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In this volume:

Jason Kovacs reviews the history of the birth of the first Hungarian settlements on the Canadian Prairies.

Aliaksandr Piahnanau tells the story of the Hungarian democrats' relations with the Czechoslovak authorities during the interwar years.

Agatha Schwartz writes about trauma and memory in the works of Vojvodina authors László Végel and Anna Friedrich.

And Gábor Hollósi offers an overview of the doctrine of the Holy Crown of Hungary.

Plus book reviews by

Agatha Schwartz and Steven Jobbitt

A note from the editor:

After editing this journal for four-and-a-half decades, advanced age and the diagnosis of a progressive neurological disease prompt me to resign as editor and producer of this journal. The *Hungarian Studies Review* will continue in one form or another under the leadership of Professors Steven Jobbitt and Árpád von Klimó, the Presidents respectively of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada and the Hungarian Studies Association (of the U.S.A.). Inquiries regarding the journal's future volumes should be directed to them. The contact addresses are the Departments of History at (for Professor Jobbitt) Lakehead University, 955 Oliver Road, RB 3016, Thunder Bay, ON, Canada, P7B 5E1. sjobbitt@lakeheadu.ca (and for Prof. von Klimó) the Catholic University of America, 620 Michigan Ave. NE, Washington DC, USA, 20064. klimo@cua.edu .

Nándor Dreisziger

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The First Hungarian Settlements in Western Canada: Hun's Valley, Esterhaz-Kaposvar, Otthon, and Bekevar

Jason F. Kovacs

Approximately a dozen Hungarian farming settlements were established on the Canadian Prairies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hungarian settlement was initiated through the activities of one "Count" Paul O. Esterhazy whose relatively brief activities as a special government agent for the promotion of Hungarian immigration to Canada (1885-1887) contributed to a sizeable migration of Hungarians from the United States and Hungary to the then sparsely populated Prairies. Hungarian settlements emerged in all three of Canada's Prairie Provinces, but were mainly concentrated in what is now southeastern Saskatchewan and, initially at least, in southwestern Manitoba. This paper provides historical overviews on the first four of these colonies: Hun's Valley, Esterhaz-Kaposvar, Otthon, and Bekevar.

The paper begins with a short survey of the first settlement, Hun's Valley (1885), Manitoba; an ethnically mixed colony of Hungarians, Slovaks, Poles, and others, established under the leadership of agricultural expert, Géza de Döry under the auspices of Esterhazy's Hungarian immigration and colonization initiative. The paper then addresses what is now commonly regarded as the first Hungarian prairie settlement, Esterház-Kaposvár (1886); a settlement that comprised what Esterhazy noted in his letters to Canadian government officials as two distinct Hungarian colonies, "Esterház" (1886) and the adjacent "Kaposvár" (1891), but which for various reasons are now usually referred to using the latter place name or in the hyphenated form. The paper then addresses the less well known history of the small hamlet of Otthon (1894), Saskatchewan, before concluding with an entry on what was once arguably the most cultural-

ly vibrant Hungarian settlement outside of Europe: Békevár (1900), Saskatchewan.

Hun's Valley (1885), Manitoba

Associated names: New Hungary Colony, Hungarian Colony, Hungarian Valley, Hunsvally. Known after 1921 as Polonia.

Location: 26 km northwest of Neepawa Manitoba. Rural Municipality of Rosedale. Township 16, Range 16, W1 (50.388935 N, -99.618857 W)

Hun's Valley was the first, at least partly Hungarian settlement established as a part of Paul O. Esterhazy's attempt to create a "New Hungary" on the Canadian Prairies. While Hun's Valley did not become a lasting centre of Hungarian influence, the settlement paved the way for the establishment of the Esterház colony and other Magyar settlements in the Prairie West. In early August 1885, Count Géza S. de Döry (1837-1895), an agricultural expert, Hungarian nobleman and principal assistant to Paul Esterhazy, settled over a dozen Magyar and Slavic families (mainly Slovaks) there from Pennsylvania.

The group of settlers that de Döry led to Manitoba in 1885 comprised 38 families recruited by Esterhazy in the eastern mining region of Pennsylvania. The land they were assigned was spread out. The Manitoba and North-Western Railway gave up three of its odd-numbered sections (17, 21, 33) in the valley of Stony Creek so de Döry's settlers could build their houses more closely together. The railway company also provided a \$4000 loan for the purchase of agricultural implements and farm animals. During the first winter the settlers gained supplementary income cutting cordwood and burning charcoal for the railway company. In subsequent years, they traded loads of poplar cordwood cleared from their land for supplies in Neepawa. Rather than enter for homestead lands, more than half of the original group sought work opportunities elsewhere. However, the population of the "New Hungary Colony" was augmented shortly after its establishment with the arrival of a second smaller group of families from Pennsylvania. By the end of 1885, 17 colonists (43 individuals) had filed homestead entries and had begun working their land.

Within a year of its establishment the future of Hun's Valley looked promising. A number of log houses and stables had been

erected, a petition for a post office had been approved, preparations for the construction of a schoolhouse were under way, and a village site was being surveyed. Eight additional homestead entries had been filed by 1889 at which time the settlement encompassed about 2,000 acres, only a fraction of which had actually been cleared. A land inspector noted in his report that considerable clearing of underbrush and cutting of trees still remained to be done before a substantial amount of grain and crops could be cultivated. De Döry argued in an initial report that his settlers had the hardest part of the country to cultivate but gave a promising account of the agricultural potential of the area based on his own preliminary farming achievements. In 1893, his colony consisted of 29 families, 122 people in all. Collectively, the land under cultivation grew from just over 112 acres in 1889 to 300 acres four years later. The settlement also had 60 horses and 200 head of cattle.

To meet their spiritual needs, the first settlers constructed a small Catholic church in 1887-88. Missionary priests visited intermittently. To cope with a growing congregation, the larger St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church was built and a year later, in 1903, Hun's Valley received its first resident priest, Fr. Ernest Kistorz. However, by then a number of Magyar as well as Slovak settlers had already left the colony for better lands further west. In fact, most of the original families gradually left after the death in 1895 of the colony's leader, Géza de Döry. Polish settlers arrived to take their place beginning in the late 1890s. As a reflection of the changes in the ethnic composition of the farming district, the name of the settlement and its post office were officially changed in 1921 to Polonia.¹

Esterház-Kaposvár (1886), Saskatchewan

Location: immediately north of the Qu'Appelle Valley in southeast Saskatchewan, 5 1/2 km south of present-day Esterhazy.

Rural Municipality of Fertile Belt No. 183. Township 19, Ranges 1 & 2, W2 (50.605002 N, -102.085467 W)

Esterház became the second colony after Hun's Valley MB to be established under the direction of Paul O. Esterhazy, a.k.a. Count Esterhazy (1831-1912) during his employment as special agent for Hungarian immigration to Canada (1885-1887). Esterház (later known as Kaposvár) served as an important transitional shelter for subsequent

groups of Hungarian immigrants who arrived in the Canadian Prairies up to the 1920s. Its success helped pave the way for further Eastern and Central European settlement in the Prairies, and the foundation of Esterház-Kaposvár is now recognized by Parks Canada as a national historic event. However, little remains of the colony other than an impressive stone church which continues to serve as an important spiritual site for descendants of the pioneer settlers.

Named after a historical seat of the Esterhazy family, Esterház was founded by some 35 families of predominantly Magyar ethnicity. The colonists had been provided with free transportation from Toronto to Winnipeg, and Esterhazy secured a loan of \$25,000 on their behalf to build houses and purchase farming equipment and cattle. In addition, Esterhazy negotiated to have both even-numbered and certain odd-numbered adjacent sections of land available for his settlers. Ordinarily, those odd-numbered sections would have been reserved for the future use of railways. However, if they were available to settlers, then a more compact settlement pattern resembling the villages they were used to was possible. Early colonists initially situated their frame houses close to their neighbours' homes in clusters of four at the centre of each section.

While the almost immediate establishment of a post office indicated a promising future for the settlement, problems soon emerged. Another group of about 60 settlers recruited by Esterhazy left Pennsylvania for the North-West without his instruction. Meanwhile, a prairie fire destroyed much of the colony's supplies making the absorption of the approaching group impossible. Esterhazy stopped them from going to the colony during the winter months and instead found them temporary employment at a mine near Medicine Hat. However, the Hungarians felt that they were being taken advantage of by the contractors at the mine so they left for the immigrant shed at Medicine Hat. At about the same time, a number of Hungarian families destined for the west arrived in Montreal penniless, having been swindled of their money by a steamship agent in Hamburg. To make matters even worse, the exceptionally cold winter of 1886-87 proved too much for the majority of the Esterház colony's settlers who lacked adequate shelter, food, winter clothing, timber and hay. They left for the immigrant sheds of Brandon and Winnipeg, and later returned to the United States. Even though these events were largely beyond Esterhazy's control, his employment with the Department of Agriculture was terminated. Nonetheless, Esterhazy continued to

encourage Hungarian settlement in Canada from his residence in New York.

The Esterház colony was saved from total collapse with the arrival in the spring of 1888 of more than twenty families from Hungary. By the end of 1891 all debts had been paid off and the Hungarians, numbering around 350, were portrayed as model settlers in a government report. Correspondence between settlers and their relatives and friends in Pennsylvania and abroad encouraged the growth of the farming settlement. By 1904 at least 125 homesteads had been taken up in the Esterház district and the population of the colony reached 900. Hungarians formed the majority of the population, though there was also a large Czech and significant Slovak presence. In fact, the establishment of a second post office in 1891 (Sec.4, Twp 19, R1, W2) pointed to solidifying ethnic boundaries within the district. The new post office named "Kaposvar," after a city in Hungary with large Esterhazy estates, was situated in the predominantly Hungarian populated eastern section of the settlement with the original post office named "Esterhaz" (Sec.2, Twp.19, R2, W2) becoming increasingly seen as an integral part of the growing Czech colony (the Esterhaz post office was renamed with a Czech place name in 1903). Kaposvár quickly became associated as the first Hungarian colony, and the Esterház place name faded in importance after a new railway station (1902) and village (1903) to the north of the colony were named "Esterhazy" in honour of the "Count's" colonization work.

In 1902 Paul Esterhazy was once again employed temporarily by the Canadian government to develop a promotional pamphlet showcasing the prosperity of the pioneers of Esterház-Kaposvár. Personal accounts and photographs highlighted their material success. The inclusion of a supporting letter written by the colony's German-born parish priest, Reverend Francis Woodcutter, signalled the important spiritual dimension of the then thriving farming colony. Unlike most Catholic Hungarian parishes in Saskatchewan, Kaposvár had its own priest, one who tried to advance the development of the colony. Woodcutter was responsible for establishing a stone rectory (1900) in the colony. His successor, the Belgian priest Father Jules Piro, undertook an even more ambitious project: to replace the colony's wooden church with a stone church, Our Lady of Assumption (1907). In 1915, the congregation received the first of a number of Hungarian priests and Kaposvár became regarded as a centre of Hungarian Catholic influence in Canada.

The farming settlement remained a strong cultural island throughout the interwar period as evidenced by the colony's grand golden jubilee celebration. However, outmigration, especially following the Second World War, coupled with the lack of cultural institutions and an increasing rate of inter-ethnic marriage contributed to the erosion of what remained of the ethnic district. Owing to continued population loss and the growth of the nearby village-turned-town of Esterhazy, the church was closed for regular service in 1961 and with that the Kaposvár settlement in many ways ceased to exist.

Otthon (1894), Saskatchewan

Location: 14 km southwest of Yorkton, Saskatchewan. Rural Municipality of Cana No. 214. Township 24, Ranges 4, 5 & 6, W2 (51.096466 N, -102.597936 W)

Otthon was founded by Reverend János Kovács, also the founder of the First Hungarian Reformed Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was the second oldest Magyar settlement in Canada after Esterház-Kaposvár, if the ethnically mixed Hun's Valley settlement is omitted from consideration. Otthon means "home" in Hungarian. A small hamlet remains at the heart of the old Hungarian colony.

In January 1894 Rev. Kovács wrote a letter that was published in the most popular Hungarian language newspaper in the United States at the time, *Amerikai Nemzetőr* (American Home Guard). It claimed that some of his congregation had wrongly accused him of misappropriating funds for the construction of his church. Accordingly, he declared his intention to leave Pittsburgh and organize a group of Hungarians with the purpose of establishing a farming settlement in the Canadian prairies at a suitable location suggested by Canadian authorities. His plan was undoubtedly influenced by Paul O. Esterhazy's earlier work in settling the Esterház colony, as well as by his own back-to-nature philosophy. In particular, the reverend believed that farming was a far better option than the constant danger and "moral corruption" that the Hungarian immigrant faced working in the small mining towns of Pennsylvania.

A follow-up letter in March written by the editor of the *Amerikai Nemzetőr* warned readers that while 150 people had already expressed interest in leaving Pennsylvania, they and others

needed to be fully aware that they could in no way expect to “find manna in readiness and milk, honey and beer flowing in the river beds.” He further warned that “shirkers should not join” Rev. Kovács’ co-operative land settling enterprise and potentially repeat what had occurred eight years earlier when many of the first Hungarian settlers destined for the colonization initiative at Esterház returned weeping from the hardships they endured during their first winter in Canada. It seems the warning was effective because only about four or five families moved to the Yorkton area that April of 1894.

Rev. Kovács rented a small house for the settlers until they could complete the task they undertook cooperatively of building temporary sod hut dwellings in the forested area that was to be theirs. In the winter of 1895, Rev. Kovács wrote a number of letters that were widely circulated, including in the press, giving details about how to acquire free homestead land, the cost of livestock, the superior quality of the new land in Canada, and life in general by contrast to what was offered in the United States. Not only were these letters read by Hungarian immigrants in the United States, but also by many of their relatives and friends in Hungary. As a result, Rev. Kovács and his initial followers were soon joined by a dozen or so families from the U.S. as well as eight families directly from Hungary.

The chief Canadian supporter of Rev. Kovács’ plan to settle some fifty Hungarian families of the Reform (Calvinist) faith was Rev. Theodore Teitelbaum of Saltcoats (near Yorkton, Saskatchewan), a Church of England clergyman and son of a refugee of the failed 1848-49 Hungarian War of Independence. The initiative gained the additional support of Dr. James Robertson, Superintendent of Presbyterian Missions in Western Canada.

Although the first group of settlers were of the Reformed faith, subsequent groups also included Catholics and Baptists. For most of the first decade of its existence no permanent congregation of any denomination could be organized in the colony. Before their church was built in 1905, services for Reformed-Presbyterians were conducted in Reverend Kovács’ house, and later in the homes of two settlers. Otthon’s Catholic church was built in East Otthon where most of the Catholic Hungarians had settled. It was consecrated in 1903.

The first institution in Otthon was the post office (Sec. 36, Twp. 24, R. 5, W2) and Rev. Kovács served as the colony’s first postmaster from 1896 to 1898. Upon the Reverend’s resignation, the post office was briefly closed, reopening in 1899 at a new location

(Sec. 14, Twp. 24, R. 5, W2). Six postmasters served there until its closure in 1968. Rev. Kovács' letter of resignation as postmaster in late 1897 may have been linked to the growing alienation that he was facing in his new home and adopted country, particularly following a conflict he had with the Presbyterian Church of Canada. The conflict led not only to a reprimand and loss of an annual subsidy, but also to the departure of several members of his flock. The founder of Otthon left his colony and Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The Reformed congregation of Otthon received a promising replacement with a theological student from Hungary, but he left after no more than two years service. Then Lajos Kovácsi, a former teacher in Hungary who had become a missionary for the Canadian Presbyterian Church, arrived in about 1905 and provided the colony with strong leadership in both the religious and ethno-cultural sense for two years. He and his older brother, Rev. Kálmán Kovácsi, were responsible for establishing the *Canadai Magyar Testvéri Szövetség* (Canadian Hungarian Fraternal Association) in 1910, a supracommunal organization jointly based out of Winnipeg, Manitoba and Békevár, Saskatchewan. It served Hungarian interests such as the promotion of bilingual (English Hungarian) schooling. A branch of the short-lived organization was established in Otthon that same year.

Despite the relatively short time spent in the colony, Lajos Kovácsi seemed to have helped awaken the Otthonians from their apparent indifference to cultural activities. In particular, like his older brother in Békevár, Lajos actively promoted the cult of Lajos Kossuth, leader of the 1848-49 Hungarian War of Independence. He delivered patriotic speeches on Hungarian national memorial days, March 15 and October 6. Following his departure, a number of other ministers served Otthon's Reformed congregation before Lajos' older brother Kálmán – a capable orator, leader and poet – arrived in 1911 to act as minister. Kálmán Kovácsi, too, was succeeded by other Reformed Hungarian ministers. Unlike the Calvinists, the Hungarian Catholics of Otthon were not as fortunate in the matter of obtaining their own clergy. Their church was often served by visiting priests from the Esterház-Kaposvár settlement.

The Otthon colony had two schools, the first of which was established in 1899. It also had the Rákóczi Orchestra, formed in 1905 and named after the leader of an earlier Hungarian War of Independence in 1703-1711. An important social event in Otthon was the mid-summer picnic. The first of many picnics was arranged by the

Reformed congregation in 1912. It was geared to all members of the community, irrespective of religious and ethnic background. Many other important occasions for communal eating, dancing, music-making and singing existed, usually tied to religious dates and events such as Christmas, Pentecost and Easter, particular saints' days, baptisms and weddings.²

Békevár (1900), Saskatchewan

Associated name: New Botrágy

Location: 9 km southeast of Kipling, Saskatchewan. Rural Municipality of Hazelwood No. 94. Township 12, Ranges 4 and 5, W2 (50.023633 N, -102.599095 W)

Békevár means “fortress of peace” or alternatively “peace awaits you.” It was the largest and one of the most prosperous Hungarian farming settlements in the Prairie West. It was populated primarily by members of the Reformed (Calvinist) Church and, to a lesser extent, by Baptists. Similar to the symbolic role played by its Catholic counterpart, Esterház-Kaposvár, the Békevár settlement was regarded by generations of Hungarian Calvinists in Western Canada as their spiritual centre. The settlement was also a strong and, in many ways, unique, centre of Hungarian culture in Canada. In particular, Békevár resembled a traditional Hungarian peasant community in that a rich array of traditions and folk customs were cultivated and maintained in the new setting for several decades.

János (John) Szabó (1853-1925), who founded Békevár, had been employed in the mid-1890s as a coal miner in Pennsylvania. Like many other Hungarian immigrants, Szabó viewed the backbreaking and dangerous work in the mine as a short-term measure to build up enough capital to purchase land in the old country. While in Pennsylvania, however, Szabó read a series of published letters written by the Rev. János Kovács of Otthon touting the great farming opportunities in the Canadian Prairies. Upon learning of his wife's death back in his native village of Botrágy (in Bereg County, northeastern Hungary, now Berehove Raion, Ukraine), Szabó quit his job and returned home in 1897. He subsequently sold all his belongings and left for Canada in the spring of 1898 with his two sons and daughter, a new wife and one of her children.

He went first to Esterház-Kaposvár but because there was no land available there he rented land near Whitewood until he could find a suitable location to establish his own colony. Szabó's settlement plan was utopian in the sense that he intended to recreate Botrágy on the Canadian prairies by transferring a large part of his native village there. He wanted to improve the lives of his co-villagers, and a great many planned to join him. A letter dated 15 August 1899 sent to the Department of the Interior indicated the intention of 55 or more families to emigrate to Canada once Szabó had secured a suitable area for mixed farming.

In the summer of 1900, with the aid of Hungarian agronomist János Faragó, Szabó located southwest of Whitewood what he thought would be an ideal place to establish his "New Botrágy." They marked out the boundaries of the first house of the colony on July 20, a foundational date that was to be commemorated annually by the descendants of the pioneer settlers. Szabó subsequently sent letters back to his village informing his relatives and friends about everything from the size of acquirable lands for cultivation and grazing to the costs of houses and stables. Over the course of the next three years several small waves of settlers brought 38 families to the colony. While a large proportion of these and later settlers came from Szabó's native village, others soon arrived from other villages in the northeast as well as elsewhere in the Hungarian Kingdom especially the Kunság and Trans-Danubia. Szabó's farming settlement had a population of 1,578 by 1916, and new settlers continued to arrive as late as 1930. Its name, Békevár, was adopted in 1902. In 1904 the "Bekevar" post office was established.

Szabó acted as both leader and unofficial settling agent. The "Moses of Békevár" as he was to be later remembered, advised and helped secure and locate quarter sections for newcomers and offered much of his time, in spite of his own work, aiding those who could not take care of themselves. He also helped secure the colony's first minister, Rev. Kálmán Kovácsi (1873-1931) in 1901 with the help of Dr. James Robertson, superintendent of Presbyterian missions.

Rev. Kovácsi's sermons were initially held in the homes of settlers, later in school buildings, until in 1912 the Békevár Reformed Church was opened. The architectural design for the twin-spired wooden structure was likely inspired by either the Reformed Great Church of Debrecen, in the so-called Calvinist Rome of Hungary, or possibly the Romanesque parish church of Ják in western Hungary.

Rev. Kovácsi was credited with introducing two controversial movements during his nearly decade-long stay in Békevár. One was a prairie-wide initiative to promote bilingual English-Hungarian schooling. He worked on this with his younger brother, Lajos, a missionary in Winnipeg. Their cause resulted in the Winnipeg-based *Canadai Magyar Szövetség* (Canadian Hungarian Association), established in 1908, with its first branch in Békevár; and a similarly short-lived organization, the *Canadai Magyar Testvéri Szövetség* (Canadian Hungarian Fraternal Association), established in 1910.

The second controversial initiative was a quasi-cultic movement called spiritism. Rev. Kovácsi returned to Canada after a visit to Hungary in 1907 as a convert to spiritism, a movement that promoted faith healing and belief in the possibility of communicating with the spirits of the dead. With the support of Szabó, he established a thriving but short-lived spiritist movement in the Békevár colony. In particular, under his guidance, adherents of spiritism formed the lay fraternity, *Keresztény Spiritisták Egylete* (Christian Spiritists' Society). The spiritist organization was highly controversial as its presence suggested that the church could not cater fully to the spiritual needs of the Calvinist congregation. In fact, the spiritist movement left the community in strife and divided. The pro-spiritist faction in Békevár began to use the Kossuth School for its meetings while the anti-spiritist faction used the Rakoczi School in the adjacent township. Rev. Kovácsi was eventually pressured by the anti-spiritist opposition to leave the settlement in 1910. Although the Christian Spiritists' Society was dissolved the following year, the spiritist group continued to function for some time. The spiritist movement, though organizationally short-lived, was eventually incorporated into local traditional legends and it became a popular topic of conversation well into the latter half of the century. It also had an influence on the settlement's small but very active Baptist congregation.

