345. For the latest biography of Horthy see, Dávid Turbucz, *Horthy Miklós* (Budapest: Napvilág, 2011). For an overview on Horthy, see Péter Sipos, "Horthy Miklós személyisége and gondolkodásmódja," *Rubicon*, 2007/10, 57-61. For several historians' opinion about Horthy, see Ignác Romsics, "Horthy képeink," *Mozgó Világ*, 2007/ 30, 2-33. On his role in the genocide see "Történeiszek vitatkoznak Horthyról: 'Nem tudta mi lesz a zsidósággal,'" *HVG*. 2012. július 31. http://hvg.hu/itthon/20120731_tortenesz_vita_horthy accessed March 10, 2015.

¹⁰² Jaross's testimony, "Endre László és társai," 64-66; Komoróczy, *A Zsidók Története Magyarországon*, 705.

¹⁰³ Horthy to Hitler, June 6, 1944, in Szinai ed., *The Confidential Papers of Admiral Horthy*, 304-306.

¹⁰⁴ See General Géza Lakatos's testimony in Karsai and Molnár, *A magyar Quisling-kormány*, 462-465.

Ágnes Zsolt's Authorship of her Daughter Éva Heyman's Holocaust Diary

Gergely Kunt

This paper, a further elaboration of my earlier work, aims to show that thirteen-year-old Éva Heyman cannot have been the author of the book *Éva lányom* [My daughter Éva], and the actual author was her mother, Ágnes Zsolt. After its publication in 1947, the diary received little to no scholarly attention, but in 1972, Zsuzsa Scheer wrote an article on the book where she referred to the titular Éva Heyman as the 'magyar Anna Frank' [Hungarian Anne Frank].¹ Éva Heyman was a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl murdered in Auschwitz in 1944, and her diary, allegedly written between February and May 1944, was published by her mother Ágnes Zsolt in the form of a volume titled *Éva lányom. Napló* [My daughter Éva: Diary].² As a supplement to the diary, Ágnes Zsolt wrote a preface and also attached two private letters, one written by the family's cook and the other by the governess who raised Ágnes as well as Éva.³ To this day, the widespread consensus among scholars is that the volume originally published by Ágnes Zsolt contains her daughter's writing. In contrast, this paper argues that the book was written by the mother in the format and style of a young girl's diary to explore Éva Heyman's short life from the child's perspective and to help Ágnes process her grief over losing her daughter.

In 2010, after seven years of doing comparative analysis of Jewish and Christian adolescent diaries, I wrote a Hungarian-language article where I suggested two possible readings of *Éva lányom* as either the original writing of Éva Heyman or the work of the mother, Ágnes Zsolt.⁴ However, in the next four years, I examined several unpublished diary manuscripts since my doctoral dissertation focused on the comparative analysis of adolescent diaries, and based on my experiences of analyzing these texts, I now firmly believe that judging by its style and format, *Éva lányom* could not have been written by a young adolescent.

The first section of this paper presents Ágnes Zsolt's life and career, followed by a section where I discuss the role of Ágnes Zsolt's guilt and grief over the death of her daughter in writing her memoirs. The

third section focuses on *Éva lányom* as Ágnes Zsolt's work and argues that by analyzing certain aspects of the text, we can determine authorship even in the absence of the original manuscript. I also discuss the issue of authenticity as debated by other scholars, then examine articles and reviews from 1947, the year *Éva lányom* was published. I will then examine the title and structure of the volume as well as the length and style of the diary entries, highlighting certain historical inconsistencies in the text. Finally, I shall analyze the two letters attached to the volume that were allegedly written by the cook and the governess of Ágnes's family, concluding that the two letters are likely fake and have also been written by the mother.

The tragic life of Ágnes Zsolt, mother of the 'Hungarian Anne Frank'

In 1912, the year Ágnes was born in the city of Nagyvárad [today's Oradea in Romania], her father, pharmacist Rezső Rosenberg (who later hungarianized his surname to Rácz) purchased the Hungarian Crown Pharmacy and the family hired an Austrian governess called Juszti, who raised not only Ágnes, but also Éva nineteen years later.⁵ Ágnes Rácz completed her studies in Kolozsvár [today's Cluj-Napoca, Romania] and became a pharmacist, and we may presume that she was meant to inherit the pharmacy her father originally bought to provide for his family. (For a portrait of Ágnes Zsolt see appendix I, [page 153])

In 1931, Ágnes Rácz gave birth to Éva Heyman, her only child from her first marriage to architect Béla Heyman, but their marriage eventually ended in divorce and Ágnes later married leftist writer and journalist Béla Zsolt, changing her name to Ágnes Zsolt and following her husband to Budapest while young Éva stayed behind with her maternal grandparents in Nagyvárad, where she was practically raised by the Austrian governess. By the time Ágnes married Béla Zsolt, he had become a nationally renowned and celebrated writer and journalist, who wrote many extremely successful plays, novels and short stories. However, as a leftist writer, Zsolt also publicly criticized the interwar Hungarian political system, which made him infamous in right-wing circles. In 1942, due to his Jewish origin, Béla Zsolt was conscripted into labour service on the Eastern front, where he developed typhoid fever and was only released in 1944 thanks to his wife's efforts and support. Following Béla Zsolt's release from labour service, he and his wife decided to visit Ágnes's family. On March 16, 1944, the couple arrived in Nagyvárad and was soon trapped there due to the German occupation of Hungary on March 19,

which left Béla Zsolt no choice but to go into hiding due to his reputation as a notorious left-wing journalist. Following the German occupation, many antifascist politicians and prominent Jewish persons were arrested by the German and Hungarian police forces. Nevertheless, the authorities failed to apprehend Zsolt because he left his residence in Budapest and moved in with Ágnes's family in Nagyvárad.

During Béla Zsolt and his wife's stay in Nagyvárad, the family had several opportunities to save Éva Heyman from deportation, but Ágnes's indecision eventually rendered their options impossible. At the beginning of May 1944, the family was forced to move into the Nagyvárad ghetto, where Éva Heyman lived with her grandparents at 20 Szacs vay street while Béla Zsolt was in hiding at the ghetto hospital as a patient, and doctors hid Ágnes Zsolt at the maternity ward to prevent Hungarian and German authorities from finding Béla Zsolt through her, her parents or her daughter. However, due to these arrangements, Ágnes Zsolt could only meet with her parents and child in secret.⁶

At the hospital of the Nagyvárad ghetto, two Jewish doctors, Sándor Bálint and gynecologist Miksa Kupfer, with the help of a gentile pathologist called Konrád Beöthy, attempted to save Jewish patients from deportation by imitating an outbreak of typhoid fever.⁷ The idea was inspired by the fact that it was possible to detect positive signs of typhoid fever in the blood of patients who had already suffered the disease (as did Béla Zsolt in 1943 during labor service).⁸ Kupfer and Bálint took blood samples from patients and then transferred them to Beöthy's laboratory, where he willingly confirmed the samples for typhoid fever whether the patient in question had the illness or not. The doctors then declared these patients contagious, isolating them in a special epidemic ward established in the air defense basement of the building. At the time of deportation, all non-contagious patients were deported, but thanks to the efforts of the three doctors, some thirty patients residing at the epidemic ward survived because Hungarian and German authorities did not want to risk exposing their personnel to the illness.⁹

Some of the Jewish patients who were saved by the efforts of Bálint, Kupfer and Beöthy at the Nagyvárad ghetto hospital, including Ágnes and Béla Zsolt, eventually managed to escape with forged documents to Budapest, Romania (due to its proximity to Nagyvárad) or to neutral Switzerland. At the end of June 1944, thanks to the Zionist Rescue Committee and journalist, lawyer and Zionist leader Rezső Kasztner, the organizer of the famous Kasztner train, 1,684 Jews managed to escape from Hungary by traveling on board the Kasztner train through Bergen-

Belsen and into Switzerland. Passengers included Kasztner's relatives and friends, but the majority were prominent Jews (rabbis, writers, artists and Zionists) and their relatives, as well as other persons and a group of orphans.¹⁰ As a fellow journalist, Kasztner was intent on helping Béla Zsolt, and his efforts allowed Béla and Ágnes Zsolt to reach the Swiss border, but Éva Heyman and her grandparents could not accompany them. Since Ágnes's parents and daughter could not seek refuge in the hospital of the Nagyvárad ghetto, they were all deported and eventually murdered in Auschwitz.

In 1945, Béla Zsolt and his wife returned to Hungary from Switzerland, and once they settled down in Budapest, Béla Zsolt began writing his memoirs while also actively participating in Hungarian politics. Within two years, he became the co-president of the left-wing Hungarian Radical Party, the editor of the party's journal *Haladás* [Progress], and in 1947, he also became a member of Parliament.¹¹ By 1946, Zsolt finished his memoirs titled *Kilenc koffer* [Nine suitcases], publishing the book in segments in *Haladás*. In *Kilenc koffer*, Béla Zsolt commemorated his labor service during World War II, his and his wife's last visit to Nagyvárad, the German occupation, their stay at the Nagyvárad ghetto and their successful escape to Switzerland, and though he mentioned his stepdaughter Éva Heyman in his memoir, it is interesting to note that he did not mention Éva having ever written a diary. Based on Béla Zsolt's memoirs, Éva Heyman either did not have a diary, or if she kept one, her stepfather did not consider the diary significant or important enough to mention it in his own memoirs, even though Béla Zsolt did mention some of Éva's possessions, such as her sports medals or her zoo card.

Although Ágnes Zsolt had originally studied to become a pharmacist, she decided to follow in Béla Zsolt's footsteps after World War II and became a journalist, publishing articles and reports in the journals *Világosság* [Light], *Világ* [World], and *Magyar Nemzet* [Hungarian nation], and finally publishing her one and only book, *Éva lányom*.¹²

We may assume that as a starting journalist, Ágnes might have been motivated by her husband's work and his autobiographical novel *Kilenc koffer* to write her own book and commemorate the tragedy of her daughter Éva. After 1945, Béla Zsolt once again became a celebrated writer in Hungary, as shown by the fact that he received the Order of Merit of the Hungarian People's Republic.¹³ His prestige definitely played a role in getting his wife's book published, since Ágnes's volume was obviously meant to be a tribute to the child as evidenced by the title *Éva lányom*. The

preface also states that Ágnes Zsolt wrote the book at the Szabadsághegy Sanatorium, where she allegedly composed the entire text in eight days.¹⁴

When she received news of Éva Heyman's early and tragic death, Ágnes Zsolt was overpowered by crippling grief and guilt, but her and her husband's desperate anger soon turned against their rescuer Miksa Kupfer, and according to my sources, the Zsolts were not the only patients who blamed Kupfer and his associates for not saving everyone at the Nagyváradi ghetto. Reuven Tsur (born Róbert Steiner), who today teaches literature at Tel Aviv University, was also one of the temporary residents of the Nagyváradi ghetto and his memoirs provide us with an additional account of what transpired at the ghetto hospital. Steiner was born in 1932 in Nagyváradi, where he was acquainted with the Zsolt family and Éva Heyman as a child. In 1944, Steiner's family was forced to move into the ghetto with other Jewish residents, but unlike Éva Heyman and her grandparents, the Steiner family managed to survive by escaping to Romania. Tsur's memoirs were originally published in Hebrew, but in 2005, a Hungarian translation was published under the title *Menekülés a gettóból: egy nagyváradi zsidó család története* [Escape from the ghetto: The history of a Jewish family from Nagyváradi]. Tsur mentions the Zsolts in his memoirs and also states that Miksa Kupfer was sued by several patients who were allowed stay at the hospital as their family members were deported. As Tsur writes, "When the Zsolts returned to Budapest after the war, they decided to persecute Kupfer in any way possible."¹⁵ By blaming their rescuer, Ágnes and Béla Zsolt tried to alleviate their own guilt and diminish their personal responsibility in the death of Éva Heyman and Ágnes's parents. Their goal was to sue Kupfer and have him indicted by court, and though their attempts failed, they did manage a small act of revenge by having Béla Zsolt portray Kupfer in an extremely negative light in his book *Kilenc koffer*, calling him a "demonic ponce of a doctor."¹⁶ Miksa Kupfer was so deeply offended by Béla Zsolt's unfair portrayal of him that he almost sued Zsolt for publishing his biased opinion in *Haladás*,¹⁷ and it is interesting to note that although the full text of *Kilenc koffer* was meant to be published as a volume in 1947, it only came out in Hungarian in 1980.¹⁸

In 1949, two years after the publication of *Éva lányom*, Béla Zsolt died of laryngeal cancer¹⁹ and left behind a widow consumed by guilt and loneliness, since Ágnes' grief over the murder of Éva Heyman did not lessen over the years. In August 1951, Ágnes committed suicide, but my sources disagree on the method she used. According to Tsur, she cut her wrists, while writer and actress Ilona Harnos wrote that Ágnes poisoned

herself.²⁰ We only know for certain that her dead body was found in her house, lying next to the picture of her daughter Éva.²¹

The psychological background of the birth of *Éva lányom*: Trauma, mourning and grief

In November 1947, Zsuzsa Madarassy published a short article about *Éva lányom* in the journal *Politika* [Politics], where she quoted Ágnes Zsolt with regard to her motivation behind writing her book, which was apparently a product of the mother's guilt over losing her daughter: "This book has made public my private self-accusation of why I stayed alive."²² Ágnes's words suggest that she blamed herself for surviving when her daughter and parents did not, and Béla Zsolt's memoirs confirm that his wife was irreversibly traumatized by the fact that she and her husband managed to escape to Switzerland while Éva Heyman and Éva's parents were deported and murdered in Auschwitz. Since Ágnes lost her entire family in the Holocaust, her mourning and grief work were especially difficult on account of having no relatives who shared her experiences of this tragic period and could have helped her cope with her loss.

According to Béla Zsolt's memoirs, Ágnes made several unsuccessful suicide attempts in May 1944 after the doctors at the hospital of the Nagyváradi ghetto informed her that her daughter Éva had been deported. After the death of Éva Heyman, the doctors first withheld the news from Ágnes and inspired false hopes of the child's survival, but after three days, they finally visited her at the epidemic wing to relay the tragic news. In February 1944, Ágnes developed a tumor and had to undergo extensive surgery, which already left her in a delicate condition, but her state of health deteriorated considerably once she became overpowered by crippling guilt and shock. In her grief over losing her daughter, Ágnes turned to self-harm and in her first suicide attempt, she managed to tear open her relatively recent surgical wound. Béla Zsolt was not present during Ágnes's suicide attempts, but based on the accounts of the doctors, he managed to reconstruct Ágnes's attempts in *Kilenc koffer*: "On the third day in the cellar, she discovered that she had been misled and her parents and her child had been deported. After a hair-raising nervous attack, followed by a six-hour faint [sic], she was overcome by a speechless, melancholy lethargy and went on hunger strike."²³

To Ágnes Zsolt, the only possible way to cope with the loss of her daughter was to join Éva Heyman in death by taking her own life in any

way possible. According to Béla Zsolt, she nearly succeeded in killing herself at one point:

Then she turned to self-flagellation. For two days she writhed on the bare stone floor of the cellar: her operation wound opened and the doctors had to stitch it up again. It was only with great difficulty that they managed to carry her to one of the empty rooms upstairs. When they left her alone for a few minutes, she tore her artery open at the wrist and in a fit of weeping kept biting her fists till they were bleeding. [...] Eventually she recovered somewhat and frantically demanded to be taken to the gendarmes, put into a wagon and sent after her family. When the doctors tried to calm her down, she started to scream: if they didn't let her go to the gendarmes, she would reveal the whole deception [sic] and report the doctors and the patients. If her child had been deported [sic], then everybody else should be deported too. In the hospital windows there was no glass, and in the street outside, less than five meters from her room, every word could be heard by the free Aryans [non-Jewish persons – G. K.] of Nagyvárad as they were passing by. The horrified doctors held her down and gave her an injection to make her sleep.²⁴

The tragedy of losing Éva Heyman was exacerbated by the fact that, just like others who mourned the death of their relatives in Auschwitz, Ágnes Zsolt did not know the exact location of her daughter's body and was denied an important part of processing her trauma, the means of giving Éva a proper burial. Funerals have a special function during mourning since they allow the mourner to conclude their period of shock and say farewell to the deceased through a series of traditional funeral rites in the presence of a supportive community. Ágnes was denied the conclusive farewell of a funeral, and in his 1947 article, Béla Zsolt mentions that the fact that Éva had no designated grave depressed Ágnes, who often visited the cemetery after the war: "As a matter of fact, she often goes to the cemetery to look at the unmarked graves and sometimes manages to delude herself that the child is there somewhere under one of those mounds."²⁵ Ágnes's coping strategy served to curb her hopeless and self-destructive grief by finding a place where she could cherish and honor her daughter's memory 'in the presence' of the departed.

