

The Arrow Cross.
The Ideology of Hungarian Fascism.
-A conceptual approach-

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Introduction

I arrived in Budapest in the beginning of 2007, as an MA student at the CEU, to an atmosphere of tension and discontent. Hungary, by that time, was gripped by a recession and a general dissatisfaction with the powers that be coming from a significant section of the population. The loss of credibility of the political left, and the subsequent rise of the right-wing, in its conservative and far right manifestations, was palpable. As a Hungarian coming from the diaspora, I had the quality of a semi-outsider, and had a unique perspective, being accustomed to Hungarian culture, but not its contemporary politics. I could not help notice the situation, and contrast it to that of my native country, Romania, where the far right had all but died out as a political phenomenon. As a historian, I attempted to interpret the situation in a diachronic manner, comparing past situations to the present. As asymmetrical as these comparisons were, they opened up my interest in investigating a hitherto under-researched area, that of the far right and fascist ideologies in interwar Hungary. These past political projects were conspicuously present in the symbolism and legitimacy of the contemporary far right, which glorified the interwar period. Reading further into the material that became available to me, I came across certain trends of interpretations that seemed implausible and anachronistic (see the literature review). Beyond simple intellectual curiosity toward the topic, I attempted to explain the apparent populist and mimetic leftist rhetoric of both the interwar fascism and contemporary far right.

The dissertation is structured into three major chapters, which constitute the body of the thesis. The first chapter is dedicated to explaining the current state of the research on the topic, and attempts to place my work within the major international historiographic debates on the subject of fascism. It also provides the reader with the needed socio-political context, in order to show the political, intellectual and social background which gave birth to fascist ideology in Hungary. This also includes external influences, for I have partly explained the phenomenon as a product of domestic tendencies and adaption of foreign ideologies. The second chapter contains the actual results of my research, structured into four major sub-chapters, each dedicated to a certain group of ideas or concepts. In the first sub-chapter, I attempted to discuss the attempt of interwar fascism to create a certain type of national community through discourse and practice, and to define the nation on ethno-racial terms, all the while attempting to place Hungary as high up as possible in a European new world order. Closely following this, the second part of the chapter discusses the role of the narrative of leadership and charisma in creating hierarchies of power within state and society. These hierarchies were formed a binomial between leadership and the people, who were also given an important role, as fascism attempted to level social difference in favor of an organic community of the people, with a singular leader. This kind of definition of the people constitutes the topic of my third subchapter. The final sub-chapter of the second part of the thesis analyzes the narrative in which these concepts of people, nation, and leader were arranged. The narrative theorizing was disguised as historicist, but ultimately was an a-historic and anti-historic theory. The Hungarian nation would enter into a new phase of existence that would constitute the end of history, a sort of perpetual golden age. In the final chapter, I provided the conclusions to my work.

Fascism in Hungarian historical writing

Compared to the vast literature on German National Socialism or Italian and even French fascism, a literature review of the scientific works on the topic of Hungarian fascism is a somewhat brief task, but at the same time it speaks volumes about the politics of memory in the country in the last 5-6 decades. The topic of fascism in Hungary was a problematic one to deal with and process both during communism and democracy, a dark chapter of history which was in turn condemned, forgotten, deemed an aberration or utilized for political legitimation. Due to the prevalence of these attitudes, there was little serious or independent (unmarred by politics) analysis of the phenomenon up to the present, with a few notable exceptions. This is evident if we undertake a short history of the histories of Hungarian fascism.

The first works that started to deal with and tried to make sense of the brutality and apparent insanity of the Szálasi state appeared in the immediate wake of the fall of the fascist regime in Hungary. The most significant of these was the work of Márton Himler, a Hungarian-American journalist of Jewish origin, who had direct access to Szálasi in 1945, as he was part of the American OSS team which captured and repatriated the former fascist dictator. He questioned and took the statements of Szálasi during his investigation, and gathered invaluable data on his personal attitude toward politics, nationalism and especially the anti-Semitic crimes perpetrated during his time in power. The results of his work appeared much later, in 1958, under

the title “The face of the gravediggers of the Hungarian nation¹”. He was also examined by the psychologist Pál Gartner². A little later, during his detainment preceding arraignment for his trial, the authorities also attempted to confront Szálasi with his crimes, taking him on a tour of the ruins of Budapest, from which the statement, the notes of the trip from his prison diary and a number of photos survive³. The opinions in all reflect him rebuffing any responsibility and maintaining his radical nationalist stance until the end; the authors of the materials therefore considered him a pathological case, and gave his actions a clinical psychiatric interpretation. This gave rise to the first scheme of understanding the fascist regime, which on the one hand, divested a lot of what happened onto the actions of the leader, and on the other, underlined the deeply irrational, pathological nature of the regime. The idea was that it had been a regime that had come into power during extraordinary circumstances (the war, Soviet invasion), via the action of a foreign power (Nazi Germany) and was essentially made up of a political riff-raff of insane persons. This is a seductively simple explanation, which is still championed today by some professional historians (I have also run into this interpretation during academic forums). This explanation also bears the error of minimizing the domestic responsibility for the crimes that occurred, and gives them an external tinge, as if the 1938 anti-Semitic laws and the ghettoization of Jews did not exist prior to 1944. It also does not explain anything, and does not show the deep roots of Hungarian fascism and far right anti-Semitism which in actuality began in the 1920’s.

Proper histories of fascism and national socialist politics in Hungary started to appear soon after this, as professional scholarship began to turn its attention toward the phenomenon.

¹ Marton Himler, *Így Néztek Ki a Magyar Nemzet Sírásói : A Magyar Háborús Bűnösök Amerikaiak Előtt Tett Vallomásának Hiteles Szövege* (New York: St. Marks Print. Co., 1958).

² Rudolf Paksa, *Szálasi Ferenc És a Hungarizmus* (Jaffa Kiado, 2013)., p. 192

³ Ibid., p. 188; L Karsai, “Tetemrehívás,” *Rubicon*, October 1992.

The first such work of any significance was written by Jenő Lévai, a left-leaning journalist and writer⁴, who was a pioneer in two significant ways: he was the first one to write a long-term history of all of the most important Hungarian fascist movements, stretching back to the late 1920's; secondly, he was the first to gather data on all of these movements and synthesize them in a coherent manner in his book entitled "Swastika, Scythe Cross, Arrow Cross"⁵. The book however, is a largely descriptive work, with an important addendum of historical documents; the interpretation has to be read between the lines. What we can ascertain is, however, very shallow and largely follows the scheme laid out in above. Almost all of the fascist leaders are either ridiculed for their stupidity and ineptness, or accused of not being actually ethnic Hungarians: Mecsár and Meskó were Slovaks, Ulain, Gömbös and others Germans, Szálasi was Armenian, the Arrow Cross was infiltrated by ethnic Germans and Swabians, et cetera. Lévai starts his book by documenting actual and supposed public and secret meetings between Hungarian and German national socialists, and suggests that all of the other Hungarian fascist parties were under Nazi control or influence. This reading of history placed a lot of blame in the wrong hands, and led the investigation down a blind alley, for the book was highly influential on Hungarian and international historiography, by securing the status of the single workable synthesis on the topic for at least a decade.

The first book to give a balanced treatment to the theme of the Hungarian far right generally, and to the fascist movements within the country, specifically was Carlile Aylmer Macartney's "October Fifteenth: A History of Modern Hungary, 1929-1945"⁶. The book is a larger synthesis, spanning two volumes, dedicated to the history of the Hungarian state in

⁴ Ágnes Kenyeres, "Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon, 1900-1990," n.d., <http://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC09006/09443.htm>

⁵ Jenő Lévai, *Horogkereszt, Kaszáskereszt, Nyilaskereszt* (Budapest: Müller, 1945).

⁶ Carlile Aylmer Macartney, *October 15th: A History of Modern Hungary, 1929-1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1956).

general, but consecrates a large chunk of several chapters to the history of the Hungarian far right. Macartney was a Northern Irish historian who had extensive knowledge of Hungary and Central Europe in general, and may be considered the counterpart of Robert W. Seton-Watson⁷, inasmuch as he always had a positive attitude toward Hungary in his most important writings. The British historian was in direct contact with many of the politicians of the Horthy regime during their time in exile in Vienna in 1918-1919, and tended to give precedence to Hungarian rhetoric on Central Europe on a number of subject; this is most evident in his moderate revisionist critique of the Versailles/Trianon system in East Central Europe in his works *Hungary and her successors* (1937) and *Problems of the Danube basin* (1942)⁸. In them, he highlighted the numerous problems of treaty violations concerning the good treatment of minorities, and suggested a reform of the Paris system based on appeasing at least some of the Hungarian claims⁹.

Macartney, however leaning toward the Hungarians, was the first one to trace the continuity between Gömbös, the freecorps- and racial defense-far right of the 1920's to the later phenomenon of Szálasi's Arrow Cross. He correctly showed the partly symbiotic, partly rivaling relationship between central authority and the fascist opposition. What Macartney also highlighted was the gradual push toward the far fringes of right wing which this interaction elicited, during the reign of Gömbös, toward Imrédy and then ending up with Szálasi. The faults of the work are the lack of deep exploration of the ideology and praxis, the lack of linkage between Hungarian political culture and fascism, and the basically descriptive nature; the book

⁷ Lojtkó, "C.A. Macartney and Central Europe."

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

was on the other hand, never intended to be an analysis of fascism, but a synthesis of a decade and a half of Hungarian history.

Macartney's book proved to be inspirational, mainly due to its international exposure and prestige, rekindling the interest for studies in the field. A few years later, in the 1960's, a number of new works started to appear both in Hungary and abroad. The "enthusiasm" lasted up until the mid-1970's when the subject was relegated to the corpus of forgotten topics of historical research. This increase of interest may be explained by the political event of the 1956 revolution and the subsequent shift in the policies of the communist regime. After 1960, the regime of János Kádár had a direct interest in presenting the 1956 revolution as a fascist coup, or a sort of ultranationalist revolution. This is why many of the books appearing on the topic concentrate on Hungarian fascism in power, and the events before and following October 15th, 1944. A good example of this is the book entitled *A zuglói nyilasper*, which published the court proceedings of a trial of lower Arrow Cross party members during 1966-67; it shows the communist regime's attempt, through the trial, to draw a parallel between the occurrences of the 1956 revolution (hangings, lynchings of security services' staff) and the lynchings, disorders and mass murder perpetrated by the Hungarian fascists two decades earlier¹⁰.

In 1962, Rozsnyói Ágnes published her work, entitled "The Szálasi putsch¹¹"; she deemed the fascist movement in Hungary as an unimportant phenomenon, concentrating only on the events around the coup d'état which thrust the Arrowcross party to power. In many ways, her descriptive work did not accord enough importance to the movements, being more about the last days of the Hungarian participation in the Second World War, than anything else. The book can

¹⁰ Miklós Szabó, "A Zuglói Nyilasper | Beszélő," accessed April 13, 2015, <http://beszelo.c3.hu/cikkek/a-zugloi-nyilasper>.

¹¹ Ágnes Rozsnyói, *October Fifteenth, 1944: History of Szálasi Putsch* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1961); Ágnes Rozsnyói, *A Szálasi-Puccs* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1962).

be described together with its counterpart, which appeared almost 12 years later, Teleki Éva's "Arrow Cross Rule in Hungary¹²". Both are highly descriptive, and give most of their attention to the political and military events which occurred from Hungary's occupation by Germany to the last days of the Szálasi government. However, Teleki had learned the lessons from Rozsnyói's earlier mistakes, and gave an interpretative framework for the rise to power of what she called "far right fascism¹³". Its source was orthodox Stalinist dogma: she correctly established the connection between the far right of the early days of the White Terror and its fascist descendants, but Teleki put a sign of equality between them. For it, the two were the same, fascism being just another manifestation of the reactionary classes and the military caste, trying to fool the masses into helping it them secure political power¹⁴. She claimed that fascism only reached power due to the extraordinary circumstances of the war, and in any case, it was supported by the reactionary classes and the lumpen-proletariat¹⁵. In the end, her interpretation, even if we chose to accept it, only explains part of the story, and is highly open to questioning.

In 1963, Szakács Kálmán published his book "The Scythe Cross", a brief, but exhaustive case-study of the earliest example Hungarian fascist movement with any measure of success. To this day, most of the work holds up, and its conclusions ring true. Szakács argued that the reason for the success of Böszörmény Zoltán's party in the rural areas of Hungary was due to the rampant poverty in the area, the lack of political connection between the peasants and the ruling elites in Budapest, and the fact that left-wing parties did not and could not campaign efficiently in the villages. This is the weakest leg of the argument, for he only considered the Social-Democratic Party, and spoke of the forceful curtailment of its activism in the countryside. The

¹² Éva Teleki, *Nyilas Uralom Magyarországon : 1944. Október 16- 1945. április 4.* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1974).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 56-57

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57-58

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 61

truth is that the Social-Democratic Party was, by its nature, a reformed Marxist political formation and its ideology imposed little campaigning in the villages, concentrating instead on the urban proletariat. The real loser of the Horthy regime was Nagyatádi Szabó's Smallholder Party, which was swallowed up into the government party of Bethlen due to its own faulty politics. The Hungarian historian also correctly identified the provenience and main elements of the Scythe Cross ideology: the nationalist and chauvinism of the interwar far right, the cult of personality, and German National Socialism, all blended together with elements lifted from religious cults and millenarian movements. The author also explained the "flaming out" of the movement by likening it to peasant revolts, which either broke up upon reaching their goals or upon losing it.

A year later, in 1964, and subsequently, in 1965, international scholarship gave its answer to Hungarian historiography. This was done in the pioneering work of Eugen Weber and Hans Rogger, which for the first time, attempted to write a comparative history of European fascism. The books functioned on the "checklist method" of defining the concept of fascism, by identifying its main ideological components. This was a daunting task, since they attempted to do so in no less than eight¹⁶ countries, in the "Varieties of fascism"¹⁶ and eleven, in "The European Right"¹⁷. The main points of contention were the racialism of German Nazism, which the two struggled to explain, calling it a "red herring". The works also struggled to make sense of the social demagogy of fascism, and overall, their concept of "extreme right" was extremely porous. Nevertheless, the books were written by specialists of the field such as Eugen Weber, a Romanian-American historian of high caliber, and featured articles by Hungarian political

¹⁶ Eugen Weber, *Varieties of Fascism: Doctrines of Revolution in the Twentieth Century*, Van Nostrand Anvil Books (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1964), <https://books.google.ro/books?id=sFmGAAAAMAAJ>.

¹⁷ Hans Rogger and Eugen J Weber, *The European Right: A Historical Profile* (University of California Press, 1965), <https://books.google.ro/books?id=RUErSj8Z86IC>.

scientist István Deák. The main fault of the works, besides a theoretical scheme which was too broad, is the fact that they were highly tributary to secondary literature, and had very scarce access to primary sources.

This was not the case in Hungary, though, where the limitations came from eschewing the censorship of the regime. A historian had to work broadly within the Marxist blueprints, in order to have his/her work published. A scholar who did this balancing act masterfully was Miklós Lackó; he was to become one of the first historians of political ideas in Hungary, and cut his teeth by writing on the topic of Hungarian fascism in the mid-1960's. He wrote two works in the mid-1960's, entitled "The social bases of Hungarian national socialism¹⁸" and "Arrow Cross men, national socialists¹⁹". The works, which also appeared in English, investigated the fascist movements of interwar Hungary from a number of viewpoints: social, political, and cultural. Lackó, working from a Marxist perspective, theorized that the social bases of fascism of Hungary were made up of three main categories: the reactionary holders of medium-sized properties and land, the military-bureaucratic-bourgeois caste, and the industrialist-capitalist bourgeoisie²⁰. This was a dogmatic explanation, but later in the work Lackó attempted to suggest that the movements had real mass support, by capitalizing on public discontent and by coalescing the declassed elements of aristocracy, the military-bureaucratic bloc and the petty bourgeoisie. The work was the first one to concentrate on the Szálasi movement, and give a concrete history of all of its facets, breakups and its road to power. Lackó also wrote an introductory history into

¹⁸ Miklós Lackó, *Vázlat a Szélsőjobboldali Mozgalmak Társadalmi Hátteréről Magyarországon Az 1930-as években* (Budapest: Akadémiai Nyomda, 1963).; Miklós Lackó, "The Social Roots of Hungarian Fascism: The Arrow Cross," in *Who Were the Fascists? : Social Roots of European Fascism*, ed. Jan Petter Myklebust Stein Ugelvik Larsen, Bernt Hagtvet (Bergen ; Oslo ; Tromsø: Universitetsforl., 1980), 395–400.

¹⁹ Miklós Lackó, *Nyilasok, Nemzetiszocialisták : 1935-1944* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1963).; M Lackó, *Arrow-Cross Men, National Socialists, 1935-1944*, Studia Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Akadémiai Kiadó, 1969).

²⁰ Lackó, *Nyilasok, Nemzetiszocialisták : 1935-1944.*, p. 8-9

the origins of the ideology of Hungarism in his work, tracing the elements of Szálasi's thought. He brought all the attention of a professional historian to the topic.

The most seminal occidental book written on the topic was published in 1970 by Nicholas Nagy-Talavera. Entitled "The Green Shirts and the others"²¹, it was (and still is) among the few attempts to write a comparative history of two contemporary fascist movements of East Central Europe. The author was a Hungarian-Jewish historian from Transylvania, who, through his upbringing, had unique access to both Romanian and Hungarian sources, and had an unique affinity and sensitivity toward the subject, being a former Holocaust and Gulag survivor, and even met Romanian fascist leader Corneliu Zelea Codreanu on one occasion. Talavera traced the history of ideas of nationalism that led to the development of Szálasi's ideology of nationalism, and treated explored his ideas of nation quite extensively, while at the same time writing a political history of the movement. He was also the first to theorize that one of the reasons for the emergence of fascism in both Hungary and Romania was the loss of credibility of both democracy and communism²², combined with a political culture steeped in demagoguery and nationalism. The Great War and the Great Crash of 1929 served as catalysts²³. In 1971, Hungarian-American historian Peter F. Sugar edited the first comparative history of Eastern European fascisms, entitled "Native Fascism in the Successor States"²⁴. It filled in some of the gaps left by Talavera, by providing an inkling into the social bases and mass support of fascism in Hungary. Sugar was a well-known expert on South-East and Central European nationalism, who wrote and edited almost a dozen works on the subject, and he employed the budding social

²¹ Nicholas M Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania*, Veritas (The Center for Romanian Studies (Iasi)) (Center for Romanian Studies, 2001).

²² *Ibid.*, p. 75

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 83

²⁴ Péter F. Sugár, *Native Fascism in the Successor States: 1918-1945* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 1971).

and economic historian György Ránki to write one of the chapters on Hungary, and fellow luminary George Bárány to write the other. Ránki concentrated on the social roots, while the latter compiled a political history. Ránki was the first to show concrete evidence of the mass support that existed for the Arrow Cross Party around 1938-39, by analyzing evidence from the voting patterns in the elections of 1939, in another book published in the West, under the coordination of Larsen and Hagtvet²⁵. He disclosed that even “Red Csepel” a working-class borough of Budapest, which was staunchly leftist, had voted massively for the Arrow Cross²⁶. However, Ranki still refused to break completely with the theory of fascism being a petty bourgeois phenomenon, and did not seem to differentiate at all between the different far right elements in interwar Hungary (Gömbös, The Awakening Hungarians, Imrédy, Szálasi etc.). He contended that the Arrow Cross and other such political movements were led by a petty bourgeois and military element, which ultimately defined the nature of the parties. This argument may be convincing, however Ránki and others of his generation gave little further direct attention to the topic of fascism and its social roots in Hungary. Berend, Ránki and others of his generation were system builders, studying overarching social, economic and political structures and conditions, and were not prone to case studies. The two were in contact with Occidental leftist scholarship, Ránki participating in the German paradigm shift of the “new social history” (The Bielefeld School), publishing books on comparative history with the likes of Jürgen Kocka²⁷. This explains much of his nuanced opinions on the topic of the social support of Hungarian fascism.