In 1911, four Baptist families in the colony constructed a small wooden church adjacent to where the Reformed Church was being built. A year later, the Baptists' first minister, the Rev. János Mónus, arrived. A number of Calvinist adherents of spiritism subsequently joined Békevár's new Baptist Church, which had already been infiltrated from the start by traditional folk beliefs. Conversions were undertaken in a large slough called *Jordan-tó* (Lake Jordan) and the 14' x 20' church structure had to be enlarged in 1915 and again in 1918. By the time Rev. Mónus left in 1925, the congregation had 65

baptized members and 109 children were attending Baptist Sunday school. The Church continued to grow with new memberships from both Békevár and the nearby village of Kipling.

Békevár was regarded as a leading centre of Hungarian Canadian culture. In fact, it has been argued that Békevár was culturally the richest Magyar settlement outside of Europe. Not only were folkloric rites and rituals preserved (e.g. baptismal, marriage and funeral customs), but the transplanted culture was further developed, with new songs and poetry produced to address new circumstances. The solid cultural foundation that included an array of folk traditions and values was largely tied to the fact that the core population of Békevár originated from the same village. Thus, systems of kinship and co-villager groupings, as well as the archaic yet vibrant folk belief system of turn-of-the-century Botrágy were transplanted, largely intact, to the Canadian Prairies.

Rev. Kovácsi, a poet of some repute in Hungary, greatly facilitated Békevár's development as a creative centre of folk-poets, prose and drama writers, musicians and festivals. For example, the settlement had a brass band and a succession of at least three string bands, a choir, and at least two well-published writers. Committed to fostering the anti-Habsburg Kossuth cult, the reverend-poet wrote patriotic poems and speeches such as "A Szabadság Ünnepe" (On the festival of freedom) for important annual events such as the Hungarian National Day on March 15. He also oversaw the Önképzőkör (Self-Training Circle), a cultural organization that helped nurture the poetical and literary creativity of many of the pioneer settlers. Poetical texts, short stories and even long epic poems were produced by the early Békevárians, including works with such titles as the "Hymn of Bekevar" and "The Conquest of our New Home." A Self-Training Circle for Youth (Ifjúsági Önképzőkör) was also established to encourage the Canadian-born children to learn Hungarian poetry, song and music. However, as with other Hungarian settlements in the Canadian Prairies, the active reinforcement of Hungarian culture at the heart of this settlement declined by the mid-twentieth century.³

NOTES

The above entries on Hun's Valley, Esterház-Kaposvár, Otthon, and Békevár were originally published on the website of the Canadian Utopias Project: Built Utopian Settlements to 1945 (canadianutopiasproject.ca). The author would like to thank Beth Milroy (Professor Emirata, Ryerson University) for her help in editing the original entries on these four settlements and for providing permission to have them re-published in this issue of the *Hungarian Studies Review*. The author would also like to thank Nandor Dreisziger for his help in reviewing the original entries that were submitted to the Canadian Utopias Project and for suggesting that they be re-published in this journal.

¹ Prior to the death of de Döry, which likely contributed to the demise of Hungarian presence in the farming settlement with outmigration, there is evidence that some of the Hungarian settlers of the multi ethnic colony attempted to bequest their native language to their children. In particular, the first teacher of the the Hun's Valley School District and first post master of the area, Michael Ruby, offered Hungarian language instruction to the children of the pioneer settlers. A century later, the author of the local history book *Along the Hills to the Valley* and descendant of one of the few Magyar pioneer settlers who remained in the colony ensured that Esterhazy's and de Döry's contributions to the establishment of the settlement be acknowledged on the centennial cairn of St. Elizabeth of Hungary church.

² For more on Otthon, see M. Kovács (1980d), Dreisziger (1982), Paizs (1928), and Ruzsa (1940).

³ The main studies upon which this entry is based are M. Kovacs (1980a) and the edited collection of studies by R. Blumstock (1979). For spiritism, religious mysticism and sectarianism in Békevár see L. Dégh (1980) and her study in Blumstock's edited volume. For examples of poetry from Békevár see Kovacs (1980b). Shorter overviews with additional information include Kovacs (1980c; 1982; 1985) and Dreisziger (2004; 2016).

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Unrequited Love? The Hungarian Democrats' Relations with the Czechoslovak Authorities (1919-1932)

Aliaksandr Piahanau

[W]e need to work on overthrowing the Horthy-rule. This is not going to happen without outside pressure and actions: [...] people have almost messianic expectations from Prague and Vienna, from you and from us, waiting for [liberation].
Vilmos Böhm to Mihály Károlyi (Vienna, 3 September 1920)¹

'The backbone of my policy is a full agreement with the Czechs. I can regard President Beneš, whom I know for over 20 years, as a personal friend.
Mihály Károlyi to a Soviet diplomat (London, 8 June 1943)²

Abstract: This paper defines the main objectives, stages, and the dynamics of the secret cooperation of the democratic Hungarian opposition, hostile to the Horthy regime, with the government of Czechoslovakia. It focuses on the Prague's contacts with Hungary's Octobrists, social democrats (active both within the country and in exile) and liberals. The paper covers mostly the period of the so-called consolidation of the Horthy regime, carried out under the leadership of Prime Minister István Bethlen. Our research concludes that the struggle of the democratic opposition against the Horthy-Bethlen regime was consistently encouraged by Czechoslovak political and diplomatic circles. The collaboration between anti-Horthyist groups and Prague was particularly intense in 1919–1921 and in 1930–1931. Our study utilises hitherto unknown documents from archives in Prague and Budapest, to re-evaluate the causes of interwar tensions between Hungary and Czechoslovakia — beyond their disputes over borders and disagreements over the treatment of minorities.

Following the dissolution of Austria-Hungary and a series of revolutionary upheavals after the end of World War I, an authoritarian rule under the regency of Miklós Horthy was established in Hungary in 1920. This conservative and nationalist regime forced its most ardent domestic opponents to make a choice between a recognition of the new government and emigration (mostly to neighbouring countries). But the consolidation of the ‘counter-revolution’, as the circle around Horthy proudly called their rule, did not eradicate the opposition in the country. Relying on the public discontent with the Horthy’s regency and with the support provided by foreign governments and political parties, Hungarian oppositionists continued their attempts to democratise Hungary throughout the 1920s. It was the neighbouring Czechoslovak Republic (hereafter the ČSR) that provided most active support to the anti-Horthyist circles, and this article strives to uncover the story of the Czechoslovaks’ secret actions.

The official relations between Budapest and Prague in the interwar period were far from trouble-free. The most important reason for their disagreements was a territorial dispute over Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia, which had belonged to Hungary until the end of the Great War. After these lands were incorporated into the ČSR in 1918–1921, the vast majority of Hungary’s political establishment looked forward their full or partial return. Budapest authorities maintained strong ties with anti-Prague opposition movements in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia, particularly among local Magyars. Moreover, Prague also had its own claims against Budapest (which concerned certain territories and the position of Slovaks in Hungary), and, apparently, it even saw Hungary as its potential sphere of influence. The Prague-Budapest tensions reached their zenith during the border rectifications in Slovakia and Ruthenia in 1938–1939.

The reading of the interwar realities through the prism of “mixture of border and ethnic conflicts” seems to simplify the complex relations between the post-WWI Czechoslovakia and Hungary. It ignores the fact that both states were uninterested in escalating their disputes excessively. Budapest had to take into consideration that Czechoslovakia far exceeded Hungary in terms of military potential and was a member of the Little Entente – a military and political bloc that guaranteed the ČSR Yugoslav and Romanian aid against Hungary. Furthermore, the ČSR was Hungary’s second-largest trade partner behind Austria, meaning that a rise of strife between them would greatly damage the Horthyist economy. Prague, in turn, could not be sure that

the population of its eastern provinces would remain loyal in case of war and feared the possible interference of other regional states in the conflict. In this context, and despite their numerous disagreements, both Prague and Budapest worked towards the bilateral normalisation. But, whenever diplomacy could not deliver desired results, the two governments applied various soft power instruments of pressure on each other, spreading the hostile propaganda or secretly supporting the political opposition on the other side of the shared border.

Foreign interferences in domestic affairs, especially regarding the interwar Central Europe, are often associated with the activities of national minorities. The classical examples are the German or Magyar minorities that sought a protection from Berlin or from Budapest respectively, to counter-balance the power of majority.³ In the case of Hungary-Czechoslovakia relations, a lot of scholarly attention has been paid to the contacts between the Hungarian authorities and the opponents of Prague among the Slovak and Magyar political parties in the ČSR.⁴ While some historians see these relations as 'justified' and 'natural,' other condemn them. Labelled as the Horthyist interference in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, these relations were described as proof of Budapest' and national minorities 'aggressive' and 'disloyal' attitude to the Czechoslovak state, and considered one of key reasons for persistent tensions between Budapest and Prague.

As the number of Slovaks in post-Trianon Hungary did not reach 200 thousand, and were speedily Magyarised, 'national-minded' historians failed to notice a 'pro-Czechoslovak strata' inside the Hungarian political scene. Despite that the counter-revolutionary regime in Hungary was challenged by a wide front of oppositional groups, the issue of collaboration between these anti-Horthyist circles and the government in Prague remains little studied.⁵ This paper aims to overcome this gap by giving an outline of the stages, events, and substance of the partnership between the Magyar democrats and the Czechoslovak diplomacy. Also, it seeks to contribute to the scholarship by suggesting that it is not necessarily the 'national minority' which acted as an third pillar in the bilateral relations of neighbouring states, but rather the united opposition movement.

The scarcity of preserved primary sources is one of main problems for studying 'secret cooperation' between the opposition movements and foreign governments. Aware of potential danger of presenting proofs of such cooperation, which could be used either as proof of

'foreign interference,' 'political venality' or 'national treason,' the involved parties tended to convey information on their plans and activities with the minimum of written records.⁶ For example, when the Czechoslovak representative in Budapest, Milan Hodža, cabled to Prague in August 1919 that he would provide details which kind of action should be taken regarding the republican parties with pro-Czech orientation in Hungary only during his next visit to Prague.⁷ The question of financial subsidies was hidden with special diligence, and sources contain only allusions to it.⁸ Otherwise, the Hungarian journals were full of different accusations against the opposition parties of accepting foreign funds, but it is almost impossible to verify them. For example, in December 1930, the rightist press in Budapest published several letters apparently exchanged between Hungarian socialist party leaders and their Czechoslovak partners. The letters showed that the ČSR had been supplying the social democrats with money for their political struggle.⁹ Due to these scarcities or biases of sources, speculations about relations between the Hungarian opposition and the governmental circles of Prague, and especially the funds involved, remain a very slippery area for research.

At the same time, there is enough evidence of the existence of 'special relationship' between the Hungarian democrats and the Czechoslovak authorities. First, the Hungarian émigrés maintained extensive correspondence among them, and the letters of such figures as Mihály Karolyi, Oszkár Jászi or Vilmos Böhm contain multiple references to Prague's support of their anti-Horthyist struggle. Second, the Czech sources also mirror these relations. On one hand, they testify to the extent of Prague's support for the 'democratisation' of Hungary, and the place that this issue occupied in official diplomatic relations between Budapest and Prague. Finally, as the Horthyist regime kept an open eye on the Czechoslovak relations of its domestic opponents, and documents housed in the National Archives of Hungary shed some additional light on this intricate problem.

Another challenge in studying unofficial relations between a foreign state and Hungarian domestic opposition lays in terminology. The word choice probably would be a reason for critique always as the distinction between institutional or personal cooperation and hidden manipulation is often very subtle. How to differentiate a foreign aid from a foreign interference? Should the Czechoslovak financial assistance to pay the legal fees during the trials over the social-democrats in Hungary¹⁰ be considered a justified reason to call the anti-Horthyist

activists 'agents' of the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš? Or should repeated Czechoslovak promises to encourage the establishment of 'democratic governance' in Budapest be understood as Prague's intention to meddle in internal affairs of a neighbouring country? Much less innocent seems to be a Beneš advise to the left-wing émigrés to put an end to the counter-revolutionary regime by an 'outright rebellion' in 1920, or Prague's enthusiasm about the right-wing radical István Friedrich's plans in 1932 to stage a coup to overthrow Horthy.

Leaving the clarification of these and many other issues for future research, this paper argues that the Hungarian democratic circles maintained partnership with the governmental spheres in Prague throughout the 1920s and that this relationship strongly affected the internal politics in Hungary as well as bilateral Prague-Budapest diplomatic relations. This research also concludes that the intensity of the collaboration between the anti-Horthyist opposition in the ČSR in the 1920s depended mostly on, first, the stability (or a lack thereof) of Horthy's regime, and, second, on the level of cordiality between cabinets in Budapest and Prague. Whenever the counter-revolutionary authorities had to confront a serious internal or external challenge, the opposition would increase its pressure on the Horthy regime, pushing it to loosen its authoritarian grip and carry out democratic reforms. However, Prague provided support to the opposition only upon a serious consideration of the potential consequences, and the paper concludes that the Hungarian opposition could not count on an unqualified Czechoslovak support against the Horthy regime.

The paper focuses on the 1920s and early 1930s, covering the period of the so-called consolidation in Hungary (1921–1931), carried out under the leadership of regent Horthy's closest political ally – Count István Bethlen. For one decade, the political system of the Hungarian 'kingdom without a king' remained surprisingly stable; its symbol, apart from regent Horthy, was the long-standing Prime Minister, István Bethlen. This Transylvanian aristocrat, who became head of the government after the (ex-) King Charles IV Habsburg had attempted a failed coup in March 1921, retained the reins of power until August 1931. The consolidation decade became so inextricably linked with the Prime Minister's name that foreign diplomats used to call the Hungarian ruling regime not only Horthyist, but also Bethlenist.¹¹

Throughout the 1920s, the camp opposed to the Horthy-Bethlen duo may be divided into three main groups: 1. democrats

(composed in turn of the so-called liberals who were proponents of democratic reforms; Octobrists – supporters of the Aster Revolution of 1918; and social democrats); 2. legitimists (who were calling for a Habsburg restoration); and 3. ultra-right nationalists. All three opposition groups rejected the consolidation policy to various extent. On the one hand, the *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt* (Social Democratic Party of Hungary, hereafter MSZDP) and the Octobrists (whose leaders were in exile), as well as the largest liberal parties (Vilmos Vázsonyi's *Nemzeti Demokrata Párt* (National Democratic Party, hereafter NDP), Károly Rassay's Party, as well as the Kossuth Party) principally opposed the government; on the other hand, many of the legitimists and radical nationalists (united around Gyula Gömbös) were in favour of a peaceful coexistence with the regime. Part of the opposition existed on the edge of legality: for instance, the *Magyarországi Szocialista Munkáspárt* (Socialist Workers Party of Hungary), which in 1925–1928 acted as a cover for the illegal Communist Party of Hungary; or the so-called Republican Party, repeatedly banned by the authorities in the 1920s. The situation was further complicated by the fact that both the democratic and the legitimist opposition saw as their main political opponents not Bethlen's clique, but rather Gömbös and his followers. The democrats disliked his chauvinism, anti-Semitism, and anti-socialism (Gömbös was seen as responsible for many of the 'white terror' killings), while the legitimists were averse to his anti-Habsburg position. Although the democrats and the legitimists held opposing views on many social and political matters, they were united in their demand for a 'democratisation' of the counter-revolutionary regime by means of a universal secret suffrage.¹²

Hungarian democratic groups carefully maintained connections with ideologically close movements and political circles abroad. The MSZDP was a member of the Second International and was well connected to influential socialist parties abroad, such as those of Great Britain, France, Austria, and the ČSR,¹³ while the Kossuth Party members were very active in the Pan-Europe movement.¹⁴ Apart from these direct contacts, the Hungarian democrats maintained relations with foreign partners through the left-wing émigrés who had left the country during the white terror in 1919–1920.¹⁵ Initially, a majority of these refugees fled to Austria, but at the height of the Hungarian crisis, the ČSR opened its borders to some of them. The Czechoslovak envoy in Vienna, Robert Flieder, reported to Prague in January 1920 that the opportunity to obtain asylum in the ČSR put newly-exiled Magyars in

a pro-Czechoslovak mood. Flieder noted that the émigrés, who hated the counter-revolutionary abuses of power, repeatedly offered their services to Prague; thus, it became clear which among them could become future intermediaries in the reconciliation between Czechoslovakia and Hungary.¹⁶

By the early 1920s the ČSR had become one of the main safe havens for the leftist Hungarian émigrés (apart from the Octobrists Mihály Károlyi, József Diner-Dénes, and Rezső Krejcsi, and many former Magyar Communists, like Ignác Schultz; intellectuals such as Lajos Bartha, Pál Ignótus and Jenő Gömöri also settled there), some of whom became involved in Czechoslovak politics (Hungarian cadres occupied top positions in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia).¹⁷ The second wave of the Hungarian political emigration to Czechoslovakia happened after stifling the February 1934 rebellion in Austria that forced Magyar social-democrats to seek new asylum (such as Vilmos Böhm, Jenő Horovitz, Pál Oroszlán, and Pál Szende). Among the political refugees, the move to the ČSR was made much easier for those who had the official residence in Northern Hungary (Slovakia or in Subcarpathian Ruthenia) before 1918, and, thus, had a formal right for Czechoslovak citizenship. However, the Czechoslovak asylum was not as sure as the Hungarian émigrés may hope. When relations with the Horthy regime were improving, Prague was inclined to loosen its connections with the Magyar democrats. In 1920, in the background of the normalisation of official Prague-Budapest relations, Károlyi was invited to leave the republic. Many other Hungarian exiles also left the ČSR. Similarly, those left-wing Hungarians, who were criticizing the Czechoslovak regime, were under the threat of expulsion. The 'émigré' left-wing activist Lajos Surányi, who was even elected to the Prague parliament, was expelled as 'foreigner' to Hungary in 1929, and became a zealous critique of the 'Czechoslovak democracy.' While the Czechoslovak reception of refugees from Hungary laid foundations for collaboration between Prague and the anti-Horthyist movement,¹⁸ the importance of exiled Hungarian diaspora in the ČSR had significantly weakened by the end of the interwar period.

The Hungarian *frondeurs* made the Czechoslovak Republic one of the main pillars of their activity for several reasons. First, the disputes between official Prague and Budapest, although put on the back burner, allowed the Hungarian opposition to view the ČSR as a potential ally against the counter-revolutionary regime. Second, anti-

Horthyist and Czechoslovak circles had reasons for mutual sympathy: Hungarians were attracted to the ČSR as the foremost 'democratic' state in the Danubian basin, while the Hungarian democrats' pleas for aid against the Horthyist 'oppression' found a deep resonance among the Czechoslovak socialists.¹⁹ As a MSZDP authority Ernő Garami argued, the rapprochement with two democratic neighbours, Czechoslovakia and Austria, had to strengthen the democratization of Hungary.²⁰ Otherwise, the promoters of the orientation towards Prague usually stressed the economic interdependence between the former Habsburg lands, especially Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovakia.²¹

As the influence of the Magyar democratic emigration was diminishing throughout the 1920s, the role of the domestic opposition to the counter-revolutionary rule was increasing. The main base for independent political activity in Hungary was the Budapest Parliament itself, to whose liberties Regent Horthy still showed outward respect. The government reported to the parliament, which passed laws and approved the budget. However, thanks to a series of machinations and abuses of power by the Horthyist administration, the pro-government *Egységes Párt* (Unified Party; headed by Bethlen) repeatedly won two-thirds of all seats (in 1922, 1926, and 1931), which gave it full control of the legislative branch.²² As a result, the opposition did not regard the parliament as a fully legitimate legislative body. After the 1922 elections, the joint committee of the democratic deputies adopted a declaration stating that 'the National Assembly and its activities are ... unlawful.'²³

The most influential among the democratic parties was the MSZDP, but its political prestige slowly but steadily decreased. It reached what was probably the peak of its power during the winter of 1918–1919, when the party (according to its own statistics) counted as many as 1,5 million members.²⁴ Up until the mid-1930s, the MSZDP had the largest opposition faction in the parliament: it won 25 seats in 1922, 14 seats in 1926, and 11 in 1931; in the meantime, all the liberal parties put together counted circa 10 seats. In the elections of 1922, in which the democratic opposition won more votes than at any other point during the interwar period, the MSZDP received over 300 thousand votes (200 thousand in Budapest alone), while the liberals gained 100 thousand votes.²⁵ In the early 1930s, when the democrats lost part of their popularity, the MSZDP counted circa 50 thousand members,²⁶ while the NDP and Rassay's party had only 25–30 thousand and 14–15 thousand members, respectively.²⁷ With the decline of the left parties'

popularity, by the early 1930s the right-wing *Független Kisgazdapárt* (Independent Smallholders' Party) became the main opposition force inside Hungary. The new face of the parliamentary opposition – the Smallholder leader Tibor Eckhardt also inherited the label of a 'bribed Czech traitor' from his adversaries.²⁸

The alleged Czechoslovak financial assistance to the Hungarian opposition was the main reason to call the democratic parties 'Beneš or Little Entente agents,'²⁹ but it seems that these parties primarily sought to cover their expenses with donations made by their members. Concurrently, they did not refuse outside aid when it was offered. The liberals, for instance, could rely on financial aid from Hungarian banks and trade and commercial associations (such as TÉBE, GYOSZ, and OMKE), which were interested in lobbying the democrats' programme of regional economic cooperation. According to the historian Zsuzsa Nagy, the Hungarian democrats could also count on subsidies from the Rotary Club, the Fabian Society, the Pan-European Movement, the Hungarian section of the League for Human Rights (headed in Paris by Mihály Károlyi), and the freemasonry.³⁰

The uprooted left-wing exiles were economically more vulnerable than their home fellows. Thus, the acquiring of stable revenue became a major issue for their existence. 'The Program for the Emigration' prepared by Oszkár Jászi in 1919, which called for the unity of the anti-Horthyist leaders outside Hungary, stipulated that the émigré community could accept the financial backing from foreign states and private persons only with the assent of its all members.³¹ Nevertheless, the unification of leftist exile groups, not speaking about the entire Hungarian democratic opposition, was never achieved and it seems that their revenue streams remained unknown for each other.

The rumours that the Czechoslovaks were providing financial support to the Hungarian opposition were not completely unfounded. Sources indicate that the ČSR social-democrats assisted their Hungarian comrades, and that the Prague government supported opposition press both in exile (the Viennese *Bécsi Magyar Újság* and *Új Magyarok*)³² and inside Hungary (such as the *Világ*). The Czechs offered loans and distribution on the territory of republic. In the early 1930s, even the influential Budapest newspaper *Pesti Napló* approached Beneš for a financial help needed to propagate Czech-Hungarian reconciliation.³³ Apart from the loans, the Hungarian opposition tried to establish a more legal way of obtaining the financial help from Czech-

Czechoslovakia. In 1921, the representatives of a 'liberal block' in Hungary proposed the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry to grant their commercial partners certain trading concessions.³⁴ Ten years later, a similar demand was formulated at Prague by another promoter of the Czech-Hungarian rapprochement Gusztáv Gratz.³⁵ Nevertheless, it seems that the interwar right-wing speculations about the amount of Czech subsidies for the Hungarian opposition were largely over-estimated.

Prague and the Magyar democrats facing the counter-revolution in Hungary, August 1919–December 1921.