Since Ágnes could not process the loss of her daughter by burying Éva's body, we could argue that her memoirs served not only as a tribute to the child, but also as a means of articulating Ágnes's most important memories. By writing her book, Ágnes could recreate her daughter to suit her own needs of coping with Éva's murder and loss, leading her to

construct an idolized image of her child not only in the preface of her book but through the entire volume, where one recurring theme is Éva's will to live despite her terrible circumstances. In the preface, Ágnes talks of her daughter in the third person, emphasizing Éva's sensitive nature and will to survive, which the 'diary' proceeds to confirm in the form of diary entries written in first person. In my interpretation, writing her book as if it were Éva's own memoir was part of Ágnes Zsolt's grief work and gave her a chance to process the trauma of losing Éva Heyman by presenting and preserving an idealized image of Éva as a vigorous, smart, sensitive and open-minded girl with above average intellectual capacities.

***Éva lányom* and the question of authenticity in scholarly literature**

Éva lányom has traditionally been considered a collection of Éva Heyman's own diary entries by scholars such as Judah Marton, who wrote the preface to the Hebrew translation of the text published by Yad Vashem in 1964.²⁶ Marton also wrote the preface to the first English translation of the book in 1974, which was based on the Hebrew version. The first sentence of the preface of the English version reads as follows: "This little volume contains the diary notes of a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl."²⁷ Marton supports his statement by referring to conversations he had with unnamed close friends of the Zsolt family, who were living in Israel at the time the Hebrew version was published. Marton also consulted members of the Rácz-Rosenberg family in Israel, mentioning that "they had no reason to question the authenticity of any part of the diary."²⁸ However, it is important to emphasize that Marton did not claim that any of the family members had ever seen or read the original manuscript, and he concluded that in the absence of the original, the authenticity of the text could not be proven.

In 1981, Dezső Schön and Mose Heller published an edited volume titled *A tegnap városa* [The city of yesterday] in memory of the Jewish inhabitants of Nagyvárád, and their work also considered *Éva lányom* an authentic diary, arguing that the text was 'honest' in a way the entries of an adult could never be. At the same time, the editors did assume that the original material was partially edited by Ágnes Zsolt.²⁹ Mária Ember, author of one of the first historical studies of Hungarian literature on the Holocaust, wrote an article on the book where she accepted it as an authentic diary,³⁰ and her opinion was also shared by Louise O. Vasvári, who researches the gendered aspects of the Holocaust.³¹

Recent studies of the book *Éva lányom* published by Ágnes Zsolt

began to emphasize the editing role of the mother over the child's authorship. For instance, literary historian Sz. Péter Nagy mentions the book in his short monograph on Béla Zsolt: "He married the daughter of a pharmacist in Nagyvárad, who later became a journalist under the name Ágnes Zsolt and also published the potentially fictive diary of her daughter from her first marriage in 1947 under the title *Éva lányom*."³²

Alexandra Zapruder comes to a similar conclusion in her book *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, which is a compilation of fourteen adolescent diaries, including Heyman's 'diary'.³³ According to Zapruder, it is probable that Éva kept a diary during the war, but for its publication, Ágnes Zsolt edited the original diary considerably by writing supplements and rewriting some of the original manuscript. Zapruder also assumes that it is no coincidence that the original manuscript is still missing and Ágnes may have destroyed it so that her changes could not be traced. However, she concludes that in the absence of the manuscript, its authenticity cannot be determined, an opinion also shared by literary historian György Szőke, who considers Ágnes Zsolt to be the author and attributes the birth of the book to the mother's feelings of remorse. In his article about *Éva lányom*, Szőke also notes that "[o]ne more legend debunked: the book we are holding in our hands is not the diary of the Hungarian Anna [sic] Frank."³⁴ Lastly, Reuven Tsur, who knew Éva personally from his childhood years, considers the book as "containing Éva's diary as well as her mother's comments."³⁵

Reviews of *Éva lányom* upon its publication in 1947

In 1947, several reviews were written about *Éva lányom* to celebrate its publication, and when we examine these reviews, we will find that there was considerable uncertainty at the time regarding the book's actual authorship. The short articles I examined were published around October and November 1947, one of them written by no other than Béla Zsolt, whose review can be reasonably regarded as the most authentic account of *Éva lányom* since Béla Zsolt not only knew both Ágnes and Éva intimately as Ágnes's husband and Éva's stepfather, but was also likely familiar with the book's origin. In his review for the journal *Haladás*, Zsolt introduced the book as follows: "My wife has recently published her book *Éva lányom*, in which she reconstructed from memory the diary of her thirteen-year-old daughter from her first marriage."³⁶ In his review, Béla Zsolt emphasized that the book was not a simple diary due to the fact that the mother not only used her daughter's diary as the source material, but also

supplemented it: “this thirteen-year-old girl revived in my wife’s book from the fragments of her diary...”³⁷ As we can see, Béla Zsolt’s review seems to consciously obfuscate the origin of the book by writing that the child is both ‘reconstructed’ and ‘revived’ in the published volume, which suggests that there might have been a diary that inspired the mother to write the book. However, it is important to note that Béla Zsolt never stated that the published volume was identical to the child’s diary and continuously emphasized the mother’s role in creating the volume.

In his 1947 review, writer and journalist Andor Kellér also foregrounded the creative role of Ágnes Zsolt over the authorship of Éva Heyman: “[S]he wrote the diary of her daughter’s last few months from memory in one go, one singular trance. At the time, she snuck a peak inside that private booklet, and the mother’s brain soaked up the voice of that beloved child like a sponge. She then breathed life into her, she who was silenced forever.”³⁸

In contrast to Béla Zsolt and Andor Kellér, other reviewers of *Éva lányom* accepted the book as containing the original diary. According to the 1947 article of writer and poet László Hárs, “Ági Zsolt, who appears on the cover, is not the author but the publisher of the diary of thirteen-year-old Éva who died in that Nazi hell.”³⁹ Writer and poet Zsuzsa Madarassy shared Hárs’s opinion and wrote, “This is Éva’s diary that her mother sometimes read in secret in Nagyvárad.”⁴⁰

In conclusion, when we examine the reviews and articles published in 1947, the very year of the publication of *Éva lányom*, we can clearly see that there was general uncertainty regarding the book’s authorship, not in the least due to the fact that Ágnes and Béla Zsolt made no concrete claims in this regard.

The title *Éva lányom*

When *The diary of Anne Frank* was published in 1947, Anne Frank was designated as the author of the book, whereas the diary of the ‘Hungarian Anne Frank’ published in the same year was listed under Ágnes Zsolt’s name instead of Éva Heyman’s. In both cases, the parents had a choice after the child’s death to decide whose name should be stated on the cover as the author, and from Ágnes Zsolt’s choice, we may conclude that she considered the volume to be her own creation rather than Éva’s. In contrast, Otto Frank published the original diaries of his daughter, which made it self-evident that the diaries should bear the name of the daughter rather than her father’s name.

The original cover of *Éva lányom*, shown below, promotes Ágnes Zsolt as the author of the book instead of Éva Heyman (this cover is reproduced in appendix II of this article.) Éva's first name is featured twice on the cover, but her surname is missing in both instances, which implies that she is a character rather than the author of the volume. The cover also features a quote from the preface in capital letters that briefly summarizes the contents of the book: "Thirteen-year-old Éva fought for her life against the killers of the Third Reich, but the German beast defeated Éva."⁴¹ The inner cover contains the title *Éva lányom* without the quote, and once again, there is no mention of the book being a diary until the first sentence of the preface. The cover of the book was obviously designed according to Ágnes Zsolt's specifications and shows how the book is meant to be viewed as her literary work about her daughter. In contrast, *The diary of Anne Frank* published in the same year clearly states on the cover that the book contains Anne Frank's diary letters.⁴²

In 1964, *Éva lányom* was translated into Hebrew and published by Yad Vashem, but the translation made considerable alterations, such as changing the title of the book to *אמנה של עיה* [Yomanah shel Eyah Hayman, Diary of Éva Heyman]⁴³ and replacing Ágnes Zsolt's name with Éva Heyman's. In other words, the Hebrew translation gives the illusion of the child's authorship when the original Hungarian text clearly designated Ágnes Zsolt as the author of the volume. Ten years later in 1974, *Éva lányom* was also published in English based on the Hebrew version instead of the original Hungarian,⁴⁴ which meant that it also adopted the changes of the Hebrew translation. Regarding the quality of the English version, I agree with Tim Cole who notes that "The diary was translated by Moshe Kohn from Hebrew into English (and hence the translation is far from ideal)."⁴⁵

The preface of *Éva lányom* written by Ágnes Zsolt had little to say about the diary it was allegedly based on. In fact, Ágnes Zsolt only mentioned the diary twice without any further detail,⁴⁶ also failing to clarify how the published diary related to the original manuscript. She noted in the first sentence of the preface that "I found Éva's diary in Nagyvárád in 1945,"⁴⁷ but she did not claim that the published diary was identical to the diary found in Nagyvárád.

The entries of the book

For my analysis, I compared certain diary entries of *Éva lányom* with two authentic adolescent diaries where the original manuscript proves the

children's authorship, and then compared these three texts based on the specificities of the diary genre (frequency, personalness, real time narrative and fragmentation),⁴⁸ as well as the length of diary entries, style, and recurring themes characteristic of adolescent diaries.

I compared the text attributed to Éva Heyman with the authentic diaries of two thirteen-year-old girls, Anne Frank, and Éva Weinmann, who was born in 1928 in Budapest and kept her diary between October 1944 and January 1945, though the diary was not published until sixty years later.⁴⁹ I also compared the Hungarian text of the Heyman 'diary' with the original Hungarian manuscript of Éva Weinmann, who started writing her diary at the age of thirteen, while in the case of Anne Frank, I only used those entries of the complete English version that she wrote when she was thirteen years old.⁵⁰ My analysis was informed by my experiences with other adolescent diaries in the course of writing my doctoral dissertation on the comparative analysis of fifteen Christian and Jewish adolescent diaries.⁵¹

When I examined *Éva lányom* with regard to the specificities of the genre of the diary, I found that unlike adolescent diaries where the randomness and spontaneity of daily entries leads to an overall fragmented text, the entries of *Éva lányom* are remarkably coherent, which suggests that they were composed in part by an adult. When I compared the diaries of Éva Weinmann and Anne Frank to *Éva lányom*, the other two diaries showed a number of similarities, the most striking of which was that the two authentic diaries did not contain long entries like Ágnes Zsolt's volume does. Two to three-page entries are relatively rare in the two adolescent diaries while Zsolt's text is rife with exceptionally long entries that would have filled multiple sheets of paper in handwritten form. The writing style of these long entries is also more detailed and sophisticated than any entries in Anne Frank's diary, despite the fact that Anne Frank revised her diary at a later age.⁵² Another characteristic of adolescent diaries is that they are often tied to adolescent roleplay where aspiring young people, such as Anne Frank who wanted to become a writer, looked to their diary as their first work of art. According to Ágnes Zsolt, however, Éva Heyman wanted to become a photo reporter, which means she would have had no reason or motivation to write exceptionally long diary entries as a way of testing her abilities. Conversely, there are no short entries in *Éva lányom* as opposed to Weinmann and Frank's diaries, which makes her 'adolescent diary' sound rather artificial.

Aside from lacking the fragmentation characteristic of authentic adolescent diaries, another aspect that is completely missing from *Éva*

lányom is the act of constant self-analysis and self-searching, which is especially characteristic of and a traditionally recurring theme in adolescent diaries. In other words, the author of *Éva lányom* is reporting about her surroundings rather than sharing information about herself, her feelings, desires and plans. Parts that pertain to Éva's desires or plans are so brief and rare that they do not constitute a recurring theme in the text, which may be explained by the fact that Ágnes Zsolt did not live with Éva and therefore found it difficult to grasp her character. On the other hand, Ágnes was familiar with everyday life in Nagyvárád since she had grown up in the city, making everyday events, places and people easier to write about. Ágnes may have also wanted to cater to readers' needs by describing and situating places and characters to facilitate navigation in the text.

Another aspect of adolescent diaries missing from *Éva lányom* is the focus on the present and on momentary occurrences. For instance, in the entries before the German occupation in March 1944, the author of the 'diary' constantly talks of the past rather than the present, which is uncommon for a diary where instances of reminiscing about the past are usually rare and accidental. Finally, another aspect where *Éva lányom* seems to deviate from authentic adolescent diaries is that the author of the text does not appear as an agent in the narrative. Unlike other adolescent authors, 'Éva' does not reflect, evaluate or make sense of the events she's writing about.

The structure of the 'diary'

In *Éva lányom*, the 'diary' begins on Éva Heyman's thirteenth birthday, a date that seems to have been chosen by Ágnes Zsolt to place the text in a tragic framework where the narrative begins with the birthday of the murdered child and lasts until the day of her deportation. It is interesting to note that Éva's thirteenth birthday fell on a Friday, which lends an ominous atmosphere to the first passage that can be connected to Ágnes's guilt over having missed her daughter's final birthday: "I've turned thirteen, I was born on Friday the thirteenth. Ági is terribly superstitious, though she's ashamed to admit it. This is the first time Ági didn't come for my birthday. [...] She didn't come home for my thirteenth birthday."⁵³

The first entry of the 'diary' serves as an introduction and an occasion for Ágnes Zsolt to reminisce about the most memorable experiences of her daughter Éva. Ágnes's description of the most important events in Éva Heyman's life begins with the above quoted excerpt and foreshadows the themes and main elements of subsequent entries. In the

introductory entry, the author uses the child's chain of thought to give short descriptions of Éva's family members, including the grandparents, the parents, the servants of the family, immediate relatives and Éva's best friends. These descriptions are then juxtaposed by turning points in the family's life, such as the divorce of Ágnes from Béla Heyman, the forced leave of the Austrian governess (due to the Hungarian Jewish Laws of the era that forbade German citizens to serve Jews), Béla Zsolt's conscription into labour service, the expropriation of the pharmacy and the deportation of Éva's friend Márta Münczer.