²⁵ Stein U Larsen, Berndt Hagtvet, and J P Myklebust, *Who Were the Fascists: Social Roots of European Fascism*, A Scandinavian University Press Publication (Universitetsforlaget, 1980).

²⁶ M Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

²⁷ J Kocka, G Ránki, and Magyar Tudományos Akadémia. Történettudományi Intézet, *Economic Theory and History: [papers Presented... at the Eight International History Congress Held in Budapest in 1982]*, Institute for History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Akadémiai Kiadó, 1985).

The most important corpus of published documents we probably owe to the pioneering work of Elek Karsai. Between 1977 and 1988, he published three books, dedicated to the trials of Szálasi and his cronies, and to Szálasi's hitherto unpublished diary²⁸. Karsai was one of the prime ideologues and specialists of the Kádár regime on the topic of far right and Holocaust. Therefore, his demarche was primarily political, a drive not to analyze, but to memorialize and condemn the phenomenon of fascism and its consequences in Hungary. Therefore, there is little analysis, and a lot of raw data in his works. Karsai characterized Szálasi's ideology as a mix between violent anti-Semitism, irrationality and an attempt aping and reproducing Hitler's charismatic politics in Hungary²⁹.

His work was taken up and continued by his son, Karsai László, who brought the topic to international attention, contributing with book chapters and articles to a number of international works³⁰. Karsai László later wrote a series of articles in the popular historical magazine *Rubicon* dedicated to Szálasi, which did much to clarify his ideology and reopen the public discussion on the subject³¹. On the whole, however, the Hungarian historian concentrated his efforts on researching the topic of the general conditions that led to the Holocaust in Hungary, and interpreted the Arrow Cross party as an element (albeit the most important one) of that historical phenomenon. Karsai's work may be integrated in the general field of Holocaust studies, rather than fascism studies.

²⁸ Elek Karsai, *A Budai Vartol a Gyepüig, 1941-1945* (Budapest: Tancsics, 1965); Elek Karsai and László Karsai, *A Szálasi per* (Budapest: Reform Lap- és Könyvkiadó, 1988); E Karsai, *Ítélt a Nép*, Népszerű Történelem (Budapest: Kossuth, 1977); E Karsai, F Szálasi, and E Szuhay-Havas, "Szálasi Naplója": *A Nyilasmozgalom a II. Világháború Idején* (Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1978).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9

³⁰ Randolph L Braham and S Miller, *The Nazis' Last Victims: The Holocaust in Hungary*, Holocaust in Hungary (Wayne State University Press, 1998).

³¹ Karsai, "Tetemrehívás."

A number of other authors also published smaller, companion works on the topic of the trials³² and on the topic of Szálasi's prison diary, the last appearing in 1997³³. The introduction to this book contains what I consider to be the best and most succinct introduction to the history of the Arrow Cross movement and Szálasi's ideology, written by Péter Sipos.

The historiography of fascism in Hungary transformed only somewhat after 1989, and has not progressed much in quality. Only a handful of works appeared on the subject. Aside from those already mentioned, the only ones worth noting belong to János Pelle³⁴, and those edited by Romsics Ignác³⁵. Tibor Tóth has written a simple book on the post-war Hungarian émigrés, which has some limitations in the source material³⁶. The most important work done in this field since 1990 has been done by Rudolf Paksa, a young historian, who has written two seminal works. The first is political profile of Szálasi, complete with the most ample biography ever committed to paper³⁷. The author of the book utilized extensive archival material, and painstakingly trawled Szálasi's numerous diaries, personal writings and ramblings to produce the outline of the dictator's mind which is unparalleled. The work is significant also due to the fact that it is the first(!) academic work dedicated solely to Szálasi. The second part of Paksa's work is his extensive political history of Hungarian fascism, entitled "Hungarian National Socialists". The work features his already-mentioned attention to detail and extensive use of source material, and is completed by never-before published samples of source material, and a small dictionary of fascist movements and people. At the present time, I consider it the primer on the topic of the

³² János Sólyom and L Szabó, *A Zuglói Nyilasper* (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1967). T Zinner and P Róna, *Szálasiék Bilincsben* (Lapkiadó Vállalat, 1986).

³³ Ferenc Szálasi, Tamás Csiffáry, and Péter Sipos, *Szálasi Ferenc Börtönnaplója 1938-1940* (Budapest Főváros Levéltára, 1997), <http://books.google.ro/books?id=Bz16AAAAMAAJ>.

³⁴ János Pelle, *Sowing the Seeds of Hatred: Anti-Jewish Laws and Hungarian Public Opinion, 1938-1944*, East European Monographs (Boulder: Columbia University Press, 2004).

³⁵ Ignác Romsics and Balázs Ablonczy, *A Magyar Jobboldali Hagyomány, 1900-1948* (Osiris, 2009).

³⁶ Tibor Tóth, *A Hungarista Mozgalom Emigrációtörténete* (Debrecen: Multiplex Media, 2008).

³⁷ Paksa, *Szálasi Ferenc és a Hungarizmus*.

political history of interwar fascism in Hungary (it is a shame it is not yet translated into a language of international circulation).

A number of important works have appeared on the topic of the proto-fascist and fellow traveler movements and political groups of the Hungarian post-war and interwar period. Béla Bodó's work on the lives, paramilitary and political activity of Pál Prónay³⁸ and Iván Héjjas³⁹ has given precious insight into the militant wing of the radical right in the 1920's and how the carriers and political options of these former freecorps members evolved further. Bodó argues that the paramilitary violence of the early year caused a sort of cul-de-sac evolution in Hungarian politics, in which violence became a legitimate means of conducting politics from the outset. The author believes that this led Hungary down a blind alley, eventually ending in the anti-Semitic violence and Holocaust during World War II. While this seems to be a valid argument, Bodó's work also shows that at least some of these former paramilitary leaders had a different ideological makeup than fascist later developed⁴⁰, retaining conservative leanings to the end. However, others ended up converting to fascism, showing the partial continuity between the two ideological traditions.

Finally, while not directly dedicated to the topic of fascism in Hungary, we must make mention of two of the most important recent authors working on the topic of far-right and anti-Semitism in the interwar period: Krisztián Ungváry and János Gyurgyák. The latter has published over the last decade a series of three books, dedicated to the history of Hungarian

³⁸ Béla Bodó, *Pál Prónay: Paramilitary Violence and Anti-Semitism in Hungary, 1919-1921* (Pittsburgh, PA: Center for East European and Russian Studies, 2011).

³⁹ Béla Bodó, "Iván Héjjas: The Life of a Counterrevolutionary," *East Central Europe* 37, no. 2 (2010): 247–79, doi:10.1163/187633010X535477.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

nationalism, anti-Semitism and to the topic of the interwar radical right⁴¹. This triptych contains the author's basic explanations of the development of far-right ideologies and discourses in modern Hungary. Gyurgyák favors a historization of the problem, going back to the 19th century, and analyzes the roots and diachronic changes of the various concepts of nation, ethnos and „the other”. His is a more-or-less up-to-date approach, in methodological and theoretical terms, to the history of nationalist and radical right-wing discourses, which he analyzes exhaustively. Albeit briefly, he correctly set up a blueprint of the basic elements of Hungarian fascist discourses in the late interwar and wartime periods: biopolitical anti-Semitism, nationalism on a racial basis and social populism with mimetic leftist leanings.

On the other hand, Ungváry Krisztián's latest work⁴², entitled “The verdict on the Horthy-system” has created a large debate among historians. The main contention of the historian is that anti-Semitism in interwar Hungary occurred out of a complex interplay of social, economic and political development, and the resistance to modernity displayed by certain “reactionary” elements of Hungarian society, namely the gentry and to a lesser extent, the aristocracy. The upward mobility and social domination of Jews in certain sectors, created a sort of “dual society”, in which the Jews progressed toward modernity, reaping all the benefits of a modern liberal, capitalist way of life, while the rest of the Hungarian elite remained backward. This imperfect modernization has much in common with Andrew C. Janos' argument⁴³, and ultimately is derived from Daniel Chirot⁴⁴. However, Ungváry deviates from Janos, and makes

⁴¹ János Gyurgyák, *A Zsidókérdés Magyarországon : Politikai Eszmetörténet* (Budapest: Osiris, 2001); János Gyurgyák, *Magyar Fajvédők: Eszmetörténeti Tanulmány* (Budapest: Osiris, 2012). János Gyurgyák, *Ezzé Lett Magyar Hazátok. A Magyar Nemzeteszmé és Nacionalizmus Története* (Budapest: Osiris, 2007).

⁴² Krisztián Ungváry, *A Horthy-Rendszer Mérlege: Diszkrimináció, Szociálpolitika És Antiszemitizmus Magyarországon, 1919-1944* (Budapest: Jelenkor Kiadó, 2013).

⁴³ Andrew C Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945* (Princeton University Press, 2012).

⁴⁴ Daniel Chirot, *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe: Economics and Politics from the Middle Ages Until the Early Twentieth Century*, Acls Humanities E-Book (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991).

the crucial mistake of internalizing some of the ideas and perceptions of his primary sources, believing that the domination of Jews in certain sectors was real, and not just a perception of the times. This creates a problematic position, which is unsustainable, especially in the light of the data put forward by Hungarian social historians. The other problem of his book is that he perceives anti-Semitism as on the one hand institutional project, while on the other, as being a gentry phenomenon. This only explains part of the story, as this thesis shall attempt to show the manner in which anti-systemic discourses were successfully paired with anti-Semitism. The value of the work is that it gives a good description of the political atmosphere of the interwar period, in which anti-Semitism and radical nationalism had created a sort of interpretative scheme, a dogma, and a language, within which each political project had to navigate.

Outside of the two, all of the works directly dedicated to the topic of fascism, published after 1990, exhibit the same problems. The single most significant issue is that they almost completely lack a theoretical basis and a solid methodology, to be expected in modern scholarly products. Ironically, the Marxist and communist materials produced on the topic in the 1960-1980's have a somewhat more sophisticated approach to the subject material, as they actually possess somewhat concrete conclusions and a coherent argumentation (albeit one the author of this thesis might disagree with). The post-communist books all fall back on a pseudo-Rankean scheme of "sine ira et studio" history-writing, which upholds history as the "science of the particular". This however, results in eschewing generalizations to the degree that conclusions are almost left out of the works completely. It may be explained by the laziness of the authors, but in truth, it can probably be chalked up to a loss of quality endemic in the institutions of higher learning not only in Hungary, but all of Eastern Europe, as they become increasingly massified in scope and ossified in leadership. Theorization, the basic goal of any social science, is therefore

missing from the books, and this has consequences on their outside forms. A general sense of confusion dominates, in which terms are not clearly defined, and the reader is left with a sense of having read nothing more than a muddled description. For instance, what is fascism? We are never told. The authors all toy with terms such as far right, right wing, radical right, fascism, national socialism, using them interchangeably, for seemingly varied and different movements and phenomena, often in the same chapter or passage. The objective of the works is therefore lost in translation, and they end up more as narratives, than analysis. Their methodology is restricted solely to empirical study of archive material, which is compiled and synthesized. Part of the reason for why the books fail to provide workable explanations is that they almost all focus mostly on the political history of the movements, and get lost in the details of events, parties and the movement of people. The socio-cultural aspect is left out, and they do not focus at all on ideology as a combination of discourse and practice. Szálasi's and his fellow cronies' activities are detailed in great length, but the motivations for their actions are not truly analyzed, just reproduced in the form of published samples of his writings. The why might be answered if one dissected the elements of the discourses, which are readily available in published documents (press and pamphlets). The inner logic of why the fascist movements behaved as they did is thus revealed, through critical discourse analysis. Critical theory also provides us with a reading of the socio-economic conditions and the frames of political power, which reveals the conditions in which fascist discourses gained ground in Hungary⁴⁵. The base is provided by the ossified social and dire economic conditions of the interwar period, while the superstructure is composed of ideology. It is this kind of interpretation I have ventured to provide in my thesis.

⁴⁵ Theodor W Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Verso Classics (Verso, 1997), <https://books.google.ro/books?id=lwVjsKcHW7cC>.

My thesis seeks to make up the lack of a deep exploration of the ideology of Hungarian fascism, and provide a detailed analysis of its particularities, as filtered through the various examples of its speech: political pamphlets, theoretical works, day-to-day utterances, propaganda and speeches given in various political forums and so forth. I theorize that Hungarian fascist ideology had an inexorable and deep connection with Hungarian political culture in the interwar period. The Hungarian fascist political movements developed their discourse and their system of ideas at the intersection of Hungarian nationalist political lingo and external influences, most notably coming from Germany and Italy, where similar political formations managed to achieve political success and domination. Thusly, my thesis is a history of these ideas, showing their possible proveniences, their mutation over time, and their final form or interpretations (for Hungarian fascism was at most times during its existence, represented by a plurality of parties and movements). I shall attempt to show the various ideas embedded in their particular national, regional and European contexts, and connect my work to the international theoretical debates in the field of fascist studies and 20th century European history.

My work is not an attempt to do a linear, event-based history of the various parties, fringe groups, movements and political figures which self-identified or can be categorized as fascist in Hungary in the 1930-1945 period. This approach has already been taken by other scholars (as we have seen above) and, in my opinion, has yielded very few responses on the nature, character and origins of the phenomenon of interwar Hungarian far right movements and fascism. An exploration into the fascist world of ideas, instead, would lead to a productive debate within the field of Hungarian history and has far-reaching implications for the history of interwar European fascism, as well.

What is fascism? Delimiting the concept

Before embarking on any analysis of the ideology or political impact of fascism in Hungary, a precise definition of the very concept the study is based on is necessary. Without it, the confines of the investigation would not be delimited, and the historian would get lost in the jungle formed by the abundance of far right political groups and movements of interwar Hungary. The search for definition is therefore first of all, a heuristic exercise; in other words it helps guide the research, and should not serve to curtail it.

The definitions of fascism are as old as the phenomenon itself. Among the first very popular ones we may count Dimitrov's theory: he attempted to integrate the then novel political movement into Marxist theory by claiming that it represented the very last stage of finance capitalism, the attempt of its most reactionary elements to halt the progress toward communism⁴⁶. This approach became dogma and dominated the historiography of Eastern Europe after the Second World War. In the West, the concept of totalitarianism sought to bind together the two major enemies of democracy, most significantly in the works of Hannah Arendt's "The Origins of Totalitarianism"⁴⁷, which traced important common elements in the ideology and practices of fascism and communism. Another approach which sought to explain fascism via its proximity to communism was manifested in the works of German historian Ernst Nolte, whose ultimate claim was that the former was caused by the latter⁴⁸. It was a bold revisionist claim which was ultimately successfully refuted in the intellectual phenomena called *Historikerstreit*, which debated the Holocaust and the Nazi past in Germany.

⁴⁶ Georgi Dimitrov, *Selected Works*, vol.2 ed. (Sofia: Sofia Press, 1972).

⁴⁷ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harvest Book, 1973), <http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&btnG=Search&q=intitle:Origins+of+Totalitarianism#0>.

⁴⁸ Francois Furet and Ernst Nolte, *Fascism and Communism*, European Horizons (University of Nebraska Press, 2004), <https://books.google.ro/books?id=UtFCJMuvIRwC>.

Ultimately, the main problem with the academic study of fascism was that it became over-politicized, as in all of the above cases scientific study was part of a political demarche. The field became so polluted, that some in the academic field wondered aloud if the concept was useful anymore. Among the most vocal was Gilbert Allardyce, who in a 1972 essay, declared the term to be too charged to be of any future use⁴⁹.

In the field of historical studies proper, the study of fascism was centered on the study of its ideology, and it was also not making any significant progress. Typical of these approaches are the comparative works of Rogger and Weber⁵⁰, and S.J. Woolf⁵¹. Their most important contribution is the fact that they attempted to broaden the field of study by including important case-studies from Central and Eastern Europe. However, their theoretical approaches consisted of nothing more than empirical study and their comparisons were made up of parallel retellings of the histories of the various European movements. The first to really make an important mark in the field was Stanley G. Payne⁵². He pioneered a definition of fascism based on a list of its most important ideological features. This approach, which I shall dub “the checklist method”, helped to nail down the confines of the most significant fascist ideological tenets, common all across the geographical spectrum. It contributed much toward understanding the outside manifestations of fascist ideology, by putting together a coherent map of its discourse. This diagram of fascist ideology, while explaining the how did not, however, sufficiently explain the why: what was the ideological motivation, the motor behind the development of fascist ideology, and what was its core myth?

⁴⁹ Gilbert Allardyce, “What Fascism Is Not : Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept,” *American Historical Review* 84, no. 2 (1972): 367–88.

⁵⁰ Rogger and Weber, *The European Right: A Historical Profile*.

⁵¹ Stuart J. Woolf, *The Nature of Fascism* (New York: Random House, 1969).

⁵² Stanley G Payne, *A History of Fascism: 1914-45* (London: UCL Press, 1995); S G Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1983).

The main fault of the works mentioned above, in historical studies, and political science alike was their tendency to analyze fascism either *in papyro* or concentrate only on the movements themselves, albeit across borders. The larger cultural, political and intellectual context was almost always missing, and thus the results of the studies were easily combatted and refuted by empirical studies, which were quick to point out the vagaries of the research. On the other hand, classical historical studies did not seem to pinpoint the core of fascist ideology, seemingly being unable to escape the trap of national exceptionalisms or Sonderweg⁵³ theories. In this way, they were unusable as larger interpretative schemes. The meta- vs. particular divide was first bridged by the pioneering works of Georg Lachmann Mosse. His 1966 book, entitled *The Crisis of German Ideology*, attempted to insert Nazism into the larger intellectual context of German political culture, starting with the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It correctly showed that historians may find clues in the culture of radical German nationalism that might explain the particular form taken later on by Nazism. Later, he spun this into a concrete theory of fascist ideology, which insisted on the revolutionary nature of its ideology, which merged tradition with modernity, in order to control the effects of the latter⁵⁴. In the scholarly field, this began to be termed “generic fascism” and would lay the groundwork for the consensus that was about to come to the field of fascism studies.

Building on Mosse’s work, British historian Roger Griffin, established the determination of the “fascist minimum” and advancing a coherent and synthetic theory of fascism, based on ideology, which would be accepted by the majority of scholars⁵⁵. His approach proved to be paradigmatic. Griffin utilized Max Weber’s concept of ideal-types in order to move toward a

⁵³ Jürgen Kocka, “Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: The Case of the German Sonderweg,” *History and Theory* 38, no. 1 (1999): 40–50, doi:10.1111/0018-2656.751999075.

⁵⁴ Georg L Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (H. Fertig, 1999), <http://books.google.hu/books?id=DxGFAAAAMAAJ>.