Many interwar contacts between the political establishment of Prague and the democratic forces of Budapest were rooted in the history of the Dual Monarchy. Some relations originated from the pre-war social-democratic networks, others were established in the halls of the Budapest parliament, or originated from common schooling. What was probably equally important is that during the First World War, the Czech and Hungarian democratic opposition set up clandestine connections with the Allies, hoping for outside assistance. The Czechoslovak National Council – instituted in 1916 in Paris by the émigrés, a former Reichstag MP Professor Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and his disciple Edvard Beneš – in the summer of 1918 received the Allies' recognition as the basis for a future Czechoslovak government. On 14 November 1918, Masaryk was elected president of the ČSR (to be re-elected in 1920, 1927, and 1934), while Beneš became his irreplaceable Foreign Minister (1918–1935). In turn, Count Mihály Károlyi – leader of the Hungarian democratic opposition, who headed a Suffrage block in 1917 that included the leaders of the Radical party (Oszkár Jászi), Social Democrats (Manó Buchinger and Ernő Garami), and Vázsonyi from the NDP – also maintained secret contacts with the Allies and openly called for a break between the Habsburg Monarchy and Germany and for an immediate peace.³⁶

In 1918, the Hungarian opposition tried to renew its liaisons with the Czech left-wing politicians. In late October 1918, Buchinger met with the influential Czech socialist Vlastimil Tusar in Vienna, hoping to reach an agreement on future peaceful relations between Prague and Budapest, both of which were on the verge of revolutions.³⁷ Following the victorious Aster Revolution in Budapest on 23–

31 October 1918, led by Károlyi, and the establishment of a 'People's Republic' in Hungary, Budapest exchanged official representatives with Prague (where independence was proclaimed on 28 October). A primary objective in building good relations with Czechoslovakia was the need to obtain coal deliveries from the Silesian mines, and in November 1918, Buchinger arrived to Prague for 'coal negotiations.' As a consequence, and under pressure from the Allies, Károlyi approved the transfer of Slovakia to Czechoslovak administration in December 1918, thus creating conditions for further normalisation of Hungaro-Czechoslovak relations. However, in March 1919 the Octobrist regime in Budapest was replaced by Béla Kun's 'Soviet Republic'. Károlyi and many of his adherents were removed from power and persecuted.

Prague's reaction to the creation of the Hungarian commune was uncompromisingly negative: Czechoslovak troops moved into Hungary and occupied the Subcarpathian Ruthenia. Next, Masaryk suggested to Beneš to obtain approval of the Paris Peace Conference for an occupation of Budapest by the Czechoslovak army. Old Hungarian elites opposed the communist regime too, and several counter-revolutionary centres were created in Vienna and in the south-east of Hungary, under the protection of South-Slav and French troops.

In summer 1919, Károlyi settled in the ČSR. There, he met regularly with Masaryk, Beneš, and Tusar (Prime Minister of the ČSR in 1919–1920), coordinating the activity of the Magyar democrats in exile. Czech leaders assured Károlyi (as well as Oszkár Jászi – a frequent visitor from Vienna) that the ČSR would support the creation of a democratic government in Hungary. Masaryk and Beneš repeatedly stated that they would be ready to make territorial concessions to 'friendly' and 'non-reactionary' authorities in Budapest and restitute the Magyar-populated Schütt Island (Žitný ostrov) in Slovakia to Hungary.³⁸ Prague's promises to assist the return of the émigrés to Budapest tied the Octobrists' hopes to Czechoslovak diplomatic successes.

On 1 August 1919, the Soviet government in Budapest was replaced with a moderate socialist cabinet led by Gyula Peidl. Masaryk immediately ordered Milan Hodža to go to Budapest as the ČSR representative.³⁹ However, on 6 August power passed into the hands of István Friedrich, who proclaimed his allegiance to József Habsburg. Romania, whose troops were occupying Budapest, took this *de facto* Habsburg restoration calmly, but the authorities in Prague were disconcerted. Tusar, fearing a further monarchical consolidation in Hun-

gary, kept trying to persuade the Hungarian envoy, Rezső Krejcsi, that a republican form of government had to be preserved in Hungary.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Beneš petitioned the Paris Peace Conference not to recognize Friedrich's pro-Habsburg cabinet, instead advising to replace it with a 'national democratic government'. In order to achieve that Beneš was ready to provide troops.⁴¹

The Allies declined the offer of a Czech intervention of Budapest but convinced Friedrich to disavow his loyalty to József Habsburg and, on 15 August, assign the position of Foreign Minister to the Octobrist Márton Lovászi, who maintained close links with Garami, Buchinger, Vázsonyi, and Hodža.⁴² As Hodža explained in his report to Prague, the Lovászy group was a 'lesser evil' on the Hungarian political scene, which he wanted to support against Friedrich. Hodža even suggested to the Inter-Allied Military Mission that had arrived to Budapest to appoint Lovászy the Prime Minister instead of Friedrich.⁴³ What was probably most important is that in Hodža's words 'Lovászy and Garami showed their will to recognize immediately the new frontiers already established by the peace conference.'⁴⁴ On 11 September 1919, Friedrich dismissed Lovászi,⁴⁵ but Czechoslovak diplomacy still hoped that he may be brought back to power. On 30 September, Hodža reported to Prague that he 'urged Lovászi's group to action.'⁴⁶

Prague was not ready to relinquish its plan to change the situation in Budapest in its favour. On 13 October 1919, Beneš assured Jászi that the ČSR would not allow a *de jure* recognition of Friedrich's cabinet and, 'if necessary', would even to launch a military expedition against him. At the same time, Beneš admitted that Miklós Horthy, who could rely on his own army, was even more dangerous than Friedrich. As an alternative to Friedrich and Horthy with their revanchist intentions, Jászi proposed his own concept of Danubian cooperation, which was supposed to unite Hungarians, Czechs, Austrians, and Yugoslavs, allowing for a development of economy and democracy in the region (although under the Czech leadership).⁴⁷ A couple of days later Beneš informed the Paris Peace Conference that Hungarian politicians had managed to draw up a plan of instituting a multi-party government in Budapest (consisting of democrats, socialists, and agrarians), which would function under the protection of Romanian and Czechoslovak troops. This shadow government intended to dissolve Horthy's army, sign a peace treaty with the Allies in the name of Hungary, and create an economic bloc with the ČSR, Yugoslavia, and Austria.⁴⁸

Participants of the Paris Peace Conference approved of the idea of a coalition cabinet in Hungary, but decided to supervise directly its creation. In October–November 1919, the Entente sent the British diplomat Sir George Clerk (recently appointed as the first British envoy in Prague). However, Clerk did not focus on bringing back the Octobrists to power, but only on assuring the participation of the social-democrats in a new multi-party government in Budapest. The democratic forces perceived the Clerk mission and the issue of reconciliation with the counter-revolutionaries without much hope, but the opinions whether to join a new government or not were divided. For instance, inside MSZDP, Garami opposed it, but another party leader, Károly Peyer, supported it. By the end of November, Clerk managed to obtain the resignation of Friedrich's cabinet, withdrawal of the Romanian troops, and the formation of a coalition government, which was dominated by counter-revolutionaries but also included members of the MSZDP (Peyer) and the NDP. The new cabinet, led by Károly Huszár, was *de facto* recognized by the Allies and invited to the peace conference. Even though the social democrats had joined the government, they were losing their positions under the 'white terror' persecutions. On 17 December, Hodža, reporting to Prague, wrote that the MSZDP would not be a powerful factor any more, but he added that a delegation of Hungarian republicans was preparing to leave for Prague.⁴⁹ At the same time, Garami, who had escaped to Vienna, was convincing the Czechoslovak representative Flieder that the left and right wings' reconciliation in Budapest would prove to be short-lived. Assuring that the MSZDP would soon pull out of the government, Garami entreated the ČSR not to establish economic relations with Hungary until its citizens were guaranteed democratic rights.⁵⁰ Garami turned out to be right: as Horthy's 'white terror' continued, Peyer left the government in January 1920, and the MSZDP announced that it would boycott the upcoming parliamentary elections.

In the beginning of 1920, and especially after the new Hungarian parliament officially reinstated the monarchy and elected Miklós Horthy regent on 1 March, the Budapest authorities intensified their action aimed to retake Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia by force. Their chosen methods included encouraging the Magyar irredentists, playing on Slovak separatism, and wooing the Allies. Budapest's revanchist plans created fertile conditions for the intensification of relations between the leftist émigrés and Prague. During a meeting with an

Octobrist delegation on 31 March 1920, Beneš expressed his approval of Károlyi's plan to unite all the exiles and bring down the Horthy regime. Next, Károlyi planned to restore the republic, carry out internal agrarian and social reforms, and develop stronger ties with neighbouring countries. Beneš agreed to grant semi-official recognition to the Magyar émigrés and promised to provide asylum in the ČSR to other Hungarians if necessary. According to the Czech Minister, the most efficient way to exert pressure on Horthy would be an open rebellion; however, Beneš recommended postponing the operation until after the signing of a peace treaty with the Allies, in order to make sure that Czechoslovakia would not be accused of breaking the armistice terms.⁵¹ This honeymoon period between the Prague Castle (Hrad) and the Octobrists lasted until the summer of 1920. In the meantime, Masaryk and Beneš continued to assure the Hungarian émigrés that an armed intervention against the counter-revolution in Hungary was possible;⁵² however, both Prague and Budapest eventually refrained from such military escapades.

Once the Trianon Peace Treaty was signed on 4 June 1920 between Hungary and the Allies, including the ČSR, exiles realised that Prague began to view Budapest in a different light. Now Beneš aimed at a normalisation of official Hungaro-Czechoslovak relations. On 7 June Masaryk made it clear to Jászi that although his sympathies remained unchanged, he did not consider an active intervention against the Horthy regime any more. The disappointed Károlyi, in turn, began planning to diversify the émigrés' international connections: he wanted them to collaborate not only with Prague, but also with Belgrade (which, in Károlyi's opinion, could help arm the 'anti-government' against Horthy), as well as with the British Labour Party (which had initiated an international investigation of the 'white terror' crimes and of the subsequent boycott of Hungary by the Austrian transport enterprises in summer 1920) and, if possible, with Moscow and with the Slovak communists.⁵³ Nevertheless, Jászi still hoped that Czechoslovakia would remain a stronghold of the Magyar émigrés.

Tensions between the Octobrists and the authorities in Prague kept rising. The autumn of 1920 saw the dissolution of the Hungarian émigré chancellery in Prague. Jászi, who continued meeting with Czechoslovak diplomats on a monthly and even weekly basis, criticised the 'Czech passivity' and proposed – without success – to create a series of Hungarian paramilitary units in South Slovakia.⁵⁴ After yet another audience in the Hrad in September 1920, Jászi concluded that

Beneš would not act against Horthy without the support of the Western Great Powers.⁵⁵ Another Czech blow to the Magyar exiles came in December 1920, when the Czechoslovak authorities banned the distribution of the leading exile newspaper *Bécsi Magyar Újság* ('Vienna Magyar Newspaper') in Slovakia, where most of its readers resided.⁵⁶

The symptoms of cooling in relations between Prague and the Magyar exiles were signs of a new trend in the Czech foreign policy. Beneš seemed to expect that the growing volume of trade between Hungary and Czechoslovakia would eventually induce the Horthy regime to cease its irredentist propaganda in Slovakia, demilitarise the country, and definitely relinquish the idea of a Habsburg restoration. Further, Beneš hoped that a place could be found for Budapest within the framework of Prague's policy in Central Europe. The Czechoslovak statesman even tried to persuade the Hungarian government to restore the republican form of government in Hungary.⁵⁷ When Prague set its priority on developing relations with Budapest, Hungarian émigrés suffered the loss of an important foreign protector. As this policy was introduced in autumn 1920, Károlyi left the ČSR; and after the first bilateral Czechoslovak-Hungarian talks in Austria's Bruck on 14–15 March 1921, where Beneš personally met with Prime Minister Pál Teleki and his Foreign Minister, Gusztáv Gratz, desperate Jászi wrote to Károlyi, 'we have never felt so crushed'.⁵⁸

Very soon the newly achieved reconciliation between Prague and Budapest seemed to falter: in March 1921, Teleki and Gratz compromised themselves when the (ex-) King Charles IV Habsburg tried to retake power in Hungary. Beneš replied with a threat of an intervention, and Charles IV chose to leave the country on his own accord. As the Czechoslovak Minister to Vienna, Flieder, noted, Magyar émigrés cheerfully welcomed the Czech's anti-Habsburg stand, losing their fears that Prague turned back to the democratic values in foreign policy.⁵⁹

Smooth Budapest-Prague relations, however, were soon restored. Teleki and Gratz resigned, and István Bethlen, who had been appointed Prime Minister in April 1921, continued the policy of rapprochement with Prague. In general, Bethlen's decision to give up both the irredentist propaganda and calls for a revision of the Treaty of Trianon (at least temporarily) became the basis of the Hungarian policy of good neighbour relations on the Danube.

The émigrés' hopes for a triumphant return to Budapest were

momentarily rekindled in October 1921, when Charles IV undertook a second attempt to take back the throne. In reaction to this new restoration putsch, Beneš – who acted as both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in 1921–1922 – began a mobilization and warned Bethlen that unless the Hungarian government dealt with the Habsburg claims, the Czechoslovak army would. The Magyar exiles decided to use the pressure exerted by the ČSR as a tool to bring down the counter-revolutionary regime. Jászi and Garami urgently left Vienna for Prague. On 28 October, Beneš met with Jászi and explained that the exiles' plan to remove Horthy would be difficult to realise due to the position taken by the Allies (who wanted Bethlen and Horthy to deal with Charles without any outside interference). To Jászi's disappointment, Horthy's army defeated the Habsburg troops and took the king prisoner.⁶⁰

The aggressive Czech reaction to the Habsburg putsch, as well as the exiles' concurrent visit to Prague, led the Hungarian authorities to wonder if Beneš was harbouring imperialist plans.⁶¹ On 29 October 1921, the Hungarian envoy in the ČSR, László Tahy, pointedly asked the ČSR Foreign Ministry officials if Prague intended to force an émigré republican government on Hungary and create a 'Slavic corridor' leading into Yugoslavia.⁶² Beneš denied this; he also informed the authorities in London (with whom the Hungarian government had shared their concerns) that any allegations that Prague wanted to institute an émigré government in Budapest were false.⁶³

Even though in practice Beneš took the side of Horthy in the Habsburg putsch, some Magyar democrats remained convinced that Prague's sympathies still lay with them. Right before the planned dethronement of the Habsburgs in Hungary (scheduled for 6 November 1921), the chargé d'affaires of the Czechoslovak mission in Budapest, Karel Feistmantel, telegraphed to Prague that Horthy had resigned and the opposition was ready to form a new cabinet with Count János Hadik (a liberal legitimist who had been designated Prime Minister during the heady days of the Aster Revolution of 1918) as Prime Minister. The position of Minister of Foreign Affairs in this scheme would have gone to Garami.⁶⁴ Even though the Regent's resignation turned out to be a hoax, the shadow cabinet formed by the legitimist Hadik and the socialist Garami proved to be long-lasting: the idea of replacing the Horthy-Bethlen tandem with that of Hadik and Garami kept resurfacing during the consequent political crises of 1926 and 1931.

In the early 1920s, many Hungarian exiles left the ČSR, while

the anti-Horthyist opposition found refuge mainly in Austria. In late 1921, Beneš instructed the new Czechoslovak envoy to Austria, Kamil Krofta, to keep away from the 'dreamers' among the Magyar émigrés.⁶⁵ Thus it is not surprising that when Krofta held his first meeting with the leftist Hungarian politicians on 9 February 1922 in Vienna, Jászi was left with the impression that the new envoy was less cordial than his predecessor, Robert Flieder.⁶⁶ It became ever clearer to the Octobrists that Prague preferred to reach reconciliation with the authorities in Budapest rather than help the Hungarian exiles return home.⁶⁷ Even Krofta could not deny this: he admitted to Jászi that although the Hrad was sympathetic to the Hungarian oppositionists, Prague had to consider Horthy's significant political weight.⁶⁸ On 18 March 1922, Krofta informed Jászi that Beneš felt disappointed with the Octobrists exiles. The Czechoslovak Prime Minister was displeased that the predictions of Horthy's fall did not materialise and suspected that if the Hungarian émigrés were allowed to return to power, they would pursue a revanchist foreign policy.⁶⁹

Bethlen's consolidation policy and the marginalisation of the anti-Horthyist opposition (1921–1930)

While curbing their ties with the émigrés, the Prague authorities sought not only to normalise relations with Budapest, but also to find leverage points among the opposition movements within Hungary. Throughout the 1920s, the MSZDP (which possessed large cells in Hungary and abroad) became Prague's privileged partner on the Hungarian political scene, with socialist exiles frequently acting as intermediaries. In summer 1921, Garami – one of the leaders of the émigré wing of the MSZDP – helped Beneš to establish a rapport of trust with the so-called 'liberal bloc' in Budapest, which united assorted groups of anti-Horthyist socialists, radicals, industrialists, Catholics, Evangelicals, and freemasons. This new democratic front included both republicans and monarchists. The members of the new bloc hoped to obtain financial aid from the ČSR in order to pursue their political activities and publish their newspapers.⁷⁰

It soon became clear that the plan to form a *fronde* in Hungary with Prague's assistance had serious faults. Horthyist *agents provocateurs* succeeded in getting several leaders of the liberal bloc (such as

Ádám Persián) arrested in summer 1921.⁷¹ Taking into account the danger of further persecutions by the counter-revolutionary authorities, the opposition in Budapest chose to put their contacts with the ČSR on hold.⁷²

In late 1921, the home branch of the MSZDP – led by Károly Peyer, who had recently returned from exile – opted for a compromise with Horthy's regime. Once the so-called Bethlen-Peyer Pact was signed on 21 December 1921, the party was finally legalised. The MSZDP pledged to act in accordance with the kingdom's laws and limit its propaganda and calls to strikes. The social democrats also vowed to cut their ties with the émigrés and spread Hungary-friendly propaganda abroad.⁷³

Nevertheless, the MSZDP continued cooperating with its foreign fellows, using them as intermediaries in its contacts with the ČSR. On the eve of the parliamentary elections in Hungary, which were to take place in May–June 1922, Garami, Vázsonyi, and Rassay began talks on the creation of a new democratic coalition. The atmosphere before the elections was tense, and the electoral campaign was accompanied by attacks against members of the opposition. The inaction of the Budapest legal enforcement even gave rise to the joke that the evidence 'was intent on discovering the police'.⁷⁴ Rassay repeatedly came to Vienna to meet with Garami and various Czechoslovak politicians. Prague's connections to the opposition in Budapest caused several scandals that almost led to a severing of diplomatic relations between Hungary and the ČSR. On 11 June 1922, *Bécsi Magyar Újság* published an interview with Beneš, in which he professed the ČSR's moral support for Hungarian democracy and the work done by the Hungarian émigrés. Beneš insisted that the émigrés needed to return to Hungary and prepare the country for reforms from the inside.⁷⁵ Budapest protested against this statement and threatened to cut off diplomatic relations with Prague. Beneš disavowed his interview, and the incident was resolved.⁷⁶

The 1922 elections resulted in success for the social democrats: the MSZDP came in second after Bethlen's Unified Party in terms of the number of votes. Bethlen's party gained only twice as many votes as the MSZDP, it received 143 seats in the parliament, while the socialists got only 25. Considering the circumstances of the electoral campaign, the democratic and legitimist opposition leaders refused to recognize the legitimacy of the new parliament. In autumn the MPs from the MSZDP, the NDP, and Rassay's party created their own par-

liamentary faction – the Civic and Workers Union, which included circa 50 MPs.⁷⁷

Beneš did not hide his satisfaction with the successes of the opposition in Hungary. On 12 July 1922, he once again assured Jászi of his continued support of the exiles and even recommended the establishment of a new émigré representation in Prague. Beneš also promised to investigate the assassinations during the electoral campaign and to work on expanding the suffrage in Hungary.⁷⁸ Meanwhile Czechoslovak involvement in the 1922 parliamentary elections attracted wide public attention. The radical nationalists in Budapest suspected that the democrats had received funding from the ČSR and called them traitors,⁷⁹ while the Foreign Office procured confidential information that Prague had provided the MSZDP with a loan of 3 million Czechoslovak korunas for their electoral campaign. According to another British source, Beneš had promised the Hungarian leadership that if a social-democratic government were to be formed in Budapest, the ČSR would be prepared to make territorial concessions to Hungary.⁸⁰ It seems that this kind of offer was made by the Hrad more than once.