In *Éva lányom*, diary entries from before the period of the German occupation pertain to the early years of Éva Heyman's life, while subsequent entries describe her 'present' life. We may assume that early on, frequent references to the past helped Ágnes Zsolt in constructing the text, since it was easier to simply select a given event from the past at random and include it in the diary than reconstruct the 'present' life of the child who lived apart from her mother and stepfather. In this regard, March 19, 1944 was a turning point in the text where the focus finally shifted to the present, a change of temporal perspective that can be explained by the fact that Ágnes Zsolt and her husband arrived in Nagyvárád on Tuesday, March 16, so the mother was by her daughter's side from that point onward. The German occupation thus became a turning point to Ágnes both in terms of her constructed narrative and in her family's situation.

One recurring theme in the book is the foreshadowing of Éva Heyman's tragic fate through a series of linked elements such as her friend Márta Münczer's red bicycle, which comes to signify the death of Márta and her family by German troops in Kamianets-Podilskyi⁵⁴ and serves as a basis for Éva's fear that she would share the fate of her friend due to having matching bicycles. The elements of the symbolic web (bicycle = Márta = Poland = Germans = death) appear multiple times in repetition, and to preserve the connection between them, Ágnes even located Kamianets-Podilskyi in Poland instead of its actual geographical location in the Ukraine.⁵⁵ If Ágnes had properly located the city in the Ukraine instead of Poland, she would have lost one of the pillars of the complex death symbol, the red bicycle would have also lost its meaning, and the child's fear of sharing Márta's fate would have come across as completely irrational. However, through the erroneous location or geographical 'shifting' of the first great massacre (Auschwitz = Kamianets-Podilskyi), Éva and Márta's fates do become the same.⁵⁶

Ágnes Zsolt's memoir is structured within a framework where the first diary entry was condensed in order to provide a full overview of the

child protagonist and her surroundings to the reader, while the last entry serves as the conclusion where Éva Heyman finally parts with her diary: "Now I see that friendly gendarme has let Mariska come in. I can't write anymore, dear diary, the tears run from my eyes, I'm hurrying over to Mariska..."⁵⁷ The character of the friendly gendarme also appears in the memoir of Béla Zsolt and might have been adapted by Ágnes Zsolt, but it is more probable that the identical description stems from their shared experiences.

When was Éva Heyman deported? The final entries of the 'diary'

Judging from certain contradictions in Éva Heyman's 'diary' and based on accounts of the deportation of Jews from the Nagyvárád ghetto, I concluded that the last two entries in *Éva lányom* are fictitious. The penultimate entry was allegedly written on May 29, 1944 and informs us about the first deportation from the ghetto, followed by the final entry dated May 30, 1944, in which Éva parts with her diary. Ágnes Zsolt states in her preface that Éva was put into the cattle train on June 3, 1944 and arrived in Auschwitz three days later. However, there are several contradictions in the account, not only within the 'diary' and the preface but also compared to the accounts of former residents of the Nagyvárád ghetto.

The Hungarian gendarmes divided the Nagyvárád ghetto into seven deportation districts, and each district was closed before deportation to prevent people from escaping into other districts.⁵⁸ Based on these divisions, Éva Heyman and her grandparents residing at 20 Szacs vay street were part of the third district, a fact that Béla Zsolt confirms in *Kilenc koffer*.⁵⁹ The announcements of the Chevra Kadisa published in 1949 list the number of deportation transports per day as well as parts of the ghetto from whence people were taken to the trains and the date of their arrival to Auschwitz. The list places the first deportation on May 25, 1944, when the residents of Rimler Károly street and people forced into the Nagyvárád ghetto from other parts of the country were deported, arriving in Auschwitz on May 29, 1944.⁶⁰ The second deportation took place on May 27, when the residents of the odd numbers of Kapucinus street and Szacs vay street were deported and arrived in Auschwitz on May 30, 1944. The even numbers of Szacs vay street, including number 20, were deported on May 28, 1944 and arrived in Auschwitz on May 31, 1944, which means that Éva could not have written her last two entries on May 29 and 30, 1944. The diary of Sándor Leitner, the last president of the Orthodox Jewish

congregation in Nagyvárad more or less confirms these events.⁶¹ According to his diary, the third wave of deportations occurred on May 29.

Ágnes Zsolt claims in the preface of *Éva lányom* that her daughter was deported on June 3, 1944 and arrived in Auschwitz on June 6, 1944, but several facts contradict her statement. The preface hints at the fact that in the last three days before the deportation (June 1 to 3), Éva could not have written anything if she had previously given her diary to the cook on May 30 for safekeeping. However, if we accept the mother's preface as factual, then her daughter could not have lived at 20 Szacs vay street based on other available sources and somehow had to either avoid or miss her deportation. However, this does not seem to be a viable alternative according to other related sources, including Béla Zsolt's memoir, which states that Éva was deported from Szacs vay street in district three. According to Béla Zsolt, Ágnes Zsolt's efforts to transfer her daughter into another district failed, and every available information supports the idea that Éva and her grandparents were deported either on May 28 or May 29 from district three.

The child Ágnes had (not) left

As I have previously mentioned, Ágnes Zsolt and her husband managed to find refuge inside the ghetto hospital at Nagyvárad before deportation began at the ghetto. Béla Zsolt was admitted to the hospital as a patient and Ágnes was hiding in the maternity ward under an alias, which meant that she could only meet her daughter and parents rarely and in secret.⁶² However, we only know of their location from Béla Zsolt's memoirs since Ágnes Zsolt's book does not mention that she was hiding there while the child was left with her grandparents. Instead, the text of the 'diary' constantly stresses the opposite, that Ágnes did not abandon her child and they were preparing for the deportation together. For instance, the entry on May 14 reads as follows: "Grandpa is in charge of the pharmacy, and now he put Ági on the list of workers so that she would be able to visit Uncle Béla every day."⁶³ It is clear from the entry that Béla Zsolt was no longer staying with the family at 20 Szacs vay street, a fact that is confirmed by other accounts, but these same accounts also confirm that Ágnes Zsolt was not a visitor or hospital staff but a patient at the hospital. One of these accounts is the memoir of Reuven Tsur I have mentioned before, who was acquainted with the family and his mother was an old friend of Ágnes Zsolt. In his memoirs, Tsur mentions a conversation between his mother and Ágnes at the ghetto hospital, which likely took place in May or June

1944, and the fact that the conversation took place at the hospital proves that Ágnes Zsolt was not with her daughter and parents at 20 Szacs vay street. According to Tsur's memoirs,

My mother asked her old friend where Éva was. Ági replied that she was with her grandparents. "She had always been with them. We thought it would be best if she stayed with them." To which my mother said, "At times like these, a child's place is by their parents' side. Ági, I'm afraid your maternal instincts have failed you this time."⁶⁴

By careful shifting of certain facts regarding her stay at the Nagy-várad ghetto, Ágnes Zsolt managed to create a narrative that may not have reflected reality but helped alleviate Ágnes's remorse as a mother over abandoning her daughter Éva. To maintain the illusion of staying by her daughter's side, Ágnes and even Béla Zsolt appeared in the 'child's' final entry, where Éva allegedly witnessed a conversation between her mother and stepfather. Their implied presence served to ease Ágnes's guilty conscience by indicating that her daughter stayed with her mother until the end and the whole family was preparing for the deportation together. There are also other details that suggest to the reader that Ágnes remained with her daughter and parents, such as parts of the text where the 'child' writes about her conversations with her mother or Béla Zsolt, or describes their everyday activities. From the mother's perspective, these entries served two important purposes: in the self-constructed past of the diary, her daughter *knew* her mother wanted to save her, which alleviated Ágnes' guilt, and such passages were also an indication to the reader that the child was included in her parents' escape plan: "Ági and Uncle Béla are whispering something to each other about our staying here in some kind of typhoid hospital, because they plan to say that Uncle Béla has typhoid fever."⁶⁵

Ágnes Zsolt deliberately left out the details of her own escape to Switzerland from the preface of *Éva lányom* because her narrative attempted to convince the reader that Éva Heyman and her mother were preparing for their deportation together. In the preface, Ágnes Zsolt only mentioned very briefly and vaguely that she managed to escape to Switzerland while her only child died in Auschwitz. However, this means that it remains unclear to the readers how Ágnes actually managed to escape when according to the final entries of the diary, she was still by her daughter's side at 20 Szacs vay street. The preface raises questions that Ágnes Zsolt's book does not want to answer, probably because she knew

that the answers were all in her husband's memoir *Kilenc koffer*. While the abandonment of the child filled Ágnes with so much grief and guilt that she could not bear to write about it, Béla Zsolt gave a detailed account in his own memoirs of how they failed to rescue Éva. In his book, Béla Zsolt not only pushed responsibility onto his wife and her family, who did not recognize the severity of the child's situation like he did, but also blamed the doctors who failed in their attempts to transfer the child into another deportation district.

The letters and self-accusations of a negligent parent

When Ágnes Zsolt published her book in 1947, she attached two letters that were often completely ignored by scholars. Both letters were written after the war in 1945 and addressed to Ágnes, one by the Christian cook of the Rácz family, Mariska Szabó, and the other by Juszti, the Austrian governess who had raised not only Ágnes but also her daughter Éva. Both letters were replies to Ágnes Zsolt's letters, which suggests that her first letters were written to inform them of Éva's death at age thirteen. In light of my discussion of the text as the mother's work rather than her daughter's writing, one may ask why Ágnes Zsolt considered it important to publish these letters along with what she claimed was the child's diary.

If we consider the book to be Ágnes Zsolt's work, then it is of course possible that the letters attached to the diary were also written by her. Viewed in this light, the first letter allegedly written by the cook would thus serve to further reinforce the authenticity of the child's diary. Similarly, writing the letter on behalf of Juszti gave Ágnes an opportunity to openly articulate her self-accusation through the character of the governess, pointing out where she made wrong decisions as a parent that she would later regret.

In my opinion, the primary function of the cook's letter was to prove the existence of Éva Heyman's diary to the reader since the letter does not pertain to the book in any other way. Similarly, the purpose of the final sentences of the last entry is to establish a connection between the 'diary' and the attached letter, in which the family's cook informs Ágnes Zsolt about the diary in her possession: "Madame knows that on the last day, when I got inside the Ghetto, Évike gave me her diary."⁶⁶

In her letter to the Austrian governess, Ágnes Zsolt must have written of her immense guilt over surviving while Éva was murdered in Auschwitz, which firsts elicits the governess's sympathy in her reply to Ágnes, but Juszti then goes on to accuse Ágnes of neglecting Éva well

before the time of their transportation to the ghetto in a straightforward and harsh criticism of the mother:

If there is one thing for which I must blame you, it isn't for having stayed alive while the girl is dead, for the very opposite could have happened too, but for having lulled yourself with excuses that looked real — things I have already referred to — and for not having fought to have Éva with you, even in more modest circumstances. You, who fought so hard for your man when everybody said it was hopeless; you, who in the end succeeded in rescuing him from that horror in which you found yourselves in Várád; and in the end you, who understand people so well, for you have an instinct about this sort of thing, you, my Ágika, in this matter you failed!⁶⁷

If we read Ágnes Zsolt's published volume as the mother's memoirs, then certain recurring themes in *Éva lányom*, such as Ágnes's divorce from Béla Heyman, can be traced back to the image of the negligent mother projected by the governess' letter to Ágnes Zsolt. Ágnes likely realized in retrospect that not only was her divorce a difficult period for Éva, but that her relation with Éva was also different from more conventional mother and daughter relationships, as evidenced by her calling herself Ági throughout the book rather than 'mother' to illuminate their peculiar relationship. Therefore, in an attempt to view herself from the child's point of view, Ágnes wrote about the negative impact of the divorce and often described herself in the book as someone who was unsuitable for the maternal role, with several episodes included to reinforce her incompetence while there are hardly any instances that counterbalance it. The reason behind such passages would be Ágnes's self-accusations fueled by her reflection on her daughter's life and realizing she did not do her best as a mother to give Éva a short but happy life until the day of her deportation.

To counterbalance somewhat the negative image Ágnes projected of herself as Éva's mother and to compensate for her neglect of her daughter, Ágnes Zsolt made a point to mention her desires that pertained to the postwar reunion of mother and child. While divorce as a recurring theme could be attributed to the author's guilt, her guilt would then be alleviated by repeatedly projecting a happy future in Pest. At the same time, by constructing the text in this particular way, Ágnes Zsolt also attempted to validate herself by claiming that she only left her child due to forced circumstances and trusted her to the care of her grandparents in Nagyvárád. There are several episodes in the book that contrast the child's

negative present with a happy future in which the ‘family’ is together again:

...I go to them, and when there won't be any more Jewish Laws for journalists. I'll live with Uncle Béla in Budapest. That is why Ági says that my staying with grandpa and grandma is only a transition [sic] period, and that my true, final home will be with them in Pest, as I've already written in you, dear diary.⁶⁸

Conclusion

In this paper, I focused on the book *Éva Lányom* published in 1947 in Budapest by journalist Ágnes Zsolt, and offered an alternative interpretation of the volume that has traditionally been presumed by scholars to contain the diary entries of Ágnes's daughter Éva Heyman, murdered in 1944 in Auschwitz at the age of thirteen. Due to Ágnes Zsolt's circumstances and her difficulties in coping with the murder of her child, this paper posits a possible alternative according to which the book was written by Ágnes Zsolt as a tribute to her daughter. The memoir of Ágnes Zsolt's husband Béla Zsolt suggests that his wife was irreversibly traumatized by the fact that her connections helped her and her husband escape to Switzerland during the deportation of Hungarian Jews while Ágnes's daughter and parents died in Auschwitz. Therefore I deemed the book to have been the work of the mother, whose grief and remorse over losing her daughter Éva compelled her to write her memoirs in the form of a child's diary. In my interpretation, the book was conceived from the mother's inconsolable grief, and as such not only commemorates the child but also served as an attempt to articulate Ágnes's most important memories. Ágnes Zsolt's mourning period was especially difficult due to losing her closest relatives who shared her experiences and could have reminisced with her about her daughter and the Holocaust. In the absence of her family, Ágnes's grief over the murder of Éva Heyman did not lessen over the years, nor did she ever forgive herself for managing to survive, leading to her suicide in August 1951 at the age of thirty-nine.

I argued for Ágnes Zsolt's authorship by presenting evidence from authentic accounts of the Nagyvárad ghetto and examining the text with regard to the specificities of the genre of the diary, and based on my research, I concluded that *Éva lányom* is not Éva's diary, but Ágnes Zsolt's book written in the style of an adolescent diary. If Éva did write a diary during World War II, her manuscript was likely negligible and only

served as an inspiration for the mother to write her own book, just like the letters of the cook and the governess.

NOTES

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¹ Zsuzsa Scheer, "A magyar Anna Frank naplója" [The diary of the Hungarian Anne Frank], *Új Élet*, April 15, 1972.

² Ágnes Zsolt, *Éva lányom* [My daughter Éva] (Budapest: Új Idők, 1947).

³ After its initial publication, the book was virtually unavailable for several decades, but in 2009, after sixty-two years, it was finally republished in Hungarian. Ágnes Zsolt, *Éva lányom* [My daughter Éva] (Budapest: Fapadoskonyv.hu, 2009).

⁴ Gergely Kunt, "Egy kamasznapló két olvasata: Zsolt Ágnes: *Éva lányom. Napló*" [Two interpretations of an adolescent diary: Ágnes Zsolt's *My daughter Éva: Diary*], *Korall: társadalomtörténeti folyóirat* 41 (2010): 51-80.