⁵⁵ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991).

heuristic definition of fascism, and on the other hand, utilized the cultural history of fin-de-siècle Europe to pour content into the ideal-type construct. In practical terms, this meant that Griffin approached fascism by utilizing the historical method, and looked at its pre-history in a contextual manner. Fascism, he argued, was a by-product of a cultural malaise, pessimism and a perception of modernity as destroyer of mental super-structures, which it did not replace with anything concrete. This was evident in the works of such intellectuals as Friedrich Nietzsche, Arthur Schopenhauer, B.A. Morel and Max Nordau; certainly, when Nietzsche affirmed that God was dead, he was expressing an attitude shared by many of his contemporaries. The mass society that modernity produced also caused great fear in the establishment, expressed most poignantly in the works of Gustave Le Bon. The masses needed to be controlled, as their primary drive was anarchic and destructive.

The degeneration theories were later propounded by the effects of the Great War, and the chaos that followed it, which did much to confirm all the fears and suspicions of European society; this was echoed by the works of the likes of Oswald Spengler. Thusly, fascism was born out of a need to curtail and control modernity on the one hand, and revitalize the nation, on the other. Griffin calls this drive “Palingenetic”, meaning it is centered on the myth of rebirth. This may be better understood by employing Arnold van Gennep’s theory of the rights of passage⁵⁶ at the level of society. In it, a large section of society feels that the community is in a “liminal” phase, i.e. passing from one state of existence into another. This necessitates a revival of society in a revolutionary manner: fascist felt that the nation was under siege by foreign elements, outside influences and modernity itself, which sought to pull the organic community apart with its centripetal force. Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman referred to this as “liquid modernity”, a

⁵⁶ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, Routledge Library Editions: Anthropology and Ethnography (Taylor & Francis, 2013), <https://books.google.ro/books?id=QS7-AQAAQBAJ>.

situation of increasing feelings of uncertainty and the privatization of ambivalence, in which the status of the individual and the community are uncertain, and can shift at any moment⁵⁷. Fascism, as a political movement, stepped in to mediate this process and regenerate the nation, materially but most importantly, in a spiritual manner. The main tools of this regeneration were the myth of the nation and populism. Thusly, Griffin circumscribes fascism as a form of populist, palingenetic ultranationalism. The allegory of the nation, coagulated around a central creed, spiritually reinvented, and rising like a phoenix from the ashes is the core myth of fascist ideology, across borders. In my thesis, I have found the same basic idea in the discourses of Hungarian fascism, especially pertaining to its treatment of the concepts of nation, society, history and future.

Populism and the populist style

If we start to take apart Griffin's theory of fascism into its basic elements, we are left with three highly important concepts: the rebirth myth (which we have already treated above), ultranationalism and populism. The latter is the most troublesome from a theoretical perspective, for it is a controversial concept, floating somewhere at the confines of a political style (as Margaret Canovan claimed⁵⁸) and an ideology. We may resolve this apparent conflict if we refer to Ernesto Laclau's theory of populism. The Argentinian political theorist characterized populism as "a chain of empty signifiers⁵⁹", in other words, political demands which at first, may seem disparate and belonging to different political ideologies are brought together by their common opponent. This common opponent is the "elite", which is opposed by "the people". For

⁵⁷ Peter Beilharz and Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity, Contemporary Sociology*, vol. 30 (New York: Polity Press, 2001), doi:10.2307/3089803.

⁵⁸ Margaret Canovan, *Populism* (New York: Junction Books, 1981), <https://books.google.ro/books?id=kL2SPwAACAAJ>.

⁵⁹ Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, Phronesis Series (Verso, 2005), http://books.google.ro/books?id=_LBBY0DjC4gC; Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (NLB, 1977), doi:10.2307/1954758.

example, in Hungarian fascism, disparate political plans, such as racism, eugenics, and anti-Semitic ultra-nationalism on the one hand, were grouped together with demands for social welfare and land reform, all in the name of “the Hungarian people”. This is the chain of empty signifiers, in Laclau’s terms, which in the end is eventually unified under the banner of a single empty signifier (in this case, the rebirth of the nation), in which each interest group sees its own demand. The people claim the right to power in favor of the parasitic minority who cling to power in an illegitimate fashion.

Laclau sees populism as “empty”, in other words, more of a style and system, than an actual ideology or set of beliefs. This is why it may adapt to a number of political ideologies, and serve as one of their building blocks. However, recent studies in political science indicate that, while in essence, Laclau’s theory holds, there are a number of ideological positions within populism that may be clearly identified. A good example of these discursive tropes or ideological traits is given by Italian political scientist Daniele Albertazzi in his work “Twenty-First Century Populism”. Albertazzi identifies the following repeating patterns:

1. (a) the government and democracy, which should reflect the will of the people, have been occupied, distorted and exploited by corrupt elites;

(b) the elites and ‘others’ (i.e. not of ‘the people’) are to blame for the current undesirable situation in which the people find themselves;

(c) the people must be given back their voice and power through the populist leader and party. This view is based on a fundamental conception of the people as both homogeneous and virtuous.

2. Populists therefore invoke a sense of crisis and the idea that ‘soon it will be too late’ .

3. (1) The people are one and are inherently ‘good’.
- (2) The people are sovereign.
- (3) The people’s culture and way of life are of paramount value.
- (4) The leader and party/movement are one with the people⁶⁰.

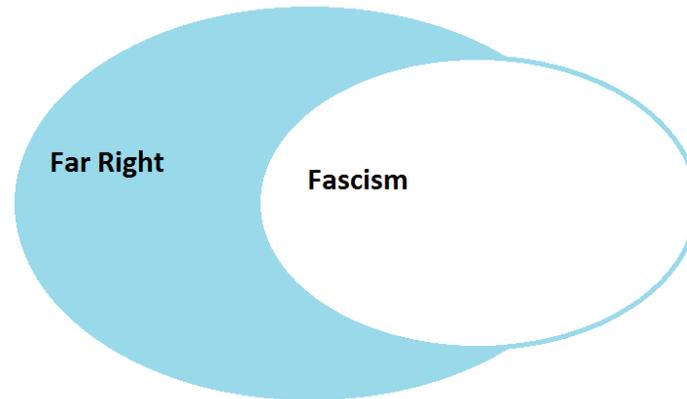
These general tropes are remarkably consistent with the discursive patterns that I have found when researching the treatment of the concept of people and leadership in the writings of Hungarian fascists. While populism may be molded to fit a number of ideologies, its inner logic also worked to transform the ultra-nationalist program of Hungarian fascism from within, and was intimately fused, in a sort of inner logic, with the idea of nationalism and palingenesis. The three form a sort of nexus, a matrix within which a number of other concepts float, each being determined and defined in relation to the connection it has to the logic of populism, integral nationalism and the palingenetic narrative. This does by no measure mean that the construction is logical, as there is a high amount of irrationality that goes into its makeup. Firstly, there is an inherent dichotomy between populism as an anti-systemic and anti-institutional system of ideas, and the highly étatist solutions to the crisis that fascist ideologues often offered. Secondly, the whole inner logic of radical nationalism and anti-Semitism on which fascism built its ideology is highly irrational. Thirdly, there is a sufficient tension between the racial and avant-garde elitism that fascism often espoused in its political language, and the populism it also diffused. Often, these conflicts are due to the different interpretations given by ideologues within different or even the same fascist political project. However, they all possessed the same palingenetic narrative, and filled the “empty” populism with their ultranationalist themes.

⁶⁰ Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, *Twenty-First Century Populism* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), doi:10.1057/9780230592100.

Circumscribing the field: the far right and fascism. The theory of the political family

While populism may be shown as a basic component of fascist ideology by showing it as a loose set of ideas or assumptions related to the concept of the people, the identification of boundaries between various nationalisms seem to be a far more daunting task. After all, what was fascism, if not just another form of extreme nationalism? Some in the field may claim that it was nothing less than a particularly strange form of a nationalist project, with a list of populist demands tacked on to its program, purely out of demagogy? Certainly, in the case of interwar Hungary, it is difficult to isolate fascism from all the fellow travelers, of which there were many, each having common elements with our object of study: anti-Semitism, radical nationalism, racialism, anti-communism and an opposition toward capitalism and democracy and so forth. As we have seen, the answer to this lies in the palingenetic core of fascism, which is not to be found in its fellow travelers, and as a consequence of this drive toward rebirth, the revolutionary nature of fascism. Germany also provides us with a strong argument to bolster our case, as it exhibits a similar situation, in which the Nazi party was also surrounded by a number of neo-conservative and far right movements, such as the DNVP, the Stahlhelm, Ernst Jünger's conservative revolutionary movement et cetera. In the Hungarian case, we may only list the political movements grouped around politicians such as Gyula Gömbös and Béla Imrédy, the radical rhetoric of István Milotay, Dezső Szabó and Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky. However, none of them had the revolutionary drive, or the particular radical program that was crystallized within the Szálasi movement. On the other hand, I do not wish to make the argument that these political ideologies and movements have to be clearly delimited; as in post-World War I Germany, they existed in the same context and had considerable influence on one another, developing their ideologies concomitantly, their discourses engaging each other. To lift Hungarian fascism out of

this context would be a mistake, and would lead to a loss of understanding of its historical meaning. It makes much more sense to treat the Szálasi movement and its predecessors as a part of a larger political family, with important ties linking it to the history of Hungarian nationalism.



One way to capture this divide in theoretical terms is to appeal to the theory of the extreme right produced by Dutch political scientist Cas Mudde. In his 2002 work, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*, Mudde proposes that we look at the far right not as a single unified political movement, but rather as a map, composed of ideological islands⁶¹. He states that political parties may be grouped together in what he calls a “party family”. The extreme right may have populist, fascist, anti-immigration etc. varieties, the ideological make-up of which may vary significantly from country to country, state to state. However, Mudde claims, all members of the extreme right party family share at least some, if not all of the following basic traits:

- Nationalism
- Racism

⁶¹ Cas Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

- Xenophobia
- Anti-democracy
- A propensity for the strong state⁶²

In this way, the Dutch scholar claims that a family has the following characteristics: a distinct group of parties that share the common ideological core (see above), the common core includes (at least) the feature described above, and within the broader family at least two subgroups may be identified, based on ideological extremity⁶³. This theoretical model provides sufficient background to situate Hungarian fascism in the broader context of the Hungarian far right. In this way, we may affirm that fascism was congruent with the Hungarian far right, but not synonymous with it. It shared some of its ideological traits, such as anti-Semitism, nationalist virulence, but sought to repair the wounds of the nation with a radicalism that was not shared by the others. It saw itself as part of a larger civilizational and political revolution, of European fascism, a semi-internationalist position which the traditional far right rejected in favor of a national approach. Fascism also wanted to completely overturn Hungarian society, and remove all but a few of the “useful” social classes, in order to realize the dream of a Hungarian Volksgemeinschaft, while conservative far righters wanted to protect the traditional form of Hungarian society.

The history of transfers

As we have stated above, Hungarian fascist ideology should be studied within its national context, as the Hungarian right had a powerful influence in developing some of the ideas and concepts which went into the equation of its discourse. On the other hand, we must not neglect the role of external influences, which helped to launch and shape the movements from outside,

⁶² Ibid., p. 11

⁶³ Ibid., p. 16

through indirect or direct action. The principal influence of German Nazism is paramount, as much of the conceptual toolkit of Hungarian fascism was directly lifted from it, and adapted to the domestic scene. Italian Fascism was also of secondary influence, not to mention other significant fascist movements from the neighborhood: the late 1930's fascist press of Hungary was full of news about the Romanian Iron Guard, for instance.

The easiest way to grasp this in a theory is to call it a history of transfers. This is an approach of transnational history which contends that certain concepts were transferred unilaterally from one side to another, across borders, and adapted in their respective domestic contexts. Many in the field of fascist studies refer to the demarche as entangled history or *histoire croisée*⁶⁴; I, however, have found little evidence that would back that Hungarian fascism had any influence outside the borders of Hungary, and insurmountable proof of the adoption of Nazi concepts in Hungary. This opens up an interesting theoretical problem: was fascism developed simultaneously in a number of European centers, and thus generic fascism is a theoretical tool, an ideal-type? Or did fascism come into being in a single center and exported, then adapted to fit particular national contexts? The latest trends in comparative fascist studies seem to suggest the former, as Eastern European scholars seek to integrate their own national stories into the larger discussion⁶⁵. For many historians, integrating their national cases into a

⁶⁴ Constantin Iordachi, *Comparative Fascist Studies New Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2009); Constantin Iordachi, "Fascism in Interwar East Central and Southeastern Europe: Toward a New Transnational Research Agenda," *East Central Europe* 37, no. 2 (2010): 161–213, doi:10.1163/187633010X541786; Roger Griffin, "Uniqueness and Family Resemblances in Generic Fascism," *East Central Europe* 37, no. 2 (2010): 338–44, doi:10.1163/187633010X534540.

⁶⁵ Iordachi, *Comparative Fascist Studies New Perspectives*, p. 39, Andreas Umland, "Diachronic and Cross-Cultural Comparison: Toward a Better Understanding of International Fascism," *Fascism* 1, no. 1 (2012): 62–63, doi:10.1163/221162512X623629; Andreas Umland, "Is There a Post-Soviet Fascism? A Brief Deliberation on the Cross-Cultural and Inter-Epochal Study of Right-Wing Extremism in the Post-Cold War Era," *East Central Europe* 37, no. 2 (2010): 345–52, doi:10.1163/187633010X534559; Arnd Bauerkämper, "Transnational Fascism: Cross-Border Relations between Regimes and Movements in Europe, 1922-1939," *East Central Europe* 37, no. 2 (2010): 214–46, doi:10.1163/187633010X534469; Stein Ugelvik Larsen, "De-Linking as an Explanation of International Fascism," *East Central Europe* 37, no. 2 (2010): 362–66, doi:10.1163/187633010X534586; Constantin Iordachi,

larger, transnational interpretative frame is synonymous with their countries being in tune with modernity in the interwar period⁶⁶. Recent debate within the field has revealed the following theories from known Eastern and Western European specialists in fascist studies: fascism must be seen both as a synchronic-epochal phenomenon, anchoring research to the study of interwar Europe; and as a generic-diachronic phenomenon, detaching research from particular historical periods or case studies, but instead treating fascism as a global phenomenon of the modern age⁶⁷. Most theorists also agreed that the approach which studies “varieties of fascism” must not be based on the “East-West” or “North-South” axis, as these are artificial divides, produced by the years of separation during communism, and must not be reified as true marks of difference. Fascism must be seen as a transnational phenomenon, which at the same time had local particularities and was anchored in the local contexts in which it appeared. However, as Mark Biondich pointed out, it is a difficult task to study fascism in the “East” and “South-East” through the lens of generic fascism, and synchronicity, due to our still flawed and partial understanding of the particular case-studies and national contexts that produced some of the movements that self-identified as fascist in the interwar period⁶⁸.

Even if we contend that fascism was a cross-European phenomenon, developed simultaneously in a number of national contexts, Hungary was not among its originators. It developed a strong fascist movement relatively late (1937-38), the ideology and political language of which is strongly and evidently influenced not only by its domestic context, but by

“Debate: Fascism,” *East Central Europe* 37, no. 2 (2010): 331–71, doi:10.1163/187633010X534513; Philip Morgan, “Studying Fascism from the Particular to the General,” *East Central Europe* 37, no. 2 (2010): 334–37, doi:10.1163/187633010X534531.

⁶⁶ “Introduction: Fascism in Interwar East Central and Southeastern Europe: Toward a New Transnational Research Agenda,” *East Central Europe* (Brill Academic Publishers, December 1, 2010).

⁶⁷ Constantin Iordachi, “Debate: Fascism. Fascism in East Central and Southeastern Europe: Mainstream Fascism or ‘Mutant’ Phenomenon?,” *East Central Europe* 37, no. 2 (2010): 331–71, doi:10.1163/187633010X534513.

⁶⁸ Mark Biondich, “The Need for a More Rigorous Historiography of Fascism,” *East Central Europe* 37, no. 2 (2010): 359–61, doi:10.1163/187633010X534577.

external fascist discourses. In the thesis, I have attempted to trace the provenience of most concepts and narrative frames utilized in fascist discourses; in many cases, they are, at least initially, carbon copies of German Nazi or Italian Fascist utterances.

Cohen and O'Connor contend that the history of transfers is sub-variant of comparative history, which studies the practice of transference between national contexts⁶⁹. To this, I would add that the history of transfers is partly an exercise in Jürgen Kocka's asymmetric historical comparison, especially for the purposes of this thesis: the concept and ideology of fascism was always transferred from one side (Germany, Italy, from where it originated) to another (Hungary) in an imbalanced manner, and many of its finer details were lost in translation. This is especially evident in the early adopters of fascism in Hungary, who perceived it basically as a combination between charismatic authority, nationalism and strong-statism (see chapters one and two). In this sense, Henk te Velde highlighted that adaption of the original practice to the national context is natural, even to the degree that it is sometimes not evident that there is a clear linkage between the original model and the adapted element⁷⁰. In fact, te Velde continues this is exactly the object of study for historians of transfer: the exact changes that occur during the adaption of concepts and practices across borders. I have chosen to study the transference of fascist ideology across borders into Hungary, in order to reveal how much of the original construct remained, beyond the Palingenetic ultranationalist and populist core. Chapters two, three and four show that quite a bit was adapted from German Nazism conceptual world, as a result and byproduct of the practice of transfer. The most significant elements relate to the aesthetic politics of charisma, party organization and outward appearance, but also the spatial

⁶⁹ Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor, *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (Routledge, 2004), <https://books.google.ro/books?id=BgclDGwJNboC.>, p. xiii

⁷⁰ Henk te Velde, "Political Transfer: An Introduction," *European Review of History* 12 (2005): 205–21, doi:10.1080/13507480500268995.

elements of nationalism and the social demagoguery of *Blut and Boden*, not to mention the racial approach to nationalism.

Conspiracies and fears

While Griffin's theorem answers most of the questions regarding the intellectual and societal motivations behind fascism, we have to also look at the phenomenon of reality-perception at the lower levels of society. While studying the discursive products of Hungarian fascism (press, periodicals, public speeches), I was struck by how simplistic and innately unintellectual most of the material was. This does not mean that the material is devoid of a certain philosophy. On the contrary, most of the published material contains an irrational theory so heavy that it fossilizes into a dogma already in the early-to-mid history of the movement(s). Thus, the discourse analysis which I have undertaken would also benefit from a theoretical framework borrowed from anthropology, and not only intellectual history and the history of ideas (as in the case of Griffin and Mosse). The mass of the fascist movements, and certainly a greater part of its leadership perceived and made sense of reality through the skewed lens of a conspiracy theory, which it in part developed, and vigorously cultivated. U.S. anthropologist and political scientist Michael Barkun, working in the field of American political extremism and millenarian and utopian movements has put forward a thesis explaining the inner workings of conspiracy theories⁷¹. The modern history of these theories originate in the early 1900's, with the original model of a conspiracy being the anti-Semitic canard, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion". The American scholar traces the history of the Protocols back to the late 19th century, when the hoax was originally concocted by the anti-Semitic circles around tsar Nicholas II. The work contains all of the initial characteristics that would be maximized and extended in

⁷¹ Michael Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2003).

contemporary theories of conspiracy. Conspirational thinking, Barkun teaches us, is centered around the concept of *stigmatized knowledge*, which he invents in his book. Stigmatized knowledge refers to a type of cognitive action which is rejected by the mainstream due to its irrationality. This type of knowledge acquisition is in opposition to classic epistemology. It stands firm in its belief that it possesses true knowledge, rejected by the mainstream due to its controversial nature, which is inherently so dangerous that it risks toppling the superstructure on which the present value system is built. A good example of this is the anti-semitic conspiracy theory of the Protocols which posits that the entire world order, including political and economic power is controlled by or in process of being taken over by Jews. The mainstream political commentators, historians and analysts reject this reality, in spite of evidence “offered” by the conspirators, due to them being also under the control of Jewry. It is this kind of inductive and circular logic that acts as the engine of a conspiracy theory. This sort of thinking was highly popular in the wake of the First World War and was influential in many political circles (especially the far right) all throughout the 1930’s. Conspiracy theories are also highly seductive in many historical contexts, as they offer easy solutions and answers to complicated conundrums. They do this through a subversion of the principle of Occam’s Razor or the law of parsimony, which states that among several theories explaining a phenomenon, the one with the fewest assumptions is probably the closest to the truth. A concrete example of this is the Dolchstoss theory or the Hungarian anti-Semitic theories concocted in the wake of World War I.