Those democratic leaders who had not returned to Hungary used every opportunity to exert pressure on Horthy's regime with the help of their international collaborators. In 1923–1924, Bethlen's cabinet found itself in great difficulty as a consequence of the post-war economic crisis. As the government desperately tried to obtain a relief from its burden of reparation payments (mostly by means of an international loan under the aegis of the League of Nations), the anti-Horthyists turned to private diplomacy. In April 1923, Károlyi, Jászi, and Béla Linder suggested to the Yugoslav authorities that the Little Entente members should approve a loan for Hungary only if Budapest agreed to carry out democratic reforms.⁸¹ At first the opposition had great hopes for the Little Entente: when in September 1923 Bethlen held several meetings with Beneš in Geneva to discuss the terms of the international loan, rumours spread among the Budapest liberals that Beneš was going to demand the creation of a reconciliation cabinet, which would include members of the leftist opposition.⁸²

Beneš' report to the parliament in early November 1923, in which he mentioned the issue of the Magyar émigrés, elicited a lively reaction in Hungary. According to the account sent to Prague by the Czechoslovak envoy in Budapest, Hugo Vavrečka, the Magyar émi-

grés and their supporters at home were elated, believing that Beneš would not agree to a loan unless the exiles were allowed to return. Radicals on the right, by contrast, were offended, convinced that Bethlen was ready to tolerate interference in Hungary's internal affairs just to get the loan. They insisted that in return Prague needed to agree to a repatriation of Slovakia's refugees, of whom there were 150 thousand in Hungary. Vavrečka added that Bethlen's own reaction to Beneš' speech was remarkably calm. Prime Minister assured the public that he had not made any promises in Geneva regarding internal policy or the émigrés' return, and that Beneš had not even made such demands. At the same time, while speaking with Vavrečka in private, Bethlen noted that some exiles could safely return to the country.⁸³

The issue of the Magyar emigration was indeed raised during the Czechoslovak-Hungarian negotiations in 1923. However, just as before, Prague was leaning towards a compromise in return for political concessions. The talks between Bethlen and Beneš in Geneva took place largely thanks to the assurances given by one of Bethlen's close associates, a banker Filip Weiss. Weiss told to the ČSR Legation Counselor in Budapest, Jaroslav Novák that Prague had to cease its support of the MSZDP – which had no chance of obtaining power in the country anyway. In contrast, Weiss advised to start supporting Bethlen instead, who allegedly acted in full accordance with the Treaty of Trianon, kept the Hungarian army numbers low, and was prepared to curb the influence of Gömbös and his racist followers. In his report to Prague, Novák agreed that it would be worth helping Bethlen if such was indeed his policy and wrote in his report, 'Hungary is so soft now that you can mould it as you wish'.⁸⁴ In August 1923, as the technical details of the Hungaro-Czechoslovak negotiations were being settled, Gömbös left the Unified Party and moved into open opposition to the government.⁸⁵

Bethlen and Beneš began discussing the issue of repatriation of the Magyar exiles at their very first meeting on 6 September 1923 in Geneva. According to Beneš, the return of the leftist émigrés to Hungary would make it easier for Prague to agree to a loan for Hungary, since the Czechoslovak socialists maintained strong ties with the exiles.⁸⁶ Bethlen took a few days to consider the matter and finally replied to Beneš on 9 September that he could not approve an amnesty for the émigrés without them first being tried in court. Still, Bethlen offered an alternative solution: if Hungary was to put a stop to irredentist propaganda, then the neighbouring states – including the ČSR –

would need to limit the émigrés' propaganda against the Hungarian government. Beneš agreed and guaranteed that the Czechoslovak government would take measures against the Magyar exiles as soon as friendly relations were established between Budapest and Prague.⁸⁷

The democratic opposition's hopes that the matter of the international loan would weaken the Horthy regime did not materialise: the negotiations were proceeding successfully without any significant softening to the counter-revolutionary regime. After the Bethlen-Beneš talks in Geneva, Krofta explained to Jászi that 'we had to reach an agreement with Bethlen, because that is what the Allies and the League of Nations wanted.'⁸⁸ In spite of such statements, the émigrés felt that Beneš had 'allied' with Bethlen and that 'the Little Entente seemed more eager to deal with Horthy than with the Magyar democrats'.⁸⁹ Although as late as January 1924 Károlyi was still convinced that 'with French help, Beneš managed to postpone the matter (the loan – A.P.) indefinitely',⁹⁰ he subsequently changed his view. Thirty years later, Károlyi wrote in his memoirs that Beneš did not protest against issuing a loan to Budapest, which presumably proved that Prague was not truly opposed to Horthy's regime.⁹¹

However, when the UK Labour Party (which had led the international campaign against the 'white terror' in Hungary in 1920) formed the cabinet in January 1924, the Hungarian dissidents were once again filled with hope: perhaps the proposed international loan could still be used as a way to bring down the counter-revolutionary regime. On 1 February, the influential socialist Gyula Peidl told the official Czechoslovak newspaper *Prager Presse* that he was planning to hold talks with Ramsay MacDonald's cabinet about reversing the counter-revolution and allowing the exiles to return.⁹² Thanks to mediation by Czechoslovak diplomats, a Hungarian leftist delegation soon arrived in London (Garami and Peidl from the MSZDP, and Rusztem Vámbéry from the Kossuth Party). The democrats insisted on the need to restore universal secret suffrage in Hungary, revoke the *Numerus Clausus Act* that limited the admission of Jews to universities, and ensure civic liberties.⁹³ Károlyi and Jászi made similar suggestions to MacDonald in the summer of 1924. Nonetheless, the wishes of both delegations were largely ignored.⁹⁴

On 14 March 1924, Hungary and the Little Entente members signed two protocols in Geneva, confirming their acceptance of the Trianon terms, pledging to respect their mutual sovereignty and territo-

rial integrity and not to interfere in each other's internal affairs. Based on these agreements, the Little Entente states agreed to an international loan of 250 million gold korunas for Hungary; Budapest received the first installment in summer 1924. Although Bethlen reassured the Hungarian parliament that the terms of the loan did not contain any internal policy stipulations, he still unexpectedly promised democratic reforms.⁹⁵ Soon the Horthyist internment camps were dissolved, and the 'least important criminals' among the exiles were allowed to return and granted an amnesty.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, this limited democratisation could not satisfy the leftist and liberal circles, which started to regret counting not only on Prague, but also on London. After the anti-Horthyist oppositionists found themselves unable to gain reliable support over the course of the loan negotiations either in Czechoslovakia or in Labour-led Britain, they focused their hopes on France.⁹⁷

A great opportunity to test the opposition's pro-French orientation came in 1926, when it was uncovered that several of the top Horthyist officials were involved in counterfeiting French francs and Czechoslovak korunas.⁹⁸ The ČSR tried to blow out of proportion the 'counterfeiters affair' in the media and at various political forums. In June 1926, Beneš admitted to his Czech colleagues that he considered the talks that followed the discovery of the counterfeiting operation a political success.⁹⁹ Indeed, Bethlen almost resigned under the burden of evidence.¹⁰⁰ As reported to Budapest by the Hungarian envoy in Paris, Baron Frigyes Korányi, 'the Little Entente, the Second International, and the League for Human Rights, together with certain international Jewish circles, are doing their best to discredit the current regime in the eyes of the whole world and to install a Károlyi-style republic in Hungary.'¹⁰¹

In January 1926, Garami arrived in Paris together with another important MSZDP member, József Diner-Dénes. During their visit to the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, both politicians tried to persuade the Quai d'Orsay officials to take harsh measures against Budapest in order to bring a new, 'unstained' government into power. This new cabinet, as they saw it, had to be led by János Hadik, who had already been suggested for the role in 1921. According to Garami and Diner-Dénes, Hadik's cabinet, although composed of legitimists, would immediately introduce a universal secret ballot. Furthermore, the government of Hadik would include proponents of a reconciliation with the Czechs and the Serbs. Diner-Dénes added that since Beneš had a good grasp of Hungarian internal policy, the ČSR could be very useful

in putting pressure on the Horthy regime.¹⁰² However, the intrigues of the Magyar émigrés did not lead to Bethlen's resignation. In August 1926 Garami, distraught by this new failure, informed the Hungarian envoy in Paris of his desire to return to Budapest and participate in the work of the parliament.¹⁰³ The December 1926 elections in Hungary proved that the influence of the democratic opposition had diminished: their number of seats fell, while that of the Unified Party rose to 170.¹⁰⁴

The period 1926–1928 saw a significant improvement in the international standing of Horthy's regime. After the League of Nations lifted the financial and military restrictions imposed on Hungary, Budapest signed friendship treaties with Rome, Ankara, Warsaw, and Sofia and launched a so-called 'active diplomacy'. Bethlen managed to ameliorate his relations not only with Great Britain, but also with France and even the ČSR. The strengthening of Horthy's regime pushed the émigrés to change their tactics. Garami and Buchinger – the leaders of the international branch of the MSZDP – sent out feelers to Budapest, hoping to arrange a compromise for the exiles' return to Hungary. This initiative was apparently supported by the ČSR. In reaction to the new position of the MSZDP, which had started to insist more actively on a revision of the Trianon peace terms, the influential Czech newspaper *Národní politika* wrote on 8 August 1929 that Prague's leftist sympathies remained unchanged: 'It is in our best interest to have Garami or Jászi rule in Hungary instead of Bethlen'.¹⁰⁵ Bethlen's government seriously considered the international potential of the MSZDP and in September 1929 decided to lift criminal charges against important social democrats.¹⁰⁶ As a result, the ten-year exile of several leading members of the MSZDP finally came to an end: in November 1929, Garami and Buchinger safely returned to Hungary. As a proof of the new relationship format between the government and its opponents, Bethlen temporarily recognized the need for a 'democratisation' and agreed to local elections based on a secret ballot.¹⁰⁷ At the same time, as the Hungarian democratic core abroad melted away, Horthy's regime reached the peak of its stability.

The economic crisis and the renaissance of secret collaboration between the Hungarian opposition and Czechoslovakia (1930–32)

Several months after the Wall Street crash of October 1929, the global recession reached Europe. The Great Depression disrupted international trade and finance and threatened not only to ruin the shaky Hungarian economy, but to undermine the power of the Horthy-Bethlen tandem. Conscious of the scale of the upcoming stagnation, Jászi (who had been living in the U.S. since 1924) wrote to Vámbéry on 12 November 1929, 'the Hungarian counter-revolution may turn into chaos... The October programme is more timely today than it was in 1918.'¹⁰⁸

Jászi's forecast was quite correct. As the prices for agricultural produce (which constituted the main Hungarian export) fell rapidly and foreign investment dried up, the Horthyist economy found itself in deep crisis. This was a perfect moment for a new mobilisation of the democratic opposition. In 1930, the social democrats annulled one of the compromise points of the 1921 Bethlen-Peyer Pact, which prohibited public protests, and organised one of the largest manifestations of the interwar period: on 1 September 1930, circa 100 thousand people gathered in protest on the streets of Budapest.¹⁰⁹ After the demonstration, Bethlen became convinced that the ČSR had been instigating the opposition against Horthy's regime.¹¹⁰ The Hungarian envoy in Prague, Szilárd Masirevich, also concluded that Beneš – contrary to his proclaimed desire for a rapprochement with Hungary – was secretly plotting to 'hang a so-called democratic government around our neck'.¹¹¹ The Hungarian authorities suspected that Czechoslovakia's main objective was to suppress the revisionist campaign in Hungary and to 'democratise' Horthy's regime.¹¹² In the spring of 1931, international newspapers reported that Beneš had expressed a desire to see a more 'accommodating government' in Budapest – one that would not press for a revision of the Treaty of Trianon but rather endorse Garami's position on the future of the Hungaro-Czechoslovak relations.¹¹³

Whilst Hungary's economy managed to endure the Great Depression with difficulties, Prague did not miss the opportunity to apply pressure to the beleaguered counter-revolutionary regime. In June of 1930, the ČSR announced its intention to terminate the trade agreement in Hungary; this gave rise to a customs war between the two states, which began in 1931 and lasted for five years,¹¹⁴ catastrophically damaging the Hungarian economy. Moreover, Prague expanded its connections on the Hungarian political scene. The Czechoslovak

envoy in Budapest, Václav Pallier, named among open promoters of Hungaro-Czechoslovak reconciliation the social democrats, the liberal democrats, some legitimists (especially ex-Prime Minister István Friedrich and ex-Foreign Minister Gusztáv Gratz) and an economist Elemér Hantos.¹¹⁵

Unable to reckon with the economic crisis in Hungary, István Bethlen resigned on 19 August 1931. Bethlen's resignation was met with jubilation in the Czechoslovak press: almost all newspapers wrote that the only way Horthy's regime could deal with the crisis was to introduce a democratic form of government and reconcile with neighbouring countries.¹¹⁶ The new Prime Minister Count Gyula Károlyi was more amenable to a rapprochement with the ČSR, and even listed it as one of his foreign priorities in his first speech in the parliament.¹¹⁷ Károlyi hurriedly engaged into broad-scale diplomatic exchanges with the Czechs.¹¹⁸

The economic hardships (budgetary cuts, failing earnings, and growing unemployment) undermined the Horthyist stabilisation. The opposition political parties recruited masses of new members. The widest popularity was enjoyed not by the MSZDP but the Independent Smallholder's Party, which reportedly had 500 thousand followers.¹¹⁹ Fearing the explosion of public discontent, a state of emergency was declared in September 1931 in the country. This measure did not preclude the spread of the idea of the overthrow the Horthy regime by force if necessary. Most often calls for the use of weapons were heard from the nationalists and the Smallholders.¹²⁰

The Hungarian socialists and the legitimists also intensified their activity, but did not plan to overthrow Horthy through an armed insurrection. First of all, they strove to create a united front that would be able to push through democratic reforms.¹²¹ Additionally both the legitimists and the MSZDP demanded the government in Budapest to initiate a rapprochement with the ČSR.¹²² One of the first coordinated actions carried out by the new democratic anti-Horthyist front was to organise an international congress on Danubian cooperation in Budapest. The goal of the congress was to popularise the idea of removing the high customs barriers that existed between the smaller states in the Central Europe and to bring them closer together politically. Czechoslovak envoy Pallier was approached with the idea for such an event by representatives of the Kossuth Party Pál Auer and Vámbéry in late November 1931.¹²³ The conference – which took place in Budapest on

11–12 February 1932 under the auspices of the Pan-European Movement – was attended by delegates from Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Poland.¹²⁴

Throughout the winter of 1931–1932, the social democrats Garami and Buchinger, as well as the legitimists Gratz, Friedrich, and an economist Hantos made numerous trips to the ČSR.¹²⁵ While Gratz, together with Hantos, became the most visible propagandists of the economic cooperation among the Danube nations (especially among Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovakia), their first discussions with Beneš did not bear fruit. On 19 September 1931 in Geneva, Hantos handed to Beneš, Krofta and the French diplomat André François-Poncet a memorandum with a plan of economic rapprochement between Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Hantos assured his interlocutors that he acted in accordance with the influential Defence Minister, General Gyula Gömbös. As Hantos explained, the general, in case he would be appointed Prime Minister, would proceed to the creation of a ‘democratic parliament’ in Budapest (but only if the regional trade will be restored and the Czechoslovak-Hungarian frontier will be modified).¹²⁶ However, even though Hantos’ pronouncements were positively covered by almost all Czech newspapers,¹²⁷ he failed to gain much confidence in Prague. One member of the Czechoslovak intelligence service described him as a clever ‘political opportunist’ who did not have substantial backing in Hungary.¹²⁸

What was probably more important is that the general Gömbös, a well-known chauvinist, could hardly inspire the Czechoslovaks as a negotiating partner. However, as Gömbös’ position was reinforced by the resignation of Bethlen, the prospects of collaborating with him needed examination. In 1931, the Czechoslovak government learned with satisfaction that Gömbös consented to the reduction of the governmental financial aid to the Magyar parties in Slovakia and even prompted the dismissal of its leaders (such as OKSZP President Géza Szüllő).¹²⁹ Moreover, Gömbös, like Beneš, was an ardent opponent of the Habsburg restoration and, apparently considered the economic cooperation among Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovakia as ‘natural’.¹³⁰

When Gratz went to see Beneš in Prague on 12 December 1931 (following a trip to Paris), the results of discussion were limited. The Czech leader rejected the project of the Upper Danube ‘triangle’ of Vienna-Budapest-Prague, stating that he preferred the rapprochement that included the five regional states: the Little Entente members

plus Austria and Hungary. Once such a union is realised, Beneš said, the revision of Hungary's frontiers could be discussed.¹³¹

In the meantime, Prague maintained more cordial relations with its old left-wing partners. Among their exchanges, the case recorded in most detail is that of Garami's visit to Prague in early December 1931, followed by one to Paris. The central topic of his talks with Beneš was a plan of democratisation of Horthy's regime. Garami hoped – just like he did in 1926 – that with French and Czechoslovak help he would be able to force Horthy to approve a transitional government, which was to be led by Hadik. János Hadik had pledged that if he was appointed Prime Minister, he would reform the counter-revolutionary regime and build stronger economic and political ties with the ČSR. Beneš approved of the plan. Garami also reassured him that the new government would dissolve paramilitary organisations and pursue a demilitarisation of Hungary. However, in order to make this 'peaceful revolution' a reality (Garami insisted that Horthy would not leave 'without spilling blood', so he 'had to stay'), Hadik's cabinet would require the funds necessary to lift Hungary out of the financial crisis.¹³² On 21 December 1931, Garami, accompanied by the French socialist Léon Blum, were received by Prime Minister Aristide Briand who promised he would take the same position towards the Garami-Hadik plan as Beneš.¹³³

The conspiratorial activities of the Hungarian opposition and their relations with the Czechoslovak Republic did not go unnoticed by the Budapest government. On 4 February 1932, Gyula Károlyi said in Parliament that he had no objections to the foreign travels of Friedrich and Gratz, but did not support them.¹³⁴ Nevertheless in practice, while the foreign activities of Gratz were indeed tolerated, the Friedrich audience with Beneš cooled down the Czechophile sentiments in the Unified Party circles.¹³⁵ As one party member confessed to the Czechs later that Friedrich's meeting with Beneš might be compared with the potential reception in Budapest of the Czechoslovak general Radola Gajda,¹³⁶ who was accused in 1931 of preparing a putsch.

By spring 1932 it had become clear that most of the initiatives that had been proposed by the advocates of democratisation in Hungary had failed: both the Danubian integration project and that of a transitional government of Hadik were not realised. Although Prague maintained its contacts with the MSZDP and the legitimists, the recent reconciliation between the left and right branches of the anti-Horthyist

opposition was bursting at its seams. In order to clarify the situation in Hungary, the Czech journalist Hubert Ripka – a trusted associate of the Hrad – made a visit to Budapest from 30 April–2 May 1932. He met with both dissident politicians and members of the Unified Party. In his report Ripka concluded that 'the militant spirit of the opposition has dwindled' and that a fall of the regime seemed unlikely. 'A revolutionary coup is hardly imaginable', stated Ripka, adding that the Hungarian *frondeurs* placed excessive hopes in Beneš.¹³⁷

It seems that Prague abstained from further involvement into the struggle among different political groups in Hungary. Perhaps Hrad leaders viewed their old left-wing partners too weak, perhaps the personality of right-wing leaders aroused distrust. In any case, according to Hungarian Foreign Ministry data, the ČSR began to cut its financial aid to the 'parasitic Magyar exiles' starting in May 1932, while visits of non-governmental Hungarian politicians to Prague became ever more rare.¹³⁸ It looks quite credible that Prague once again preferred to come in terms with the official Budapest, sacrificing the interests of the Hungarian democrats.

It could be speculated that the two governments – in Prague and Budapest – simultaneously agreed to cut their contacts with the opposition movements across their common frontier. Not only did Beneš refrain from further interference into Hungarian politics but also the Károlyi cabinet calmed down the Magyar opposition in Slovakia.¹³⁹

Contemporaneously with the diminution of assistance of each other's opposition circles, Hungary and ČSR were steadily improving their economic relations. A symptom of this was the fact that the ČSR and Hungary signed a compensation trade agreement.¹⁴⁰ On 23 August, giving a press conference, Prime Minister Károlyi presumptuously predicted that this freshly signed agreement 'broke the ice' between Hungary and Czechoslovakia and constituted a first step towards restoring the normal trade relations between them.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, the ice was not broken on the Danube, and no significant revival of mutual trade happened. Facing failures in his foreign and internal politics, Károlyi resigned in September 1932, leaving the office to the general Gömbös. The new PM strengthened the regent's rule, overcame the acute crisis of the counter-revolutionary regime, and annulled the state of emergency. During the Gömbös era (1932–1936), collaboration between the Hungary's democratic opposition and Prague greatly diminished.

The convoluted and asymmetrical relations that were established between Hungarian democratic circles and the ČSR in 1919 can create an impression that the opposition naively hoped for Prague's altruistic assistance against the regime of Miklós Horthy. Nonetheless, faith in Czechoslovak democratic principles was not universal among the Hungarian opposition: seeing the oppression of the Magyar minority in Slovakia, they suspected that behind Prague's grand words of civic liberties and people's rule stood the strategic and economic interests of the ČSR. Correspondence, diaries, and memoirs written by the Magyar émigrés demonstrate that whenever Prague hesitated to show full support of the Hungarian democratic project, the exiles would take it as a sign that Beneš and Bethlen were secretly colluding behind the democrats' backs. Their opponents, the followers of Horthy, also doubted Prague's desire to install a democracy in Hungary – and so did a number of independent observers. For instance, as the fake franc scandal unfolded in January 1926, the Foreign Office official Miles Lampson wrote that 'the Little Entente was undoubtedly out for Bethlen's blood': the military bloc was unwilling to see a strong personality at the head of the Hungarian government, since that would interfere with the Little Entente's plans to spread chaos in Hungary. Lampson concluded that all talk of democratisation in Hungary was nothing more than an 'ideal mischievous proposal', which Prague never meant sincerely.¹⁴² Finally, the opponents of Horthy could not consider the democratisation as a panacea for all Hungarian troubles. For example, seeing the scale of Great Depression in his country, Mihály Károlyi wrote to Jászi in July 1932 that "it does not matter if Hungary is ruled by Horthy, Otto or a republican regime like in Czechoslovakia", because a fairer political system would not assure much better economic situation".¹⁴³

After the demise of Bethlen in 1931, Prague seemed to abandon its intensive cooperation with the Hungarian democratic movements for the sake of winning the goodwill of official Budapest. In any case, Hrad had no serious partner among its old anti-Horthyist acquaintances: while the leftist emigration lost much of its previous influence, its home wing was not powerful either. Another of the opposition groups – the legitimists, such as Friedrich or Gratz, also possessed no real influence in Hungary. On the contrary, the new Prime Minister Gömbös, proved to be a popular politician and showed some inclination towards cooperation with Prague. But the following years proved

that Gömbös was more disposed towards collaboration with Berlin and Rome.

NOTES

This article was translated from the Russian by Alice Orlova

¹ *Böhm Vilmos. Válogatott politikai levelei. 1914–1949*, eds. Éva Szabó, and László Szűcs (Budapest: Napvilág, 1997), 92.

² *Károlyi Mihály levelezése. IV, B kötet (1940–1944)*, eds. Tibor Hajdu and György Litván (Budapest: Napvilág, 2015), 705.

³ One of the most radical conceptualizations of this approach was developed by Rogers Brubaker who proposed a ‘triadic nexus’ model comprised from three actors (categories): ‘national minority’, ‘nationalising state’, and ‘external national homeland.’ See Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Re-framed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4.

⁴ See Juraj Kramer, *Iredenta a separatizmus v slovenskej politike* (Bratislava: Slovenské vydavateľstvo politickej literatúry, 1957), and Béla Angyal, *Érdekvédelem és önszerveződés. Fejezetek a csehszlovákiai magyar pártpolitika történetéből 1918–1938* (Galánta–Dunaszerdahely: Lilium Aurum, 2002).

⁵ Connections between the Octobrists and Prague in 1919–1923 have received the most attention. See, László Szarka, “Dunai konföderáció. Egy álom realitása. Jászi Oszkár csehszlovákiai kapcsolatai és a magyar kisebbségi kérdés 1919–1939,” *Századvég* 1 (1986): 52–66; György Litván, *A Twentieth Century Prophet: Oscar Jászi (1875–1957)* (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2006); György Litván, “Jászi’s Viennese Years: Building Contacts with the Democratic Left in the Successor States,” *Hungarian Studies Review* 18, no. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 1991): 43–50. A special mention should be given to Zsuzsa L. Nagy’s study of the liberal opposition in Hungary during the 1920s. See, Zsuzsa L. Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke. A liberlális polgári pártok. 1919–1931* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1980).

⁶ The investigation of relations between Budapest and the Magyar parties in Czechoslovakia face the same problem. The archives of the Magyar parties are unknown, and the historians mainly consult the Budapest documentation gathered by the Hungarian state officials (see: *Dokumentumok az Országos Keresztényszocialista párt történetéhez. 1919–1936*, ed. Angyal Béla (Dunaszerdahely: Lilium Aurum, 2004), and the reports of the Czechoslovak special services, see: *Maďarské politické strany (Krajinská kresťansko-socialistická strana, Maďarská národná strana) na Slovensku v rokoch 1929–*

1936. *Dokumenty*, eds. Mária Ďurková, Soňa Gabzdilová, and Milan Olejník (Košice: Spoločenskovedný ústav SAV, 2012).

⁷ *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky*. T. A/2 (*Československo na pařížské mírové konferenci. 1918–1920*). Č. 2 (*červen 1919– červenec 1920*), ed. Jindřich Dejemek (Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 2011), 83.