⁵ Péter Újvári, ed. *Magyar Zsidó Lexikon* [The Hungarian Jewish encyclopedia] (Budapest, 1929): 469, 752; H. Mária Péter, *Az erdélyi gyógyszerészet magyar vonatkozásai* [The Hungarian aspects of Transylvanian pharmaceuticals] (Cluj-Napoca: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2002), 88-89.

⁶ Béla Zsolt, *Kilenc koffer* [Nine suitcases] (Budapest: Magvető, 1980), 52.

⁷ Reuven Tsur, *Menekülés a gettóból: egy nagyváradi zsidó család története* [Escape from the ghetto: The history of a Jewish family from Nagyvárad] (Budapest: Noran, 2005), 88.

⁸ Zsolt, *Kilenc koffer*, 147-152.

⁹ Braham L. Randolph, *A magyar holokauszt földrajzi enciklopédiája I.* [A geographical encyclopedia of the Hungarian Holocaust, volume I] (Budapest: Park Kiadó, 2007): 332; Tsur, *Menekülés*, 86-95.

¹⁰ László Karsai, *Holokauszt* [Holocaust] (Budapest: Pannonica, 2001): 373-374.

¹¹ Péter Sz. Nagy, *Zsolt Béla* [Béla Zsolt] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990): 23.

¹² "Zsolt Ágnes" in *Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon* [The Hungarian biographical encyclopedia]. <http://mek.niif.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC17155/17430.htm>

¹³ Nagy, *Zsolt Béla*, 23.

¹⁴ György Szőke, “‘Én nem akarok meghalni’ – Egy Soa-napló tanulságai” [“I don’t want to die:” The morals of a Soa diary], in *Holocaust a művészetekben* [The Holocaust and the arts], ed. Lóránt Kabdebó, *et al.* (Pécs: Janus Pannonius Egyetemi Kiadó, 1995), 161.

¹⁵ Tsur, *Menekülés*, 94.

¹⁶ Béla Zsolt, *Nine Suitcases: A Memoir*. Translated from the Hungarian original into English by Ladislaus Löb (London: Pimlico Publishing, 2005), 128.

¹⁷ Zsolt, *Kilenc koffer*, 402.

¹⁸ Zsolt, *Kilenc koffer*, 401.

¹⁹ Tsur, *Menekülés*, 94-95.

²⁰ Tsur, *Menekülés*, 95; Kosztolányi Dezsőné. *Burokban születtem* [I was born in a cocoon] (Budapest: Noran, 2005), 440.

²¹ Éva Heyman, *The Diary of Éva Heyman*. Introduction and notes written by Yehudah Marton. Translated from the Hebrew translation into English by Moshe M. Kohn (New York: Shapolsky Publishers, 1988), 14.

²² *Politika*, November 22, 1947: 10.

²³ Zsolt, *Nine Suitcases*, 248.

²⁴ Zsolt, *Nine Suitcases*, 249.

²⁵ Béla Zsolt, “Feleségem könyve” [My wife’s book], *Haladás*, October 30, 1947: 3.

²⁶ Heyman, *The Diary*, 16-17.

²⁷ Heyman, *The Diary*, 7.

²⁸ Heyman, *The Diary*, 17.

²⁹ Dezső Schön and Heller Mose *et al.*, eds. *A tegnap városa: a nagyvárad* [The city of yesterday: In memory of the Jews of Nagyvárad] (Tel-Aviv, 1981), 327-330.

³⁰ Mária Ember, “A holocaust a magyar prózairodalomban” [The Holocaust in Hungarian prose], in *Holocaust a művészetekben*, pp. 154-159. See also Agatha Schwartz, “Éva Heyman, the Hungarian Anne Frank: Writing Against Persecution and Trauma,” *Hungarian Studies Review* 42, 1-2 (2015): 117-134.

³¹ Louise O. Vasvári, “Hungarian Women’s Holocaust Life Writing in the Context of the Nation’s Divided Social Memory, 1944-2014,” *Hungarian Cultural Studies* 7 (2014): 54-81. *HCS* is the e-journal of the American Hungarian Educators’ Association, <http://ahea.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/ahea>.

³² Nagy, *Zsolt Béla*, 21.

³³ Alexandra Zapruder, ed., *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers’ Diaries of the Holocaust* (New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2002), 445-446.

³⁴ Szőke, “Én nem akarok meghalni,” 160-163.

³⁵ Tsur, *Menekülés*, 91.

³⁶ Zsolt, “Feleségem könyve,” 3.

³⁷ Zsolt, “Feleségem könyve,” 3.

³⁸ *Világosság*, November 4, 1947: 2.

³⁹ *Szivárvány*, November 15, 1947: 20.

⁴⁰ *Politika*, 1947: 10.

⁴¹ Book cover of Ágnes Zsolt, *Éva lányom* (Budapest: Új Idők, 1947).

⁴² Book cover of Anne Frank, *Het Achterhuis. Dagboekbrieven van 14 juni 1942 tot 1 augustus 1944*. (Amsterdam: Contact Publishing 1947.)

⁴³ Éva Heyman, [מגרת] ווטרמ הדוהי תאמ תורעהו אובמ / [אמיייה הווא לש הנמוי] *Yomanah shel Evah Hayman / mavo ve-he'arot me-et Yehudah Marton; [tirgem me-Hungarit Tsevi Barme'ir]* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1964).

⁴⁴ Éva Heyman, *The Diary of Éva Heyman*. Introduction and notes written by Judah Marton. Translated from the Hebrew translation into English by Moshe M. Kohn (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1974).

⁴⁵ Tim Cole, *Traces of the Holocaust: journeying in and out of the Ghettos* (London: Continuum, 2011.) 167.

⁴⁶ Zsolt, *Éva lányom*, 5-6.

⁴⁷ Heyman, *The Diary*, 19.

⁴⁸ Andy Alaszewski, *Using Diaries for Social Research* (London, 2005), 12.

⁴⁹ Éva Weinmann, *Weinmann Éva naplója: 1941. okt. 10 - 1945. január 19*. [The diary of Éva Weinmann, 10 October 1941 - 19 January 1945]. Translated by Noémi Berger *et al.* (Budapest: Lauder Javne Iskola Judisztikai Archívum, 2004).

⁵⁰ Anne Frank, *The Diary of Anne Frank. The Revised Critical Edition* (New York: Doubleday, 2003).

⁵¹ Gergely Kunt, *Szocializáció, előítélet, politikai propaganda kamasznaplók tükrében (1938-1956)* [Socialization, prejudice and political propaganda in adolescent diaries, 1938-1956] (Doctoral dissertation manuscript. ELTE-BTK, 2012).

⁵² Philippe Lejeune, "How Anne Frank Rewrote the Diary of Anne Frank," In *On Diary*, ed. J. D. Popkin and J. Rak (Manoa: Hawai'i UP, 2009), 237-267.

⁵³ Heyman, *The Diary*, 23.

⁵⁴ In July 1941, after the offensive launched against the Soviet Union, the Hungarian Central Authority for the Screening of Foreigners [KEOKH, Külföldieket Ellenőrző Országos Központi Hatóság] deported all homeless Jews and Jews with invalid personal documents to Ukrainian territory occupied by the Hungarian army. However, even Jews of Hungarian nationality and valid identification documents were often arrested by police in different parts of Hungary and then deported to the Ukraine. Márta Münczer, a friend of Éva Heyman, was also deported with her family despite the fact that they were Hungarian citizens and only Márta's father was considered Jewish by the Hungarian Jew Laws. In August 1941, an SS unit massacred approximately fifteen-thousand deported Jews in the area of Kamianets-Podilskyi because Hungarian authorities barred them from

returning to Hungary. (Karsai, *Holokauszt*, 228-232). The Zsolt family, including Éva, knew about the tragedy.

⁵⁵ Kamianets-Podilskyi is located in the Ukraine, close to the 1939 Polish border. Mária Ormos, *Magyarország a két világháború között. 1914-1945* [Hungary between the world wars, 1914-1945] (Debrecen: Csokonai Könyvkiadó, 1998), 235.

⁵⁶ If connecting Kamianets-Podilskyi to Poland is not a result of the author's decision as discussed above, it may have of course been a simple error.

⁵⁷ Heyman, *The Diary*, 104.

⁵⁸ Schön and Heller, *A tegnap városa*, 322.

⁵⁹ Zsolt, *Kilenc koffer*, 253, 256.; Heyman, *The Diary*, 86.

⁶⁰ Schön and Heller, *A tegnap városa*, 322.

⁶¹ Schön and Heller, *A tegnap városa*, 310.

⁶² Zsolt, *Kilenc koffer*, 52.

⁶³ Heyman, *The Diary*, 92.

⁶⁴ Tsur, *Menekülés*, 92.

⁶⁵ Heyman, *The Diary*, 104.

⁶⁶ Heyman, *The Diary*, 107.

⁶⁷ Heyman, *The Diary*, 112.

⁶⁸ Heyman, *The Diary*, 35.

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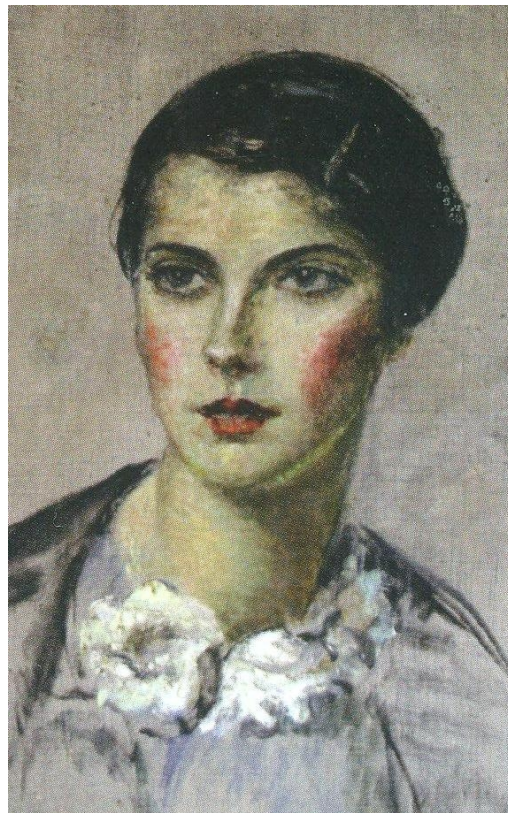
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Appendix I



Portrait of Ágnes Zsolt by Lajos Márk. Canvas, oil, around 1935 (in a private collection).

Published in Számadó, Emese, *“Villámcsapás” – Zsolt Béla és a 20. század eleji Komárom* [“Thunderstrike” – Béla Zsolt and Komárom at the beginning of the twentieth century]. (Komárom: Komárom Város Önkormányzata, 2009, p. 24.)

Appendix II



The original cover of the book published in 1947
(<http://moly.hu/konyvek/zsolt-agnes-eva-lanyom>)

Identity Shift in the Literature of Vojvodina's Hungarian Community, 1992-2010¹

Oszkár Roginer

This paper deals with evolving forms of identity as represented in the Hungarian literature from the Vojvodina, and analyzed through local, regional and national aspects of space. From the end of the Second World War and until the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ), there has been a relatively self-sufficient Hungarian community in Vojvodina, with its own collective identity quite distinguishable from the collective identities of communities surrounding it. Hungarians in Vojvodina produced literature following the traditions determined by this autonomous community and its spatial experience. This paper concentrates on the period between 1992 (when SFRJ disintegrated) to 2010 (when dual citizenship for diaspora Hungarians was made possible), with the aim to outline modifications of collectively inhabited space based on narrative representations of certain elements of the topography (i.e. cities, rivers and landscapes) in Vojvodina Hungarian literature.

Following a brief introduction to the history of Vojvodina Hungarian literature, this research focuses on the 1990's and 2000's, i.e. on the period after the breakup of Yugoslavia. I am interested in how, during this period, the identity of the Hungarian minority shifted its base of identification. I will try to outline how a Yugoslav based, thus essentially geocultural identity shifted to a Hungarian based, thus ethno-cultural one, relying on the representation of inhabited space in literature. Parallel to these shifts, the topographical image, the collectively imagined map of the Hungarian and Yugoslav/post-Yugoslav collective identities also changed. This eventually led to modifications in the self-image and the perception of a homeland for the Hungarians in Vojvodina as well. I will base my analysis on the works by Hungarian authors from Vojvodina. Other texts containing important spatial references from Yugoslavia and Vojvodina are cited in the annex "Further reading". The theoretical framework and

the used concepts are mainly by Marc Augé, Benedict Anderson, Gaston Bachelard and Michel Foucault, cited in the bibliography.

Introduction

With the dethronement of the Karađorđević-dinasty, and abolition of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) headed by Josip Broz Tito, backed up both by the western allies and the Soviet Union, started a state building project already during the Second World War, effectively reorganising the country territorially, ideologically, demographically, economically and administratively. This led to the creation of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia in 1946, while the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) came later, in 1963. Up until its disintegration in the 1990's, this state in the Western Balkans was, on the one hand, one of the major powers in the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as the least authoritarian country in the Eastern-bloc. On the other hand, it was a state union displaying more and more apparent economic and demographic divisions, differences in industrialisation and modernisation processes, level of poverty and contribution to GDP — problems which were increasingly hard to master after Tito's death in 1980, and which eventually led to war and constitutional dissolution.

With six republics, and the now-independent Republic of Kosovo, Vojvodina was an autonomous province of Yugoslavia, located on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. Its population — dependent on the period — varied around 1.5 million, and Hungarians made up a quarter of the population.² Vojvodina's capital, Novi Sad (Hungarian: Újvidék), was the province's cultural, political, administrative and industrial centre. Moreover, from the early 1950's onward, the Hungarian community developed a centralized organisational structure based in the city. Firstly, this meant that the community had one centre, and everything else was more or less culturally marginalized, frowned upon as provincial, and — following this pattern — state funding was relatively disproportionate as well. Secondly, the centre was fully institutionalized with infrastructure necessary for cultural production, such as the editorial for a daily newspaper (*Magyar Szó*) and several journals (e.g. *Híd*, *Új Symposion*), a publishing house (Forum), a facility for higher education at the university of Novi Sad (Magyar Nyelv és Irodalom Tanszék), an institute for research of Hungarian culture, literature, and ethnology in Yugoslavia (Hungarológiai Intézet) which was later merged with the Department of Hungarian Language and Literature, and a theatre with a regular Hungarian repertoire (Újvidéki Színház). This centre

was so influential that even the former smaller Hungarian gravitational points within Vojvodina (Subotica-Szabadka, Senta-Zenta, Sombor-Zombor, Zrenjanin-Nagybecskerek etc.) or outside of it (e.g. Zagreb-Zágráb, Osijek-Eszék, Lendava-Lendva) in existence prior to Novi Sad (Újvidék) as a centre of Hungarian language and culture, gradually declined and gave place to the well organised governmental structures of the federal system.