Historian Paul Hanebrink described the domestic origins of the theories concerning Jewish conspiracy as stretching back to the late 19th century, when they arrived in Hungary via

Vienna, and took on the shape of a “Kulturkampf”⁷². This cultural and political struggle was waged between Jews and Hungarians on the national level, and between Christian civilization and Jewry internationally. Among the people subscribing to this theory was bishop Prohászka Ottokár, one of the foremost religious and nationalist ideologues of the pre-and post-war period. During and after World War One, this spun into a theory of an “inner front” composed of Jews, who were seen as “the elusive enemy”, trying to undermine the Hungarian fighting spirit and civilization with their “racial materialism”⁷³. Nationalist journalist Milotay highlighted the perception that “Jews controlled the most powerful tools of social and economic organization, who have...become a racially conscious state within the state...”⁷⁴. The subsequent events of 1918-19 led the political right to believe that its fears were confirmed, and that anti-Semitism was a proper response to a real and actual danger.

The complex phenomenon and multiple factors that lead to the loss of the war, the social and economic upheaval that followed, and the rough road through democratic and communist experiments was explained by the higher echelon by modernity and theories of degeneration. Many, however, simply believed that it was due to the action of the Jews, in their bid to destroy the nation from within. This vulgar theory of degeneration was the counterpart of the sophisticated theories of decay and loss of self, worked out by philosophers and social scientists. If the sense of being on the cusp of great change, of human nature and traditional society itself being under siege was a metaphor provided by high culture, the besiegers were personified by the scapegoating conspiracy theories. The conspiracy theory offered simple explanations, which could be understood by all, and offered a common enemy: Jews; this came in very handy in

⁷² Paul Hanebrink, “Transnational Culture War: Christianity, Nation, and the Judeo-Bolshevik Myth in Hungary, 1890–1920,” *The Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 1 (2008): 55–80, doi:10.1086/529077.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

times such as the age of the economic crisis of the 1930's. It claims to answer the questions that institutional analysis cannot, making sense of a world that is otherwise confusing to the lay person. It also creates a dichotomy of reality, in which two groups, the good versus the evil, are locked in a teleological battle. This simple dialectic may be the secret to the seduction of fascist ideology.

Barkun isolates three different types of conspiracies, categorizing them according to their scale and scope. The first are event conspiracies, related and resumed to one event, for example the assassination of a leading political figure. The second are systemic conspiracies, in which a distinct group works toward grabbing political power and changing an entire system of a country or nation to its own ends. This is the case which interests us most, for it is the group into which the Dolchstoss theory and the Jewish world conspiracy falls into. The last category is that of superconspiracies, which consists of stacked conspiracies, akin to the layers of an onion. A systemic conspiracy has the following characteristics:

- Nothing happens by accident.
- Nothing is as it seems.
- Everything is connected.

This type of approach is most evident in the interpretation of history that Hungarian fascists put forward. They departed from the fashionable theories of historical degeneration of society, nation and polity, and moved toward a conspiratorial interpretation of the past, by which they saw the action of Jews everywhere in the early modern, enlightenment and 19th to early 20th century periods, culminating with the tragedy of the nation in World War I.

The study of ideology through political concepts

One of the first features that become evident to the historian studying the ideological products of party politics (party programs, periodicals, public utterances), especially modern political movements, such as Hungarian fascism, is the self-imposed structuring of the source material. The materials are divided thematically, in some cases manifestly, in others the structure being found within the texts themselves, broken up into multiple recurring tropes. This is due to the fact that modern political parties, especially mass parties structure their discourse according to a list of demands that they feel the audience (the voters) need them to address. As we have seen, in the case of populism, Laclau calls them “empty signifiers”, which are eventually united under a single “empty signifier” or cause. These themes are elaborated according to what Austrian-American political scientist and economist Joseph Alois Schumpeter called the “market theory” of democracy or politics. According to him, political leaders and groups compete in an open market-like structure for the vote of the public in a market-like structure, with victory belonging to the highest bidder.

This type of interaction may be understood at the ideological and conceptual level by making reference to British political scientist, Michael Freeden’s theory of ideology. In his 1998 book, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*⁷⁵, the author builds on Saussurian scholarship to offer a model of the structure in which ideologies exist. This blueprint investigates the semantic, focusing of shifting patterns of meaning, rather than just structure. Freeden builds his scheme up as follows: within society, there are number of shared concepts, both large and small, which make up the cultural vocabulary of a given society. Modern political

⁷⁵ Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, Oxford Scholarship Online (Clarendon Press, 1998), <http://books.google.hu/books?id=ocS-zA5zwSYC>.

ideologies are composed of core and peripheral concepts, which are in continuous shift and may be reassigned a different status according to the changing context. Examples of such concepts are the ideas of freedom, justice, state, nation, origins and so forth. Concepts only have meaning in relation to one another (an influence of structuralism), and they are being constantly redefined by the activity of ideologies. The various ideologies may all assign a different meaning to a concept, or share the definition of a set of concepts, but differ on others or arrange concepts in a different hierarchy to suit their own devices. To remain with Mudde's definition, within a party family, therefore a fascist party may share the organic definition of the nation with a conservative party, but differ on the interpretation of other concepts, such as individual liberty. The degree of success of an ideology is gaged by its success at furnishing society with the "correct" definition at one particular time, or in other words, by negotiating its own the definition of the terms to the correct contemporary context. With success follows a (temporary) imposition of its own definition of the concept, or set of concepts within society. What Freedon proposes we study is diachrony of the relationship between concepts and the semantics of concepts. Thusly, in my thesis I have proposed to study the relationship between the basic and secondary ideas that made up the ideology of fascism in Hungary. I also propose to use the comparative methods provided by the history of transfers, in order to link the various ideas to their sources and show their diachronic change. Ideas sourced from German Nazi ideology or even the domestic nationalism were adapted and changed to fit new schemes and political needs of Hungarian fascism. In this way, I shall also briefly trace their provenience (whether domestic or transferred), and their genealogy. The thesis shall also endeavor to look at the semantics of various ideas and concepts: the relationship between the signifier (the word) and the signified (the symbol, what they denote).

In this sense, my thesis utilizes concepts as a theoretical tool, as elements making up a larger system of ideas; thusly, the work is not a conceptual history á la Koselleck⁷⁶, in which ideas such as the aforementioned concepts such as palingenesis are diachronically analyzed. Rather, it is an exploration into the history of ideas, such as that championed by Iain Hampsher-Monk⁷⁷, in which context is all-important. In order to present the various elements that I have identified and that make up fascist ideology in interwar Hungary, I have taken their taxonomy as a basis for the analysis undertaken in this work. In most cases, political pamphlets, and attempts at a theoretical explanation of the ideology, authored by the fascist politicians themselves, were broken down into the categories that make up the backbone of my thesis: state, nation, history, people, society. In my work, I have often attempted to separate these ideas as much as possible, in order to dissect each one and present it to the reader in a more comprehensible form, but of course, they were interconnected and layered upon each other. This is the reason why I have taken a non-linear and non-narrative approach: the ideas are analyzed in a more clear and distinct manner if they are grouped together in thematic categories. In the structure of the thesis, I have insisted on highlighting the fact that interpretations of certain ideas, themes and concepts was not monolithic, but rather fluid (within, of course, certain general trends). Thusly, I have also grouped together, or presented separately, authors which ideas were different, variations on the same theme, or even contentious. For example, Szálasi's idea of space and European existence differ from those grouped around Matolcsy, and again vary from those expressed by the historian Tibor Baráth. The ideas all reacted to one another and were developed in the same political scene, so there is a high amount of influence they exercised on one another, as well as a common

⁷⁶ I Hampsher-Monk, K Tilmans, and F van Vree, *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*, OAPEN (Open Access Publishing in European Networks) (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998).

⁷⁷ I Hampsher-Monk, *A History of Modern Political Thought: Major Political Thinkers from Hobbes to Marx*, Major Political Thinkers from Hobbes to Marx (New York: Wiley, 1993).

platform they established vis-à-vis other political ideologies' interpretation of the same ideas or their contestations.

Interwar Hungary- ossification and revolt

Fascism in Hungary developed out of a very particular set of circumstances, composed out of the conjugation of the socio-economic environment, the political system and the political culture. In 1918-19, in the wake of the Great War, Hungary metamorphosed in a radical manner, going from empire to nation-state in a unique fashion. The upheaval of the First World War proved to be transformative all over Europe, as it brought the bourgeois way of life to an end, and made way for mass society, in all of its myriad forms. In his 2007 book, Roger Griffin revealed the World War as the catalyst for a mythopoeia of modernism, which began in the late 19th century and ended with the creation of the totalitarian projects of the early 20th century. Building on Arnold van Gennep's and Victor Turner's anthropologic theories on the rites of passage, Griffin showed that they were applicable to societies as well, which perceived themselves as passing into another state of existence. Indeed, according to Reinhart Koselleck, one of the characteristics of modernity was the opening up of historical time, in which the concept of future really appeared, and was understood as an unknown⁷⁸. Thus, a section of society felt itself eternally propelled forward into a great unknown, in an eternal state of liminality. This gave rise to the fears and criticisms of modernity expressed by Nietzsche in

⁷⁸ Reinhart Koselleck, "Modernity and the Planes of Historicity *," *Economy and Society* 10, no. 2 (1981): 166–83, doi:10.1080/03085148100000002; N Olsen, *History in the Plural: An Introduction to the Work of Reinhart Koselleck* (Berghahn Books, 2012).

philosophy, Munch in art, and Le Bon in social science⁷⁹. Maurice Bloch described the method by which a society passes through to the new tier as process of regeneration, in which a society ritually achieves renewal through its own resources, in its search for transcendence. The liminoid transition to a new order takes place when a society undergoes a crisis sufficiently profound to prevent it from perpetuating and regenerating itself through its own symbolic and ritual resources⁸⁰. Examples of these may be natural disasters, or, in our case, the political, economic and social upheaval caused by World War I. For the Hungarian nation, this meant a transmogrification from the second fiddle in a large, multinational empire, with European and worldwide influence and Great Power status, to a backward, tiny rump nation-state in East Central Europe, sandwiched between enemies. The war, so destructive for the entire continent, was especially so for Hungary, which, after losing two thirds of territory and two-thirds of its population, had to deal with a completely changed state of affairs. It also faced three political revolutions in the span of two years, which threw the country into political instability. First, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy fell, and the king was dethroned by count Károlyi Mihály's democratic government on the 31st of October 1918 in what became known as the Aster Revolution. This weak political regime could not muster the resources to deal with the myriad of problems plaguing the "country". It is difficult to even speak of a proper state at the time, due to the undefined territory and general chaos in which several political figures, such as the former power man and prime minister of Hungary, Tisza István, were murdered by marauding gangs of soldiers. The Károlyi regime attempted to handle all of the problems of establishing the structures of a fledgling nation-state on the ruins of the old regime, while managing the war-

⁷⁹ Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 110

⁸⁰ Maurice Bloch, *Prey Into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience*, Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), <https://books.google.ro/books?id=wuG5-DegSN4C>.

ravaged country and endeavoring to deal with the fluidity of its political borders. The multitude of the problems of the country were too much for this government, which began to lose political support. It received the so-called “Vix notes”, which contained the decisions of the Paris Peace Conference, on the 20th of March 1919; this was the first nail in its coffin. The second was the decision of the Social-Democratic Party, which until then, was part of the governing coalition, to open talks with the Communist Party. The Communist and Social-Democratic parties declared the fall of the Károlyi regime and the democratic republic on the 21st of March 1919, and declared the Hungarian Soviet Republic. The communist experiment lasted until the 1st of August 1919, when a combined effort of the Romanian and Czechoslovak armies drove them out. The whole thing ended with a humiliating Romanian occupation of Eastern Hungary and the capital city of Budapest. The Romanian army retreated and put the counter-revolutionary forces of Admiral Miklós Horthy, who entered a beleaguered Budapest, in all the trappings of a former Austro-Hungarian naval officer, astride a white stallion.

The experiences of democracy and communist rule were not forgotten by the new rulers of interwar Hungary. The regime predicated its existence as a project of Hungarian recovery from the ruin of the war, and safekeeping against the dangers of pluralism and communism. Beside political, social and economic measures, it attempted to achieve this by producing a narrative which assassinated all of its real or perceived political adversaries. Typical of this attempt was the promotion of Cécile Tormay’s works, who interpreted the democratic and communist regimes in the frames of an aggressive, pathetic nationalism, calling them disastrous anti-national projects. This propaganda contributed much to the loss of credibility of these two political systems as alternate ways to manage a modern mass society. Hungarians were led to feeling that democracy had lost the war, and the Hungarian territories due to its weakness and

cosmopolitanism, and were appalled by the memory of the war and the Red Terror. This was compounded by the political developments in the fledgling Horthy-system. The admiral wasted no time in appointing first count Teleki Pál, then count Bethlen István at the heads of two counter-revolutionary governments, which set up the modern Hungarian nation-state. One of Bethlen's most important measures to set up his regime (which would dominate Hungary for more than a decade, up to 1932), was to create the base for his political rule. The tool for this was a partly coerced, party voluntary molding together of the Christian National Unity Party and the Nagyatádi Smallholders Party in early 1922. In the words of Thomas Lorman, the latter voluntarily "put its head in the panther's mouth", due to its bad tactics and hunger for political power, thereby discrediting peasantist politics for the entirety of the interwar period⁸¹. Therefore, in the span of no more than four years, democratic, communist, socialist and peasantist-agrarian forces had lost their credibility in front of the Hungarian electorate due to their exercise of political power. This had dire consequences in the coming decades, as the Hungarian public was caught in a nationalistic frenzy which lasted until 1945.

The system set up by Bethlen István had two major characteristics: it was anachronic and resistant to change. In a world that was moving toward mass society, the baroque system of interwar Hungary tried freeze history while attempting to develop technically. This is apparent if we take a closer look to the characteristics of the political system that was put in place after 1920. As mentioned above, Bethlen forged a political party out of the parts of his own center-right political formation and the Smallholders Party, called the Christian Agrarian Smallholders Civic Party. It became commonly known as the Unitary Party or the Government Party, and for

⁸¹ Thomas Lorman, *Counter-Revolutionary Hungary, 1920-1925: István Bethlen and the Politics of Consolidation*, East European Monographs (Boulder: Columbia University Press, 2006), <https://books.google.ro/books?id=b8NnAAAAMAAJ>.

good reason: it dominated Hungarian politics all throughout the interwar years and up to 1944. This was achieved by a combination of strong-arm police tactics against the leftist opposition, corruption and cajoling the right-wing, and fixing the elections nationwide through legal and illegal methods. Firstly, Bethlen partly repressed and partly coerced the Social Democratic Party into submission, by curtailing its activity in the larger cities to the urban proletariat and barring its expansion beyond that. This was codified in the Bethlen-Peyer Pact of 1921, which restored the right of workers to strike and tabulated a number of their rights and privileges⁸². The secret ballot was restored in the larger cities (mainly Budapest), together with the properties and rights to act of the trade unions. This served to channel the support of the working class toward the Social Democrats, who in turn severed their ties to Soviet Russia and the communists. However, over time, this resulted in an effective neutering of the left, as it was doomed to a perpetual minority political representation in the opposition: the workers could express their desires by voting socialist, but their votes were cast into the wind, as they had not concrete consequence.

As mentioned above, the smallholders and the agrarians had been absorbed into the governing coalition. The right-wing opposition was mainly formed by a loose coalition of former army officers, and freecorps members, intellectuals and urban bureaucracy, which formed the Party of Racial Defense. Officially called the Hungarian Party of National Independence, it was formed when Gyula Gömbös left the Unitary Party in 1924, with six of his fellow radical nationalist MP's. The Racial Defense party did not have a large social basis, or much electoral support, and the differing views of its politicians and ideologues, ranging from the populist Szabó Dezső (who in the beginning served as one of the main inspirations, but by the mid-1920's, had turned into a critic of the party) to the eugenicist Méhely Lajos to the theologians

⁸² Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945.*, p. 234

Béla Bangha and Prohászka Ottokár meant that it was never more than a loose coalition, held together by the forceful personality of Gömbös Gyula. When he left in 1928 to rejoin the government forces, eventually becoming prime minister in 1932, the party more or less fell apart. In conclusion, the opposition forces had been neutralized for the greater part of the second decade of the 20th century. Bethlen made sure of this fact by enacting electoral laws that favored his forces. First of all, elections were held as open, not secret, and this fact coerced much of the electorate into voting government. Secondly, the government organized the elections through the regional governors called the *főispán*, who were appointed directly from Budapest. Thirdly, the electoral law of 1922 only allowed about 29.5% of the citizenry to vote, reduced from about 40% in 1920⁸³. The Franchise act of 1913 was put back into force in 1922, and the gendarmerie was used to the same efficiency as in the old regime to quash opposition⁸⁴.

In the economic sector, Bethlen favored industrialization, which he saw as a key to advance the competitiveness of the country on the international scene⁸⁵. This, in turn, led to the conservation of the system of large landed estates as one of the primary forms of production in agriculture. This was due to two main reasons: while smaller estates produced a higher living standard and income per capita for their owners, they fell behind huge landed estates when it came to the sheer gross output of cereal for the export market. The second reason was Bethlen's own attitude of social conservatism, which was a product of his social status, of a former large landowner in Transylvania. This informed his political program, and large landowners constituted a major part of his political and financial backers. The status quo was sanctified by introducing the Upper House of Parliament, dominated by magnates and religious leaders.

⁸³ László Püski, *A Horthy-Rendszer: 1919-1945*, Modern Magyar Politikai Rendszerek (Pannonica, 2006). P. 98-100; Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945.*, p. 212; I Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century* (Corvina Books, 1999)., p. 183

⁸⁴ Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945.*, p. 212

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 220-221

Parliament, as such was dominated by large landowners (28.5%) and the bourgeoisie (62.5%, liberal professions, industrialists, state functionaries), who made up 91% of the deputies in 1935⁸⁶. Thusly, no real land reform was ever enacted in interwar Hungary under Bethlen. In fact, the two dominant types of landed properties in the interwar period were the large landed estate and the dwarf property:

Farms in 1935		
Size of farm (hold)	Number (%) of all farms	Area as % of total area
0-5	72.5	10.1
5-20	21.3	21.8
20-100	5.4	20.0
100-1000	0.6	18.2
Over 1000	0.2	29.9

Source: Iván Berend and Ránki György, *A Magyar Gazdaság Száz Éve* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1972).