⁸ For example, in February 1930 the Hungarian social-democrat Illés Mónus contacted his exiled in Vienna comrade Vilmos Böhm mentioning ‘very important for us financial questions.’ Mónus explained that this issue shall be discussed with Böhm by their fellow Manó Buchinger upon his visit to the Czechoslovak social-democrats. See, *Böhm Vilmos. Válogatott politikai levelei*, 124.

⁹ Naturally, Garami and the Czech social democrats refuted this claim (“Peníze čs. sociální demokracie do Pešti?,” *Lidové noviny*, 7 December 1930, 4).

¹⁰ *Böhm Vilmos. Válogatott politikai levelei*, 91–92.

¹¹ Hugo Vavrečka, “Madarsko. Poměry,” 24 November 1924, karton 37, fond ZU Budapest, Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věci České republiky (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, hereafter AMZV ČR).

¹² Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században* (Budapest: Osiris, 2010), 222–235.

¹³ György Litván, “Irányzatok és viták a bécsi magyar emigrációban,” *História*, 11, 6 (1989): 25–30.

¹⁴ Henrietta Kiss, “Páneurópa-szekció Magyarországon (1926–1932),” Part 1 and 2, *Valóság* 4–5, 46 (2003).

¹⁵ Bela Bodo, “Hungarian Aristocracy and the White Terror,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 4/45 (2010): 704.

¹⁶ *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky*. T. A/2/2, 255.

¹⁷ Juraj Benko, “Maďarská komunistická emigrácia a jej posobenie v rokoch 1919–1921,” *Historický časopis*, 63, 4 (2015): 605–628.

¹⁸ Бела Й. Желицки, and Чилла Б. Желицки, *Венгерские эмиграционные волны и эмигранты. Сер. XIX-конец 50-х годов XX века* (Москва: Индрик, 2012), 189–211. The same motive – creating Czechophile Russian elite – underlay Prague’s decision to offer asylum to Russian exiles after the Civil War. See, Т.Г. Масарик и ‘Русская акция’ Чехословацкого правительства: К 150-летию со дня рождения Т.Г. Масарика. По материалам международной научной конференции. Москва: 2005.

¹⁹ Szarka, “Dunai konföderáció,” 52–66.

²⁰ Varga Lajos, *Garami Ernő. Politikai életrajz* (Budapest: Napvilág, 1996), 301.

²¹ Varga, *Garami Ernő*, 342–343. The Horthyist circles also believed in the economic need for a rapprochement with the ČSR. But the most ardent champions of the idea for the Danubian reconciliation, especially in the form of a Vienna-Budapest-Prague triangle, were the legitimist politicians like Gusztáv Gratz and Tibor Eckhardt, or the economist Elemér Halmos. The Danubian triangle concept was intensively discussed in the years of the Great Depression.

²² Romsics, *Magyarország története*, 226–227.

²³ Zsuzsa Nagy, 86.

²⁴ Тибор Хайду, “Съезд объединенной партии и принципиальные проблемы рабочей партии в Венгерской Советской Республике,” *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 15 (1969), 4.

²⁵ Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 57.

²⁶ As reported by the newspaper *Pesti Hírlap*. See, Vacláv Pallier, “Zpráva běžna č.10,” Budapest, 16 April 1932, karton 183, fond Edvard Beneš 1, Archiv Akademie věd České republiky (Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic; hereafter AAV ČR).

²⁷ Data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Hungary. See, Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 72.

²⁸ *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky v roce 1937*. T. A/19/1 (*leden – červenec 1937*), ed. Jindřich Dejemek (Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 2007), 257.

²⁹ Zsuzsa Nagy, 84.

³⁰ Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 80–83.

³¹ Litván, *A Twentieth Century Prophet: Oscar Jászi*, 203.

³² “Dr. Fényes Samuel – měsíčník Uj magyarok,” Vienna, 7 October 1932, karton 70, fond KPP. T, AKP ČR.

³³ Pallier to Beneš, copy, Budapest, 5 December 1931, karton 70, fond Kanceláře Prezidenta Republiky. Tajné (the fond of the Office of the President of the Czech Republic. Classified; hereafter KPP. T), Archiv Kanceláře Prezidenta České republiky (the Archives of the Office of the President of the Czech Republic; hereafter AKP ČR). Two weeks after this request *Pesti Napló* editor Rudolf Szántó was invited to meet Beneš in Prague to discuss the financial aid, and the newspaper published his interviews with Beneš and another ČSR Minister Juraj Slávik. The sensational character of these interviews and their deep effect on the Hungarian public was highlighted by the press analysts at the French Foreign Ministry. See, *Bulletin périodique de la presse hongroise*. No 138, 1–2.

³⁴ *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky*. T. A/2 (*Československo na pařížské mírové konferenci. 1918–1920*). Sv. 2 (*červen 1919–červenec 1920*), ed. Jindřich Dejemek. (Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 2011), 52.

³⁵ Přemysl Šamal, a report on the conversation with Gusztáv Gratz, Prague, 24 July 1932, karton 70, fond KPP. T, AKP ČR.

³⁶ Ates Uslu, “Nous sommes les amis de l’Entente. Le comte Mihály Károlyi dans les années de la Grande Guerre,” *Öt Kontinens* 5 (2007): 263–287.

³⁷ Manó Buchinger, *Tanúvallomás. Az Októberi forradalom tragédiája* (Budapest: Népszava, 1936), 79–90.

³⁸ Tibor Hajdu, *Ki volt Károlyi Mihály* (Budapest: Napvilág, 2012), 128–130; Mihály Károlyi, *Hit, illúziók nélkül* (Budapest: Magvető, 1978), 208; *Jászi Oszkár naplója*, ed. György Litván (Budapest: MTA TTI, 2001), 67.

³⁹ Milan Hodža headed the Czechoslovak mission at Budapest in November 1918–March 1919.

⁴⁰ Rezső Krejcsi, Unnamed document. Report on a meeting with the ČSR Prime Minister Vlastimil Tusar (August 1919), cs. 1/1919, 2 tétel, fond K 96, Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (National Archives of Hungary; hereafter MNL OL)

⁴¹ *Francia diplomáciai iratok a Kárpát-medence történetéről, Vol. 2* (1919–1920), eds. Magda Ádám and Mária Ormos (Budapest: Akadémiai, 2004), 43–44; *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky. T. A/2/2*, 63.

⁴² *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky. T. A/2/2*, 77–78, 83, 89–90. The participation of the democrats in the Friedrich government was not approved by all Octobrists. In early August 1919, Jászi tried to persuade Garami and other moderate socialists to keep distance from the ‘clerical-militarist-royalist’ government in Budapest. See: Litván, *A Twentieth Century Prophet: Oscar Jászi*, 196.

⁴³ *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky. T. A/2/2*, 83.

⁴⁴ Robert Pejša, *Vztahy Československa a Maďarska v letech 1918-1939* (Praha: Karolinum, 2017), 173.

⁴⁵ Zsuzsa Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 11–13.

⁴⁶ *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky. T. A/2/2*, 90.

⁴⁷ *Jászi Oszkár naplója*, 67–68; *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei*, ed. György Litván (Budapest: Magvető, 1991), 230–231. In October 1919, the Magyar left-wing exile agreed on the formation of the liberal-democratic coalition government for Hungary under the leadership of István Bárcza, Lovászi and Garami. Jászi obtained the promise of support for this government from the Austrian Chancellor Karl Renner. See: Litván, *A Twentieth Century Prophet: Oscar Jászi*, 201.

⁴⁸ *Francia diplomáciai iratok*, K. 2, 108–109; on 27 September 1919, Garami sent a letter to the French socialist Jean Longuet, in which he also suggested the idea of a foreign intervention in Hungary and a forced removal of Friedrich from power in order to ‘protect the democracy and the

republic in Hungary'. See, Sándor Vadász, "Garami Ernő publikálatlan levele Jean Longuethoz a demokratikus intervenció ügyében (1919 szeptember 27)," *Történelmi szemle*, 1 (1979): 101–104.

⁴⁹ Milan Hodza, "Referat z Madarska," 17 December 1919, fond Edvard Beneš 1, AAV ČR.

⁵⁰ *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky*. T. A/2/2, 207–209.

⁵¹ *Jászi Oszkár naplója*, 97–98; Litván, *A Twentieth Century Prophet: Oscar Jászi*, 209–210.

⁵² Желицки, Желицки, *Венгерские эмиграционные волны*, 195–96.

⁵³ *Jászi Oszkár naplója*, 117.

⁵⁴ *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky*. T. A/3 (*Československá zahraniční politika a vznik Malé dohody. 1920–1921*). Č. 1 (4. červen 1920–31. květen 1921), ed. Jindřich Dejmek (Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 2004), 205–206.

⁵⁵ *Jászi Oszkár naplója*, 135, 142.

⁵⁶ Litván, *A Twentieth Century Prophet: Oscar Jászi*, 222–223.

⁵⁷ In February 1921, the ČSR Foreign Minister Beneš declared in parliament that Prague wished to see a republic installed in Hungary; in March 1921, he repeated this statement to the Hungarian Prime Minister, Pál Teleki. See, Lajos Geceşenyi, and Péter Sipos, "Gratz Gusztáv emlékiratai," *Történelmi szemle* 3–4 (2000): 336–337; "Bruck a/d Leitha, Feljegyzés. II ülés," 15 March 1921, Filmtár. 808. Res.Pol. 1921. tet. 4, MNL OL.

⁵⁸ *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei*, 257.

⁵⁹ *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky*. T. A/3/2, 595. In April 1921, the ČSR *chargé* in Budapest, Lejhanec, recommended to Prague to soften its attitude on the governance type in Hungary. The diplomat wrote that even if foreign states would have managed to exert more influence on Hungarian internal policy, it would be difficult to introduce 'real republican democracy' at Budapest (Václav Lejhanec. "Demise mad.ministra věci zahraničních Dr. Gratzé", Budapest, 9 April 1921, karton 37, fond ZU Budapešt, AMZV ČR). However, a desire to have a republic in Hungary was still alive in Prague. At least until the next autumn, the ČSR intentionally avoided calling Hungary 'a kingdom' ("Madarsko – otázka vládního režimu", 2 November 1922, karton 37, fond ZU Budapešt, AMZV ČR).

⁶⁰ *Jászi Oszkár naplója*, 225–228.

⁶¹ No 2525/21, 29 October 1921, karton 175, fond EB 1, AAV ČR.

⁶² *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky*. T. A/3 (*Československá zahraniční politika a vznik Malé dohody. 1920–1921*). Č. 2 (1. červen – 31. prosinec 1921), ed. Jindřich Dejmek. (Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 2004), 266–267.

⁶³ Beneš to London. No 6640/204. 29 October 1921, karton 175, fond EB 1, AAV ČR; British Foreign Office analysts could not agree on the veracity of this information. While it was considered true in the British mis-

sion in Budapest, the British Commercial Secretary in Prague, Bruce Lockhart, found it amusing: he could not imagine Masaryk, the university professor, ‘plotting in the recesses of his library’. See, Dragan Bakić, *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe: Foreign Policy and Security Challenges* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 41.

⁶⁴ Feistmantel to the Czechoslovak MFA, Budapest, 5 November 1921, karton 175, fond EB 1, AAV ČR.

⁶⁵ Kamil Krofta, *Diplomatický deník. 1919–1922* (Praha: Karolinum, 2009), 236–237.

⁶⁶ *Jászi Oszkár naplója*, 253.

⁶⁷ *Jászi Oszkár naplója*, 282.

⁶⁸ Krofta, *Diplomatický deník*, 259.

⁶⁹ *Jászi Oszkár naplója*, 263–264; Litván, *A Twentieth Century Prophet: Oscar Jászi*, 239. In spite of the cooling off between the Magyar émigrés and Prague, their collaboration was not over, and Jászi remained a Czech ‘trusted person’. For example, the Czech authorities conditioned the removal of the Slovak ban of the *Bécsi Magyar Újság* by the appointment of Jászi at the head of its editorial board (Litván, *A Twentieth Century Prophet: Oscar Jászi*, 227). Moreover, as the newspaper continued to struggle with financial difficulties, Beneš granted a loan to Jászi to keep the newspaper alive (*Jászi Oszkár naplója*, 349, 353). Later, as Jászi’s financial situation in Vienna became more difficult, Masaryk proposed to allow the Hungarian newspaper *Világ*, where Jászi anonymously published his articles, to be distributed in Slovakia. Also, Beneš supported Jászi’s application for an American visa. Even Jászi’s move to the Oberlin College, Ohio in 1925, where he taught for the rest of his life, could be related to the Czech assistance. The head of the Hungarian mission in Washington reported to Budapest that this appointment was negotiated by an Oberlin professor of Czech descent who was a close acquaintance of Masaryk (Litván, *A Twentieth Century Prophet: Oscar Jászi*, 307).

⁷⁰ *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky*, T. A/3/2, 49–53.

⁷¹ *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky*, T. A/3/2, 90–91.

⁷² *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky*, T. A/3/2, 148.

⁷³ Maria Ormos, *Magyarország a két világháború korában, 1914–1945* (Debrecen: Csokonai, 1998), 100–101.

⁷⁴ Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 52–55.

⁷⁵ Ernst Oltó, “Beneš nyilatkozik a magyar demokrácia jövőjéről. Beszélgetés a csehszlovák miniszterelnökkel,” *Bécsi Magyar Újság*. 11 June 1922, 1.

⁷⁶ Miklós Lojkó, *Meddling in Middle Europe. Britain and the “lands between”. 1919–1925* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2005), 167–168.

⁷⁷ Zsuzsanna Boros and Dániel Szabó, *Parlamentarizmus Magyaror-*

szágon (1867–1944): parlament, pártok, választások (Budapest: ELTE, 2014), 236–237; Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 91.

⁷⁸ Jászi Oszkár naplója, 291.

⁷⁹ Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 58.

⁸⁰ Lojkó, *Meddling in Middle Europe*, 168.

⁸¹ Árpád Hornyák, *Hungarian-Yugoslav diplomatic relations. 1918–1927* (East European Monographs: New York, 2013), 166.

⁸² Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 113.

⁸³ Hugo Vavrečka, “Otázka maď.emigrantu v exposé ministra Beneš,” Budapest, 6 November 1923, karton 177, fond EB 1, AAV ČR.

⁸⁴ “Hlášení leg.rady Dr. Jar. Nováka,” karton 177, fond EB 1, AAV ČR.

⁸⁵ Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 102.

⁸⁶ “Protokol o schuzce Dr. Beneše s Bethlenem a Daruváry ve dne 6 září 1923,” karton 177, fond EB 1, AAV ČR; Memo “A miniszterelnök és külügyminiszter uraknak Benešsel folytatott beszélgetése,” Geneva, 6 September 1923, Cs. 38, 1923, tétel 7/4, fond K 96, MNL OL.

⁸⁷ “Protokol o schuzce Dr. Beneše s Bethlenem a Daruváry ve dne 9 září 1923,” karton 177, fond EB 1, AAV ČR; Memo “A miniszterelnök és külügyminiszter uraknak Benešsel folytatott második beszélgetése,” Geneva, 9 September 1923, cs. 38, 1923, tétel 7/4, fond K 96, MNL OL.

⁸⁸ Quoted from Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 114.

⁸⁹ From letters written by Lajos Bíró (1 February 1924) and Pál Szende (2 October 1923) to Oszkár Jászi. Quoted from Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 113–114.

⁹⁰ From a letter written by Mihály Károlyi to Oszkár Jászi (18 January 1924). Quoted from Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 114.

⁹¹ Károlyi, *Hit, illúziók nélkül*, 250–251.

⁹² Magyar Távirati Iroda (The Hungarian Telegraph Agency). Napi hírek (Daily news). 1924.02.10, 21–22.

⁹³ Ignác Romsics, *Bethlen István. Politikai életrajz* (Budapest: Osiris, 2005), 234–235.

⁹⁴ Jindřich Dejmek, *Nenaplněné naděje: politické a diplomatické vztahy Československa a Velké Británie od zrodu První republiky po konferenci v Mnichově (1918–1938)* (Praha: Karolinum, 2003), 101.

⁹⁵ Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 118.

⁹⁶ Romsics, *Bethlen István*, 236.

⁹⁷ Nagy, *Bethlen liberlális ellenzéke*, 127.

⁹⁸ As stated by Edvard Beneš, the total damage caused by the counterfeiter to the Czechoslovak economy in 1921–1922 amounted to 6 million korunas; a further 25 million in fake notes were confiscated by border police. See, *Edvard Beneš, Cirkulární telegramy. 1920–1935*, ed. Jindřich Dejmek (Praha: Společnost Edvarda Beneše, 2002), 106.

⁹⁹ *Edvard Beneš, Cirkulární telegramy*, 114–115.

¹⁰⁰ *Horthy Miklós titkos iratai*, eds. Miklós Szinai and László Szücs (Budapest: Kossuth, 1962), 72–77.

¹⁰¹ Quoted from Nagy, *Bethlen liberális ellenzéke*, 160. Mihály Károlyi indeed used his connections with the Foreign Ministry of France. The former President of Hungary petitioned the French to threaten Horthy and his Prime Minister with a lawsuit unless they agreed to introduce universal secret male suffrage and create a coalition cabinet in cooperation with the opposition (*Francia diplomáciai iratok a Kárpát-medence történetéről*. K. IV (1922–1927), eds. Magda Ádám and Mária Ormos (Budapest: Gondolat, 2010), 255–257).

¹⁰² *Francia diplomáciai iratok*. K. IV, 269–270.

¹⁰³ Romsics, *Bethlen István*, 249.

¹⁰⁴ Nagy, *Bethlen liberális ellenzéke*, 179.

¹⁰⁵ Magyar Távirati Iroda. Napi hírek, 3 August 1929.

¹⁰⁶ Minisztertanácsnak Jegyzőkönyve, No 1, 27 September 1929. Fond Miniszterelnökség, K. 27, MNL OL.

¹⁰⁷ Romsics, *Bethlen István*, 296–297.

¹⁰⁸ *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei*, 315.

¹⁰⁹ Ormos, *Magyarország a két világháború korában*, 130.

¹¹⁰ *Iratok az ellenforradalom történetéhez*. K. IV (*A magyar ellenforradalmi rendszer külpolitikája. 1927. 1 január–1931. 24 augusztus*), ed. Elek Karsai (Budapest: Kossuth, 1967), 443–447.

¹¹¹ Szilárd Masirevich, Pol. jelentés No 144/1930 “Beneš-féle laphangok Magyarországról,” 27 May 1930, cs. 41, 1930, tétel 7/7, k. 96, MNL OL.

¹¹² Magda Ádám, “A magyar-csehszlovák államközi kapcsolatok a két világháború között,” in László Szarka, ed., *Szomszédok hármastükörben. A magyar-csehszlovák történész vegyesbizottság negyedszázada (1959–1984)* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1987), 247.

¹¹³ Magyar Távirati Iroda. Napi hírek, 19 March 1930.

¹¹⁴ Marta Romportlová, *ČSR a Madarsko. 1918–1938. Bezprostřední vývojová báze a průběh obchodně politických vztahů* (Brno: Univerzita J. A. Purkyně v Brně, 1986), 83–84.

¹¹⁵ Václav Pallier, “Zpráva běžná č.4,” Budapest, 16 January 1932, karton 183, fond EB 1, AAV ČR.

¹¹⁶ At least as claimed in the Czech press analysis at the French Foreign Ministry. See, *Bulletin périodique de la presse tchécoslovaque*. No 38 (6 juin–2 octobre 1931) (Ministère des Affaires étrangères (hereafter MAE), 1931).

¹¹⁷ *Képviselőházi napló, 1931. K. I* (Budapest: Ahtenaeum, 1931), 357.

¹¹⁸ Romportlová, *ČSR a Madarsko*, 85–86.

¹¹⁹ Václav Pallier, “Zpráva běžná č.10,” Budapest, 16 April 1932, karton 183, fond EB 1, AAV ČR.

¹²⁰ On 28 November 1931, the Hungarian police arrested a group of conspirators from the ultra-right-wing radicals who were preparing a putsch (*Bulletin périodique de la presse hongroise*. No 137 (1 novembre–17 décembre 1931) (MAE, 1932), 6). In the summer of 1932, foreign diplomats in Budapest commented that the position of Károlyi’s cabinet remained shaky, while the ‘desperate heads’ like the Defense Minister Gyula Gömbös and the Smallholder deputies Gáal and Tibor Eckhardt could venture to seize power by armed means (*Francia diplomáciai iratok*. K. V, 344–346.).

¹²¹ *Bulletin périodique de la presse hongroise*. No 138 (18 décembre 1931–6 février 1932) (MAE, 1932), 6.

¹²² *Bulletin périodique de la presse hongroise*. No 138, 2.

¹²³ Václav Pallier, “Sbližení s Madarskem. Snahy Auer-Vambery,” Budapest, 28 November 1931, karton 37, fond ZU Budapest, AMZV ČR.

¹²⁴ *Bulletin périodique de la presse hongroise*. No 139 (7 février–20 mars 1932) (MAE, 1932), 7; Václav Pallier, “Zpráva běžná č. 6,” Budapest, 18 February 1932, karton 183, fond EB 1, AAV ČR.

¹²⁵ “Összefoglaló politikai jelentés az 1932-ről,” cs. 46, 1932, tétel 7/1, K. 96, MNL OL. Elemér Hantos was an economic expert hired by the League of Nations. From the mid-1920s he had been actively popularizing the idea of the economic cooperation in Central Europe.

¹²⁶ Bohumila Ferenčuhová, “La Tchécoslovaquie et le plan Tardieu,” *Revue d’Europe centrale* 2 (5) 1997: 21.

¹²⁷ *Bulletin périodique de la presse tchécoslovaque*. No 39 (3 octobre–17 décembre 1931) (MAE, 1931), 5.

¹²⁸ “Informace. Hantoš Elemér,” 18 December 1931, karton 70, fond KPP. T, AKP ČR.

¹²⁹ Béla Angyal, *Érdekvédelem és önszerveződés. Fejezetek a csehszlovákiai magyar pártpolitika történetéből 1918–1938* (Dunaszerdahely: Lilium Aurum, 2002), 177.

¹³⁰ Marta Romportlová, and Zdeněk Sládek, “Integrační střeoevropský plán A. Tardieua a československá a madarská politika,” *Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty Brněnské univerzity* 25/26 (1978–1979): 89.

¹³¹ *Edvard Beneš, Cirkulární telegramy*, 180–181.

¹³² *Francia diplomáciai iratok*. K. V, 304–307; Catherine Horel, “La Hongrie et le plan Tardieu,” *Revue d’Europe centrale* 5, 2 (1997) : 73–85.

¹³³ Stefan Osuský, “Garami u Brianda,” 23 December 1931, karton 156, fond EB 1, AAV ČR.

¹³⁴ *Bulletin périodique de la presse hongroise*. No 139, 5.

¹³⁵ Václav Pallier, “Zpráva periodická č.1 za leden a únor 1932,” Budapest, 16 March 1932, karton 183, fond EB 1, AAV ČR.

¹³⁶ Hugo Ripka, "Informační zájezd do Pešti ve dnech 30 dubna až 2 května 1932," karton 183, fond EB 1, AAV ČR.