By the end of the 1950's, for the vast majority of the country's population, the attribute "Yugoslav" meant less and less what it etymologically denoted (South-Slavic). The discourse "Brotherhood and Unity"³ vouched for a different definition. With the isolation of its ethnic elements (though promoted in terms of language and culture), the term "Yugoslav" systematically transformed from an exclusive into an inclusive idea of federal strength through heterogeneity. It affirmed a then quite widespread model of nationhood, connected not to ethnicity, but to citizenship. Differences in language, regional characteristics, folklore, or even the latently present religious practices in public were perceived as a positive and not as a negative statement — and this was particularly significant for the numerous minorities (Albanians, Bosnians, Hungarians, Italians, Roma, Rumanians, Ruthenians, Slovaks, etc.), many of whom inhabited Vojvodina. In comparison to the term "narodí", which denoted ethnic groups of south Slavic origin in Yugoslavia, the communities cited above were coded "narodnosti" and not "manjine", which would have meant minorities. According to the Constitution of Yugoslavia from 1974, the minorities of Yugoslavia effectively seized to be minorities.⁴ Stated in the article 245: "All nations and nationalities of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are equal." Hungarians in Yugoslavia were thus relatively free to exercise their rights concerning language, to promote and cultivate other aspects of culture through institutions, press or electronic media. By the 1960's, for the Hungarian community (although assimilation was an ongoing but latent process), this resulted in a substantial improvement of their situation in comparison to other Hungarian minorities in the Carpathian basin. The improvement was evident mainly in the fields of cultural politics, ethnic self-determination and language rights. Furthermore, if we look at the cultural policies, publishing houses, theatre practises or even the distance between freedom of speech and official censorship,⁵ the Hungarian minority was in some respects better off even than the Hungarians in Hungary.

Substantial structural reforms put through under Josip Broz Tito's governance had led to this constellation, and was one of several outcomes

of the widely accepted and politically cultivated discourse of “Brotherhood and Unity” (Bratstvo-Jedinstvo) in Titoist Yugoslavia. It promoted an umbrella-like, supranational Yugoslav geo-cultural identity, connected primarily to the homeland, the secular state, Tito’s cult of personality, socialist egalitarianism and — in order to root out internal nationalisms that continued to carry the historical memory and linger on between different ethnic groups such as Croats, Serbs and Bosnians — the liquidation of ethnic and religious belief systems. Thus, during the 1960’s and 1970’s, the Hungarian community differed only in language from other citizens of the Yugoslav terrain, sharing an ideology, a popular culture and the landscapes comprising this literature, which was in this sense Yugoslav in its manifestations, but Hungarian in its language and literary heritage. This pattern did not change until the mid 1980’s.

Literary landscapes of the Vojvodina Hungarians

The Hungarian minority in Yugoslavia thus had its own cultural, governmental and political centre which was fully independent of Budapest and governed by the choices and verdicts made by the federal officials mostly in Novi Sad, and partly in Belgrade. This way the collective identity evolved fairly detached from other Hungarian collective identities, and as early as the late 1940’s, developed its own collective name (jugoszláviai magyarság, vajdasági magyarok). The collective name, although originating from the interwar era, did not exist in the 1920’s, and was not so widespread in the 1930’s either. On the one hand, the Hungarian minority of the interwar years more or less still considered Budapest as its cultural Mecca. On the other hand, since their rights as citizens were few, their language rights practically unacknowledged, cultural and political organisations sporadic, and the imagination of a community only present in a rather rudimentary form in the 1930’s, the collective self was not a subsystem of the land of citizenship as it was the case after 1945, but more a part of a greater, though mosaic-like Hungarian collective identity stretching throughout the Carpathian Basin.

Moreover, this collective identity was firmly linked to an established, autonomous and flourishing literature (jugoszláviai magyar irodalom — Yugoslav Hungarian literature). It is important to note the difference in this respect to Hungarian minorities in Romania or Czechoslovakia. The Hungarians in Yugoslavia rarely used regional toponyms inherited from earlier history when distinguishing their cultural production. In contrast to the terms “erdélyi magyar irodalom” (Transilvanian

Hungarian Literature) or “felvidéki magyar irodalom” (Upper Hungarian Literature), there has not been a “délnyugati magyar irodalom” (Southern Hungarian literature), for even in its early years — in the late 1920's — scholars, authors, poets and writers were referring to it as “vajdasági” or “jugoszláviai magyar irodalom”. This identity can best be described in the following terms: the community had its own Hungarian ethnic roots, with its own linguistic identity and cultural heritage; after World War II, they merged into an amalgam with a Yugoslav collective identity hallmarked with contemporary culture and the openness to Western values. An overarching geo-cultural identity, which was to be distinguished from an all-Hungarian national identity, or as Danyi Magdolna, the editor-in-chief of the literary magazine *Új Szimpozium* put it in 1975: “Our cultural existence has a triple bond. Besides the autonomous vojvodiniannes and the traditions of the mother tongue, we put a large emphasis on the influence of the Yugoslav mentality which forms our consciousness.”⁶

What I am arguing is that the cities, rivers, islands, the seashore and other landscapes represented in this literature are showing a Yugoslav based cultural identity, with a perspective on the Western Balkans. The texts presented in this paper are therefore as much a part of Yugoslav literature written in Hungarian, as they are a part of Hungarian literary history. The topographical representational space of this literature includes places like Novi Sad, Belgrade and the Danube, stretching all the way to Zagreb, Rijeka (Fiume), the Velebit mountains and the Adriatic Sea as well as the Neretva River, Mostar and Sarajevo. This literature thus operates along the same Yugoslav identity as other Yugoslav authors of the time who were writing in Serbo-Croatian, Slovene or Macedonian. Toponyms from Hungary such as Budapest, Szeged, Lake Balaton, are all distant places which have no or very little inner significance for the reality experienced in Yugoslavia. Therefore, they are not represented as parts of the space inhabited by the imagined community of Hungarians in Yugoslavia. In the period between the Second World War and the Balkan Wars of the 1990's, spaces of Hungary differ little from the spaces of other countries beyond the border. There is no substantial difference for instance, between Prague, Vienna or Budapest. These cities are always fitted to a tourist gaze, and a relationship which has little in common with the self-image, the collective identity or the coherent spatial cosmos of the collective subject writing about it. Nevertheless, sites from Hungary are also present in the Hungarian literature of Yugoslavia, but they are very sporadic and rare, and if we look at them closely, there is a certain otherness attached to them. As Ottó Tolnai, one of the most important authors

of Yugoslav-Hungarian literature, puts it in his poem *Balaton* (Lake Balaton): “despite everything, the vacation of the Hungarian worker is more organised/ because they have workers/ and we have workers as well.”⁷

Disintegration

For Hungarians, the shift began between the so-called “anti-bureaucratic revolution” of Slobodan Milošević in the late 1980’s, and the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the early 1990’s, when this Yugoslav geo-cultural identity became rapidly devalued. The formerly nominal minorities became real ones yet again, and — through segregation — they were deprived of their extensive educational, cultural and linguistic rights. In parallel — since the SFRJ as a state vanished within a few years — it suddenly became anachronistic for the Hungarian minority to declare itself “Yugoslav” or to use “Yugoslav” as a distinctive quality when referring to itself. Therefore, the Vojvodina Hungarians began to look for a collective identity elsewhere.⁸

Yugoslav Hungarians were Hungarians by ethnicity and language, and Yugoslavs by socialisation and geo-cultural bonds, which meant that with the shift in question, they became a minority as much as in Slobodan Milošević’s Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia, as in post-Soviet Hungary. The Vojvodina Hungarians, thus, effectively became a minority without a country. In the first half of the 1990’s, they had lost the legal and political discourse which granted them the rights and privileges previously mentioned, as well as the spatial dimensions of their collective identity: Sarajevo, the home of the 1984 Winter Olympics, became a worldwide media sensation due to sniper attacks on civilians and shelling; Dubrovnik, the pearl of the Adriatic Sea was under siege; the Adriatic coastline, where all Yugoslavs enjoyed spending their family holidays, was cut off, while Ljubljana became the capital of independent Slovenia and thus unreachable for Serbian citizens in the 1990’s. Most importantly, every single one of these places pinpoints a disintegrating collective identity, gradually denoting more and more distant spaces somewhere abroad. Through time, the identificational linkage became looser and looser, and these landscapes evolved from denoting spaces inhabited by citizens of the same country to spaces reachable only as a tourist (with a passport) — and literature followed this process step by step.

Through the spaces represented in Yugoslav-Hungarian literature, one can see the blueprints of this collective identity. In addition, compared to its situation in the previous, Yugoslav periods, the shift from a geo-

cultural perspective to an ethno-cultural perspective is also noticeable. The biggest change, however, became the imagination of a collective self not as a sub-system of an ethnically heterogeneous entity in the Western Balkans, but of an ethnically homogeneous entity in the Carpathian Basin. For authors of the younger generations socialised through post-Yugoslav pop-culture and collective discourses, also in line with cultural and educational policies of the late 1990's and beyond, the perception of their own inhabited space is to a much greater degree connected to Hungary or Budapest than to the Adriatic coastline or the Balkans, thus differing vastly from generations of the SFRJ period between 1945-1992.

The landscapes that fell out of the previous collective identity transformed from previously heterogeneous spaces into more homogenous ones. The terrain is no longer cracked with experience or intimacy, as Gaston Bachelard would explain it, it is not bended with memories, and there are no narratives linked to it. The post-Yugoslav space of the Western Balkans is homogenous in the sense that it is flat, hollow and empty — a blank spot of a collectively indifferent terrain on the map. Without these augmented memories and elements which could carry the possibility to distinguish one segment of this space from another, a community cannot develop a meaning for it, and it cannot embed it in its collective self based on — amongst other things — its spatial experience. For familiar places contain memories; spaces which are known to us were at some point scenes of events — if not to us, then to someone with whom we share a collective identity. “In its countless alveoli space contains compressed time. That is what space is for.”⁹ The landscapes which were gradually fenced off for post-Yugoslav generations of Hungarians in Vojvodina, do not have these compressed memories, which were handed down by narratives or accumulated through the experience of annual summer vacations, various cultural manifestations, inland travels or means of education. These landscapes are flat, in a timeless and empty plane from where the collective self has retreated, and which cannot be narrated collectively any longer. Parts of the old geo-cultural identity mean nowadays (especially for younger generations socialised during the 1990's and after) as little as Rome, the Black Sea, Munich or Vienna. As parts of a former identity, the toponyms on the chart shaped a cosmos of familiar spaces, while in contemporary literature these toponyms are as chaotic and foreign as they would be in a tourist guide. Mircea Eliade begins his book *The Sacred and the Profane* with the sentence “For religious man, space is not homogenous; he experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others.”¹⁰ Much like the religious man, the

man of the age of nationalism also interprets space by building a hierarchy within it, and by doing so he shapes an individual, eventually a collective cosmos, too, with borders, centres, and routes of transit. However, when these interpretations are questioned or replaced, space becomes a chaotic mass, similarly unshaped as it was before, not differing from other unknown spaces. This is the interpretational shift in question, which occurred during the 1990's, transforming the collective imagination of inhabited space for Hungarians in Vojvodina to this day.

Dilemmas

The first signs of this shift appeared as early as 1992. István Németh, one of the most prolific short story writers of the period, uses the term “Délvidék”, for the first time, on the pages of the daily newspaper *Magyar Szó*. The sheer act strikes him as a problem: “I write Délvidék for the first time, since the word Vojvodina is starting to lose its meaning.”¹¹ The term “Délvidék” means “lands of the south”; it is a traditional Hungarian geographic term denoting what Southern Hungary had been prior to the Treaty of Trianon, i.e. roughly the territory of Vojvodina. It was in use prior to the First World War, and again during the Hungarian takeover of Vojvodina in the Second World War. During the communist period, the term was banned from public discourse. In the same year that Németh picked up the term “Délvidék”, Ottó Tolnai writes: “If I would have to say why this abstraction of the Adriatic concerns me a lot (allegedly one could travel to Croatia with a Catholic baptism certificate), then aside from the abandoned marble quarries of Vrnik, I would most probably mention the geranium trees from Žuljana.”¹² This text was published in the first issue of the journal *EX Symposion* based in Veszprém, Hungary, although the manuscripts were most probably intended for the journal *Új Symposion* based in Novi Sad (Újvidék), which ceased publication after its authors had fled abroad. The concept of the two journals is practically identical, both relying traditionally on Hungarian authors from Vojvodina and Hungary, and some Serbo-Croatian authors from other parts of Yugoslavia, with a strong focus on post- and neo-avant-garde practices, and a comprehensive approach from social sciences.¹³

And thus the shifting began. If we look at it as a hobsbawmian question of invented traditions,¹⁴ we can observe a very indicative model of identity shifting from one tradition to another, and the utilisation of toponyms as part of one tradition towards a different one. Communities choose their traditions, and if the usage of toponyms requires a linguistic

practice, then this practice means that at an identificational crossroad, the practice shows which collective identity prevails. The (re)labelling of landscapes and their representation in literature contributes to, and is a fine indicator of these practices. Tradition in this case functions as part of a discourse, and it formalises the way of representing objective reality. Representation of space in this discourse is just one of the symptoms, and literary examples can show that, when it comes to space, traditions are the instances within which rules are invented. It is therefore crucial, whether a spatial identificational element is represented as alien or not, whether it is perceived as one abroad or not, or inhabited by one's own community or the "Others". The two quotes above show how this barely tangible but penetrating flow had begun. Németh ponders whether another discourse should or should not be accepted, and, if so, which would be the proper way of (re)introducing it. While the Tolnai text deals with the reconstruction of spaces, emigration, borders. He writes about war with countries that were recently homelands, but which are becoming foreign and potentially alien to future readers, who will be unable to identify with them.

Interludes

The shift from one collective identity to the other was (and never is) by no means a smooth, uneventful and easy process; nonetheless, it resulted in a lot of sidetracks — fortunately, a lot of them were highly creative. On the one hand, due to the fragmentation of public space, the collective self-image had connected to smaller, locally defined spaces, while on the other hand, spaces of transit became a frequent scenery of literary narratives. Along with spaces disappearing and emerging, one of the most peculiar symptoms of the forthcoming age was the reappearance of sacral spaces — in literature as much as in other art forms as well.

Local discourse of the mid 1990's

By the mid 1990's, authors started to describe places which were quite marginal in quantity and sporadic in their appearance prior to the shift, or didn't even exist — neither in landscapes of the collective self, nor in literary discourse. These spaces were rarely known beyond the local community. Poems, prose and even drama started to use these spaces, which were up until that point fairly unknown to the wider public, and familiar only to the local observer. The plot unfolded at previously unknown sites, in a mi-

lieu scarcely represented before, and in spaces belonging to a necessarily smaller scale. In contrast to previous patterns where novels, poems and short stories could take place on streets and boulevards of such Yugoslav cities as Sarajevo, Belgrade, Zagreb, Priština, sometimes in a specific village on the seaside or even on islands in the Adriatic, the mid-1990's were rather hallmarked by a number of micro-spaces. Literary texts abandoned the above mentioned larger landscapes, and pulled out their subjects from its contexts. Instead of the vast settings of poems or prose, one could encounter spaces at the micro-level: bridges, streams, wells, field paths, streets, squares, marketplaces — without any intention or hint from the author to reveal the town's name, a town almost without exception located somewhere in the Vojvodina countryside, away from urban areas. The authors often used smaller geographical elements, village alleys instead of city squares or even streams instead of rivers. Novi Sad and Subotica rarely provided a scenery at this point. The great waterways of the Danube, or the once relevant Sava, Drina, and Drava, vanished from the collective imagination, hence the significance shifted to a much smaller radius. The subject becomes more focused on its proximal environment, dealing with issues concerning only the immediate visibilities, thus mythologizing and closing them into a much smaller textual world than it was usual during the 1950's, 1960's, 1970's and 1980's.