Per capita income for the peasant families with 10-100 holds in 1931-32 was 432 pengő, which was just 81% of the national average income, while those having 1 to 10 hold earned only 227 on average, just 43% of the national average income⁸⁷. The peasantry was the largest segment of the population, numbering 4.4 and 4.5 million, between 1920 and 1941, but its share of the total population declined from 55% to 48% in the same period⁸⁸. Peasant living standards and nutrition were extremely low, when compared to European standards, leading to a stagnation

⁸⁶ Püski, *A Horthy-Rendszer: 1919-1945.*, p. 233

⁸⁷ Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century.*, p. 163

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 162

of the population⁸⁹. Unemployment among agricultural laborers was a widespread phenomenon even before the 1929 economic crisis, and pressure valves, such as immigration to the USA, were not an option in the interwar period⁹⁰.

The industrial working class did not fare any better. Their incomes were about 80 to 90% of what they had been in 1913, peaking in 1929, and dropping back down after that. In 1939, they had only recovered about 97% of the 1929 level. In concrete numbers, this meant that in 1930-31, a miner's wage, for example, was 534 pengő, about 80% of the national average, a factory worker earned about 70%, while a manual day laborer had only 43%⁹¹. Already in the 1930's, they comprised over 30% of the total workforce of the country⁹². To add to this, in an effort to make the state more efficient, Bethlen fired about 60,000 public servants during the decade of 1920-1931⁹³.

The above developments were combined with a huge rise in the levels of literacy. By 1930, it had reached 90%, and the populace was better informed than ever, with newspapers and new forms of media, such as the radio, reaching a large segment of the population⁹⁴. The number of newspapers grew from 1882 in 1910 to 1934 in 1938, with a reported total circulation of 100 million copies⁹⁵.

The institution of new educational and cultural politics by ministers Klebelsberg and Hóman saw more pupils than even attending the so-called popular schools (*népiskolák*⁹⁶). This meant that a large section of the population became available for political mobilization.

⁸⁹ Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945.*, p. 240

⁹⁰ Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century.*, p. 164

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 165

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 165

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945.*, p. 241

⁹⁵ Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century.*, p. 174

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 147

However, the central authority did not express any desire to involve the majority of the citizenry in the political process. However, participants in education on all levels were given a strong primer in radical nationalism and the so-called “Christian course”, as the regime sought to spread its neo-conservative ideology. Each pupil and student was taught to support the national cause, and was indoctrinated with the cause of revanchist irredentism; typical of this were the provisions of the educational policy. Geography was taught always as the geography of historical, undivided Hungary, the history of Hungary had always to deal with the Treaty of Trianon and “the dictatorship of the proletariat”, the map of Hungary was always shown first as the undivided one, and every school day had to start and end with the recital of the Hungarian Credo⁹⁷. The Credo was a short prayer, mimicking the Christian Credo and read: “I believe in one God/ I believe in one home/ I believe in divine, eternal justice/ I believe in the resurrection of Hungary/ Amen⁹⁸”. We may theorize that this is the first large-scale appearance of the national Palingenetic/resurrection mythos in interwar Hungary.

School qualification levels of Hungary's population between 1930 and 1941

Category	1930	1941
Completed university	1.1	1.2
Completed at least 8 middle-school grades	3.6	5.9
Completed at least 6 middle-school grades	4.7	4.9

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 150

⁹⁸ Paul A Hanebrink, *In Defense of Christian Hungary: Religion, Nationalism, and Antisemitism, 1890-1944* (Cornell University Press, 2006)., p. 111-112

Completed at least 4 middle-school grades	10.8	12
Completed at least 6 elementary school grades	48.5	55.4
Completed at least 4 elementary school grades	73.9	78.8
Able to read and write	90.4	92.4
Able to read	0.8	0.3
Illiterate	8.8	7.3

Source: Pető Iván and Szakács Sándor, *A Hazai Gazdaság Négy évtizedének Története, 1945-1985* (Budapest: Közgazd. és Jogi Kvk., 1985).

The number of universities also increased, from three on the territory of central Hungary, to five, with the repatriation of the Pozsony and Kolozsvár universities from the lost territories of Slovakia and Transylvania. They were relocated, along with their entire teaching staff, to Pécs and Szeged. Keeping these institutions was a matter of a mix of prestige and irredentism. They, in turn, started to churn out graduates in an increased rate⁹⁹. Many alumni had, however, a great difficulty in acquiring jobs in their respective fields, due to the ossified and immobile state bureaucracy of the Horthy era. This, in turn, led to sentiments of dissatisfaction and a rise in the feeling of anti-Semitism at the level of the universities, where the Turul Union dominated (one of the forces behind the Numerus Clausus law of 1920 in the universities). This further clampdown on social mobility meant an establishment of the phenomenon that British historical sociologist Walter Runciman identified as relative deprivation, among the highly skilled and educated. This

⁹⁹ Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945.*, p. 247

sort of evolution was typical of East Central Europe. A similar development was identified in neighboring Romania by historian Irina Livezeanu, who showed that Romanian fascist Iron Guard was born out of a combination of nationalist cultural politics and relative deprivation of the student generation of the 1920's¹⁰⁰.

The intellectual and political roots of Hungarian Fascism

The history of ideas leading to the development and codification of fascism in Hungary may be resumed as follows:

1. It was born out of a gradual push and movement toward the right of the political spectrum. The 1929 financial crisis dealt a final blow to the neo-conservative politics of István Bethlen. A section of the far right, led by Gyula Gömbös, was coopted to power in 1932, and the Racial Defense Party splintered into smaller groups. This opened up a vacuum of power in the opposition, which the leftist parties were unable to fill, due to a number of reasons, most important of these being their curtailment by the central authorities, which were more forgiving with criticism coming from the right. This set up a relationship of mutual competitions between far right and fascism, which lasted until 1945 (evident in the Imrédy Hungarian Life Party vs. Arrow Cross, Hungary Renewal Party vs. Arrow Cross interplay).
2. Experimentation with fascist concepts imported from Germany, and to a lesser extent, Italy and the rest of Europe. These were synthesized with the ideas of domestic nationalism, originating from the Racial Defense Party. A good example of this is the evolution of anti-Semitism, from ethnic-religious to the biological realm, based partly on Méhely Lajos' work, and partly on the theses of German Nazism.

¹⁰⁰ Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building & Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930*, Cornell Paperbacks (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2000).

3. The incorporation of a program of social demagogy and revolution. Hungarian fascism combined elements of populism, fascist corporatism, with elements of the critique of capitalism taken from socialism and Hungarian organic communitarism, which idealized the Hungarian peasant.

The most important ideological predecessor of Hungarian fascism was the loose coalition referred to as the Fajvédő group (Racial Defenders). It was composed out of a nebulous cluster of political figures, moving in and out of power: writers Szabó Dezső, and Lendvai István, journalist and publicist Milotay István, theologian Bangha Béla, scientist Méhely Lajos, politicians Eckhardt Tibor, Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Endre and Gömbös Gyula, and freecorps army officers Ulain, Héjjas and Prónay and many others¹⁰¹. They would all have varying success in politics, and ultimately, dissimilar political options. For example, Bajcsy-Zsilinszky spun his nationalism into anti-fascism (which ultimately led to his death in 1944), Eckhardt moved to the USA to become one of the leading anti-communist émigrés, while some of the freecorps members became fellow travelers of the fascists (Prónay), or even outright fascists (László Baký, László Endre – both minor figures of the freecorps in 1919-20).

The core of their ideology consisted (loosely, for there were large differences between stances) of a dream of a renewed Hungary, which would sweep away the vestiges of the old regime reinstated by Bethlen. In the beginning, they believed that Hungary was about to undergo a sort of spiritual, national and “racial” renaissance¹⁰². The end product of this spiritual rebirth would have been “the new Hungarian”, who would be free of foreign influences, cultural suppression and social oppression¹⁰³. The way toward this new Hungarian society and individual,

¹⁰¹ János Gyurgyák, *Magyar Fajvédők: Eszmetörténeti Tanulmány*.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

however, eluded the Racial Defenders. They either proposed different solutions, or remained at the level of expressing criticism toward the existing state of affairs. They were the first to agitate for a turn toward the Hungarian peasant, but they did very little to champion his affairs. Their ways of doing politics shied away from the methods utilized by true mass parties, and they were afraid of the mass in a truly middle-class manner. Hungarian historian Gyurgyák János correctly identifies this as one of the main points of difference between them and their fascist successors, such as the Arrow Cross Party¹⁰⁴. Another difference consists of their usage and apprehension of the concepts of nation, people and race. Most of them used these terms haphazardly and interchangeably, in order to signify basically the same thing: ethnicity. There were of course differences, as stated already, most notably Méhely Lajos, and the rest were sufficiently muddled in their expression that their cultural definition of nationalism could very well have flowed toward a racial-biological definition of nation. They however, did not have any concrete theory of racial difference based on morphology, no racial hierarchy, and generally, considered their own nation to be of mixed background¹⁰⁵. The ideology, in the end, consisted of defensive nationalism against real or perceived enemies, a rejection of multi-culturalism and the left, an opposition of the ossified neo-baroque political and social system of interwar Hungary, and real social awareness toward the plight of the peasantry¹⁰⁶. Their anti-Semitism was virulent, but defined Jews on a religious basis.¹⁰⁷ Hungarian fascists took from them their drive, their motivation and the idea of a Hungarian spiritual renewal, and combined it with fascist methods from abroad. In the latter years of the third decade of the 20th century, Szálasi and Hubay all publically declared their movements to be continuators of “the Szeged idea”, which of course

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 214-215

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 214-215

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 216

¹⁰⁷ Gyurgyák, *A Zsidókérdés Magyarországon : Politikai Eszmetörténet.*

meant that they were tributary to the nationalism coming both from the conservatives and the racial defenders, for they correctly identified their ideological brotherhood, within the same political family.

Hungarian fascism developed its discourse inside a specific political language, of Hungarian interwar nationalism. The aforementioned “Szeged idea” was developed in a number of centers, most prominent of which were the Szeged and Vienna, where the counter-revolutionary politicians, servicemen and intellectuals gathered, sheltering themselves from the communist regime of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. The Szeged idea was, from the beginning, made up of a number of competing ideological elements: conservatism, integral nationalism in the Maurrasian fashion and right-wing populism, united in their opposition of bolshevism and the desire to re-conquer lost Hungarian might and territory. Horthy and his conservative circle utilized free-corps and militias made up of former low-grade army officers, such as Pál Prónay, Iván Héjjas and Ferenc Ulain, led by Gyula Gömbös. They were great fellow travelers in the period of 1919-1921, when the leftist opposition had to be put down, the rest of the political parties needed to be whipped into order and coerced into participating in the new political regime, and when Habsburg King Charles the IV twice attempted to reclaim his throne in 1921. However, their continuous radicalism and their clamor for social and political reform soon came into conflict with the more pragmatic politics of the conservatives gathered around Bethlen, who was put into power by the regent Horthy. They, together with their intellectual followers, were soon marginalized; the regime started to enact its own cultural politics by diffusing a mix of Christian conservatism and revanchist nationalism. The narrative of the new “Christian course” soon became all-encompassing, and attempted to format the Hungarian public opinion to the needs of the political regime. The Racial Defenders interpreted this as “a stolen revolution”, by

which the very elites they helped get into power betrayed them. They saw Bethlen's reign as being synonymous with the return of old practices, in social and economic life, and clamored when the Numerus Clausus law was slowly phased out. In their opinion, the regime had not gone far enough. Meanwhile, both political groups, conservative and racial defender, thoroughly worked toward assassinating the left, a move which was quite successful for a while, curtailing the social-democrats and the communists to a few islands in the larger urban and industrial centers. On the level of public expression, this created a culture of nationalism, and a political language in which all claims and utterances were made within the nationalistic lingo.

The narrative of an “aborted revolution” eventually turned against the Racial Defense Party. The 1929 world economic crisis hit Hungary hard, and Bethlen fell from grace when he did not manage to handle the calamity adequately. When Gyula Gömbös left to take up his position as prime minister on the 1st of October 1932 (after the interregnum of Gyula Károlyi), the radical right felt that the hour of revolution had finally come. It is no coincidence that the first fascist political projects are launched around this time (the Scythe Cross party, the Meskó and Festetics groups), on the backdrop of a looming revolution both at home and abroad, where the German National Socialist Party was knocking on the door of political power. Gömbös would soon disappoint his followers; while he managed to push Hungarian politics further to the right, his hollow demagogy and nationalist slogans were interpreted by the majority of the racial defender leftovers and the rising fascists as a second “stolen revolution”.

The vacuum created on both the Hungarian far right and the left, where the demands of a large section of the population were fertile ground for the development of a political language based on social demands, was ultimately filled by Hungarian fascism, which became the largest oppositional force. It was successful due to the fact that it adapted its political language, and

worked within the confines defined by the nationalist and conservative right before 1932: it did not question irredentist nationalism, the genius of the Hungarian people and peasant. For the fascist political language, anti-Semitism was a *sine qua non*; its only ambition on the topic was how to extend radicalism on this topic even further, and give more precise, biological definitions of both Jews and the nation, inspired by German discourses. When necessary, fascist ideology historicized its narratives and theories to fit the regime's and legitimated its demarche by pointing to the fact that it was an offspring of the Szeged idea (which, in many ways, it was). Thus, it was given a much freer rein than leftist parties did, and competed for their electorate successfully in many instances. Fascist parties brought together (in Laclau's terms, a chain of empty signifiers) disenchanted right-wing intellectuals, former populists, leftists and *déclassé* elements, and many of the radical right-wingers from the racial defense camp. All came with their own interpretation of what fascism was, and what it could give them and the Hungarian nation. Eventually, these desires and wants were fused into an original ideological synthesis and political language.

The effects of fascist mass mobilization and ideology were strong on the political regime as well. As I have already mentioned above, the push toward the right (the coming to power of the Gömbös government in October of 1932), was one of the causes of the rise of fascism in Hungary. At the same time, it created the first revolution of a vicious circle which would send Hungary spinning toward chaos, a maelstrom of right-wing radicalization. The continuing rise in popularity of fascism, in the years 1937-38, led to fragments of its ideology and language being adopted by the government party as well, as it moved from the National Unity Party toward the Party of Hungarian Life (1939), and eventually The Party of Hungarian Renewal (1940, in opposition). The main architect of this radicalization was Béla Imrédy, prime minister between

14th of May 1938 – 16th of February 1939. After an initial attempt to repress the Arrow Cross, he recognized its success, and attempted to build a far right, para-fascist movement modeled on it, from the top down. He called it the Hungarian Life Movement, and its symbol was a Hungarian mythological animal, the *csodaszarvas* (*the Miraculous Deer*). The movement advocated dictatorship, anti-Semitism and its political language was replete with nationalist slogans. In the fascist press, the movement was ridiculed, and the challenge was taken up: it is at this time that the Arrow Cross turned to outright opposition toward the government, calling it “the system¹⁰⁸”. The Imrédy movement attempted to compensate this by passing two anti-Semitic laws, in 1938 and 1939 (passed under Teleki, though a creation of the former government), and by nationalist banter. The competition between the government and the Arrow Cross, during this period, led to the apparition and solidification of a state-sponsored far-right political movement and ideology. In the end, extreme manifestations of nationalism and anti-Semitism became the norm, thrusting Hungary into the arms of Nazi Germany and leading it down a blind alley of paranoia and hate.

¹⁰⁸ Virstologi Rupprecht Olivér, “Magyarság” (Budapest, n.d.), 1938 November 29, p. 9; Ibid., Hubay Kálmán, “Lássuk a medvét”, 1938 december 1st, p.1

Fascist Charisma in interwar Hungary:

Contributions to the concept of charismatic authority

The concept of charismatic authority is very important for the understanding of how fascist political thought and discourse operated in interwar Europe. The studies concentrating on charismatic authority have, up to now, concentrated on two important questions: the components of charismatic authority and the reasons for its success in certain contexts. The present study shall analyze the manner in which the charismatic image of fascist political leadership was constructed in interwar Hungary. Hungarian fascism was among the more well-developed in its political family as a movement (perhaps less original in terms of ideology) and may serve as an important case-study for the analysis of the abstract concept of charismatic authority in real, historic context. I theorize that charismatic authority achieved a great deal of success in late interwar Hungary because of its complex nature, which derived authority from a number of sources. It is the argument of this study that Hungarian charismatic authority of fascist provenience utilized established cultural norms, a set of components “traditionally” identified as charisma, and rational-legal authority to construct an image of charismatic leadership.

Theory

The most important conceptual tool of this analysis is the concept of charismatic authority, as developed by Max Weber. The German sociologist invented the concept as a heuristic tool, one of his “ideal-types”. It belonged to a set of three other types, alongside traditional, and rational-legal authority. However, charismatic authority differed from the other two, because it drew its influence not from rules, institutions or positions of power, but rather from a faith in the exceptionality of the leader’s persona. The charismatic leader, according to Weber, is “set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least exceptional powers and qualities...not accessible to the ordinary person but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as leader¹⁰⁹”. Weber also theorized that the attitude of charismatic authority is essentially revolutionary, and its influence unstable and transitory. The charismatic leader may lose charisma either by failure in his proposed mission or via success, as his authority transforms into the rational-legal or traditional forms. While Weber’s theorem is useful for the sociological and anthropological study of political power, for the purposes of this chapter I shall utilize his concept of charismatic authority as a political concept. In other words, Weber synthesized and theorized as an ideal-type an image, an idea, and a narrative about leadership which had developed during his time (the late 19th and early 20th century), and was alive and well as a *desideratum* in the political imagination of his contemporaries. The German sociologist used it as

¹⁰⁹ Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, (New York: Free Press, 1947), pp. 358-359

tool to study the social underpinnings of political power, but I theorize that charismatic leadership was also a key component of political discourses and understood as an alternative to other forms of statecraft and leadership.

Anthropologists Jay Conger and Rabindra Kanungo expanded Weber's theoretical construct. They identified the ideal-type of the charismatic leader as possessing a set of qualities that include: 1. high self-confidence and self-determination; 2. a high degree of mental involvement in the mission and the leadership role and 3. a high need for power¹¹⁰. They also built on previous research, stating that other distinguishing attributes were vision, emotional expressiveness, articulation skills, a high activity level and exemplary behavior¹¹¹. These are all elements which can be found in the image of infallible leadership projected by interwar Hungarian fascist politicians. I surmise that these components all go into a narrative which forms the discourse of charismatic leadership. This charismatic discourse is one of the key components of fascist ideology in interwar Hungarian, and European contexts; while it is not a determining narrative, such as palingenesis (as other ideologies, such as conservatism, authoritarianism and communism also utilized it), it was adapted by fascism into becoming one of the building blocks of its ideology.

Roger Eatwell applied the concept to the study of totalitarian politics, arguing for a restructuring of charisma into three different categories: coterie- charisma (between leader and the hard core of his following), centripetal charisma (the identification of the leader with the party, regime or state) and cultic charisma (the deliberate attempt to create a political religion around

¹¹⁰ J A Conger and R N Kanungo, *Charismatic Leadership in Organizations* (London: SAGE Publications, 1998), p. 326

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 325

the figure of the leader)¹¹². Eatwell also detailed a number of qualities commonly found in the images of all fascist leaders in interwar Europe. He also underlined the missionary vision of charismatic leaders stated by Conger and Kanungo, but added a few other dimensions. According to the British scholar, the charismatic leader possesses symbiotic hierarchy: he can portray himself at times as being an ordinary member of society¹¹³. This hierarchy may be connected with the basic traits of populism given to us by Daniele Albertazzi, in which the leader is of the people, and simultaneously above them¹¹⁴. Fascist leaders often utilized this strategy in order to establish the counter-cultural aspects of their leadership cult: they were representing the populous against the Establishment. Fascist charisma also binds attempts to bind together societies via Manichean demonization of a certain category of people (ethnic, social categories); the creation of an “Other” is highly important¹¹⁵. Lastly, personal qualities, presence is also very important, however, often it is a fuzzy concept.