¹³⁷ Ripka, "Informační zájezd do Pešti." Among different opposition leaders in Budapest, Ripka found István Friedrich the most interesting person to cooperate with (Letter of István Friedrich, 22 May 1932, karton 183, fond EB 1, AAV ČR). However, Prague hesitated to favour the right radicals. When in July 1932, Friedrich and Gratz arrived to Prague, hoping to meet Masaryk and Beneš, they waited in vain for a couple of weeks. Finally Friedrich was granted audience at the Hrad on 23 July, where he told Chancellor Přemysl Šamal that his supporters were preparing a coup for the autumn of 1932. After the seizure of power, Friedrich promised to introduce general and secret vote (Přemysl Šamal, a report on the conversation with István Friedrich, Prague, 23 July 1932, karton 70, fond KPP. T, AKP ČR).

¹³⁸ "Összefoglaló politikai jelentés az 1932-ről."

¹³⁹ Czechoslovak intelligence reported in April 1932 that Hungary's Foreign Minister Lajos Walkó had warned the OKSZP long-standing leader Szüllő that there was no money in Budapest to finance the Magyar parties in Slovakia (*Maďarské politické strany*, 44–51). Another Czechoslovak report recorded the birth of an 'activist movement' within the OKSZP which aimed at replacing Szüllő as the party president by the young and moderate Count János Esterházy ("Blok maďarských opozičních stran na Slovensku," Prague, 7 April 1932, karton 19, fond ZU Budapešt, AMZV ČR). On 18 August 1932 Szüllő indeed resigned from the Presidency of the OKSZP.

¹⁴⁰ *Bulletin périodique de la presse tchécoslovaque*. No 43, 6.

¹⁴¹ Václav Pallier, "Zpráva period. č.4 za červenec a srpen 1932," Budapest, 5 September 1932, karton 183, fond EB 1, AAV ČR.

¹⁴² Quoted from Bakić, *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe*, 47.

¹⁴² *Károlyi Mihály levelezése*. IV, A kötet (1930–1940), eds. Tibor Hajdu and György Litván (Budapest: Napvilág, 2015), 134, 138.

**Historical Trauma and Multidirectional
Memory in the Vojvodina: László Végel's
Neoplanta, avagy az Igéret Földje and Anna
Friedrich's *Miért? Warum?***

Agatha Schwartz

Introduction

In this paper I offer a comparative reading of two Vojvodina-Hungarian novels, both published in recent years, from the point of view of their thematizing repressed historical trauma that affected the Vojvodina in the 20th century. I analyze how the two narratives propose a more inclusive form of collective memory. László Végel is an internationally known and widely translated Hungarian writer from the Vojvodina; Anna Friedrich is a Vojvodina-based Hungarian journalist with *Miért? Warum* being her first novel. *Neoplanta, avagy az Igéret földje: Városregény* (Neoplanta, or the promised land: Novel about a city, 2013) and *Miért? Warum? Egy jugoszláviai lágert túlélő magyar-német asszony története* (Why? The Story of a Hungarian-German woman who survived a Yugoslav camp, 2016), both published in Budapest, are certainly different regarding their literary style and narrative approach. What both novels have in common, however, is their interest in the question of cultural and historical memory of ethnicity-based and gender violence brought about with World War II to this long-established multiethnic and multilingual region — according to some scholars, “one of the most multiethnic and multilingual regions of Europe” (Bugarski) — that has seen many cultural and border shifts throughout history.¹ Both authors tackle the decade-long silence sur-

rounding interethnic and sexual violence committed against ethnic Hungarians and Germans (Swabians), a topic that has long been omitted from the country's (former Yugoslavia's and now Serbia's) official historiography about World War II. The two narratives, I will argue, propose what Michael Rothberg termed "multidirectional memory," a form of collective memory based on the "interaction of different historical memories," which Rothberg distinguishes from "competitive memory," i.e. a struggle over whose memory and whose pain are more worthy of remembering (3). Végel and Friedrich thus remind us of the fact that, particularly in ethnically diverse communities, and even more so in a region marked by centuries of cultural hybridization, memories (and I would add, identities), to use Gabriele Schwab's words, "are always already composites from dynamically interrelated and conflicted histories" (30). Opening up the space for multidirectional memory in a multicultural and hybrid community like the Vojvodina would constitute a necessary step in coming to terms with the "haunting legacies" (Schwab) of its not so distant past. The two novels, I argue, set an important direction in this regard as they both offer a "working through" of a still unresolved and hence haunting traumatic past.

László Végel was born in 1941 in Szenttamás/Srbobran (southern Bácska), and he studied at the University of Novi Sad (the capital of Vojvodina) and the University of Belgrade. Végel is thus a typical bilingual Vojvodina-Hungarian intellectual. During Tito's rule in Yugoslavia, Végel was one of the most prominent members of the Vojvodina-Hungarian avant-garde literary circle around the magazine *Új Symposion*. A prolific novelist, essay writer and playwright, he worked for many Yugoslav newspapers and magazines both in Hungarian (i.e. *Magyar Szó*) and Serbo-Croat (i.e. *Polja* in Novi Sad and *Politika* in Belgrade). He was awarded numerous prizes, including some of the most prestigious ones, such as the Kossuth Prize and the Gold medal for his overall work (veg.el.org/en/). Like other opposition intellectuals, during the Milošević-years,² he was subjected to political persecution and had to go into hiding. His works have been translated into Serbo-Croat, German, Dutch, English, Slovenian, and Albanian. He is considered a leading Central European intellectual.

Anna Friedrich was born in 1953 in Bezdán (northern Bácska) in the Vojvodina. She is a journalist, a psychologist (a graduate of the

University of Belgrade), and a writer. She lives between Bezdán, Novi Sad, and Budapest. She worked for the Hungarian-language newspapers *Magyar Szó* and *Dunatáj*, and also for Radio Zombor (that was abolished a couple of years ago). In her first book *Ez még nem történelem* (This is not yet history, 2006), she used the diary form under the motto “13 év Belgrádtól Hágáig” (13 years from Belgrade to The Hague) to document the events of the Milošević-reign that had led to the Yugoslav wars and the end of Yugoslavia, and how they affected the Vojvodina Hungarians.

Both authors tackle the necessity to create a form of collective memory in the Vojvodina rooted in multidirectional memory practices. According to Jan Assmann, communicative memory is the cultural memory kept in families and communities through oral transmission. The official cultural memory is marked by “figures of memory”: “events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)” (Assmann 129). In communist Yugoslavia cultural memory was defined along the discourse of “brotherhood and unity” and the constitution of a collective Yugoslav identity. Although the “brotherhood and unity” ideology certainly helped to bring about social cohesion, especially among the younger generation, it also hindered the “working through” of a traumatic past whose truths were undesired by the communist regime, even dangerous to openly talk about, and therefore not revealed until decades later. Végel’s and Friedrich’s novels both address the haunting of this repressed past. Their narratives can be considered an attempt to create a counter-narrative to the narrative of the dominant cultural memory and thus add elements toward the establishment of a multidirectional memory that would incorporate the hybrid cultural mosaic and its history in the Vojvodina.

Cultural hybridity, trauma, and haunting

The title of Végel’s novel implies a historical reference. The promised land refers to the history of Novi Sad when in 1748, the city’s numerous different ethnic groups (Germans, Hungarians, Serbs, Jews etc.) pulled together and collected the necessary money to buy from Empress Maria Theresa the title of “Free Imperial City” for the city she

named Neoplanta: “Let its name be Neoplanta and let all its people call it in their own language. May they live in peace and love, and may this multinational city be an example of the various nations’ peaceful cohabitation” (*Neoplanta*, back cover).³ (“Legyen a neve Neoplanta, és minden nép nevezze saját nyelvén. Éljenek békében, szeressék egymást, ez a soknemzetiségű város legyen példája a különböző nációk békés egymás mellett élésének.”) Végel’s novel demonstrates how this utopia of a peaceful multiethnic coexistence in Neoplanta/Neusatz/Újvidék/Novi Sad was not only destroyed in the 20th century but that its official historical memory has been constructed so as to erase certain chapters, particularly those pertaining to ethnic groups that have been virtually eradicated from the city’s once multicultural fabric. In contemporary Serbia, in the official cultural memory there is space for one gruesome episode of ethnic cleansing perpetuated by the occupying Hungarian forces in the entire Délvidék, in which 3,309 mainly Jewish and Serbian civilian victims were brutally murdered (Braham 211). In Novi Sad alone, 879 people were killed (Végel, *Neoplanta* 293).⁴ The fact that in 1944-1945 Tito’s partisans conducted a mass capturing of tens of thousands of Hungarian and German civilians of all ages who were thrown into concentration camps all over the Vojvodina, where they were brutally tortured, beaten, starved (many to death) and raped, has been glossed over by Yugoslav and Serbian historiography. Végel sums up this selective historical memory in the following words:

European politics considered Tito’s Yugoslavia a showcase example of fair minority politics. The communist elite acknowledged the city’s multinational character, but not its past. The fact that Novi Sad was multiethnic was always proudly emphasized; but its historical past and the reasons behind it were deliberately suppressed. And so was the question about what happened to the Germans who had been deported, thrown into mass graves or perished in work camps. With the city’s impressive development, the leading elite made an attempt to forget the past. Their efforts were eased by the fact that the population increased, and the newcomers didn’t have anything to remember. There was no shared past. (*Újvidéki képeslapok*)
 (A titói Jugoszláviát az európai politika a méltányos kisebbségpolitika mintapéldájaként tartotta számon. A kommunista elit tudomásul vette a város többnemzetiségű jellegét, de a múltját már nem. Azt, hogy Újvidék többnemzetiségű, mindig büszkén hangoztatták, ellenben az előzményekről, arról, hogy miért,

miféle történelmi múlttal rendelkezik, azt tudatosan elhallgatták. Meg azt is, hogy hová lettek az időközben kitelepített vagy a tömegsírokba vetett, avagy a munkatáborokban odaveszett németek. A város lenyűgöző fejlődésével a vezető réteg igyekezett feledtetni a múltat. Ügyeskedésüket könnyítette, hogy a város lélekszáma meghatározódott, az újaknak nem volt mire emlékezniük. Nem létezett közös múlt.)

The novel *Neoplanta* evokes the city's traumatic past. Its virtual hero is Novi Sad, the capital of Vojvodina since 1945. In a 2014 interview, Végel referred to Novi Sad as a traumatized European city (Pejčić). The narrative is told through a double lens: the ironic voice of the first-person Hungarian narrator, and that of Lazo Pavletić, the Serbian fiacre driver (Bence 81) whose fiacre becomes a silent witness to the many historical upheavals the city and its inhabitants have to endure during the long 20th century (Bányai 328). It is through the conversations of these two characters that the reader is introduced to some major events that marked the city's and Vojvodina's history in the 20th century. The conversations between the Hungarian narrator and the Serbian fiacre driver are necessarily multilingual to reflect not only the linguistic and cultural fusion between the city's numerous ethnicities but also their sometimes colliding collective memories. Although Novi Sad was founded in the spirit of peaceful coexistence, geopolitical interests, wars and population shifts have led to various historical traumas.

Végel's words about an old café in the heart of Novi Sad, where his novel places some major fictional events based on suppressed local history, sums up these shifts in the erasure of undesired historical chapters and the creation of a new cultural memory, always guided by current political interests:

[...] we stop by at Café Athens in the city centre. Originally, this was the Dornstädter café and pastry shop. After WWII, this catering establishment that used to be the property of Jakab Dornstädter was nationalized and renamed Café Moscow. In 1949, its name was changed to Café Zagreb, and since 1994 to date, it has been Café Athens [Atina]. These periodic name changes speak to Novi Sad's rather painful history" (*Újvidéki képeslapok*).

([...] betérünk a központban lévő Athén kávézóba, amely eredetileg a valamikori Dornstädter kávéház, illetve cukrászda volt. A II. világháború után a Dornstädter Jakab tulajdonát képező vendéglátó-ipari létesítményt államosították, ezután Moszkva lett. 1949-ben Zágrábra keresztelték, majd 1994-től egészen napjainkig Athén. Az időközönkénti névcserekből rejtőzik Újvidék története, amely felettébb kínos.)

The continuous name change of the café that carried the name of its Jewish owner (who “disappears” during the war) in the interwar years, reflects the historical changes that have swept through the city and the entire region leaving behind their unresolved traumas: from the Holocaust to the Soviet-influenced first years of communist Yugoslavia (Moscow), to the “brotherhood and unity” motto of Tito’s Yugoslavia following the split with Stalin (hence Zagreb, the capital of Croatia), to the post-Yugoslav developments, which mirrors the 1990s era of the Milošević-rule and its aftermath with a desire for closer ties to the Balkans (Athens) and a breaking away from an Austro-Hungarian past. (See Appendix, Picture 1).

In his novel *Végel* casts a seemingly secondary female character, the waitress of Café Dornstädter who becomes a witness to the dramatic historical changes of which the café is the focal point. She also happens to be the fiacre driver’s mother and embodies the city’s multilingual and hybrid character in a gendered way: not only does she evade all definitions along single national lines (“She may have been a Slovak woman, but perhaps she was Hungarian” — “Szlovák nő lehetett, de lehet, hogy magyar volt”, 63), she also speaks several languages fluently: Hungarian, Serbian, German and Slovak. She sometimes uses the name Horák Katalin, sometimes Katarina Horakova, thus fitting Assmann’s definition of cultural identity as a social construct in response to the expectations of our social environment (qtd. in Rudaš 96-97). Horák Katalin/Katarina Horakova is thus a perfect example of Vojvodina’s cultural hybridity. Her shifting between cultural identities and ethnic allegiances illustrates what Homi Bhabha formulated as a challenge to the illusion of a homogenous national identity: “the inherent originality or ‘purity’ of cultures are untenable” (156) — especially in a region like the Vojvodina. The cultural hybridity that Katarina/Katalin embodies makes her the perfect person to work at Café Dornstädter where all ethnic groups meet and where all languages are spoken before WWII. Whereas the fiacre driver’s Serbian

father (who had also been a fiacre driver) struggles with the different languages, it is thanks to the mother's multilingual talents, her malleable hybrid identity, and her astute talent of observation coupled with her survival skills that the family manages to move unharmed through the Hungarian occupation during the war and the subsequent liberation/occupation by the Red Army and Tito's partisans. While the son (later the fiacre driver), following his return from the war as a Hungarian soldier, is forced to demonstrate his Serbian allegiance by shooting into an unmarked mass grave his two best friends, a Hungarian and a German, thus symbolically killing the multiethnic character of his city and his own hybridity, his mother is cast as a witness to and carrier of Novi Sad's and Vojvodina's multidirectional memory, in particular those parts that have been erased from official cultural memory. The most vivid and disturbing episode is her witnessing the orgy organized by local partisan supporters at the "nationalized" Café Dornstädter for the sake of appeasing the drunken misbehaviour of Soviet soldiers toward their Serbian female comrades. Instead, local "traitor" German families are "punished" for their non-Serbian ethnicity and "bourgeois" identity: their female members, in particular their young daughters, like the former ball queen Miss Meinert, are dragged away from their homes in the middle of the night to be thrown into the rape orgy at the mercy of the soldiers while exposed to the vulgar gaze of the grinning crowds gathered on the street in front of the café's windows. The only eye witness to this violent episode — an episode that becomes erased from the city's cultural memory — who comments on its lasting traumatic impact is the waitress: "when did the lace curtains become yellow, why were the plush arm chairs creaky, why is the floor covering so dirty?" (Végel, *Neoplanta* 78) ("[...] mikor sárgultak meg a csipkefüggönyök, miért nyikorognak a plüssfotelek, miért olyan koszos a padlóburkolat?"). It is thus the place itself, the café that continues to carry the haunting memory of this less than heroic episode from the end of the war. Against all effort that has been made to erase this memory and construct a new one, Végel's narrative evokes the former's ghosts. Avery Gordon understands the ghost not as the return of a dead or missing person but rather as a sign that demands "not a return to the past but a reckoning with its repression in the present" (183) — hence the necessity to include it as part of a multidirectional memory. The ghosts of the city's repressed traumatic past that the Café Dornstädter exemplifies are not present in a physical way; instead, they exist, in Gordon's words, as a "seething presence" (8). By putting

this violent episode right at the beginning of the regime change following WWII, the author adds an important element to the creation of a multidirectional cultural memory in that he breaks the silence regarding the murder and rapes perpetrated by the “liberating” armies (both the Soviets and the partisans) against the local population, in particular the Germans and Hungarians, and more specifically, the women, a topic that had been taboo for decades.⁵

Gendering multidirectional memory

Friedrich’s novel expands on the gender aspect in the establishing of a multidirectional memory about Vojvodina’s post-WWII history. Even more than Végel, she bases her fictionalized narrative on historical facts. Her heroine, Róza/Rosalía Emling, is based on the real story of a young Hungarian-German girl from Novi Sad who was taken as a teenager to one of the infamous concentration camps that were established under Tito’s regime all over the Vojvodina (Schwartz, “Interview”). To add more veracity to her narrative, Friedrich includes a detailed map with the locations of the camps and numbers of the victims. (See Appendix, Picture 2).⁶

Róza is raped ten times and is saved thanks to the help and intervention of a courageous girlfriend who manages to bring her some food and clothes. Róza’s mother dies in the camp whereas Róza survives and, following her release, lives with her surviving grandmother. Later she moves to (West) Germany where she joins her brother and, gradually working through her trauma, starts a new life and eventually, a family of her own. What helps her in this process is also the fact that she meets a German woman, Lujza, who survived gang rapes by American GIs and remained childless as a consequence. Lujza supports Róza and understands what she went through. By including Lujza’s story in the narrative, Friedrich addresses the universal theme of sexual violence that millions of women experienced at the hand of soldiers of all backgrounds during WWII and following Nazi Germany’s defeat all over Nazi-occupied Europe and the former Soviet Union.⁷

Friedrich’s description of the rapes is reminiscent of other rape narratives, such as Alaine Polcz’s *Asszony a fronton* or Judit Kováts’s

Megtagadva in Hungarian literature but also of rape narratives from German literature by teenage survivors such as Gabi Köpp or Leonie Biallas. The Serbian rapist in *Miért? Warum?* smells of onion and brandy (similar to the Soviet rapists in the other narratives), and the experience of Róza's first rape is described in similar terms: sharp pain, a knife cutting her flesh, her fear that her back will break and her abdomen be torn, disgust, choking:

As he lifted my leg, the thought flashed through my mind that he would break my back.

My god, I will die!

Then I felt a sharp pain.

He stabbed me with a knife, I thought, and the ripping pain made me think that he was cutting the flesh of my lower abdomen. [...] The bastard, panting, held down both my hands while I could feel his breath in my mouth. The smell of onions and brandy made my stomach turn. I felt like throwing up and thought I would choke, but the feeling that he would tear up my lower abdomen was even more frightening. (71)

([...] Ahogy felemelte az egyik lábamat, felvillant bennem, hogy el fogja törni a derekam. Istenem, meghalok!

Aztán éles fájdalmat éreztem.

Kést döfött belém, gondoltam, és a hasító fájdalomról azt hittem, hogy az alsótestemben a húsomat vagdossa. [...] A dög lihegve szorította mindkét kezemet, miközben a számba lehelt, és a hagymás pálinkaszagtól felgyülemlett a nyál a számban. Hányni akartam volna, és úgy éreztem, megfulladok, de a fuldoklásnál remisztőbb volt az érzés, hogy széttépi az alsótestem.)⁸

What distinguishes Friedrich's narrative from the narratives mentioned above is that Róza starts to count while being raped, a strategy of keeping her spirit at distance from the terrible violence her body has to endure. Róza counts in three languages, beginning with Hungarian, switching to German and finally to Serbian while her rapist murmurs insults and swear words into her ear in Serbian. What the author describes here can thus be interpreted as the metaphorical rape of Vo-

jvodina's multilingual identity by a monolingual, brutal force. Moreover, this multilingual identity is gendered as female as the brutal force "taking" Róza's body is the metaphorical conquest of Vojvodina by a colonizing, armed patriarchal power. With the rape of Róza, multilingualism and cultural hybridity are superseded by monolingualism and the imposition of a single ethnic identity, which stands for the ensuing loss of a multiethnic community.

The author weaves in her expertise as a psychologist into Róza's story which is told back and forth between the present and the past, a narrative strategy that allows for the demonstration of how traumatic experiences and memories survive in the body and the mind, even decades later, in flashbacks, nightmares, and uncontrollable movements. One example of this traumatic re-enactment is Róza feeling nausea and clenching her fist while flashbacks shoot through her mind in situations in which her body is reminded of the past wound, such as when she smells brandy from a nearby co-worker's breath:

My stomach was lifted, my back sank, and squeezing my thumb between my four fingers, I clenched my right fist and pressed it firmly against my stomach. My right knee collapsed as if instinctively trying to make myself look smaller than I really was. These movements returned periodically when the images I had buried appeared in front of me in a flash, like now under the influence of the smell of brandy. (39)

(A gyomrom megemelkedett, a hátam megroggyant és a hüvelykujjamat a négy ujjam közé fogva ökölbe szorult a jobb kezem és erősen a hasamra szorítottam. A jobb lábam térdben meghajlott, mintha ösztönösen kisebbnek akarnék látszani, mint amekkora vagyok. Ezek a mozdulatok vissza-visszatértek olyankor, amikor egy villanásra megjelentek előttem az elhantolt képek, most éppen a pálinkaszag hatására.)

Róza obviously suffers from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). Cathy Caruth speaks of the temporal aspect of PTSD as a belated response to a traumatic event, an event that at the time when it hits a person, he/she is unable to process given that the consciousness shuts down as a protective reaction while numbness ensues (4). Hence the uncontrollable repetitive behaviour as a belated "acting out" of the traumatic impact. According to Dominick LaCapra, in the acting out of the compulsive repetition the past occurrences intrude in the present (142). Essentially, acting out means reliving the past, i.e. the unsettled

ghosts of the past event continue their haunting in the present. As we are reminded by LaCapra, in order to come to terms with the traumatic past, a “working through” has to happen. Working through does not mean that a traumatized person is completely “cured”; it does, however, bring a temporal structure into a traumatized person's life and allows him/her to distinguish between past, present, and the future. In other words, working through allows the victim to move beyond victimhood and gain agency, an agency that still allows to keep the memory of the past, which Róza succeeds in doing. She honours the memory of her own past and that of the lost loved ones while she gradually comes to terms with her wound and is able to become successful in her new environment in Germany, a loving friend and eventually a wife and mother.