Here, at the barely inhaling
 living Aranka
 leafs
 started to fall swiftly
 through them like knots
 nests lump out
 and within them already
 the autumn is nesting

With us, at the barely inhaling
 living Aranka
 the silence of the
 fallows had grown and
 their failure touches almost
 the mask-like sky...
 sluggish birds
 wrinkle, peck
 the decay
 a whole heaven of birds
 and on the fading trees

cold nests
whether next year
will there be hatching here
the same ones who put
who placed them here this year?!¹⁵

The reader often requires the gaze and knowledge of the local, native observer in order to decipher the whereabouts of the specific locality. One could say that the authors retreated from the more and more uncertain and indeterminate spaces to the only space that they were certain would not fall into pieces — the space of the local community. On the one hand, this cosmos remains a small one, but on the other, it is rich with anecdotes, village fools, local heroes and buildings, toponyms, wells and roads which could only be fully interpreted through the eye of the local bystander. As Bachelard writes: “Inhabited space transcends geometrical space.”¹⁶ Reading these poems and stories of the mid 1990’s, one can experience a small world enlarged by literary fantasy, enhanced in scope to much greater urban and social construction, represented as a gargantuan maze, sometimes with a centre, but certainly never with a way out — a Hungarian Macondo¹⁷ in a disintegrating Yugoslavia.

In a 1994 conference analysis from Hamburg, Zygmunt Bauman argues that postmodern communities dream of a local discourse which will grant them certainties and truths that nation-states cannot grant them any longer. They dream more of a unity of thought, feeling, will and action on a local scale. Bauman calls them “neotribal communities”, and refers to them as ones that cannot live differently, but only through the faith in the norms stated above.¹⁸ If we look at the products of the Hungarian literature in Vojvodina, it is quite easy to notice that a similar process took place and peaked in literature by the mid 1990’s. The only certain way of building a collective identity — or at least trying to build one during the dissolution of the country, which resulted in the devaluation of every identificational pattern of a larger scale — was through the certainty provided by the local identificational web. This, actually, was the most radically minimalistic approach a public discourse could provide; after that, there is nothing but the individual.

To define it briefly, the local discourse is a way of thinking, writing and identifying oneself according to the norms, structures and hierarchies of the local community. The subject retreats from the imagined communities of national or even regional strata, and finds its way back to the primary face-to-face community of the local milieu. In contrast to Benedict Anderson’s imagined communities,¹⁹ a local community is not

necessarily imagined. Hence, a lot of knowledge is implicitly present and there is no need for a “footnote” or a reflection, since there are very few of those who would seek additional explanation. These narratives are closed by not mentioning the city name, and they are focusing on the inner structures, with the obvious assumption that the reader shares the writer's local knowledge. This community is small, compact and often provincial. Texts are recurrently written in dialect. The step-by-step withdrawal is demonstrated very precisely in a poem by Károly Jung, entitled *Limányi anziksz* (Postcards from Liman), written originally as a street graffiti in Novi Sad, showing instability even in its linguistic manifestation (written in Serbian and Hungarian, but struck out in both). The author names every level of space, but only the city (Novi Sad-Újvidék) remains unveiled:

This is ~~Yugoslavia!~~
 This is ~~Serbia!~~
 This is ~~Vojvodina!~~
 This is ~~Liman!~~
 This is a ~~building!~~
 This is ~~crap!~~²⁰

Another aspect of the local discourse is that the narration depends very much on the topography, which is mostly codified in names tangible only to the ones who share the knowledge with the locally defined collective identity. This, naturally, does not mean that a reader with an entirely different cultural background will be completely unable to understand what is written, but his experience will be undeniably different. The author aims at a locally socialized reader, one who is familiar with the current situation and understands his problems and needs — for these are the problems and needs of “the” community. This narrative practice gives the poem certain mysticism, and even though, on the surface, it is readable by everyone, the author’s only true accomplice is someone who can decode the topographical matrix and break through this locally encrypted fence. Éva Harkai Vass, in a poem from 1993, wrote:

I see you standing on the Butter Hill,
 and on the freshly painted Calvary
 only an alto prayer was heard
 and the stacios as lung wings
 successively open their gates²¹

The Butter Hill (Vajhegy) and the Calvary on its top is located in Bačka Topola (Topolya), a town 74 km north of Novi Sad. It is impossible to locate these places on a map, for they are not normative, codified names — only the local subject can pin it on his/her spatial chart. Another example from an essay, published in the same year demonstrates how the hydrography shows signs of this local discourse as well: “Undergarments, I saw a lot, but not just in the summer, when on the Little-Danube the bathing women take off their clothes.”²² The Little-Danube (Kis-Duna) being a backwater of the Danube near Novi Sad, which is also not a codified name, and is used only by Hungarians in Novi Sad, Serbs calling it “Dunavac”. The authors in these years rarely define which specific village or town they are referring to, their only aim most certainly being tucking away the subject geographically to the safest, most secluded spot of the “couleur locale”.

Non-places

In the mid 1990's, another by then rather unusual experience of space emerged. It manifested itself through waiting rooms, refugee camps, border checkpoints, railway compartments, train- and bus stations. The opuses got overloaded with places which Marc Augé calls non-places, and refers to them as follows: “If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity will be a non-place.”²³ This movement, along with a migrational unpleasantness with its borders, transfers, delays and waiting, can be felt in a poem written in 1996 by György Szakmány:

I got down at Kiskunhalas
at quarter past one
I'll be at Kelebia by three
I'm from Vojvodina
I study in Buda.²⁴

Due to the Yugoslav war, a large number of Hungarian and other students, intellectuals, artists and other mainly educated and young people, fled abroad in search of a peaceful life, with no notions of war, conflict and ethnic divisions. For decades, the centre of gravity for Vojvodina Hungarian intellectuals has been Novi Sad (Újvidék). However, when the war broke out and the university campus mutated into a hunting ground for

young men who were to be recruited into the army, more and more people decided to leave. Authors such as dr. Máriás and Bada Dada who left Novi Sad wrote poems about these experiences of migration, László Végel wrote novels and essays about the ever migrating “Gastarbeiter”, while Csaba Szögi, who was a soldier, wrote a novel which takes place in a military base, and continues the tradition of the non-place. The novel is called *Drót* (Wire), and even its title functions as a synecdoche, denoting the fence enclosing the narrator, and pointing out the hollowness of the identificational space inside the barracks. Árpád Nagy Abonyi, Aaron Bloom and Ottó Tolnai wrote a series of texts about the same empty spaces which have to be passed to get to the destination point. It is symptomatic that — due to the generic situation of war — the last issue of the literary magazine *Új Symposion* was published by an editorial made up entirely of women (Ildikó Lovas, Csilla Utasi, Tímea Bordás and Zsuzsanna Papp), the editor in chief being Papp P. Tibor, who left the country soon after as well. In one of his short stories, György Szerbhorváth writes about a police station in Budapest: “Entering the police station on I. street I was only occupied with one thought, how long must I stand about this time around to get my residence permit.”²⁵

Poems, plays, novels from migrants and commuters got filled with these liminal, transitional spaces of travel, temporary residence, and other provisional landscapes of need set in an intermediate place without time, relations or any possibility of building an image of the self connected to them. The majority of Vojvodina Hungarians experienced different parts of the world, which carried the probability of a new home, but had been divided with these necessary spaces of transit. The fact that these spaces appear in a wide variety of genres shows the relevance of these representations of space amongst other landscapes of the collective self.

ERNŐ You think I went mad don't you? Man, I didn't even see that country!

TIBOR Where were you?

ERNŐ They'd escorted me, with my wife and child to a refugee camp near Malmö, and had let me go to the city only twice during the one and a half years stay. I didn't get a permanent residence permit nor a work permit, and now – as the war apparently ended – they transported us home via an airplane nicely, culturally and with a Swedish politeness.²⁶

The shift thus produced a unique sidetrack of Hungarian migrant literature. Places which were tourist attractions at most, became necessities for an escape, be it temporary or permanent. Short stories and essays about immigrant offices, train stations, passport controls abound. Empty spaces became places of contact, but even through these augéian empty spaces the subject could not build a temporary collective identity — it is trapped between its old geo-cultural self and a desire to form a new community. This wave in Vojvodina Hungarian literature reached its peak in the last third of the 1990's, with the decline of the Milošević-era, but — due to the political, economic instability in Serbia, and the fact that more and more young people decide to study in Hungary — it has remained common since. On a number of occasions, the immigrant offices, university waiting lines and other places of transit were/are often located in Budapest, Szeged or at another "home to be" in Hungary; and the foundations of the new identity have evolved somewhere near this sidetrack.

Sacral space

The end of the sacral space's stigmatization in pseudo-secular Central-Eastern Europe went parallel with the ideological shifts of the post-Soviet era. Churches, calvaries, roadside crosses or figures of saints became a familiar topos in the arts and even popular culture by the end of the 1990's. The church, as one of the most emblematic structures of every local identity, had become a taboo after the Second World War and it was not advisable to use it for artistic purposes. However, in post-socialist Europe, churches were among the first previously suppressed emblems to appear as foucauldian heterotopias, marking the town centre, a traditional gathering place for the community, a space of interaction, history, relationships, durability and ritual communication. These objects are marked with their exception from regular communal time, and the sheer entering extracts the subject from temporal continuity. They often represent complex sites, comprising a wide array of meaning, thus becoming a guarded symbol of the community. Once again, a church became a site which is defined by the renewed relations established between the space it occupies, the institution it represents and the community, which on the one hand interprets itself through it, and on the other modifies it according to its communal needs. The sacral objects, as heterotopias of an imagined communal assembly, hence became sites bearing relations to the past as a vertical, and the present as a horizontal tie to a certain group, to ethnic origins and — last but not least — to language.

Aracs
centuries like
flayed skin
peel
from your ruinous walls
Above your sunken shrine
from rank weed
a wreath
the decay braids.²⁷

Aside from the above mentioned traditional aspects of a sacral object as a heterotopia, a new quality of the late 20th century became apparent. One of the most interesting phenomena is that, with reclaiming its communal position, the sacral space had undergone a curious transformation. Vojvodina churches and monastery ruins, while re-entering the Hungarian collective self's as an ethno-cultural blueprint, somewhat diluted their divine tone and painted it with an ethnical one. Medieval ruins of churches, monasteries and fortifications became a symbol of continuity, thus strengthening notions of the upcoming discourse, serving not only as links to a pre-socialist Christian (mostly Catholic or Calvinist) identity, and as a millennium-old tie to Western Europe, but also as a spatial memento of Hungarian presence, and as knots in a network culturally and historically interconnected with other places of the Carpathian Basin. In contrast to the previous discourse, where one of the key characteristics of the collective self-image was the perception of itself as a socialist identity rooted in the present and in a struggle for the future, the new one gave priority to the past, to the continuity in opposition to the previous mythology of discontinuity, and to the cultural memory embedded in architecture. During the 1990's, the cultural journal *Üzenet* presented more essays on the buildings of this type in Subotica (Szabadka). To celebrate the new millennium, a series of historical essays were published in the 2000 issues of the journal *Híd* in order to commemorate these places.²⁸ The keywords were precisely the ones mentioned above: Carpathian Basin, Pannonia, Hungarian presence, middle ages, Christianity, Western Europe.

The Post-Yugoslav collective self of Hungarians

As stated before, the emblematic year of the shift is 1992. In this particular case, this was not just the end of the SFRJ; there is an additional, more

cultural background to it as well. As mentioned above, in the same year, the most important literary and art journal of the Vojvodina Hungarian post-avant-garde — the *Új Symposion* — seized to exist. This coincidence of political and cultural overlapping marks the beginning of a major identification shift, and clears the terrain for a process which resulted in a discourse, a collective self and a mental landscape different from the one before 1992. Although just a symptom, after the end of *Új Symposion*, one could not write about, publish about, or even imagine space as up to that year.

1992

The August issue of *Új Symposion* came out with no signs of future interruption, yet after that, no further issues appeared. However, a new journal of a very similar profile and featuring the similar authors soon came to life in Veszprém, Hungary, significantly named *EX Symposion*.²⁹ Yugoslavia was falling into pieces, and the authors who fled from the military draft — or due to other existential reasons — saw themselves forced to establish a new forum. This journal is still in existence today. During the same period, a younger generation came to age in Vojvodina, and established at home, a Novi Sad-based sequel to the journal simply naming it *Symposion*, which — albeit in a somewhat altered form — also still exists today. It gathered authors and artists from the region, but due to the financial difficulties, issues came out quite irregularly. The journals *Híd* and *Üzenet* were fairly unaffected by the course of events of the 1990's. *Híd* has been undergoing radical transformations since the mid 2000's, giving place to authors from a younger generation, and traditionally publishing literary utterances from the post-Yugoslav area, but also paying attention to contemporary literatures of neighbouring Hungarian canons. *Üzenet* seized to exist in 2006. The daily and weekly newspapers have gone through considerable alterations as well, each of them developing a profile more and more affected by the shift. The Forum publishing house in Novi Sad (*Újvidék*) and the theatres in Novi Sad (*Újvidék*) and Subotica (Szabadka) *Újvidéki Színház* and *Szabadkai Népszínház* — although new publishers and new theatres were founded — remained most likely the least affected institutions in this period (aside from organisational and financial problems). They will most likely have to deal with the shift in the second half of the 2010's, for the geo-cultural and ethno-cultural discourses are competing in these institutions since the 1990's as well. What remained, and has prevailed for the

last two decades is the idea of a Hungarian community in the Vojvodina, which identifies itself with canons channelled through both discourses. There is, however, a strong tendency of development — which can be observed since the mid-1980's — parallel with ethno-centric nationalisms in Central-Eastern Europe. References to space remain more and more in the ethno-cultural framework of southern Vojvodina. Furthermore, cultural and political connections to the Western-Balkans — although still existing — weakened, and the Hungarian community became increasingly integrated with other Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin.

In the meantime, the Hungarian community in Yugoslavia decreased from almost half a million, as it was in the 1960's, to somewhat more than 300,000 in the 1990's, and a bit over 250,000, according to the 2011 census. This was partly due to a combination of a low birth rate and assimilation, and partly to emigration. The entire state became smaller and smaller, and its name also changed several times, from SFRJ to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, then to Serbia and Montenegro (when the name Yugoslavia disappeared altogether), and eventually to Serbia alone. One can see that, from the second half of the 1990's, a new identificational basis was not so much an option, but more a necessity. Since it was an anachronism for the Yugoslav Hungarians to identify with a country which existed only as a cultural memory, the community had to turn elsewhere for an identificational basis. The 1990's are in this sense the watershed between a firmly established geo-cultural identity, and the fracturing rest of something believed to be an everlasting cornerstone of the collective identity, evolving to something new.