Constantin Iordachi, while studying the role of charisma in the Romanian Iron Guard, also praised the heuristic value of Weber’s concept, however, he established that it was useful only in explaining the nature of the relationship between the leader and his core followers in the Legionary Party (Iron Guard)¹¹⁶. The Romanian historian, while studying the strategies of political mobilization employed by the Iron Guard, concluded that charismatic leadership was only one of the elements; the Legionnaires also used millennialist cult of the Archangel Michael, the messianic mission of the postwar “new generation”, together with integral nationalism,

¹¹²Roger Eatwell, “The Concept and Theory of Charismatic Leadership,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 7, no. 2 (June 17, 2006): 141–56, doi:10.1080/14690760600642156., pp. 153-154

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 146

¹¹⁴ Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, “Twenty-First Century Populism,” ed. Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, December 14, 2007, doi:10.1057/9780230592100.

¹¹⁵ Eatwell, “The Concept and Theory of Charismatic Leadership.”, pp. 146-147

¹¹⁶ Constantin Iordachi, *Charisma, Politics and Violence: The Legion of the “Archangel Michael” in Interwar Romania*, (Trondheim: Studies on East European Societies and Cultures, 2004), pp. 159-160

including calls for “cultural purification” and “national regeneration” modeled on the pre-1914 French pattern of Charles Maurras, coupled with virulent anti-Semitism¹¹⁷. Iordachi also correctly established the tradition of charismatic politics in interwar Romania, going back to General Averescu’s People’s Party, showing the context which inspired the development of the leadership cult of Corneliu Codreanu, the Iron Guard leader¹¹⁸. The frequent use of the concept charisma in the language of the Iron Guard led to the creation of further categories of party members, the elite, which also possessed fragments of the charisma of the leader (the Văcărești), and ultimately, Iordachi concludes, to the “routinization of charisma”. This ultimately eroded the Codreanu mythos and led to an imbalance between it and the needs of party organization (which needed to routinize charisma¹¹⁹). Similar developments can be seen in the Hungarian case, where the charisma of Szálasi was used to inspire the party elite, which needed to see itself as the avant-garde of the political movement.

This is consistent with what has been described above by Eatwell as “coterie-charisma”. Building on the statement that in the economy of charismatic leadership it is not important what the leader does or who he is, but how he is perceived by his followers, I theorize that charismatic authority is limited to those who are convinced by its veracity (i.e. the coterie). Therefore, charismatic authority has to be studied as a means/attempt at political legitimation. It must not be judged by the measure of its success, but analyzed to understand what components it is made up of. These components must be comprehended as furnishing something that the target public (those who accept it) needs, because it fits the cultural and political context in which they feel themselves to be a part of. I also hypothesize that charismatic authority is a cultural code, and a

¹¹⁷ Constantin Iordachi, “CHARISMA, RELIGION, AND IDEOLOGY: Romania’s Interwar Legion of the Archangel Michael,” *Ideologies and National Identities. The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*, ed. John R Lampe and Mark Mazower (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004), 19–54.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

product of culture. Interwar fascists built the charisma of their leaders out of certain elements (religious, moral) that were a part of their respective societies' cultures and were easily recognizable. Sociologist Philip Smith stated that a direct connection can be traced between charismatic success and a cultural perception of the world of the world which is dominated by strong perceptions of good and evil¹²⁰. In this cultural setting, charisma acts by creating “negative charisma” as a counterpart and seeks to destroy it¹²¹. Interwar Hungarian society, with its liminoid condition, its strong Judeo-Christian moral code shares much of the cultural requirements for the establishment of such a type of charismatic authority.

The second most important theoretical tenet of the thesis is that of generic fascism. I shall make use of the studies on ideology within fascist studies, namely of the heuristic model provided by Roger Griffin. In this sense, fascism shall be understood as a populist ideology, which seeks to renew the national community via an ultranationalist regenerative plan¹²². Griffin's model is highly useful for the purposes of this study, since it is built on the Weberian ideal-type model.¹²³ The concept is especially functional, if we put it together with Weber's stipulations on the relationship between charismatic authority and crisis. Weber claims that charismatic authority emerges in times of such crisis, when it is especially successful and influential. I hypothesize that such crises may manifest themselves at the level of perception; they are a form of gaining knowledge about the world, and of endowment with meaning. The liminoid person(s) may seek the protection of charismatic authority in times of crisis, real or

¹²⁰ Philip Smith, “Culture and Charisma: Outline of a Theory,” *Acta Sociologica* 43, no. 2 (2000): 101–111., p. 103

¹²¹ Smith, p. 103

¹²² Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*.

¹²³ Roger Griffin (ed.), *International fascism : theories, causes and the new consensus*, London : E. Arnold, 1998; Arnd Bauerkämper, “A New Consensus? Recent Research on Fascism in Europe, 1918–1945”, *History Compass*, Volume 4, Issue 3, pages 536–566, May 2006

perceived. The charismatic personage may attempt to heighten the scope of liminality, in order to draw more support; the two have a symbiotic relationship.

Method

The method of this study shall be a synthetic discourse analysis of various attempts to create Fascist charisma in interwar Hungary. As stated above, I shall utilize the concept of charismatic authority and charismatic political leadership primarily not as a theoretical concept of social science, but interpret it as a power-narrative prevalent in the pre-and post-war historical period. Much like the narrative about decay, the mythos of a providential leader who would guide the nation out of the crisis it perceived to be in was a popular interpretative scheme, based not on careful study of social realities, but on irrational perceptions. In this way, the inner logic of charisma and the concepts which go into its makeup may be successfully dissected through an analysis of discourses and practices.

For this purpose, I have selected a number of typical pamphlets, articles and books, all written by more or less successful fascist politicians and activists. The article shall attempt to identify the main components of charismatic authority, as perceived by the authors of the texts. It shall also extract the common points and do a comparative study of them. They shall then be filtered through the cultural-political context of interwar Hungary.

The study of the charismatic sources of the authority of fascist leadership has received little attention in Hungarian historiography. While there are quite a few books dedicated to the phenomena of fascism and to the role of fascist leaders in 1930-40's Hungary, they can mostly be characterized as political histories, summarizing events. The most prominent of these are

Karsai Elek and Karsai László's¹²⁴ works, which concentrate on the activities of Szálasi Ferenc, the leader of interwar Hungary's most prominent fascist organization, The Arrow Cross Party-Hungarist Movement. Founded in 1935 (fascist parties had already appeared in Hungary in 1932) as The Party of National Will, his organization went through a number of reshufflings and official bans, and gained the name Arrow Cross Party in 1938. The next year, the party registered its most significant electoral breakthrough, becoming the largest opposition party in the Hungarian Parliament. Szálasi could not enjoy this success, as he was serving prison time on charges of treason; his trial and the projection of his sacrifice for the movement did much to help the Arrow Cross gain support among voters. The party lost much of its popular support during the wartime years, but Szálasi still maintained a significant amount of support among his hardcore followers even after his release in 1940. Indeed, by 1944, the date of the German occupation of Hungary (after a defused attempt of Miklós Horthy to change sides, as Romania did in the same year), the Arrow Cross Party remained the only political organization which could still muster some semblance of mass support. This prompted Germany to put the Arrow Cross and its leader, Szálasi, into power, in October of 1944. Budapest was almost encircled by Soviet forces at the time, but in the capital and countryside the Arrow Cross and the gendarmerie organized pogroms and a high number of Jews were murdered among the chaos.

Horthy and the others

Interwar Hungarian political culture was highly accustomed to charismatic authority. Beginning with the second decade of the 20th century, the cult of state leaders became official, with the coming of admiral Horthy Miklós to this role. He was stylized by the press and official

¹²⁴ Elek Karsai , László Karsai, *A Szálasi per*, (Budapest: Reform, 1988); Elek Karsai, *Szálasi naploja*, (Budapest: Kossuth, 1978)

discourse of the period as a providential figure, who delivered Hungary from chaos and put her back on the track of becoming an important factor in Europe. He was also well aware of the important role of associating himself with the cultural archetype of charismatic leadership: he rode a white horse upon his entry into Budapest, in 1919. This contrast, of the chaos of the past few years, with war, revolutions, and foreign occupation, and the leader, riding in on a white steed, in order to restore order, was intentional, and brought with it a new style of theatric politicking. Horthy repeated this performance in 1940, when, after the Second Vienna Award, Hungary regained lost territories: he once more rode in on a white horse to “rescue” the Hungarians in the larger cities. The Horthy cult was maintained by the press and the state apparatus, and was a mainstay of the entire period¹²⁵.

It is important that we make a short mention of the main characteristics of the charismatic myth of Horthy Miklós. This is important, for it sets up the political-ideological context in which fascist charismatics was developed. Moreover, a number of common elements between it and the fascist charisma meant that they eventually entered into a relationship of competition. I shall shortly describe the discursive strategies employed by the fascists to negate and sterilize this rivalry.

Historian Dávid Turbucz, the author of a recent Horthy biography, identified three main elements of his official cult, since its beginnings in 1919-1920. The first was his military past, and the supposed heroic achievements on the front of World War I. Dubbed “the Hero of the Novara” (the name of his military vessel) or “the hero of Otranto”, his military prowess, clear mind, decisiveness as a leader and bravery in the line of fire were hailed as unequalled by his

¹²⁵ Dávid Turbucz, *Horthy Miklós* (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2011).

propagandists¹²⁶. They built the narrative on the praise and good press he received during the war for his hypothetical military victories (although much of this was wishful thinking, for the Austro-Hungarian navy was blocked in its Adriatic ports for most of the war, and only carried out a few sorties). Soon, in 1920, he became a providential idol, and hailed by the right-wing papers and politicians as the person who had rescued Hungary from total destruction, at the hand of communists and weak leadership (during the Károlyi period). During a 1919 gathering of counter-revolutionary leaders, Gyula Gömbös put forward a number of other characteristics of Horthy that would become part of the canon. According to Gömbös, Horthy was heroic, to the point of self-sacrifice, and would “gladly give his life for his country and nation¹²⁷”. The admiral was also portrayed in the press of the period as a unifier of the nation, or conversely, the personification of all of the popular desires, of the will of the entirety of the nation. He was “just”, “honest”, “a real Magyar lord”, whose mouth “never told a lie”. The Szeged group tried to portray him as the new father of the nation, and soon, the patriarchal image stuck¹²⁸.

This image of Horthy solidified so strongly into a dogma, that it became a mainstay of right-wing political languages (which dominated the Hungary in the period). For far right and fascist movements it was therefore necessary to work within the confines of this scheme, and set up some kind of relationship with the patriarchal leader-image of the admiral. Their solution was to borrow some of the elements of the Horthy-cult, fuse it with components of external fascist ideology, and create their own narrative of providential leadership. Building on the fact that both the idea of providential and patriarchal leadership had religious undertones, fascist ideologues attempted to shift Horthy-cult into a secondary position, based on agency. Thusly, the charisma

¹²⁶ Dávid Turbucz, “A Horthy-Kultusz Kezdetei,” *Minoritate, Pro*, 2004, 156–99.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 163

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 163

displayed by fascist leaders such as Szálasi was always providential, active and Christ-like. Conversely, Horthy's charisma was much more patriarchal, God-like and aloof; its passivity was seeded between the lines. A good example of this is the series of articles that usually appeared on the pages of fascist newspapers and journals on the occasion of Horthy's birthday or the commemoration of one or more of his glorious past achievements. Papers like the *Pesti Újság* or *Magyarság* praised and eulogized the leader of the state, chronicling his past achievements¹²⁹. However, as a general rule, they preferred to omit him, and in these rare occasions, when they had to give homage to the regent, they presented his past role as a hero, and did not underscore any of his recent activities. Not wanting to create conflict, they glossed over the fact that he was responsible for putting into power the conservatives they hated so much, and attempted to set up a relationship in which he would voluntarily give political power to fascism. The most outspoken proponent of this construction was Szálasi himself, who throughout the interwar period had the fix idea that if he obtained an audience from Horthy, he could convince him to divest power to the Arrow Cross¹³⁰. He imagined the future association between himself on the dynamic of the Hitler-Hindenburg or Mussolini-Vittorio Emanuele relationships.

Popular geniuses

Having established a propensity for strong leadership in the interwar Hungarian political mind, we may concentrate on how charismatic leadership was envisioned by Hungarian fascist thought at that time. The idea of a leader, endowed with exceptional charisma and qualities, was

¹²⁹ Meskó Zoltán, *Pesti Újság: Politikai Napilap*, 1932. June 18th, p. 1, Festetics S., "Hadak útján," *Mezőföld*, December 31, 1933., p.1., Virstologi Rupprecht Olivér, *Magyarság*, 1938. June 18th, p.1.

¹³⁰ Karsai, Szálasi, and Szuhay-Havas, "Szálasi Naplója": *A Nyilasmozgalom a II. Világháború Idején*; Karsai, "Tetemrehívás"; Paksa, *Szálasi Ferenc és a Hungarizmus*.

an especially important part of Hungarian fascist ideology. The first articles and propagandistic works that can clearly be identified as being fascist all dealt to a greater or lesser extent with the idea of the leader. One of the earliest examples of such an endeavor is Dr. Némethy Béla's pamphlet entitled "Hol vagy magyar Hitler?" (Where are you, Hungarian Hitler?). Published in 1932, the short book hails "the beginning of a new era". Némethy establishes that the age of liberalism and capitalism has come to an end, "since it cannot and will not freely distribute the gains of production among the members of the community¹³¹". He then continues to extol the higher value of a socialist state, however, one that is based on the national community, which is the only true foundation "on which the tenets of socialism can be realized¹³²". The following chapters are dedicated to the description of national socialist policies, in which the state takes the role of a proactive agent. This is less interesting for our topic of charismatic leadership; however, the tenth chapter of the pamphlet gives us a first glimpse into how Hungarian fascists imagined their leader:

"In our earlier demonstrations we have alluded to the fact that a Leader is necessary for the success of National Socialism. This man, who shall not name himself the nation's apostle, but be recognized by the suffering people as leader, based upon his talent, his force of will against adversity and his puritan dedication toward national socialism, has to rally the people to the flag. His first task shall be to unify...The desperate...tens of thousands of intelligentsia, the oppressed hundreds of thousands of workers of factories and land await the rising of the sun over the dark Hungarian plain, waiting for that...soldier, politician, publicist, or even painter's or

¹³¹ Béla Némethy, *Hol Vagy Magyar Hitler?: Röpirat a Nemzeti Szocialista Magyar államról* (Budapest: [Lehel], 1932), p.3-4

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 6

stonemason's apprentice, who may already be amongst them...they all ask: Where are you, Hungarian Hitler?¹³³”

These few short passages already tell a great deal about the characteristics that a Fascist leader should possess, in order to qualify for the support of the charisma-seeking crowd. First of all, one has to notice a most significant detail: the role of the leader within the organization and the community itself. The first lines in Némethy's book already described how the nation “seeks” someone to rally behind, who can realize the new order¹³⁴. At that time, this person was to be Gömbös Gyula, ex-officer and the leader of the radical right wing formations in the parliament. Two things may be concluded from these passages: the first, that the leader plays an integral part in revolutionary transformations. The second is that the people, while an important agent of change and history, cannot exist without leadership. They must rally behind a charismatic leader in order to enact great changes. The lost thousands cry out for a leader, as in Némethy's text: the mass exists in a state of disorder or limbo without great leadership to mobilize its creative energies. These were typical topoi in the texts of the period.

The quoted passage also establishes for the first time a set of characteristics for the leader. The first is that the leader is “of the people”. This is an important element of populist discourse, in general. It points to the fact that the leader is not part of a higher class or ruling intelligentsia. He may be, as Némethy wrote, a painter's apprentice or a soldier. Owing to this provenience, he is in tune with the needs of the people, and is also anointed by them to enact their requests. However, the leader is not just an archetypical member of the community, but one that is selected, as we can see in the quoted passage above, due to his extraordinary set of

¹³³ Némethy, p. 31-32

¹³⁴ Némethy, p. 5-6

qualities. At this early stage, Némethy only mentions “talent” as an inborn trait, which is rather fuzzy, but the principle of the leader’s traits is established. Other traits mentioned include his force of will and dedication to the common good, which is synonymous with ideological indoctrination. The leader therefore rises above his peers due to his almost religious devotion to the bettering of the situation of the community.

The first significant fascist movement in Hungary, the Scythe Cross Party, enriched the palette which was used to paint the figure of the leader. The Party, existing between 1931 and 1936, was the first openly national-socialist party in Hungary with a mass following. It was led by Zoltán Böszörmény, a former student and amateur poet, turned fascist activist, who the party faithful hailed with the title of “Vezér” (Leader). Böszörmény was the first Hungarian politician who attempted to construct an image of leadership for himself, as laid down by Némethy’s crude blueprint. In order to achieve this, he relied heavily on the (supposed or existing) charismatic elements of his own personality. These are very well synthesized by the small party booklet entitled “Böszörmény”. In it, he had a variety of poems, hymns, speeches, the party anthem dedicated to himself, or containing large parts which referred to him.

“Böszörmény Zoltán is our ancestors heroic soul/made flesh for the final battle/A miracle come to life/God’s new scourge/The blood-relative of king Attila/The sword of chieftain Almos/The pure blood of Arpad/...The justice hammer of Hunyadi Mátyás...Who is Böszörmény for us?/Still you don’t know?/Oppressed Hungarians: Your Prophet!/On this Earth follow only him/He is the cornerstone of a new millennium.¹³⁵”

¹³⁵Böszörmény Zoltán, *Böszörmény* (Budapest: Fáklya, 1937), p.8-9

“In this country bleeding from a thousand wounds, the exploiters, enemies, deceivers of the Hungarian people all curse one man: Zoltán Böszörmény, this great genius, man of rock-solid will, pure white honor and stable discipline. This prophet on a godly mission...Sin fears him, because he is the only one who can win in this great fight. This Leader feels his nation’s suffering through his own. He is totally different from the politicians aping other’s ideas, building on them with Jewish mortar...He heard the cries for help of his people, the Almighty sent him among us, he became Leader due to God’s will...Let him come forth, who is more talented, dedicated, Hungarian, sacrificing, than him...¹³⁶”

The short book is full of similar articles. Böszörmény is primarily hailed, as we can deduce from the quoted passages, because of his extraordinary qualities. He is primarily a genius, a man capable of feats that ordinary people cannot achieve. Upon closer inspection, his qualities are a repertoire of the best features of the Hungarian nation, but hyperbolized: a genius, a man of fanatical belief in the cause of the nation, dedicated to it body and soul. The thesis of exceptionalism abounds in all of the descriptions in the book. A new feature which was added by Böszörmény’s political organization was the endowment of the leader and his mission with a religious substance. This was a rhetoric strategy, which sought to transform ideology into a political religion of sorts. It built upon established and shared cultural mores of Hungarian society, relating to Judeo-Christian hagiography and narratives. These were established mental patterns in interwar Hungarian society, as in all European societies. The image of Böszörmény as a leader was molded to fit that of Jesus, by way of parallels. Both delivered society from chaos; both were sent by God and both were on a holy mission. Also, Böszörmény was styled as being included in the pantheon of national heroes (Attila, Arpad, Hunyadi), which was made up of

¹³⁶ Böszörmény, pp. 9-11

persons with similar qualities, who lead the nation at times of great success, or delivered it from periods of crisis.