Nevertheless, Róza/Rosalia never really feels at home in Germany; despite her partly German background and her new life, she feels like a foreigner in her new country. With her cultural hybridity, she no longer belongs anywhere as her once multiethnic and multilingual village in the Vojvodina has been populated by a new monolingual population that replaced the expelled one. Thus despite her successfully moving forward and beyond her traumatic past, Róza never forgets how absurd all what happened to her and her family was. Hence the title of the novel and the sentence in the concluding paragraph: “Why did all what happened happen, Róza?” (Friedrich 184) (“Miért volt mindez, Róza?”). Although partly fictional, Róza's story is an important element in the creation of a multidirectional memory for the forgotten (or rather edited out) war crimes committed against the Vojvodina Hungarians and Germans, in particular the women, whose story of sexual violation at the end of WWII is covered by an additional layer of silence. How much of a taboo Friedrich is breaking with her book is reflected in the fact that even two years after its publication, the central library of the Vojvodina, the Matica Srpska Library in Novi Sad, still does not own a copy.⁹

Végel's novel ends in the narrator's failed attempt to have his Serbian fiacre driver friend buried, according to the latter's own wishes, in the same unmarked mass grave into which his two friends he was forced to shoot, the Hungarian and the German, were thrown. The fiacre, that bridge that survived through wars and generations, is taken by a schlemihl¹⁰-kind of character who suddenly appears on the

last two pages, repeating a few sentences in a language the narrator does not understand but that contains words from Hungarian, Serbian, and German mixed with incomprehensible words. The narrator answers him in English, the *lingua franca* of the 21st century, but to no avail. Upon several failed communication attempts, the schlemihl grabs the fiacre by the beam and drags it away, disappearing in the twilight, taking with him his hybrid language, perhaps a linguistic utopia for the 21st century that nobody can understand, not even a multilingual citizen of Novi Sad, that once utopian city of peaceful multilingual cohabitation.

Conclusion

Jutka Rudaš notes with respect to Végel's novel that it "celebrates the heterogeneity of cultural experience" (92) ("éltetve a kulturális tapasztalat heterogenitását"). Végel's and Friedrich's narratives are important attempts, both with their own focus and in their own genre, to diversify the still dominant cultural memory about Vojvodina's history — a memory reinforced by the Serbian nationalist government and its essentially anti-constitutional cultural policies (see Bugarski) — toward a multidirectional memory, a memory that would take into account the region's hybrid cultural past and its legacies in the present. In order to come to terms with the haunting effects of these memories that until recently were covered under a veil of silence, these violent episodes have to be given their appropriate place within cultural memory, i.e. offered what Jacques Derrida calls "a hospitable memory [...] out of concern for justice" (qtd. in Gordon, *Ghostly Matters* 58), "so as to overcome their pulsating and lingering effects" (134) on individuals and communities.¹¹ Rothberg's emphasis on multidirectional memory takes us in the same direction when it comes to settling the ghosts of memory competition:

If memory is as susceptible as any other human faculty to abuse — [...] this study seeks to emphasize how memory is at least as often a spur to unexpected acts of empathy and solidarity; indeed multidirectional memory is often the very grounds on which people construct and act upon visions of justice. (19)

It is therefore urgent to listen to the ghosts of past traumas and injustices; they remind us that what happened in the past may happen again, and that it may very well happen to any of us: “it could be you. I could be you” (Gordon, “Some Thoughts” 13). According to Gordon, we need to engage with the ghosts of the past so as to arrive at a “transformative recognition” (*Ghostly Matters* 8) which, beyond the memory of a painful and violent past, also carries the hope for future reconciliation and the need to find ways to prevent such traumas from reoccurring.

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NOTES

¹ According to Gábrity-Molnár et al., the multiethnic character of the Vojvodina was largely established following the Battle of Zenta in 1697 fought against the Ottoman Empire. The nearly depopulated lowlands — a consequence of migratory processes induced by the Ottoman conquest in the previous centuries — now became an attraction point for many migration waves that were largely determined by policies from Habsburg Vienna. A resettlement of Southern Hungary (Délvidék; later named Vojvodina by the Serbian population) began in the 18th century. Ethnic Germans from southern parts of Germany (so-called Danube Swabians) were one of the largest groups, but ethnic Hungarians also moved in along with many other smaller ethnic groups from all over the Habsburg territories (Slovaks, Czechs, Jews, Croats, Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Romanians etc.). Two big waves of Serbian refugees referred to as the “Great migration of the Serbs” fleeing Ottoman-controlled Serbia brought large numbers of Serbs into the area as well. Following the Treaty of Trianon, the newly established Serbian-Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom, later renamed Yugoslavia, was given the territory of the Vojvodina. However, well into the 20th century, no ethnic group could claim an absolute majority. Despite aggressive attempts by the Serbian king to “serbianize” the area by creating new Serbian settlements and thus breaking up the linguistic territory of the other ethnic groups, 1931 census figures still indicate that only one third of the area’s population were ethnic Serbs. The expulsion and/or murder of nearly 350,000 ethnic Germans and the settlement of over 200,000 ethnic Serbs after World War II initiated the process of the erosion of Vojvodina’s ethnic and linguistic diversity. Although what remained of the diversity was guaranteed by the constitution and cultural policies in Tito’s Yugoslavia, the balance continued to shift in favour of a Serbian majority that was firmly established by the 1960s. Since the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s that brought about further ethnically determined migrations, this shift has become further pronounced. The shrinking of the Hungarian but also other non-Serb ethnic groups continues at an alarming rate. On current trends, according to Branislav Djurdjev, a demographer at the University of Novi Sad, Vojvodina will be 90% Serb by the end of the 21st century. The remaining 10% will consist largely of Hungarians and Roma. Of the 350,000 ethnic Germans only 4,000 remain today in Serbia.

² Slobodan Milošević was a Serbian politician, President of Serbia between 1989 and 1997, and President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1997-2000. Given his rise to power in the 1980s, he was chiefly responsible for the ignition of Serbian nationalistic politics that, along with simi-

lar politics by his Croatian counterpart, Franjo Tuđman, led to the catastrophic and bloody break-up of multinational, multiethnic, and multilingual Yugoslavia along single national ideologies. It is also thanks to Milošević that Vojvodina (along with Kosovo) lost its previous autonomy which had been granted to both provinces in the 1970s under Tito.

³ All translations from the Hungarian by Agatha Schwartz.

⁴ Randolph L. Braham gives the following ethnic breakdown of the Újvidék massacre: 550 Jews, 292 Serbs, 13 Russians, and 11 Hungarians (211).

⁵ In the Hungarian context, this taboo topic has been recently researched more extensively. See Schwartz on the representation of the rapes in Hungarian literature; Márta Mészáros' 2017 feature film *Aurora borealis: Északi fény*; and Andrea Pető's 2018 monograph *Elmondani az elmond-atlant*.

In the context of the Vojvodina and former Yugoslavia, the rapes committed during World War II have not been researched. In Serbian scholarship, there are only sporadic references to the rapes perpetuated against local women. Milovan Djilas in his internationally known *Conversations with Stalin* addresses this less than heroic behaviour of the Soviet soldiers, a comment jovially glossed over by his interlocutor. The rape of German women who survived Tito's camps has so far only been addressed in the groundbreaking publication *Dunavske Švabice* where the editors mention the rapes in their introduction, a fact that their interviewees, elderly ethnic German women, did not wish to have included in their respective narratives collected in the volume. One of the editors, Nadežda Radović, told me in an interview that in one case, it was the son of one of the interviewed women who did not wish to see his mother's name "tainted" by publishing this particular detail about her camp experience. Thus it is still the victim who has to feel ashamed, even decades later, while the perpetrators evade justice.

⁶ Friedrich's source for the map is <http://www.keskenyut.hu/>.

⁷ The number of women raped in World War II and its aftermath will likely remain an estimate given the complex issue of memorializing wartime rape and the mechanisms of silence that surround rape as a social phenomenon (in war as in peace time), but historians talk about millions of women affected both in Nazi-occupied territories — which includes Germany both before and following Allied occupation, especially taking into account female concentration camp inmates and forced labourers — and in territories liberated by the Allies.

⁸ On Hungarian women writers' narratives of wartime rapes see Schwartz.

⁹ It ought to be mentioned that at times, Friedrich inserts into her narrative ethnocentric comments that go against the conciliatory passages in other parts of the novel.

¹⁰ In American slang, schlemiel usually means an awkward or unlucky person. The origin of the word is Hebrew and Yiddish and was made famous by German late Romantic writer Adalbert von Chamisso and his novella "The Wonderful History of Peter Schlemihl" (*Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte*, 1813).

¹¹ In 2017, with the support and encouragement of German chancellor Angela Merkel, a monument to the murdered and expelled Danube Swabians was erected by the Serbian government on the site of the notorious camp in Jarek (north of Novi Sad) where about 6,500 ethnic Germans had been killed between 1944 and 1946. Vojvodina Hungarians have unofficially erected some small memory sites (which have repeatedly been vandalized) in various places where civilians had been murdered at the end of World War II. The erection of a multilingual monument in Novi Sad to all civilian victims at the end of World War II has been debated since 2016.

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“Végel László.” <http://vegel.org/en/>

Appendix

Picture 1



Current front façade of the café Atina © Agatha Schwartz

Symbol or Concept? An Overview of the Doctrine of the Holy Crown of Hungary

Gábor Hollósi

On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United States returning to Hungary her symbol of enduring constitutionality, the story of the Holy Crown is once again front and center. Our use of the word “symbol” already in the very first sentence is intentional, for in addition to the “visible” manifestation of the crown, an “invisible” aspect surrounds it as well.¹ The invisible crown represents a set of ideas that is embodied in our Holy Crown. Throughout the history of our constitution, the most important of these is the so-called Doctrine of the Holy Crown, which is what we focus on below.

How do the Concept of the Holy Crown and the Doctrine of the Holy Crown differ?

Although the literature often uses the terms interchangeably, we believe that separately defining them is more appropriate.² The Concept of the Holy Crown covers the symbolism of the crown (for now let us set aside the point from which we may consider the Hungarian crown as holy). For example in King St. Stephen’s (1001–1038) Admonitions to his son Prince Emeric, the crown appears as both earthly royal authority and as the symbol of heavenly and eternal power.³ Later, the Holy Crown itself came to symbolize the territory of the state; we often come across the phrase: “Lands of the Holy Crown”. These are, of course, only examples. In our work we do not attempt to provide an overarching analysis of symbology of the crown.

In contrast to the mentioned symbols, the Doctrine of the Holy Crown is a public law (“constitutional law”) tenet whose first phrasing can be traced to legal theorist and statesman István Werbőczy (approximately 1458–1541), who was a judge on the royal high court.

The starting point of the Doctrine is that the Hungarian state is composed of the king and the nation. (At that time, one's status as nobility, rather than what his mother tongue was, determined whether he belong to the nation.) The two main components of the state, the king and the nation, together made up the "whole body of the Holy Crown". The supreme authority of the state thus belonged to the whole body of the Holy Crown. Thus it follows that on the one hand, the members of the nation participate in the wielding of state power through the right of the crown, while on the other hand, the king is not inherently endowed with power, but rather acquires it through the right of the crown. As such, coronation in Hungary was not a formal ceremony, but rather a public law act: through the coronation, royal power passed from the crown to the king.⁴ Thus the essential element of the Doctrine is division of power; in Hungary an autocratic monarch or despot (in modern parlance: a dictatorial "President of the Republic") is not recognized.

A short phylogeny on the Doctrine of the Holy Crown

The progression of symbology is naturally connected to the Doctrine, so from this perspective it is important to note that by the 15th century in Hungary, the Holy Crown no longer represented the power of the king, but rather the authority of the state independent of the king. This had already been the case in 1401, when Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387–1437) was detained and the barons considered his throne abrogated. The royal council metamorphosed into a country-wide council that exercised power in the name of the Holy Crown.⁵

In *Tripartitum* (Triple Codex, *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary: A Work in Three Parts*), published in 1514, István Werbőczy created the Doctrine by connecting the notion of division of powers with the Holy Crown, which symbolized the authority of the state, and with organic approach to the state concept. (Organic state concept, which draws a comparison of the state to a living body, had already been made in ancient times. In Ancient Rome, for example, Menenius Agrippa had compared the state to a human body, made up equally of patricians and plebeians.⁶ Although the Church conveyed organic state concept in the image of the body of Christ during the Middle Ages, Werbőczy could have been familiar with this symbolism via his studies of Roman law, as evidenced by his

attempts at imparting some Roman legal rules in *Tripartitum*. That these rules were not implemented in jurisprudential practice is another question, however.)

In one of the most often quoted parts of *Tripartitum*, Werbőczy wrote the following about the mutual interdependence between ruler and nobility, a.k.a. division of powers: "...because the prince [ruler] is chosen only by noblemen, who are noblemen by the grace of the prince... [...] And these noblemen [...] are considered as members of the Holy Crown."⁷ The latter sentence mirrors organic state concept, in which Werbőczy replaced the human body with the Holy Crown. It is true that Werbőczy tried instead to trace equal participation in legislative power to the principle of sovereignty of the people,⁸ but we also do not contend that he formulated a final and comprehensive portrayal of the Doctrine. The Doctrine came to full "maturity" in the 19th century via public law scholars.

By the Habsburg era, Werbőczy's construction had begun to crumble, although in 1553, under Ferdinand I, the *Quadripartitum* (Quaternary Codex) was finished, which still recognized the Doctrine of the Holy Crown,⁹ and Baron Péter Révay, Turóc County Lord Lieutenant and Royal Crown Guard,¹⁰ published *De sacra corona regni Hungariae...* in 1613, in which he referred to it as "the law of laws". In 1687, however, the right of election of kings was suspended under Leopold I; thus from the 17th century, the crown reverted to being but an emblem symbolizing the power of the king. Additionally, the symbology had also come to mean continuity in terms of territorial integrity, which could already be well perceived by the 19th century. (In 1848, union between Hungary and Transylvania had to be demanded.)

Constitutional reforms in 1848 had an impact on the Doctrine of the Holy Crown, too, as prior to 1848, only landowning nobility were considered to be members of the Holy Crown. From this point, however, based on the principle of equal rights of citizenship, every commoner, including peasants, became a member. Moreover – in connection to the abolition of Aviticum – main landownership of the Holy Crown ceased, which was related to the territory of the country.¹¹ (For earlier, the Holy Crown Domain Doctrine considered the Holy Crown as the root of every right of possession.)

The theories of Werbőczy were modernized by the public law scholars and legal historians of the Era of the Dual Monarchy. Legal historian Imre Hajnik¹² (1840–1902) considered the parliament as the body of the crown that unified the king and the “nobility” (i.e. the nation). He was also the originator of the term “Doctrine of the Holy Crown”. According to Hajnik, Hungarians were characterized by their public law thinking, unlike the liege societies of the West. The Doctrine of the Holy Crown also mirrors this public law mentality.¹³

Ákos Timon¹⁴ (1850–1925) was the one, however, who really worked out the Doctrine, enriching it with a singular mysticism. From Timon’s perspective, the Doctrine was no longer limited by time and space, for he believed that the main elements at the time of the Carpathian Conquest still prevailed in his era. He considered the Doctrine of the Holy Crown as a “hungaricum”, as something uniquely belonging to the Hungarians, in the sense that this personification of the crown could not be found anywhere else on Earth. He was convinced that the Doctrine was “the most distinctive creation on the evolution of the constitution of the Hungarian nation”,¹⁵ the significance of which was comparable only to that of the English.

Timon’s views and historiography

By the beginning of the 20th century, Timon’s views had come under fire. Among others, historian Gyula Szekfű¹⁶ (1883–1955) also saw the roots of the Doctrine of the Holy Crown in the emergence of an “estates of the realm” system in Hungarian society, rather than in the Hungarian public law genius that spanned uninterruptedly several different eras. He associated the whole conception of the Doctrine to Werbőczy’s work. However, among the public lawyers of the Horthy Era¹⁷ – chiefly Móric Tomcsányi¹⁸ (1878–1951) and Kálmán Molnár¹⁹ (1881–1961) – Timon’s approach was the decisive winner. The catalyst for the debate, which remains unsettled to this day, was an outline study²⁰ published by legal historian Ferenc Eckhart²¹ (1885–1957) in 1931.

Before we summarize the main points of contention, we must touch upon a few paradoxes. For example, as Timon had died in 1925, Eckhart had to debate the contemporary legal scholars and politicians who shared Timon’s views. While Eckhart lacked a degree in juris-

prudence, neither were the public legal scholars against whom he debated liberal arts historians. Tomcsányi emphatically stated that the history of law was “important as an independent discipline, while at the same time being an auxiliary discipline of public law”.²² Thus the two sides talked past each other and could not reconcile their intellectual differences. Moreover, the debate scarcely touched on the essence of Doctrine of the Holy Crown. According to historian Elemér Mályusz (1898–1989): “Timon’s explanation barely broached the Doctrine of the Holy Crown”.²³ Eckhart himself declared that the debate added nothing to the history of the Doctrine of the Holy Crown. Only In 1941, ten years after the beginning of the debate, was *The History of the Concept of the Holy Crown* published, which was a book that Eckhart had written in the wake of the debate. Finally, we must emphasize that with his 1931 outline study, Eckhart had wanted to provide a critical approach to legal historiography, but Timon’s views were perfectly suited for the post-Treaty of Trianon²⁴ emotional atmosphere.²⁵ His paper generated so much indignation that, for example, Gábor Ugron Jr. demanded that he be stripped of his professorship.

Eckhart denied that the Doctrine of the Holy Crown could be traced back to St. Stephen. According to his view, the early version of the Doctrine could not be found in the Admonitions. Only from the 15th century does the Hungarian crown express the king and the estates’ collective power. We believe that it is not necessarily appropriate to look for symbology of the crown in the Admonitions since the essence of the doctrine is division of power. Different questions entirely are when to consider the concept of division of power coming into association with the Holy Crown, and who shared power (in addition to the king) via the division of power, and to what extent their power extended. If we peruse the Admonitions from this point of view, we can come upon an intriguing passage: “The council installs kings and decides the fate of kings...”²⁶ In our view, this “rhymes” with the lines quoted by Werbőczy.

Eckhart had a Concept of the Holy Crown that was continuously altered in context, changing in accordance with the significance of the role played by various social groups which shared power with the king. Kálmán Molnár, however, emphasized constitutional-

historical continuity, and that the genius of Hungarian public law did not necessarily shine through the sources.

Eckhart also considered the development of Hungarian law as unique, but not isolated, for in his opinion, the Hungarian doctrine of the crown drew upon Polish and Czech influences. He stated that drawing a parallel between English and Hungarian circumstances was nothing more than “fantasy arising from national hubris”.²⁷ According to Tomcsányi, other nations, including the English, also employed a state concept based upon a duality of royal authority and individual freedom. However, these lacked a construction as eloquent as our Doctrine of the Holy Crown. In neither England nor France was coronation as significant as in Hungary. For the principle of *rex non moritur* (The king never dies), according to which the throne is never vacated because the rightful heir of the king immediately assumes power the moment the king dies, was alien to Hungarians. Under French public law, this principle was referred to as *le roi est mort, vive le roi* (The king is dead, long live the king!) In contrast, the Holy Crown was the representative of the continuity of royal power in Hungary.²⁸

Indicative of this was that prior to the coronation of Vladislaus I (1440–1444), Elizabeth of Luxembourg, daughter of King Sigismund, purloined the Holy Crown in order to have her 3-month-old son Ladislaus the Posthumous (1444–1457) crowned. In response, however, the estates decreed that their will was the source of royal power rather than the crown (1440). Starting from this basis, Tomcsányi determined that in the event of the destruction of the Holy Crown, the nation had the right to substitute for it, and if necessary could also replace the royal body as well. From a public law perspective, this was a(n) (additional) basis for the regency of Miklós Horthy.²⁹

Eckhart justifiably stated that the public lawyers had not made use of source criticism. For example, the points of the Etelköz Blood Oath³⁰ as recorded by Anonymus³¹ were considered as authentic sources by Tomcsányi and Molnár. Even though there was no critical historiography during the Middle Ages, proto-historiographers willingly projected the thinking of their time onto the past. Siding with the historians, Emma Bartoniek³² (1894–1957) also pointed out that Timon had improperly formulated the theory of the Holy Crown in

many respects, for he had relied only on Werbőczy's work and some medieval documents.³³ However, we must reiterate that our view is that emphasis should not be put on the authenticity of the Blood Oath, but rather on whether or not there had been any division of power in ancient Hungarian society. If yes, then it could be considered a precursor of the later Doctrine of the Holy Crown.

The debate continues to this day

The debate did not end in the Horthy Era, but rather subsided. The second debate, which took place in the 1950's, contributed to Eckhart's declining health and eventual death. Because of his participation in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution,³⁴ he was accused of working on "inappropriate" intellectual history, but death saved him from persecution. The third debate regarding the longevity of the Doctrine of the Holy Crown took place in the wake of the 1989/90 System Change-over,³⁵ and continues to this day.³⁶

It is an undeniable fact, however, that the "invisible crown" played a significant role in the move of the Holy Crown from the Hungarian National Museum to the Hungarian Parliament Building at the turn of the Hungarian Millennium.³⁷ Recognizing its role in the historic constitution of Hungary, the Fundamental Law of Hungary, passed in 2011, reads as follows: "We honor the achievements of our historical constitution and we honor the Holy Crown, which embodies the constitutional continuity of Hungary's statehood and the unity of the nation."³⁸

NOTES

¹ This term is used by: PÉTER László: The Holy Crown of Hungary. The visible and invisible. *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 2003/3. pp. 421–510.

² The two concepts are also differentiated by László Dávid TÖRŐ in his work "Eckhart Ferenc értelmezése a Szent Korona-eszméről" (Ferenc Eckhart's Interpretation of the Notion of the Holy Crown), *Magyar Szemle*, 2017/7–8.

³ ECKHART Ferenc: *A szentkorona-eszme története* (The History of the Notion of the Holy Crown), Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia (Hungarian Academy of Sciences), 1941. – Reprint: Máriabesnyő–Gödöllő, Attraktor, 2003. (Hereafter: ECKHART, [1941] 2003.) – *Szent István Király Dekrétomainak Első Könyve. Intelmek Szent Imre Hercegnek* (The First Book of the Decrees of King St. Stephen. Admonitions to Prince St. Emeric, hereafter: Admonitions.)

⁴ TOMCSÁNYI Móric: *Magyarország közjoga* (Public Law of Hungary), Budapest, Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda (Royal Hungarian University Press), 1942⁴. p. 282. (Hereafter: TOMCSÁNYI, 1942.)

⁵ CSIZMADIA Andor – KOVÁCS Kálmán – ASZTALOS László: *Magyar Állam- és Jogtörténet* (History of Hungarian State and Law), Budapest, Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 1998. p. 102.

⁶ Titus LIVIUS: *Ab urbe condita*, II. 16.

⁷ Quoted in length by: MOLNÁR Kálmán: *A Szent Korona-tan kifejlődése és mai jelentősége. A Magyar Nők Szent Korona Szövetségében 1927. február 2.-án tartott előadás* (Evolution and Significance Today of the Doctrine of the Holy Crown. A presentation made to the Holy Crown Alliance of Hungarian Women on February 2nd, 1927), Pécs, Dunántúl Egyetemi Nyomdája (Transdanubia University Press), 1927. p. 7.

⁸ Please see: ECKHART, [1941] 2003. p. 126.

⁹ TOMCSÁNYI, 1942. p. 288.

¹⁰ Please see: SZILÁGYI Péter: *Révay Péter és a Szent Korona (1619–1622)* (Péter Révay and the Holy Crown /1619–1622/), Budapest, M. T. Akadémia (Hungarian Academy of Sciences), 1875.