The ethno-cultural discourse

Due to the increased mobility in the past couple of decades, and to the fact that a holiday, a longer trip or even a resettlement to Hungary became more usual than in case of any other post-Yugoslav state, experiences of these spaces have also changed. Since encounters with Hungary became more frequent than with landscapes of the Western Balkans, literary texts represented a collective identity quite different from the previous one. Hungarian spaces, thus, became a recurring setting in poems, short stories and novels. Streets, squares of Szeged, boulevards and subway stations of Budapest, the beaches of Balaton became more and more represented. Therefore, mental distances between a city in Hungary and a town in Vojvodina were reduced. One could say that post-Yugoslav landscapes were abandoned during the 1990's only to be reintroduced as snapshots on tour-

ist routes of Slovenia, Bosnia or Croatia in the 2000's. The narratives connected to the old discourse could not be utilized, spaces belonging to a former collective self were incapable to address the reader, and while landscapes of the new discourse with further details became more and more integrated and remodelled into a spatial element of the new collective identity, spaces of the old one became merely a distant, isolated, and sometimes unreachable point on the map with a touch of nostalgia. Solidarity between Hungarians and non-Hungarians, interethnic ties within one model of identity got more and more abandoned, and constructions of a more monoethnic, monolingual identity seemed to be the trend. A few decades ago, it was completely normal for a Hungarian student from Vojvodina to attend the University of Belgrade or Zagreb, and it was relatively rare to see Vojvodina Hungarians as students at the University of Szeged or Budapest — but after the shift, the opposite became true. This does not mean that the old spaces vanished completely, they only became rarer. There are authors, such as the young poet Anna Terék, who try to combine both discourses. Terék has a poem entitled *Szarajevó* (Sarajevo), but also another one entitled *Temetés* (Funeral), with a much differing approach:

“we have departed into the summer night
of urine stinking Pest
[...]
after
my first girl died of cancer
I drank brandy on the Wesselényi-road
[...]
the morning of Buda came through the window
the suffocating Sun glittered.”³⁰

The shift resulted not only in spaces on a macro level, but — as we can see in the excerpt above — on the micro level as well. Unlike the Hungarian literature of Yugoslavia, especially in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's — where Budapest may be briefly mentioned as a city abroad — the Hungarian capital is no longer a distant, foreign city today. References to its streets, squares, parks, shops broke down the alienated topographical element to a more pedestrian scale. Authors today integrate and perceive these spaces as the ones belonging to a shared knowledge, generational memory, mythology and pop culture. In literature, narratives connected to these spaces have been presented as the subject's generic narratives embedded into a wider social context, thus merging them into a metanarrative

of an “imagined community,” (Anderson) centralised by Budapest. These narratives, representing parts of a map, channelled an integrated imagination of a sovereign collective self, overarching state borders. Furthermore, they delimited landscapes, and separated them from other spaces not inhabited by the community in question. The line separating one imagined community from another was radically redefined.

The Hungarian capital is, naturally, not the only mentioned city. Hungary’s map became bit by bit more detailed, and over the decades — through personal links — the communal network of landscapes evolved into a densely woven structure. We can read about the same link in the poem entitled *A veszprémi emigráns költők* (Emigrant poets of Veszprém) by Krisztián Tóbiás:

‘cos
 an emigrant poet in Veszprém
 stays the same
 an emigrant.³¹

Prior to the shift, one of the most characteristic identificational points was the Adriatic Sea. As Yugoslavs, the Hungarians of Yugoslavia considered this part of the Mediterranean as an all-encompassing landscape, while adjacent to the shift it turned either into a nostalgic commonplace of cultural memory (and along with other spaces, it was referred to in Past Tense) or into a tourist attraction not differing from other destinations abroad. While István Domonkos, Ottó Tolnai or Ottó Fenyvesi wrote dozens and dozens of poems about the shore, the islands, the waves, their colour, smell and shape, the representation of the spaces in contemporary literature is rare and quite different — even within one oeuvre. Tolnai writes about being cut off from the sea in 2001:

Now, when I’ve been cut off the Adriatic sea
 for over
 a decade [...] I hear very often
 the bell of Tíjesno.³²

The importance of the loss of the Adriatic is quite vividly depicted in Tolnai’s book *Világítótorny eladó* (Lighthouse for sale), published in

2010. The novel is mainly about people who were connected to the “Yugoslav Riviera”, who travelled there for decades, lost it during the war and in some cases reclaimed it again afterwards, only this time as foreign tourists. This short novel is precisely about the value of the Adriatic, what it stands for and what it meant, when this heterotopia faded and was made indifferent. It is perhaps the perfect example of how the landscapes forming a collective identity and the spatial matrix of minority literature could change due to a shift in only two decades. In the early 1950's, the Adriatic transformed from the Italian and Croatian seaside, and from the holiday resort of the upper middle class to ‘the’ Yugoslav shore for all of its citizens — which was not the case in previous times, nor in the interwar years, and not even before that, during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It was not a landscape of the working class, but of the chosen few who could afford it. Yet, in the Yugoslav era, it became the Foucauldian heterotopia of vacation, remodelling time, space, collective perception and communication within its range. For a few months, the whole country migrated to the shore. During the 1990's, however, this drastically changed. While Yugoslavia was vanishing from the map, Hungarian literature was gradually losing a complex site which was extensively present from the early 1950's to the early 1990's, leading to a vast number of iconic works by István Domonkos, Ottó Tolnai, Katalin Ladik. The Adriatic reappeared in the mid-2000's merely as a space of nostalgia, differing from its previous image not only in sentiment, but — for the younger generations — as a site abroad, not a part of their own inhabited space.

Conclusion

While reading poems, novels or plays, one can see that spaces which were once crucial to the community of the Vojvodina Hungarians became marginal, while new, Hungarian-defined spaces became more important. On the one hand, there are hardly any texts today about the Croatian seaside, the Bosnian mountains or the Neretva river; on the other hand, many are now about streets and squares of various cities within ethno-cultural boundaries. The collective self is a construct perceived — metaphorically speaking — from a Budapest perspective, and not from a Belgrade one any longer; the community imagines itself as a subdivision of an all-Hungarian homogenous ethnic community, and not as one of the many communities in ethnically and culturally heterogeneous Yugoslavia. The framework of today is stretched on the Carpathian Basin, and not on the Western Balkans, as it used to be.

The shift in question has been a long-term process, thus its stages exist in a more or less syncretic form, harmonising and levelling out one another between generations. Despite the fact that one can find both extremes of the shift within one opus and/or representation of a collective identity, it does not necessarily end in a paradox or a contradiction. On the one hand, one can find texts with yugonostalgic or balkanesque overtones, and on the other, ones which belong more in a Mitteleuropean or Hungarian cultural context. Essays by László Végel or novels by Ottó Tolnai — authors of an older generation — often speak nostalgically about Vojvodina landscapes with an Austria-Hungarian touch, the Vojvodina inter-war years, but also about Yugoslav spaces of their youth. There are also authors who do not step out of a sharply defined local discourse; Aaron Blumm, for instance, never leaves his native Kishegyes (Mali Idoš), and stories of Kálmán Jódal or Attila Balázs mainly stay in Újvidék (Novi Sad). Novels by writers in their twenties or thirties, such as Károly Barlog, Tamás Kiss and Csaba Szögi, or short stories and essays by György Szerbhorváth are mostly about liminal experiences of space, non-spaces and transitional spaces. Most importantly, poems, novels, plays, short stories adjacent to the spatial shift, are written almost by every generation, from Ottó Tolnai and Attila Balázs, through Árpád Nagy Abonyi and Ferenc Kontra to Károly Barlog, Tamás Kiss, Anna Terék and Orsolya Bencsik. Their subjects move through a wide variety of spaces, strengthening the characteristics of the paradigm after the shift.

Yugoslavia had vanished, and it is not very likely that contemporary authors of the post-Yugoslav space will ever develop a similar, interdependent geo-cultural identity in the Western Balkans as it was the case in the SFRJ. The dominant myths have been deconstructed, made either nostalgic or stigmatised, a uniform and interconnected spatial perspective has become fragmented, and another perspective (institutionalized mainly in Budapest) has already developed. The collective self imagines the inhabited landscapes as a web within the Carpathian Basin, a Deleuze-Guattari-type rhizome growing and developing in consonance with the Hungarian language, culture, history, and nonetheless with the common knowledge and mythology shared with its contemporaries. Hence, after the shift in question, it is impossible to talk about Hungarian authors from Vojvodina as it was possible before. The borders became more liquid than it was ever the case in the 20th century; legitimization and censorship are no longer a regional issue to the extent that it was before. Furthermore, with the integration of the nation-state into supranational governmental formations, and the transformation of the concept of nation itself, which can —

as Habermas proposes it³³ — even be called post-national, reconstruction of an independent and autonomous Hungarian regional canon in today's Vojvodina — as in the 1950's, 1960's, 1970's, 1980's and even in the 1990's — has become impossible.

During this shift, the space inhabited stayed put, and the identification changed only through spatial reinterpretations. The community inhabiting this space tried to build a new collective identity based on the “corner of the world” given, and although their own space remained more or less what it was, the points of reference moved towards other criteria of identification. If we perceive the shift during the past two decades as a continuum with many sidetracks, dead ends and failed identificational attempts, we can detect a firmly established collective identity on both ends, and an identificational vacuum which lasted for about ten years, roughly from the mid 1990's to the mid 2000's. Landscapes, which were parts of the Yugoslav geo-cultural identity, have given their place to spaces which now form a still developing, amorphous Hungarian ethno-cultural identity, with notions of regional and local spatial elements. The regional literature in question is now an established sub-system of Hungarian literature, and the community a dispersed southern part of an ethno-culturally defined Central European state.

Where all this leads, and when the next shift will occur, we can only guess; but even now we can already see signs of further fragmentation, together with the development of a multicentric and multicanonic discourse of a networked-like Hungarian literature amidst the regrouping communities of Europe. Despite the legitimizing impact of institutions and manifestations in Budapest, cultural production will most probably articulate itself through a wide array of regional canons instead of an institutionalised single one, dictated from one centre. We can observe these regional canons in their initial forms in Újvidék (Novi Sad), Szeged, Debrecen, Pécs, Kolozsvár (Cluj), Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mures), Pozsony (Bratislava)... These urban centres usually provide a necessary critical mass for artistic utterances. They are university centres, with a theatre and at least one journal dealing with literature and criticism, gathering authors who came to these cities mostly due to educational purposes. These centres are already interconnected, providing a platform for cultural production, which would not have been possible before the 1990's, but which will most probably be the case in the near future.

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NOTES

¹ The research for this paper was funded by the Balassi Institute in the period 2010-2013.

² Current census: Vojvodina has 1.92 million inhabitants, and a Hungarian minority numbering 251.000 (13% of the total).

³ In Serbo-Croatian: Bratstvo-Jedinstvo.

⁴ “U Socijalističkoj Federativnoj Republici Jugoslaviji narodi i narodnosti su ravnopravni.”, in *Ustav 1974*, član 245.

⁵ “Zajemčuje se svakoj narodnosti da, radi ostvarivanja prava na izražavanje svoje narodnosti i kulture, slobodno upotrebljava svoj jezik i pismo, razvija svoje kulturu i da radi toga osniva organizacije i uživa druga ustavom utvrđena prava.”, in *Ustav 1974*, član 247.

⁶ “Kulturális létünk háromszoros kötöttségű. Az autonóm vajdasági-asságion és az anyanyelvi hagyományokon kívül kihangsúlyozott jelentőséget tulajdonítunk a jugoszláv szellemiség tudatunkat alakító befolyásának. A tizenegyedik munkaév felé,” *Magyar Szó – Kilátó*. 1975.02.15/11.

⁷ “mindennek ellenére a magyar munkás nyaralása jóval szervezettebb/ mert hát nekik is vannak munkásaik/ és nekünk is vannak munkásaink” (Domonkos-Tolnai 1968: 22.)

⁸ Igor Štiks accurately describes this devaluation of the geo-cultural identity, through the loss of citizenship using the case of independent Slovenia. (Štiks 2010)

⁹ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon, 1964), 8.

¹⁰ Mircea Eliade, *The Saint and the Profane* (Harvest Book, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1987), 20.

¹¹ “Először írom le, hogy Délvidék, miután a Vajdaság szó kezdi elveszíteni tartalmát.” István Németh, “Velünk mi lesz?” *Magyar Szó – Kilátó*. 1992. 06.20./ 12.

¹² “Ha hirtelen meg kellene mondani, miért is érint olyan nagyon az Adriának ez a hirtelen, minden előkészület nélküli megvonása (állítólag katolikus keresztlevéllal már lehet utazni Horvátországba), akkor az elhagyott vrniki márványbányák (lásd Böcklin) mellett minden bizonnyal a žuljanai muskátlifákat is megemlíteném.” Ottó Tolnai, “Feljegyzések a vég tónusához,” in. *EX Symposium*, Benyúlás 1992/1-2.

¹³ See archive on: www.exsymposion.hu

¹⁴ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁵ “Itt a már alig lélegző/ létező Arankánál/ gyorsan hullani kezdtek/ a levelek/ közülük mind jobban/ kicsomósodnak/ a fészkek/ és bennük már/ az ősz fészkel/ Nálunk a már alig lélegző/ létező Arankánál/ nagyra nőtt/ a parlagok/ csöndje és csődje/ már-már az álarcként/ feszülő égig ér.../ lomha madarak/ redőzik, csőrözik/ az enyészetet/ égaljnnyi madár/ s a kivesző fákön/ kihűlt fészkek/ vajon jövőre is/ azok költenek itt/ akik az idén/ ide rakták,/ sikerítették őket?!”

¹⁶ Bachelard 1964: 47.

¹⁷ Macondo – an imaginary town in Gabriel García Márquez’s novel *100 Years of Solitude*.

¹⁸ “Das postmoderne Denken ist voller Träume von gemeinschaftlichen, lokalen Wahrheiten und Gewißheiten, von denen man hofft, daß sie jene Aufgabe der Zivilisierung übernehmen, die die umfassenden, universalistischen Wahrheiten und Gewißheiten der Nationalstaaten nicht erfüllen konnten; man hofft, daß sie eine Einheit von Denken, Fühlen, Wollen und Handeln stiften und damit Gewalt nur als unberechtigt denkbar erscheinen lassen. Die neotribalistischen postulierten Gemeinschaften können jedoch gar nicht anders, als an diese Hoffnungen zu glauben.” (Miller-Soeffner 1996:59.)

¹⁹ See Anderson: 1991: p. 6.

²⁰ Ovo je Jugoslavija! Ovo je Srbija! Ovo je Vojvodina! Ovo je Liman! Ovo je zgrada! Ovo je kerov kurac!

Ez (itt) Jugoszlávia! Ez (itt) Szerbia! Ez (itt) Vajdaság! Ez (itt) a Limány! Ez (itt) egy épület! Ez (itt) a kutyék fasza! Jung Károly: Változatok Pilinszky négysorosára – Limányi anizs. In: Jung. 2002. 51.o.

²¹ látlak a Vajhegyen állni/ a frissen meszelt Kálvárián/ alt ima zsong/ s a stációk mint tüdőszárnyak/ sorra megnyitják kapuik. Harkai Vass: "Triptichon," in. *Híd*, 1993./3. 124.

²² "láttam én más sokféle alsóneműt, és nemcsak nyáron, mikor a Kis-Dunán vetkőznek a fürdőző asszonyok" Gyula Gobby Fehér: "Sáfrány virágai – Illatos plánták," in. *Híd*, 1993/5-6. 359.

²³ Marc Augé, *Non-places. Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London-New York: Verso, 1995), 77.

²⁴ "leszálltam Kiskunhalason/ negyed kettőkor/ Kelebiára megyek háromkor/ vajdasági vagyok/ Budán tanulok." Szakmány György: "Mélázás," in *Symposium*, 1996/007.

²⁵ "Amikor beléptem az I. utcai rendőrkapitányság épületébe, még csak az foglalkoztatott, vajon mennyit kell megint ácsorognom azért, hogy megkaphassam tartózkodási engedélyemet." György Szerbhorváth: "Véraláfutás," in *Symposium*, 1995/4, p. 24.