Bringers of the new age

The sources for the descriptions quoted above were the foreign totalitarian cults of personality. Hungarian fascists understood themselves as being part of a larger, pan-European movement or family of ideologies. As we have already seen in the case of Némethy's pamphlet, strong political leaders, such as Hitler, proved to be the model to follow. They were understood as the most prominent and successful exponents of the European trend of fascist turn, and indeed, Hungarian radical thinkers believed that under similar leadership, their country may follow suit. The period produced a number of Hungarian panegyrics of Hitler and his German state, and a similar number of works dedicated to Mussolini's Italy. This was so especially since the Hungarian radical right began to see itself retroactively of being among the avant-garde of right-wing political movements (in the light of the events of 1919), which led to the development of fascism in Europe.

These types of texts were quite popular in the first half of the 1930's, when experiments of charismatic fascist leadership produced very weak results. A typical pamphlet of this sort was Oláh György's "From Lance-Corporal to Dictator. Hitler's Revolution". The journalist, formerly belonging to the populist movement, published his book in 1935, which was a biography of Hitler, describing his early life to his achievements to that point. The work described his life as a linear path toward success, and exhorted his charismatic qualities, his organizational genius, his ability to inspire, and his blind dedication to his cause. The work's goal was to inspire domestic attempts to create charismatic leaders, as the author confessed in the epilogue: "I was inspired to

write this popular work by the months spent in Germany at the most glorious time of the national revolution... For a son of a humiliated, destroyed nation it was natural to be inspired by... masses of people marching under his window, singing about national renewal.¹³⁷” Such works continued to appear up to the early 1940’s, the most prominent belonging to prominent Arrow Cross Party politician and journalist, Hubay Kálmán. The book was entitled “Two Revolutions¹³⁸” and was a biography of Mussolini and Hitler and a recounting of their achievements in their respective states.

The apparition and mushrooming of such texts may be understood by making reference to the historical context of the period between 1932 and 1933 in Hungary. 1931 witnessed the exit from power of Bethlen István, after roughly 11 years of dominating the political landscape. After the short interregnum of the Károlyi Gyula government, the radical right had managed a palace revolution, due to mounting social pressure, Gömbös Gyula became the next prime minister. This galvanized the radical right, as they thought their hour had arrived, and that the country would be energized by a new charismatic leader. The left wing parties had also begun to re-establish themselves and garnered more and more popular support, manifested in the September 1st, 1930¹³⁹ and spring and winter 1932¹⁴⁰ demonstrations, many of which were put down violently by the authorities.

The trend of charismatic politicking continued in late 1932-early 1933, with the establishment of the first marginally successful fascist political projects. In 1932 and 1933, two new parties were founded by politicians who had distanced themselves from prime-minister

¹³⁷ György Oláh, *Őrvezetőből Diktátor: Hitler Forradalma: 1920-1932* (Budapest: Stádium, 1935).p. 232

¹³⁸ Kálmán Hubay, *Két Forradalom* (Budapest: Centrum Kiadó, 1941).

¹³⁹ G Ránki and Z P Pach, *Magyarország Története: 1918-1945*, Magyarország Története Tíz Kötetben (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984)., p. 613

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 645

Bethlen István's ruling Unitary Party. The first was a former populist and agrarian politician and journalist, Meskó Zoltán. He founded his Hungarian National Socialist Laborer's and Agricultural Party in late 1932. He used his parliamentary mandate in the Lower House (obtained as a member of the ruling party) and his newspaper, The Pest Daily (*Pesti Újság*) to secure publicity for his political project. A series of articles published in this daily synthetically describe the concept of charisma and leadership, as Meskó understood it.

“the decades of suffering have woken up the soul of peoples worldwide. From their depths the great energies of new national consciousness broke out. Great leaders first molded their countries, then the world to their image; Mussolini, Kemal, Hitler- their names are on victorious banners in their countries. Their victories signal the victory of morality against immorality.¹⁴¹”

The article continues by stating that the Italian, German and Turkish example brings forward a new era, led by new statesmen. In these countries, the people have manifested their need for strong leadership, in order to lead them out of their previous state of crisis. The crisis manifested itself not only socially, politically and economically (through lack of equality and power being concentrated in the hands of a selfish clique), but also morally and culturally (the loss of a sense of mission, which would bring together the national community). The strong leader (Mussolini, Kemal, Hitler, and afterwards, Meskó) was presented as a providential figure. He was the solution to this crisis, through the power of example. The community would only have to do two things: accept him as their leader and follow his example. This parsimony (the mode of thinking that posits that complex problems all have a simple origin) created a duality in

¹⁴¹ Pesti Újság, 1932, June 17, nr. 25

fascist discourse. The figure of the leader is transposed over the problems society is facing, and presented as an alternative for them, a panacea of sorts.

Problems were presented in a similar vein by the exponent of another early fascist political project, count Sándor Festetics. Also a breakaway from Bethlen's conservative Unitary Party, he was an aristocrat with a great deal of political experience, who recognized the turn toward right that Hungarian politics was taking in 1932-1933. A great landowner and owner of his own newspaper (called *Mezőföld*- Meadowland), he also had the advantage (as Meskó) of having a parliamentary forum to espouse his ideas. In his newspaper, he published a series of articles very similar to those of Meskó, in which he prophesized the end of liberal democracy and capitalism, as a form of socio-political existence. They bore such titles as "The Twilight of Democracy"¹⁴² and "Tempora Mutantur"¹⁴³, and foretold not only the end of democracy, capitalism, and the liberal age, but also the birth of a "new civilization". He also identified Hitler, Mussolini, Pilsudski, and Kemal as the contemporary political figures which merited emulation. The duality of leader and crisis was maintained in the texts.

Martyrdom and leadership without leader

The most well-developed discourse on the idea of charismatic fascist leadership belonged to the luminaries of the Arrow Cross Party, and was concentrated toward the leader of this party, Szálasi Ferenc. The Arrow Cross Party is the generic name for a number of political formations lead by Szálasi, beginning with his entry into politics in 1935 (the party had to change its titlature a number of times due because of bans by the government). Szálasi held the concept of charismatic leadership as one of the core tenets of his ideology, which he entitled Hungarism. From the beginning, he established his first party (The Party of National Will) as a new type of

¹⁴² *Mezőföld*, 1933, August 27, nr.35, page 1

¹⁴³ *Mezőföld*, 1933, August 13, nr.33, page 1

political organization, which had a strong personal connection with the leader. The head of the party was Szálasi himself, who was not subject to question, critique or demotion. Membership in the party also entailed total submission to the will of the leader, who acted as the vanguard of the organization, coming up with the tenets of ideology, political strategy and the official line on all matters. Other members could only advise the leader, and nothing more. This was not a new element, the Scythe Cross Party members having already used it in the early 1930's (they took an oath on Bőszörmény to follow him), but it was the Arrow Cross Party that first used it effectively. This image, however, only existed in theory, or rather, at the level of party discourse, as we shall see.

Szálasi and his Arrow Cross were also the first to make use of two new elements to bolster the charisma of the leader. The first was the exploitation of martyrdom. The very real harassment by the authorities and the setbacks which the movement saw because of them were transformed into a process via which the leader gained charisma, instead of losing it. The second element was the utilization of the leader's past, in which parts of his previous life, in which he benefited from institutional-legal authority, were instrumentalized to create charismatic authority.

Szálasi's image mainly consisted of classical elements of attributed to charismatic leaders. In the 1944 work "From the struggles of Szálasi", party activist Csonka Emil describes him as an exceptional leader. Firstly, the book begins with a praise of Szálasi's oratorical skills at the 1937 speech given at the Buda Vigadó¹⁴⁴, at the founding meeting of the Arrow Cross Party. Szálasi was said to have inspired the crowd, endowing them with a sense of meaning and

¹⁴⁴ a congress hall often used for political rallies by various political formations, located in Western Budapest

purpose. The party faithful then rushed out onto the streets, with cheers of “Hail Szálasi¹⁴⁵”. His presence and oratorical skills, his eloquence are all praised in the work.

“after the Vigadó speech, the hounding of Szálasi intensified, being fueled by deep pits of hate against him, because they recognized it as a call for battle, and recognized that Szálasi had great qualities as leader and statesman. Every politician who aims high is enamored by power. This is not a bad quality, but a virtue of leaders, without it they would not be fit for the role. Whoever denies this is not a statesman or leader, but only a politician¹⁴⁶.”

“Also near the town of uniformed miners went out to greet the Chief. 200 miners were in military lines in the side of the country road, and the group of women and the youth organization in a marching column. The Chief got out of his car and shook hands with the members of the delegation. A big roads of the village were yet to come, however; Szálasi joined the miners in the ranks and made to walk the remaining way...from the lips of thousands of miners roared the cheers,...the crowd shouted "Szálasi! Szálasi! Szálasi! " The youth sang Arrow Cross songs, rhythmic tunes. Between the rows of the crowd led the way up, flowers were falling on all sides in front of Szálasi¹⁴⁷”

This overly positive image of Szálasi’s qualities as a leader must be contrasted with the actual evidence of the period. According to a number of sources, his actual presence was much less inspiring and charismatic¹⁴⁸; however, his supporters were attempting to follow the foreign examples of fascist charismatic narratives, of Hitler and Mussolini, and created the charismatic image, in spite of their leader’s lackluster abilities as an orator and organizer. If we contrast

¹⁴⁵ Emil Csonka, *Szálasi Küzdelmeiből: Hogyan Történet a Hatalom átvétel?* ([Budapest]: Hungarista Könyv és Lapkiadó, 1944).p.17

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.23

¹⁴⁷ Emil Csonka, *Szálasi Ferenc Országjárása* (Budapest: Könyv- és Lapkiadó, 1944).

¹⁴⁸ Paksa, *Szálasi Ferenc és a Hungarizmus*.

Szálasi's projected image with that of Hitler's, as identified by Ian Kershaw, a number of similarities emerge. Both were seen as personifications of the best qualities of the nation¹⁴⁹, he possessed unique leadership abilities, was envisioned as the future administrator of popular justice, and the voice of the people, was honest and sincere. Both upheld the rights of their nation before external threats and owing to their martial background, hailed as heroes of the World War. Both knew the value of suffering and sacrifice. Finally, both were the personification of the bulwark against all enemies of the nation, internal (Jews, Bolshevism) and external¹⁵⁰.

As mentioned above, one of the novel elements in Szálasi's image was the addition of charismatic elements which were derived not from the qualities of the man himself, but his former institutional affiliation. This appeared first in the speeches of Hubay Kálmán, Arrow Cross deputy leader, in the Lower House of the Hungarian Parliament. Szálasi, who was serving time in prison at the time, could not formally respond to the accusations brought against him in Hungary's political forum by deputy Berg Miksa. Berg, a deputy of the Independent Smallholder Party, correctly sensed the sources of Szálasi's charisma, and attacked him at his weakest points, accusing him of not having proper Hungarian birth and not possessing Hungarian citizenship legally. Hubay Kálmán, enraged by these attacks, responded in an interpellation:

"...one of the greatest personalities of today's Hungary, because he came to the attention of the most respected government and the less-respected Jewry. This man is being investigated by the police, though he was the one of the bravest soldiers of the world war, who gained the Iron Cross at 19, and gained a further 9 commendations after that. This Szálasi Ferenc was the

¹⁴⁹ I Kershaw, *The "Hitler Myth": Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 253

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 254

Hungarian Army's most promising carrier officer, because of his quality of being the most appreciated staff officer.¹⁵¹”

This meant that Szálasi gained charisma not only from his personal characteristics, but also from his past as a high officer of the Hungarian Army and a war veteran. These two positions made possible for him to receive residual rational-legal authority. We may imagine that former officers and war veterans still received a high amount of respect from ordinary members of society and were perceived as still being associated with the posts they once occupied. As the army was a symbol of order and discipline and self-sacrifice in interwar Hungary, it helped filter the image of Szálasi.

However, Szálasi's former army status did not impede the authorities sentencing him to prison on the accusation of treason and activities against the state in 1938. His jailing meant that the party and the “Hungarist” movement were without actual leadership. Nevertheless, the period between 1938 and 1940 was the time of the greatest successes of the Arrow Cross Party both at the ballot box and in terms of membership numbers and political influence. This was possible because of the phenomenon I have dubbed “leadership in absentia”. This term means that while Szálasi's political influence was curtailed, his role became a figurative one; the symbolic role, however, far outweighed the real role of the leader, as the party was practically lead by his second in command, Hubay Kálmán. Szálasi's image served as a symbol of martyrdom and was adeptly manipulated by Hubay in the pages of his daily “Magyarság” (Hungarianness). After Szálasi's sentencing, Hubay developed a binomial image of the proceedings in the newspaper. The party and the leader were identified with “Christianity” and “Christian morals”, while the

¹⁵¹ Képviselőházi napló, 1935. XVIII. kötet, 1938/ The Log of the Lower House of Parliament, 1935-1939, volume 18, 1938, page 71

prosecutors and the police were accused of being under the nocent influence of Jews, “The killers of Christ¹⁵²”. However, due to their “Christian” qualities, both party members and party leader were capable of great sacrifice for the final goal. In this period, the slogan “Without Good Friday there can be no resurrection” was invented and popularized. The party and its members were subject to “persecution”, and the parallel between the early Christian religion and the Arrow Cross Party was set up: “whose final victory cannot be halted¹⁵³”. The common threat of “persecution” was used in the Manichean manner described by Roger Eatwell, as a tool to bring the party faithful together; one of the Arrow Cross leaders, historian Málnási Ödön, even went as far as declaring: “I hope that they won’t deprive us of the great support of persecution in the near future¹⁵⁴”. The idea of sacrifice and obedience toward charismatic authority was codified by the introduction of a large number of key-words in the articles referring to the party and leader. The members were often referred to as being *fanatical Christians*, *fanatical Hungarians*. This was paired with: “national socialism is not only a system of duties, but also of sacrifices. The heightened sacrifice of the individual for the community, in order for the community to make security and well-being for the individual...the brick of the nation is struggle and sacrifice its mortar¹⁵⁵”. The articles in *Magyarság* are rife with examples of sacrifice, either referring to the jailing of the leader, or harassment by the authorities or even assassinated members: “...we Hungarists are calm men...if they want to make martyrs of us, then they shall have martyrs.¹⁵⁶” At the same time, the main motif of the articles describing the fate of the leader is “suffering”. His poor living conditions, his family’s suffering, his sickness are all described in great detail. Hubay invented a new monicker for him, to heighten his role as martyr: prisoner 9323, after his

¹⁵² *Magyarság*, August 23, 1938, p. 1

¹⁵³ *Magyarság*, May 29, 1938, p. 1

¹⁵⁴ *Magyarság*, September 11, 1938, p. 1

¹⁵⁵ *Magyarság*, November 1, 1938, p. 1

¹⁵⁶ *Magyarság*, July 5, 1938, p. 1

cell number in the prison. At the same time, the paper started a 42-part series of articles on Hitler's sacrifices in prison, entitled "From the citadel to the chancellorship". The comparison between the two situations was implicit.

Szálasi was also described in many pieces as being "alone" or "lonely". This term heightened his heroic quality, and also grew the Szálasi-Christ comparison. The party quickly stepped up the cult of the leader with a number of practices. Honorary dinners were held every October 4th, on Szálasi's name-day, called "Prison dinners". A Hungarist prayer was drawn up, which contained the phrase "I believe in Szálasi, my leader". Many leaflets, pictures, mirrors, pins and other propaganda material were produced at this time, with Szálasi's portrait and the text "Prisoner 9323"¹⁵⁷. Later, on his release from prison, the leader is presented as being reinforced by the experience. The prison sentence is interpreted as a sort of test, or a rite of passage, which secured even more the role of leader for Szálasi. Csonka Emil's book shows him as not wasting time in prison, studying, writing, and thinking about ways to set Hungary back on the path toward glory. Again the Hitler-Szálasi equivalency was being played up.

The martyrdom of the leader was thought up in order to capitalize on a number of cultural symbols existent in the minds of Hungarians. An obvious parallel was drawn between the sufferings and sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and Szálasi Ferenc at the hands of the authorities. The charisma of Szálasi floated as a Leviathan over the Arrow Cross Party, which managed to unify all the smaller fascist parties in 1939; the party appeared to be led by a dictator, but was really a coalition of smaller, autonomous forces. This strategy proved successful, if we only take

¹⁵⁷ Tóth Andrea, "Egy Vezér Imázsa. Szálasi Ferenc Bebörtönzése és a Hungarista Propaganda," *Valóság* 35, no. 6 (1992): 51–64., p. 59-60

into account the relative number or votes the party gained in the same year: 29, becoming the largest opposition party in parliament¹⁵⁸.

The organization of the Arrow Cross party also reflected the role of charisma. Here, the leader was given an inordinate amount of power, and ability to oversee and correct any and all political activities of his party members and organs. While the political organization was split into women's, youth and proper party organizations, both centrally and territorially¹⁵⁹, with a pyramidal structure, the party organizational guidelines offered the opportunity (in theory) to the lowliest party member to appeal to the leader directly¹⁶⁰. This was probably enacted to avoid the "routinization of charisma" described by Iordachi for the Romanian Iron Guard. In reality, the party structure reflected exactly this process, together with the late Arrow Cross press. In it, certain lieutenants of Szálasi attempted to derive some of his charisma and direct it toward themselves. The most significant of these was Hubay, who, while building his leader's image up, also published profusely, in the form of books, and newspaper articles especially, highlighting the volume of work he did in service of the party¹⁶¹. This was also done in order to underscore his role as the mediator between the aloof leader and the party faithful or the person who was Szálasi's voice. Of course, these types of attempts never actually challenged the role of the leader or question his charisma, but attempted to deviate some of his popularity to their own ends. If we were to remain with the religious terminology, their relationship was akin to the relation between Christ and saints.

¹⁵⁸ Nicholas Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the others : a history of Fascism in Hungary and Rumania*, (Stanford, Calif. : Hoover Institution Press, 1970)

¹⁵⁹ MOL, "P 1351 -Nyilaskeresztes Párt 1933-1945," n.d.

¹⁶⁰ "Politikatörténeti és Szakszervezeti Levéltár (PIL) 685 Fond 1-4," n.d.

¹⁶¹ Kálmán Hubay, "Hungarista Program" (Budapest: Jövő Nyomdaszövetkezet, 1938)., Kálmán Hubay, *Három Interpelláció* (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Szocialista Párt-Hungarista mozgalom, 1938); Hubay, *Két Forradalom*.