¹¹ TOMCSÁNYI, 1942. p. 289.

¹² Imre Hajnik was a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (corresponding from 1871, and regular from 1880).

¹³ HAJNIK Imre: *Magyarország az Árpád-királyoktól az ősiségnek megállapításáig és a hűbéri Európa. Állam- és jogtörténelmi kísérlet a magyar álladalmi és társadalmi élet alapzatainak és fejlődési irányzatainak feltüntetésére.* (Hungary from the Árpád Kings to the declaration of Aviticum and Liege Europe. A state and law historical attempt for the indication of the foundational and evolutionary trends of Hungarian state and social life), Pest, Heckenast, 1867.

¹⁴ Timon was appointed to the Department of the History of the Hungarian Constitution and Law at the University of Budapest in 1890, where he taught until his death in 1925.

¹⁵ TIMON Ákos: *A szent korona elmélete és a koronázás* (Theory of the Holy Crown and Coronation), Budapest, Stephaneum Nyomda (Stephaneum Press), 1920. p. 15.

¹⁶ Gyula Szekfű was named professor of the Department of Modern Hungarian History at the University of Budapest in 1925. In that same year, he became a corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, becoming a regular member in 1941.

¹⁷ In Hungarian history, the Horthy Era refers to the Interwar period and is named after Miklós Horthy, Regent of the Kingdom of Hungary.

¹⁸ Between 1922 and 1945, Móric Tomcsányi was a professor of Hungarian public law and administrative law at the University of Budapest. He became a corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1928. He was elected as a regular member in 1943.

¹⁹ Between 1925 and 1944, Kálmán Molnár was a professor of Hungarian public law at the University of Pécs. He became a corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1942. Following the German occupation of Hungary, the Arrow Cross sent him to an internment camp (in 1944).

²⁰ ECKHART Ferenc: *Jog- és alkotmánytörténet*. (History of Law and Constitution). In: *A magyar történetírás új útjai* (New Ways of Hungarian Historiography). Ed. HÓMAN Bálint. Budapest, 1931. pp. 269–323.

²¹ In 1929, Ferenc Eckhart became a professor in the Department of Law and Constitutional History of the Faculty of Law at the University of Budapest. He became a corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1919, and a regular member in 1934.

²² TOMCSÁNYI Móric: *Magyar közjog. Alkotmányjog* (Hungarian Public Law. Constitutional Law), Budapest, Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda (Royal Hungarian University Press), 1926. p. 6.

²³ MÁLYUSZ Elemér: *Az Eckhart-vita* (“The Eckhart Debate”, Hungarian language). *Századok* (Centuries), 1931/9–10. p. 415.

²⁴ In the Treaty of Trianon, signed on June 4th, 1920, Hungary lost two-thirds of her territory.

²⁵ Concluded by: BÓDI Stefánia: *A Szent Korona-eszme különbségei Eckhart Ferenc, Timon Ákos és Bartoniek Emma felfogásában*. *Polgári*

Szemle (Civil Review), 2015/1–3. – English version: BÓDI Stefánia: Different Concepts on the Doctrine of the Holy Crown in the Works of Ferenc Eckhart, Ákos Timon and Emma Bartoniek. *Jogelméleti Szemle*, 2016/2. 18–31.

²⁶ Admonitions, VII. Significance of the Council.

²⁷ ECKHART Ferenc: *Magyar alkotmány- és jogtörténet* (Hungarian Constitutional and Legal History). Budapest, Polizer Zsigmond és fia (Zsigmond Polizer and his son), 1946. p. 240.

²⁸ TOMCSÁNYI, 1942. pp. 285–286.

²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 285.

³⁰ According to Hungarian tradition, the first basic treaty in the history of the Hungarians was the Etelköz Blood Oath. According to Anonymus' *Gesta Hungarorum*, the Oath was taken by the chieftains (Álmos, Előd, Ond, Kond, Tas, Huba and Töhötöm) of the seven tribes (Tarján, Jenő, Kér, Keszi, Nyék, Megyer and Kürtgyarmat) in Etelköz. To reinforce their commitment, they sealed the Oath by cutting themselves, dripping their blood in a pan and mixing it together.

³¹ Anonymus (ca late 12th century – early 13th century) was the notary and chronicler of a Hungarian king, probably Béla III. Just as we do not know his exact date of birth, we cannot know with certainty under whom he served. Anonymus referred to himself only as Master P. ("P. dictus magister").

³² In 1916 Bartoniek was hired by the National Széchényi Library.

³³ BARTONIEK Emma: *A magyar királykoronázások története* (History of Coronations of Hungarian Kings). Budapest, Magyar Történelmi Társulat (Hungarian History Association), 1939. – Reprint: Budapest, Akadémiai (Hungarian Academy of Sciences), 1987.

³⁴ The 1956 Revolution and War of Independence was a Hungarian fight for freedom against Stalinist terror and Soviet occupation.

³⁵ The 1989/90 System Changeover was an era in Hungarian history that witnessed the Hungarian state breaking with the (communist) one-party state and peacefully transitioning to a democratic republic.

³⁶ BÓDI, 2015. TÓTH Zoltán József: Az Eckhart-vita időszerűsége (The Relevance of the Eckhart-Dispute). *Iustum Aequum Salutare*, 2007/1. 153–163.

³⁷ Act I of 2000: Commemoration of the founding of the Hungarian state and the Holy Crown, 2. § (2).

³⁸ Fundamental Law of Hungary (April 25th, 2011) National Creed.

Book Reviews

Katalin Fábián and Elżbieta Korolczuk, eds. *Rebellious Parents: Parental Movements in Central-Eastern Europe and Russia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017. 364 pages. ISBN 9780253026675.

The twelve chapters collected in this well-researched and carefully edited volume discuss civic movements of parental groups that have emerged since the 1990s in several countries of the formerly Soviet-controlled part of Europe and in post-communist Russia. Two chapters each discuss Russia and the Ukraine, one chapter each is devoted to Bulgaria, Poland, the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and Hungary, while three chapters discuss developments in the Czech Republic. The contributors' research is interdisciplinary in that it covers several disciplines from the social sciences: sociology, anthropology, political science, gender studies, and disability studies. Several chapters use photographs to add a visual dimension to their discussion.

The editors, who are also authors and/or co-authors of some of the chapters, are established experts in the fields of women's and gender studies and feminism in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia. Katalin Fábián, Professor at Lafayette College, is editor of *Domestic Violence in Postcommunist States: Local Activism, National Policies, and Global Forces* (2010) and author of *Contemporary Women's Movements in Hungary: Globalization, Democracy, and Gender Equality* (2009) as well as of numerous other scholarly contributions, while Elżbieta Korolczuk, Lecturer at Warsaw University and Researcher at Södertörn University, is co-editor of several volumes on motherhood and fatherhood in Poland and Russia, such as *Dangerous Liaisons: Motherhood, Fatherhood and Politics* (2015) and *Civil Society Revisited: Lessons from Poland* (2017). As Fábián and Korolczuk explain in the volume's introduction, their use of the term

“parental movements” in lieu of the more familiar “parents’ movements” stems from the latter’s more limited concern with custody, welfare and health care, whereas parental movements operate at the intersection of parenthood, gender, national identity, and citizenship thus covering a much broader range of issues. Most notably, the contributions have been selected beyond an expected focus on women’s activism and motherhood; instead, several chapters highlight the often overlooked engagement of men and fathers, which along with research on parental activism is an emerging field in the region generally — and, as the editors point out, wrongly — perceived as characterized by a weaker civil society compared to the so-called West.

Moving away from a focus on activism framed within the much older tradition of women’s rights and more particularly motherhood is an important methodological nuance. By choosing the gender-neutral term “parents” rather than “mothers”, and adding an emphasis on “fathers” in some cases, these parental movements in formerly communist countries reflect significant downward trends with respect to the symbolic position of motherhood and mothering and to women’s social and political position in post-communism in general, along with a return to more conservative gender and family values. By no means have the parental movements under scrutiny always embraced a liberal-progressive and inclusive stance beyond the heteronormative family model but have rather been coupled with traditionalist, nationalist and essentialist ideas harking back to sometimes idealized pre-communist family models presented as more “authentic”, even “natural” and in line with “our” traditions. This anti-communist and anti-modernist neo-traditionalism interestingly often goes hand in hand with a critical view on post-communist neo-liberal capitalist developments and their erosion of some of communism’s achievements viewed in a more positive light, such as state-funded healthcare and child support. Thus these recent manifestations of parental activism in the other Europe happen at an intersection of various ideological influences. Ina Dimitrova’s term “reactionary techno-progressivism” in the chapter on reproductive technologies in Bulgaria expresses very well this combination of a (usually anti-modernist) conservative discourse with that of technological and scientific modernization.

However, regardless of whether the different activist groups position themselves along a more progressive or a more conservative agenda, what they have in common in the different post-communist countries is that they generally reject authority coming from above, be it the state and its institutions or experts (most notably in the medical field) both at home and abroad. The collection's most important contribution to scholarship is thus its invitation to a rethinking of the dominant theoretical conceptualizations of civil society. Although these parental movements from Central-East Europe and Russia do not fit a liberal definition of civil society, one that emphasizes difference, equality and plurality, they are nevertheless manifestations of civic engagement, as ambiguous (and sometimes retrograde) as their agendas may appear to be.

The chapters are organized along three thematic clusters. The first cluster (chapters 1, 2, and 3 by Tova Höjdestrand, Olena Strelnyk, and Ina Dimitrova, respectively) examines conservative parental activist groups in Russia, Ukraine and Bulgaria. Especially the chapters dealing with Russia and the Ukraine show that this type of social activism, although most immediately concerned with the welfare of children and parents, i.e. what is generally regarded as the private sphere, is connected to much broader political discourses and public issues in their respective countries. These include questions all the way from sexual education in schools and fears about homosexuality to national sovereignty and geopolitical considerations regarding the EU and the West in general.

The theme linking the second section of the volume (chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, by Elżbieta Korolczuk/Renata E. Hryciuk, Pelle Åberg/Johnny Rodin, Iman Karzabi, and Steven Saxonberg, respectively) is the activism of fathers' groups in Poland, Russia, Ukraine, and the Czech Republic. It is interesting to see some common threads regarding gender policies and misogyny between the Polish case and comparable groups in various Western countries, including Canada, but also significant differences in the focus of fathers' groups from one country to the other, from the conservative-nationalist tone of the Polish activists and anti-feminist sentiments of Czech fathers' groups to the progressive (mainly urban middle-class based) daddy-schools in Russia (Saint Petersburg).

The third and last part of the book (chapters 8, 9, 10, and 11) is concerned with parental groups' resistance of state-imposed medical and healthcare structures and practices, such as mandatory vaccination in the Czech Republic (Jaroslava Hasmanová Marhánková), the situation of children with disabilities in the three Baltic states (Egle Sumskiene), and alternative childbirth movements in the Czech Republic (Ema Hrešanová) and in Hungary (Katalin Fábián). Fábián's chapter is particularly interesting as it demonstrates the transnational profile of the Hungarian home-birth movement through the case of Dr. Geréb.

In the conclusion, the editors summarize their book's findings and reflect on its theoretical contributions regarding a more nuanced definition of civil society, one that would take into account the complex political developments and realities of post-communist countries while still remain in a dialogue with Western liberal ideas. Although the parental movements discussed in the collection certainly have their local specificities contingent on their particular historical and cultural differences, the discourses they use and many of their aspects and concerns demonstrate that there are also significant commonalities between them, and also between them and similar groups in the so-called West. Studying post-communist civil society can thus help us see how interconnected the contemporary globalized world is without taking away from local specificities and concerns.

Extensively researched, with a very solid literature review to support and explain the positions of the editors and the volume's contributors and how their research differs from and builds on existing scholarship, this volume will be an important addition not only to any university library collection but also a valuable reading both for scholars researching the impact of globalization on gender and civil society and for any undergraduate or graduate course dealing not only with Central and Eastern Europe but gender studies in general.

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Ernő Munkácsi. *How It Happened: Documenting the Tragedy of Hungarian Jewry*. Trans. Péter Balikó Lengyel. Ed. Nina Munk. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018. 396 pages. ISBN 978-0-7735-5512-9

Edited by Nina Munk, and with introductory essays by historians Ferenc Laczó and Susan Papp, Ernő Munkácsi's *How It Happened: Documenting the Tragedy of Hungarian Jewry* is an important contribution to the history of the Holocaust in Hungary. First published in Hungarian in 1947, *How It Happened* stands as an early and very important assessment of the destruction of Hungarian Jewry during World War II. Trained as a lawyer, Munkácsi served as chief secretary of the Central Jewish Council in Budapest from Spring to mid-October 1944, and was in a unique position after the war to write of his experience during the Holocaust, and to reflect on the actions (and non-actions) of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders alike. Making extensive use of documents that had survived the war, Munkácsi not only explores the broader historical forces that culminated in the genocide of Hungary's Jews, but also recounts the confused, painful, and often absurd day-to-day decisions that Jews were forced to make, both individually and collectively, as the horror of the Holocaust unfolded around them. Part critical analysis and part memoir, Munkácsi's account examines the complex array of "choiceless choices" that he and the members of his community faced, and in so doing provides an intimate if often tortured narrative that deserves to be read alongside other similar examples of Holocaust life-writing, such as Adam Czerniakow's Warsaw Ghetto diary, or Béla Zsolt's memoir *Nine Suitcases* (which was first published in serial form between May 1946 and February 1947).

What will no doubt strike the reader from the outset is Munkácsi's critical and perhaps controversial assessment of the role that the Jewish community played in laying the groundwork for their own destruction. Munkácsi argues that internal divides combined with a "sense of inertia" prevented Hungarian Jews from acting collectively and decisively in the face of the Nazi threat. It was, in other words, not just political division and disorganization within the community that sealed their fate, but also the detached and myopic stance of the Jewish leadership. Arguing that the vast majority of the Jewish leadership

stood “aloof” from the broader community they should have been serving, Munkácsi concludes that the inevitable gulf between Jewish leaders and their people “prevented [them] in the most critical hours from being able to exercise control over the large masses of Jews, let alone influence their actions in any meaningful way” (10). Noting that the Zionists were the only ones to fully realize and appreciate “the sheer magnitude of the historic juncture around the corner” (15), Munkácsi chastises other Jewish leaders who should have seen the writing on the wall, and who should have done more for their people. “History rarely produces accidents,” he writes, and thus “those familiar with the woes and problems of Hungarian Jewry should have been able to realize decades earlier that the tragedy would inevitably happen” (9).

The sense of inertia and tendency towards inaction that Munkácsi identifies in the very first pages of his account are themes that he returns to throughout the book, noting not only that many Jews, and especially the most assimilated, had wrongly convinced themselves that they held a special position within Hungarian society and were thus “safe,” but also that the Jewish leadership had for decades proven itself reluctant to stand up to a series of affronts and assaults, and that they had chosen instead to suffer “a quick succession of fatal blows in meek surrender” (148). Failed by its leaders, and split along social, political, geographical, and religious lines, the Jewish community within Hungary lacked both the solidarity and foresight needed to meet the combined challenges of Hungarian antisemitism and Nazi terror. By retreating into a politics of inaction, Jewish leaders put blind faith in the hope that Hungary would prove an “exception” during the war, and that it would remain a “tiny foothold of an island in a sea of devastation” (12). Forced after the German invasion of Hungary in March 1944 to confront the horrors of Hitler’s Final Solution, the leadership nevertheless continued to “fumble” by continuing its policy “of salvaging what it could” (65). Failing to deviate from an earlier path, Jewish leaders instead chose to follow the path of least resistance, clutching to the futile hope that they would escape their fate if they simply obeyed the commands of their executioners.

Though much of Munkácsi’s account focuses on analyzing — and perhaps rationalizing — the inaction and ineffectiveness of the Jewish leadership during the Holocaust, the book itself is testament to the cruelty perpetrated by Nazi genocidaires and their Hungarian collaborators. As important as it was for Munkácsi to account for and

understand Jewish decisions and (in)action, he is nevertheless very clear that Hungarian Jews would never have been forced to confront and ultimately live with the legacy of the “choiceless choices” presented to them by the architects of the Holocaust in Hungary were it not for the intent and behavior of perpetrators whose culpability should never be forgotten or underestimated. Munkácsi writes very clearly of the “devilish cunning and unscrupulous hypocrisy” (17) of the occupying Germans, noting that the actions taken by the Nazis were both cold and calculated. He is perhaps even more critical of the Hungarians who collaborated with the Nazis, noting that German testimony immediately following the war “revealed that the Gestapo had been so massively understaffed in Hungary that they simply would not have been able to carry out the deportations from the provinces without the assistance of the Hungarian Gendarmerie” (132). Having been abandoned by the Hungarian government, Jews were “at the mercy of their enemies,” a fact that rendered Jewish resistance increasingly difficult, if not impossible, especially when combined with the ineffective actions and misguided decisions of the Jewish leadership.

It is important to point out that Munkácsi does not consider all Hungarians to be equally culpable or responsible for the fate of the Jews in Hungary, though he does make it clear that a broader shift within Hungarian society in the wake of World War I made it very difficult, if not impossible, for non-Jewish Hungarians to act in a way that would have mitigated or prevented the atrocities that were committed during World War II. Pointing to the role of the churches during the “so-called Christian Era” — that is, the Horthy Era from 1919 to 1944 — Munkácsi claims that the clergy, alongside outspoken Christian writers and politicians, contributed greatly to the erosion of liberal structures and practices, and also to the deteriorating relationship between Hungary’s Jewish and non-Jewish communities. Articles published in newspapers by “the lesser clergy with the purpose of inciting hatred against the Jewry,” for example, coupled with Christian politicians (many of them priests) who “distinguished themselves as ardent anti-Semites” in the National Assembly as early as the 1920s served to displace and stigmatize Hungarian Jews in the interwar period (160). Despite the “heroic struggles” of some Christians, Hungary’s Jewish community obviously could not be saved, though Munkácsi is quick to point out that a different path would have been very difficult to forge given the antisemitic conditions prevailing in Hungary at the time. He concludes, however, that “had the churches

evinced more verve, courage, and resolve, they would have been able to point the way out of the cataclysm for those Hungarians who had not been tainted by fascism" (173).

Particularly haunting in light of Munkácsi's assessment of the lack of effective resistance on the part of Jews and "righteous Christians" alike is his analysis of the appearance and reception in Hungary of the Auschwitz Protocols in 1944. Though these Protocols provided a clear description of the concentration camp and its horrors, Munkácsi suggests that their dissemination in Hungary did not embolden the resistance of Jews or righteous Christians as "neither side had the strength to act." Likening the Holocaust in Hungary to the terminal phase of a disease, Munkácsi concludes: "Never before had we glimpsed the true depth of the abyss, to the brink of which we had been pushed by twenty-five years of antisemitism, the plague spread by the anti-Jewish laws, a shackled press, and everything that every Hungarian government from Gömbös to Sztójay stood for. Most of the country had fallen for the fascist propaganda, and could hardly wait for the next anti-Jewish measure to be issued. They were eager to witness the progress of deportations from the provinces and, more important, eager to finally lay their hands on what mattered to them most: their share of the spoils" (131-132).

Writing in the immediate wake of the Holocaust, Munkácsi was convinced that "a full balance of accounts" would emerge with the passing of time. He was confident that future generations of Hungarians would be able to trace out a much fuller picture of the tragedy he had just lived through, and that a more accurate understanding of the intent and actions of "the real makers of history" would ultimately emerge (65). Yet, a full seventy-five years later, scholars still debate the difficult questions raised by commentators like Munkácsi, and have yet to agree on what course of action Jews and their allies might have taken to alter the fate of those who suffered and perished during the Holocaust. Hungarian society, moreover, still struggles to recognize and account for its own role in the Holocaust, a task made all the more difficult by a current regime bent on burying rather than understanding certain aspects of the nation's past. For these reasons alone, *How It Happened* is a welcomed and important addition to the history of the Holocaust, both in Hungary and in general.

Nina Munk has done an excellent job as editor in assembling a team of scholars capable of putting Munkácsi's work in historical

context. Though short and to the point, Papp's essay provides just enough information on the life and times of Munkácsi to help provide the reader with a clear sketch of the world that he and his family inhabited. Laczó's essay, in turn, offers nuanced insight into Munkácsi's text, and helps to situate his observations and conclusions in a critical historiographical context. Regardless of whether the reader empathizes with Munkácsi's situation, or dismisses his analysis as an attempt to distance himself from the actions of the Central Jewish Council that he served during the Holocaust, his account is a painful reflection on how difficult it is to see a dangerous situation "properly," and how profoundly challenging it is to organize and mobilize people quickly and effectively against such a profound existential threat. Beyond its value as a primary source, Munkácsi's account is compelling as a human story, and will no doubt prove to be provocative reading for students, scholars, and the general public alike.

Steven Jobbitt
Lakehead University

Books received:

Péter Krekó and Attila Juhász. *The Hungarian Far Right: Social Demand, Political Supply, and International Context*. Stuttgart: ibidem Verlag, 2018. Paper, 268 pages.

Our journal plans to publish a review of this book in its 2019 volume.

An Obituary

Hungarian Studies Review, Vol. XLV, Nos. 1-2 (Spring-Fall, 2018)

Obituary

Steven Béla Várdy (1935 – 2018)

Béla Várdy, a.k.a. Steven B. Várdy, was Professor of History and McNulty Distinguished Professor of History at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. He was born in Bercel, Nógrád County, in what is now northern Hungary — and came to the United States with his parents in 1951. He received his education in his native country, in Germany and in the United States — where he earned a doctoral degree at Indiana University. He taught at Duquesne University for five decades. For some time he acted as chairman of his department and was one of the most prolific of its members. A selective list of his publications in English alone fills more than 30 pages (see Richard Mulcahy, ed. *Hungary Through the Centuries: Studies in Honor of Professors Steven Béla Várdy and Agnes Huszár Várdy*, [Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2011, pp. 563-594]. One of the most widely used of Dr. Várdy's books is probably his *Historical Dictionary of Hungary* (Lanham, Md.: the Scarecrow Press, 1997, 812 pages). According to the website worldcat.org Várdy's books — at least one of them — can be found in close to 4,000 libraries world wide. More than a dozen of Várdy's publications have appeared over the decades in our journal — some of them co-written with his wife Agnes Huszár Várdy who taught at Pittsburgh's Robert Morris College (later University).

What made Professor Várdy different from many other Hungarian university teachers who lived and taught in the United States was the emphasis he placed on ties to his native land. Throughout his professional career he regularly visited Hungary, cultivated scholarly contacts there, and kept publishing in the Magyar language. Even his *magnum opus* appeared there: *Magyarok az Újvilágban — Hungarians in the New World* (Budapest: A Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága, 2000, 840 pages). He often declared his wish that, after his

death, he would like to rest in Hungarian soil. His wish was granted. He died, after a long struggle with diseases of old age, in July, 2018, a few days after he returned to his native land for the last time. With his passing, our journal lost one of its most productive contributors.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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