²⁶ "ERNŐ Most azt hiszed, hogy hülye vagyok, mi? Apukám, én azt az országot nem is láttam! TIBOR Hol voltál? ERNŐ Mint menekülteket asszonyostul, gyerekestül egy Malmö melletti menekülttáborba helyeztek el, de onnan kétszer engedtek be a városba a másfél év alatt. Se letelepedési engedélyt, se munkavállalási engedélyt nem kaptam, és most, hogy állítólag véget ért a háború, szépen, kulturáltan, svéd udvariassággal repülőgépen szállítottak haza bennünket." Gyula Gobby Fehér: "Ezüstlepkék a piacon," in *Híd*, 1996/nov., 883.

²⁷ "Aracs/ romos falaidról/ nyüzött bőrként/ hámlanak/ az évszázadok/ Elsüllyedt szentélyed/ fölé koszorút/ burjánzó gyomokból/ az enyészet fon," István Cs. Simon: "Borong," in *Orbis*, 1997/3. 8.

²⁸ Essays about Aracs church ruins, or the medieval Cistercian monastery located where today the Pétervárad (Petrovaradin) fortress stands, the ruins of Bács-fortress – from where the name Bácska (Bačka) originates, the small 12th century church at Marót (Morović)....

²⁹ It is interesting that the first issue bare the subtitle: "Benyúlás" (Reaching into), and the third: "Talajvesztés" (Losing ground).

³⁰ "nekiindultunk a nyári/ hűgyszagú pesti estének/ [...] miután/ meghalt az első rákos lánykám/ én pálinkát ittam a Wesselényi úton/ [...] a budai reggel bejött az ablakon/ megcsillant a fulladozó nap." Anna Terék: "Temetés," in *Híd*, 2010.okt. 15.

³¹ Mer' a veszprémi emigráns költő/ az marad ami/ emigráns. Tóbiás Krisztián: "A veszprémi emigráns költők." In.: *zEtna*, <http://www.zetna.org/zek/folyoiratok/62/tobias6.html>

³² most hogy immár egy évtizede/ el vagyok vágva/ az adriától/ [...] gyakran vélem hallani/ azt a tijejsnői harangot (Tolnai 2011: 12) (it is also symptomatic that the book was published in Pécs, Hungary)

³³ Habermas: 2001.

Book Reviews

Marius Turda, *Eugenics and Nation in Early 20th Century Hungary*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 343 pages. ISBN. 9781137293534.

Investigating the history of eugenics in early twentieth-century Hungary bears great significance for multiple disciplines. Scholars seeking to understand the intellectual history of Hungary in the early decades of the 1900s, the significance and contribution of Hungarian thinkers to scientific, social, and political discourses in an international context can find a wealth of previously unexamined material when they explore the debates on eugenics in early twentieth century Hungary. Perhaps more significantly, addressing the issues of the variations of the eugenic discourse that were prevalent a hundred years ago can help us to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the highly complex, contested, and ideologically charged notions of nation, race, and health — concepts that still are the focal points of heated socio-political debates in twenty-first century Hungary. Anyone wishing to examine the intellectual-political dynamics with respect to health, race and nation should turn to Marius Turda's monograph, *Eugenics and Nation in Early 20th Century Hungary*, since it is a thoroughly researched, thought-provoking and highly illuminating study.

Although Turda's book is a significant addition to the social, political, and intellectual history of Hungary, those who are more specifically interested in the (international) history of eugenics will find *Eugenics and Nation* a crucial contribution, as well. The international development and various national adaptations of eugenics have mostly been studied in Western countries, such as Britain, Germany or the United States. However, in a community where a struggle for national sovereignty and political independence from colonial powers has been a dominant cultural narrative, the significance and stakes of defining "race," "nation" and "national

progress” are quite different than in those countries that have been the dominant forces in world politics and history.

The aim of Turda’s book is to explore how the “vision of social and biological improvement associated with eugenics became central to various programs of social reform and national progress” (1) in early twentieth-century Hungary, and to examine how Hungarian intellectuals debating eugenics interacted with the international scholarly community in this period. As a result, Turda’s methodology draws on “comparative and intellectual history as well as [on] the history of science and the social history of medicine” (6). Turda traces the development of a Hungarian approach and later on a specific national adaptation of eugenic thought from the beginning of the twentieth century to the aftermath of the First World War. The various chapters helpfully contextualize the specific issues on a national and international level. On the one hand, this helps the readers to see the importance of Hungarian eugenics in an international ideological landscape. By locating debates on eugenics in a specific cultural and historical framework, Turda shows in what ways eugenics was important in furthering an agenda of the political and social improvement of the nation. Turda analyses numerous articles published in journals such as *Huszedik Század*, *Athenaeum*, *Egészség*, *Fajegészségügy*, *A Társadalmi Múzeum Értesítője* and *Magyar Társadalomtudományi Szemle* and public debates and lectures delivered at conferences in great detail, and shows the diverse nature of eugenic thought in Hungary.

Apart from unearthing a facet of Hungarian intellectual and political history “which historians have repeatedly edited out of Hungary’s national past” (6), Turda’s book also makes many relevant and significant theoretical points. One of the most crucial contributions of the monograph is that it shows the process and repercussions of equating the notions of “race” and “nation,” of intermingling biology and science with politics and nationalism. Turda shows how eugenics facilitated a process whereby “intellectual and political change was [...] recast by means of social and biological diagnosis” (18) and that “as a result, the nation’s body politic was eugenically choreographed, thereby prompting another phenomenon: the biologization of national belonging” (8). The legacy of such discourses is prevalent in contemporary political discourse on a Hungarian and international level as well, thus Turda’s study provides an important historical context to the understanding of current bio-political projects as well.

Since Turda’s book maps out the history of Hungarian debates on eugenics in the early decades of the 1900s in a nuanced and extremely de-

tailed manner, it not only serves as a thorough study and introduction to a specific facet of Hungarian intellectual, scientific, and political history, but it is a highly useful resource for initiating further research on pertaining topics. There are many exciting issues and questions, such as the interaction of eugenic discourses and women's movements, which could not be elaborated on due to the scope of the study, even if they deserve further investigation. Although many tenets of eugenics seem incompatible with feminist ideas, such as emphasizing women's reproductive duties, in actuality eugenics offered a potential space of social and political participation for women, in addition to assigning a new ground for citizenship by emphasizing women's responsibilities as "the mothers of the nation." As Turda's book highlights, eugenics indeed intersected with the preliminary phases of feminism in Hungary. Turda details eugenic ideas by thinkers of the women's movement, foregrounding that in the context of birth-control activism, which was an important facet of eugenic practice, "feminists like Rosika Schwimmer or Vilma Glücklich connected education and limitation of fertility with women's social and economic emancipation" (100). Contextualizing eugenics within the framework of Neo-Malthusian ideas, Turda also points out that Hungarian feminists who engaged with the ideas of eugenics were revered internationally. Thus, addressing the intersection of women's movements and eugenics within a Hungarian or Central European context would be a valuable contribution to the history of not only eugenics, but feminism as well.

Moreover, it would be worth examining how the discourse of eugenics constructs the notion of disability as a hindrance to the progress of the whole race. Turda quotes the following passage on African child-rearing practices by Emil Torday, a Hungarian ethnologist and collector for the British Museum:

When the infant is born, it is examined carefully; if it is weak or deformed, then in one way or another, it is no longer allowed to burden its own life *nor handicap its race in the struggle for survival*. This is the reason why one sees no cripples or other kind of defective persons in Central or West Africa; this is the reason why man there is a *man*, virile in habit, strong and lithe in body. (qtd. in Turda 98; first emphasis mine)

This brief excerpt highlights the importance of the interaction between the individual body and the body politic, and explicitly construes embodied difference as a liability for the whole nation. The construction of anomalous embodiment and monstrosity as an obstacle to national progress has a long history, and the examination of such discourses in a Central Euro-

pean context with a view on eugenics would definitely be an exciting area of research.

Another possible topic offered by Turda's work is the investigation of how ideas of eugenics were interpreted and put into practice on religious grounds, and how eugenics was aligned with metaphysical discourses and logic in general. Revealingly, the "founding father" of eugenics, Francis Galton proposed that after eugenics is explored as an academic question and accepted as a viable practice, "it must be introduced into the national conscience, like a new religion" (qtd. in Turda 6). Not only was eugenics overtly positioned as a "new religion" from the outset, eugenic ideas seemed to resonate with religious practitioners. For instance, the Bishop of Székesfehérvár, Ottokár Prohászka "located the regenerative potential of eugenics within Christian morality and used it to reinforce the importance of instruction and schooling in the formation of a strong national community" (90). Although there is no space in Turda's monograph to devote chapter-length analyses of religious discourses, addressing the relationship of eugenics and religious morality could lead to illuminating insights in future research — especially in Hungary, which has been constructed as a country dedicated to the Virgin Mary by the dominant national narratives. Another prevalent Hungarian cultural narrative is the vision of "the death of the nation" (*nemzethalál-vízió*) — it would be exciting to explore how this dominant cultural anxiety interacted with a founding fear of eugenics (regardless of nationality), the anxiety about biological and national degeneration.

As such, apart from being a comprehensively researched and highly insightful study of the development of eugenics in Hungary, the wealth of material also makes Turda's monograph an extremely useful and thought-provoking ground for future investigations. Turda draws on a great number of resources, and the book's useful and instructive index serves as a great help in trying to locate the many contributors to the debates on eugenics in the various parts of the study. The monograph's accessible language makes sure that *Eugenics and Nation* is enjoyable not only for scholars but also for those who are not engaged in academic study but would like to know more about the history of eugenics or the intellectual landscape of Hungary at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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H. David Baer. *The Struggle of Hungarian Lutherans under Communism*. College Station, Texas: A&M University Press, paperback edition, 2013. 164 pages. ISBN 13 978-1-60344-990-8.

I write this review on the basis of better late than never. Baer's monograph seems to have had little exposure in Hungarian scholarly circles — which is unfortunate. Hopefully this book-review will help to ameliorate somewhat that situation. The book at hand deals with an important subject: the reaction of one of Hungary's churches to the attempt by the Communists who ruled the country from 1948 to 1989 to eliminate them or to make them instruments of the totalitarian state for the control of Hungarian society.

Hungary's churches had a taste as to what can happen when Communists take power: during the commune in Hungary in the summer of 1919 the ruling Communists unleashed a reign of terror on the churches and religious life and would have no doubt caused them irreparable damage had their experiment with leftist politics not come to an end after a few months. After this episode of torment for the country's faithful, organized religious life rebounded and the following two decades saw a golden age for Hungary's churches.

Highly supportive of the churches in these decades was the regime of Admiral Miklós Horthy. His rule has often been portrayed as "fascist" by polemicists and even some historians. Baer considers this depiction of the Horthy regime "inaccurate", he admits however that it could be called "oddly authoritarian" (p. 10). Under Horthy, the churches "flourished". In the "political and civil spheres" they had more influence than they had before 1914. The "accepted" churches, including the Lutheran Church, received state subsidies. Together with the Roman Catholics and the Calvinists they operated about two-thirds of the country's elementary schools and three-quarters of its teacher-training institutions. The Lutherans had four dioceses headed by bishops — two of whom, Zoltán Túróczy and Lajos Ordass, would play large roles in the story Baer tells.

Although Hungary was occupied by the Red Army in 1945, it wasn't till 1948 that the country's churches were subjected to the full force of communist repression. The greatest crisis was caused by the government's decision to nationalize parochial schools. Bishop Túróczy came to

the conclusion that the Church had to yield to the state's wishes in this matter, while Ordass refused to consent to the idea. Despite fierce resistance to the plan, mainly by the Roman Catholic Church, the law to nationalize the country's parochial schools was passed by Hungary's communist-dominated Parliament. Unlike Cardinal Mindszenty of the R.C. Church, Bishop Ordass organised no resistance to the process of school nationalization. Still, the authorities decided to remove him from office and, after a while, succeeded in arresting him and convicting him on charges that he violated some obscure rules for the handling of diocesan finances. Compromising with the regime in the manner of Bishop Túróczy, and resisting its anti-church measures in the fashion of Bishop Ordass, would remain the two often contradictory approaches Hungary's Lutheran Church would use in the following four decades of communist rule. The advocates of both lines used theological as well as historical arguments to support their position, arguments that Baer outlines and analyzes in great detail. Both strategies were designed to ensure the Church's long-term survival. Later, other approaches surfaced, including the idea that in its struggle against the atheist assault, the Church might have to undergo martyrdom.

In the Rákosi era of Hungarian history (1948-56) not only the personnel of the Church's elite changed but the role of the leading clergy was transformed also. Church leaders were no longer accountable to their flock but to the authorities who put them into their positions. Often they functioned as propagandists for the Communists and they also developed what Baer calls "a new theology of socialism" (p. 45). In the process theological arguments were invented for the justification of totalitarian socialism. This process took Túróczy and his colleagues' non-resistance to communist anti-church measures, to their successors' complete cooperation with the regime. This was collaborationism at its worse.

Opposition to this state of affairs within the Church was slow to gather momentum but by the early fall of 1956 it had become substantial. Almost as an unrelated development, Bishop Ordass was rehabilitated of his "crimes" and was to start teaching at Hungary's Lutheran seminary on the 24th of October, but by then events in the country had overtaken these developments. A revolution broke out in Budapest on the 23rd. As a consequence and a result of the resignation of two other bishops, Ordass became the senior bishop of his Church. Interestingly, the restoration to power by the Communists did not lead to Ordass's immediate removal from office. By year's end, however, relations between Ordass and his political superi-

ors deteriorated and, after a long process of recriminations, he was silenced again.

Ordass's successor became Zoltán Káldy. Baer describes him as "an ambiguous, partly tragic figure." Some people saw in him a collaborator, others a "pragmatic defender of the church." In Baer's view, he was responsible for inflicting "countless and unnecessary psychic wounds" on members of his flock, both pastors and parishioners (p. 93). In the mid-1960s he advanced his theology of diaconia, the church in the service of the socialist society, which became the Church's official theology especially after 1967 when Káldy assumed the position of his country's senior Lutheran bishop (p. 97). In the following decade, Káldy became the pre-eminent figure of Hungarian Lutheranism. An acknowledgement of his stature was his election in 1984 as president of the Lutheran World Federation. Rather than using his new-found international prestige to enhance the position of his Church, Baer tells us that Káldy spent his time trying to settle scores with priests who had crossed him in the past. By this time Káldy "was a lost man, preoccupied only with his own prestige..." (p. 109). Late in 1985 he suffered a stroke and died two years later. Baer's overall assessment of Káldy and his theology of diaconia is unflattering. The theology, in Baer's words, was "originally only a theological excuse for compromising with the regime," but it later "became... one more way of... legitimating socialism," and Káldy, despite his good intentions, "became a mere player in the communist game..." (p. 122).

After the 1989 events that saw the transition in Hungary from totalitarian rule to multi-party democracy, the leadership of the Lutheran Church granted "moral satisfaction" to all those in the Church who "suffered unjustly" because of wrongs committed against them by the Church. Many members argued that such a facile apology "did not confront the past but glassed it over" (p. 124). In the meantime other developments resulted in the return of the Church to its pre-1948 position in Hungarian society. Important among these processes was the re-opening of some of the schools that had been nationalised by the Communists. A group within the Church called for new elections for all church offices but action on this demand was stalled — and acrimony regarding the Church's transition continued. The path to a free church in a free society was burdened by the legacy of four decades of oppression. This era of repression has been compared to the "Babylonian captivity" of the Jews in Biblical times. Baer points out that when that captivity ended, the Jews could march back to Jerusalem — but when the Lutherans of Hungary became free of com-

munist rule, they had no Jerusalem to return to but had to embark on a journey through the desert on a path leading to an uncertain future.

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