The Arrow Cross Party and its leader actually managed to access the avenues of power, through the back door provided to them by Nazi Germany in October 15th, 1944. It is interesting to contrast Szalasi's charisma in this period with that of 1938-39. The Arrow Cross newsreels of late 1944, and Ruzskay Jenő's eulogy from the pages of *Magyarság*, addressed to his leader represent good examples of the reconstruction of fascist charisma in the period. The newsreels presented Szálasi as being swooped into power on the back of a popular uprising, on the shoulders of his political soldiers (failing to mention that the Arrow Cross Party servicemen were actually armed by the Germans)¹⁶². In the subsequent newsreel, the new *Nemzetvezető* (Leader of the Nation) was presented, being sworn in front of the parliament, troops and in the traditional seat of power, the Buda Castle¹⁶³. This was done in order to project an image of legitimacy and popular support for his rule. The press and media later presented him as touring the country, being present on the frontline. The implication was that he took an active role and was a direct agent of the most important political actions. In the press, Ruzskay hailed him as a hero, a savior of the Hungarian nation:

“...I do not salute you as the holder of all of political power, as national leader, or even prime minister, but the Hungarian man who, at the last moment, the last catastrophic second,...when the most vile...treason was almost successful...when the Jews on the Eastern front were already preparing to massacre us in droves...pulled back the nation from the edge of the precipice...You prepared for this action, due to your great foresight...you and only you...may now begin your great mission...the fanatical belief in the nation, which burns within you, and which inspires a great part of the nation...gives you the strength to enact those radical and needed measures...it gives us strength and radiates strength ...the fate of the nation is in

¹⁶² “Filmhíradók Online,” accessed January 1, 2015, <http://filmhiradokonline.hu/>.

¹⁶³ “Filmhíradók Online,” n.d.

your hands. With you it shall succeed or fall...it is yours to command! May God bless your work! I salute you, Ferenc Szálasi!¹⁶⁴”

There is little actual difference between the tropes of charismatic discourse of the pre-war years, and 1944; to a degree, the rhetoric even seems more radical, due to the closeness of the war, which enhances the contrast of the Manichean construction. Szálasi was still regarded primarily as a providential figure, a genius (he had the foresight and bravery to act when needed), and a personality capable of great sacrifice, with a fanatical belief in the “higher cause” of nationalism (he possessed a “mission”). Ruskay still hailed him as the personification of the nation, imbued with a divine aura, who could do no wrong.

In the area of practices, Szálasi was to become the total dictator of Hungary, his power extending to all areas of state and society, as his new post (of National Leader), modeled on the German Führerprinzip, combined all three branches of power. In practical terms, he controlled very little, as the country was occupied by the German Army; his regime’s only contributions were in funneling resources to the Germans, prolonging the agony of Hungary by keeping it in the war and enabling the Holocaust. The regime became a parody of itself, lost in its dreams of personal leadership, all the while being subjected to one of the most open foreign occupations.

Conclusions

As much as it may be inferred by the demonstrations of this historic case-study, Max Weber’s concept of charismatic authority is still highly useful as a heuristic device. It is especially utilizable when it is understood that it is culturally conditioned. Charismatic

¹⁶⁴ Jenő Ruskay, “Köszöntelek Szálasi Ferenc!” in Olivér, “Magyarság.”, 1944, October 19th, p. 1

leadership, as we have seen in the case of interwar Hungarian fascism, is a means for extremist political organizations to gather mass support, but is also a way of endowment with meaning. The components of charismatic leadership, however, do not always fully follow Weber's scheme. Many times, residual elements of traditional, or legal-rational authority are core components of personal charisma. The case-study presented above seems to support David Beetham's findings, and his criticism of Weber's concept of charismatic authority. Beetham criticized Weber's idea of legitimacy for not being able to integrate normativity¹⁶⁵, and leaving too much up to the perceptions of those who participate in the process of legitimation. The measure of legitimacy is made up of all three components, traditional, rational-legal and charismatic all participating in the creation of authority in the modern state¹⁶⁶. While I do not support Beetham's moralizing standpoint, he clearly demonstrated how Weber's categories bleed into one another, and how one may work to construct another.

Moreover, charisma is often based on a system of cultural references. In the case of Hungarian fascism in the 1930's and 1940's, this was Christianity: the charisma of Christ was often the source of inspiration for secular charisma. The exceptional qualities of the leader therefore pail in front of a larger mythical image of charisma, pre-existent in the minds of all members of society. The Manichean understanding of leaders and lead versus an outside threat is also an important factor in the economy of charisma; there must at least be a sense of liminality in the minds of the followers. The positioning of Weber's ideal-type, within a heuristic definition of the fascist minimum is therefore highly conducive for successful monographies or comparative studies of fascist ideology.

¹⁶⁵ D Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power*, Political Analysis (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).p. 13

¹⁶⁶D Beetham, "Max Weber and the Legitimacy of the Modern State," *Analyse & Kritik*, 1991., p. 44

The concept of the nation

Symbolic geography and nationalism: spatial understanding of the nation

The First World War changed the perspective on a host of issues, including the manner in which warfare was conducted, society was structured, and politically represented. One of the byproducts of this great upheaval was a novel understanding of the national existence, configured in spatial terms. For the first time, the geopolitical context became paramount, and the concept of the international community, was brought to the fore. This was a consequence of the global nature of the war, in which alliances were forged according not only to national interests, but spatial proximity. The existence of national communities in contiguous imperial contexts was one of the many causes of the war. The quest for a clear definition and delimitation of the national space through political borders was the chief goals of European nation-states before, during and after war. A good example of this phenomenon was given by the “geographic” competition between the various nations at the negotiating table during the peace talks in Versailles. Each side began utilizing a mixture of geography and studies in ethnicity in order to back up its claims to disputed borderlands. One of the most detailed (and most interesting, for the purposes of this study) such ventures was produced by the Hungarian delegation. Led by Teleki Pál, a respected scientific figure, a geographer, it produced the famous “Red Map” (also known as the “Nationalities Map”). It was utilized as evidence of the

Hungarian claims of dominance in the Carpathian basin. A novel scientific product, it was the first visual representation of ethnic realities in the area, based on statistical data gathered in 1910. The map combined geography and studies in ethnic density: each nation was represented by a color on the map. Hungarians were allotted red, giving the map its famous title. It was also a highly sophisticated bit of visual politics and trickery. Firstly, red being the highest on the frequency and wavelength interval among the colors of the visible light spectrum, it stood out among others, which were given a dim hue, or even striped white, in the case of Croats. Secondly, most areas were colored only with the color of the majority population, not accounting for minority existences which in some cases amounted to close to half. Although ultimately an unsuccessful attempt at shaping international perceptions and policies, the map fixed the manner in which Hungarians thought of their national space, and also cemented geography and ethnic population density studies as tools of political argumentation.

The Teleki map left a mark in Hungarian nationalism because it addressed an important issue, which was a constant of the interwar period, up to 1945: firstly, the place of Hungary within the region, and secondly, in Europe and the world overall. What would the role of this “rump” (as it was often referred to in interwar nationalist lingo) Hungary be in the new international community, and how could it assert its interests? The argument was now not only an internal one, but had to be proven on the European and international stage, as some neighboring countries and actors even disputed the primacy and in some cases, the necessity of existence of the Hungarian state. This question could not be ignored by any political formation seeking support in Hungary, and Hungarian fascism proved no exception. From its early years, it showed a special proclivity at perceiving the internal problems of the country in a larger, European context. This was due to the fact that it perceived its own existence as a political

movement and ideology as being part of a larger, European trend, and indeed (as shown in chapter 1) part of a turning point in history. As such, it was paramount for Hungary, as the argument went, to integrate into this transformation, and turn to fascism as soon as possible, in order to be among the winners when the process ended. The spatial coordinates of Hungary were therefore thought to be dependent on temporal ones, inasmuch as the Hungarian nation could grasp the importance of the historical crossroads it found itself at, and make the right choice.

The significance of the national space was also highlighted due to its deterministic role. The Carpathian basin and the Hungarian nation were seen to be inextricably interlinked by Hungarian fascist thinkers. Certain geographical features, such as the Carpathian Mountains and the Danube were not only seen as bulwarks and borders in front of foreign nations, but were also understood as contributing seminal features to the Hungarian national and racial character. The Carpathian basin and its area were also understood as being of prime importance for Europe, both culturally and geo-strategically. This was true for past historical processes, but also asserted itself in the present, therefore boosting the importance and international role of the Hungarian nation, which was bound to existence in this zone. Hungarians could not exist without the Carpathian basin, and Europe was dependent on the Carpathians. These were just some of the arguments laid out by fascist ideologues in Hungary in the late interwar period and during the years of the Second World War. They were expressed in a number of books and short pamphlets, but also widely diffused in the periodicals and newspapers that made up the core of the communications and propaganda apparatus of the Hungarian fascist movement. As we shall see below, there were a number of different streams of interpretation concerning the role and place of Hungary in the present and in the fascist future. These mainly referred to its exact situation vis-à-vis the great European fascist metamorphosis. They either placed it squarely at the center

of this transformation, and at the core of Europe, historically; or at the periphery of this movement, the center being localized in Germany and Italy. According to this interpretation, Hungary found itself historically, and indeed, represented the border of Europe. Many of the fascist discourses of interwar Hungary seem to display a high level of irrationality and inconsistency, however. Thusly, it is not surprising that in many cases, elements from both interpretations coexist within the lines of a single text. In the following chapter, I shall isolate the main streams of argument, and isolate the specific concepts that the Hungarian fascist ideologues worked with, in order to recreate the symbolic geographic world created by them.

External influences

Fascist discourses referring to the linkage between space, territory and nation were hardly a sui generis phenomenon. They were highly tributary to fascist ideologies outside of Hungary, especially Nazi Germany, and to a lesser extent, Fascist Italy. This is evident in the specific forms that spatial planning and formatting took on in Hungary, and even in the terms chosen to express specific concepts: *Grossraum/ Great-space*, *Lebensraum/Living Space* and so forth. These were more-or-less mirror translations of their external counterparts.

The most important influence of German National-Socialism on Hungarian fascism was its strong linkage between people and space, and the creation of the concepts of *Grossraum*, *Lebensraum* and the New European Order (*Neuordnung*). The history of these concepts goes back to the late 19th century, to German geographer and ethnographer Friedrich Ratzel, who coined the term *Lebensraum*. His ideas were taken up in the years of the Weimar republic by Karl Haushofer, and Rudolf Kjellén, who spun them into a new scientific doctrine: geopolitics¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶⁷ D T Murphy, *The Heroic Earth: Geopolitical Thought in Weimar Germany, 1918-1933* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1997).

The two created a new approach to land-based imperialist schemes, by connecting physical geography (anthropology) with political geography and elements of economics. Their theories created the concept of Reich (empire), as composed of Raum, Lebensraum and a strategic military outline. Within a greater Raum, the Volk (defined on a racial basis) lived, imposing its civilization onto lesser peoples who only possessed Kultur. The geopolitical school also treated the state, the people and land as a singular organism, and underlined the connection between people and soil (Boden)¹⁶⁸. The link between politics and geography was strengthened, as they perceived that a survival of a nation depended on its seizure of land; states and nations were understood as being locked in a continuous struggle for land, for Lebensraum. There could not be a state without Raum. Raum was linked to the biology and demography of a people, Haushofer and others declared.

These ideas were developed further by two theorists linked directly to German National Socialism: Carl Schmitt and Walter Christaller. The former worked out the concepts of Grossraum, linking it to the already existing Lebensraum, while the former invented the terms of de-territorialization and re-territorialization¹⁶⁹. Lebensraum was defined not only as an acquisition of sufficient new space which would insure the survival and development of a nation, but also as the germanization of that space. The methods chosen consisted of establishing Grossraums, which were essentially greater spaces of German domination, gravitating around the central axis, and existing in order to service the inner, national space. Schmitt imagined a space which was filled by politics: the “German nation” was conceived as a spatial organism aimed at realizing a historical destiny: the joining of a people and a unified, endlessly perfectible German

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 9

¹⁶⁹ Trevor J. Barnes and Claudio Minca, “Nazi Spatial Theory: The Dark Geographies of Carl Schmitt and Walter Christaller,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, no. June 2014 (2012): 120323085635009, doi:10.1080/00045608.2011.653732.

space¹⁷⁰. Christaller provided the functioning mechanism of the Grossraum: it would consist of an interminable expansion, in which peoples would be displaced, the territory emptied (de-territorialization) and then germanized (reterritorialization). In Italy, there also existed similar ideas, centered around the journal *Geopolitica*, headed by a Triestine geographer, Ernesto Massi¹⁷¹. The Italians terms were “*spazio vitale*”, which consisted of “*grande spazio*” and “*piccolo spazio*”¹⁷². The *grande spazio* was similar to the Grossraum, and the *piccolo spazio* to the concept of Lebensraum. The right to conquer a *grande spazio* for itself was reserved to a few select nations, which possessed the spiritual, civilizational and racial superiority necessary for such a venture¹⁷³. This enabled them to have “civilizing” (to be read: Italianizing) mission in the area of the *grande spazio*¹⁷⁴.

These ideas had a considerable influence on Hungarian fascism. Firstly, the meaning of the concepts was not lost on the Hungarians, who desperately clung to the idea of *Neuordnung Europas*, and avoid becoming an element of the German Grossraum, which they hoped would stretch into the east. Secondly, they adopted this idea, and attempted to create a theoretical space in which Hungary would claim ascendancy, namely South-Eastern Europe (the Balkans). This secondary fascist empire envisioned by Szálasi and Baráth would exist in a symbiotic relationship with the other fascist empires of Europe, securing its southern and eastern flanks. The creation of such an imperial space was born out of the traditional desire to re-conquer lost territories, but took on a theoretical form which was clearly inspired by National Socialism and Fascism.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Marco Antonisch, “La Rivista ‘geopolitica’ E La Sua Influenza Sulla Politica Fascista,” no. 281 (1951): 269–78.

¹⁷² Renzo De Felice and Giulio Einaudi, “Mussolini Il Duce,” 1943.

¹⁷³ D Rodogno, *Fascism’s European Empire: Italian Occupation During the Second World War*, New Studies in European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).,p. 46

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 49

Szálasi

Geographic determinism of the nation and the state was one of the main elements of Szálasi Ferenc's political thought. Being the nominal leader of the most important of the Hungarian fascist movements, his charismatic image meant that his ideas had a dominant influence over fascist ideology in Hungary at the time.

Szálasi's spatial nationalism was present in his works from very early on, beginning with his second published book, entitled *Cél és Követelések* (Goal and Demands), which appeared in 1935. This coincided with Szálasi's formal entry into politics, at the head of his newly-created NAP (Party of National Will). The book can be considered to represent one of the earliest programmatic works of Szálasi, and was also among the first concrete and coherent statements of goals of any fascist party in Hungary. The work already contained the kernel of the fascist leader's understanding of the national territory and its boundaries. It dubbed it "Ősföld" (Ancient Land), one of the many acronyms used by Szálasi, and declared its re-creation to be one of the main goals of his party¹⁷⁵:

"...(the Ancient Land) is a country meant to balance out East and West, North and South. Under its authority, different peoples make up a superior nation, needed by God and Nature, and for the interest of European peace and security of possession."¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵Ferenc Szálasi, *Cél és Követelések* (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1935).

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

From the outset, one of the interesting features of Szálasi's nationalism we can observe from the passages of his 1935 work, is his absolute confidence and sense of equality in the superior qualities of the Hungarian national character. He places Hungary in the middle of his imagined European nexus of power, as a sort of irreplaceable balance, a lynchpin of stability of the continent. In this way, Hungary represents the European synthesis itself, a key player on the level of other greater powers.

Szálasi delimited his vision of the ideal Hungarian state as "being circumscribed by the Carpathians, and stretching out to the Adriatic". The source of this construction is obviously the maximalist and revanchist nationalism of the 1920's and 30's, which espoused the lost glory of the pre-1918 and medieval Hungary. Obviously, Szálasi was a man of his times, as his vision coincided with the mainstream interpretation of irredentist nationalism. However, he broke with the usual patterns of ultranationalist interpretation by suggesting a novel structure for the state. He proposed the creation of a new type of national state, on the territory of the "Ancient Land", influenced by ethnic density. Szálasi dubbed it "Hungária Egyesült Földek" (United Lands of Hungary), and it featured a territorial distribution, which, at first glance, allowed a semblance of national autonomy to the many peoples living under its authority. It was composed, as its name suggests, out of a total of five territorial subdivisions, named "Részföldek" ("Component-lands"). The largest, and most important was allotted to Hungarians, and called "Magyarföld". It dwarfed all the others, and had a central position. The others included Slovakland, Ruthenland, the Land of Transylvania, Croat-Slavon Land and the Western Mark. The basis of this administrative structure was inspired by historic division between Hungary proper, Transylvania and the Kingdom of Croatia; however, the author broke with traditional divisions, and added a number of new elements, such as lands for Slovaks, Ukrainians, and Germans in the west. These

had never existed in Hungarian history as separate entities, and seem to reflect the contemporary political situation.

If this initial structure seemed to suggest a softening of nationalist attitudes, it is contradicted by the definition given by Szálasi in the following sentences. He was convinced that the future state of the United Lands of Hungary would come about as a result of the common will of the peoples living on its territory, who recognize the necessity of such a construct, due to the commonality of their interests. This naïve interpretation is a trademark of Szálasi, whose interpretation of the needs and wants of surrounding nations was not in tune with reality. Often criticized for this naiveté, he put forward his concept of “co-nationalism” to address the projected lack of desire of minorities to participate in the project of his United Lands. This understanding of nationality and ethnicity shall be addressed in another subchapter.

He also stated that these peoples, by themselves, do not constitute a nation, but are the building blocks of the Hungarian nation. This seems to originate from the traditional 19th century concepts of nations and nationalities, according to which national existence and culture was closely tied to the ability of state-formation. Szálasi’s whole construction thus seems to possess anachronic and unrealistic, almost naïve characteristics. This air of superficiality, was however, shattered by his next work, entitled “Út és Cél¹⁷⁷” (“Way and Goal”), from 1936. In it, he clarified some of his earlier views on the exact structure of the future state and the role of the peoples within it. The common will, projected so positively both in this and his previous book, upon closer inspection, is revealed to be nothing more than naked imperialism. On the first page of the book, he declares:

¹⁷⁷Szálasi, *Út és cél*, 1936, p. 6

“Hungarism was not meant for the Rump Country, and not even solely for the Hungarian people, but to the thousand-year Fatherland surrounded by the Carpathians and crossed by the Danube, and all the indigenous populations living on its territory, who, under the leadership and with the direction of the Hungarian people, and together with her, make up the moral, spiritual, material, political, economic and social unity of the Hungarian nation.¹⁷⁸”

As we can see from the passage above, the peoples living on the territory of this future Hungary were meant to be led by Hungarians. The additions of cultural autonomy and plebiscites (to assess the desire of the minorities to participate) were given as incentives, although the practicalities of such a procedure would obviously yield results which can easily be anticipated (as they would follow after the military occupation of the lands). This system was entitled “Pax Hungarica” by Szálasi. On the field of foreign policy, he envisioned a smooth cooperation in the “new national-socialist European order” with other fascist states.

One of the main criticisms of Szálasi against the old order was that, while it managed to maintain Hungarian statehood on the Western model, it failed to integrate the nationalities of Hungary organically into the state and political life of the country¹⁷⁹. Szálasi, instead, preached a totality of the nation¹⁸⁰, and minorities could not escape integration into it. They would be allotted national space according to what Szálasi perceived as their national character. These characteristics, interestingly, were also pre-defined by their space; were certain social positions were allocated to the various peoples by this arrangement. Slavs would be given the most inhospitable lands, in the mountains; the German, hilly regions; Romanians, alpine mountainous areas; finally, Hungarians would dominate the plains (which were, of course, the most abundant

¹⁷⁸*Ibidem*, p. 9

¹⁷⁹*Ibidem*, p. 47

¹⁸⁰*Ibidem*, p. 13

and hospitable areas)¹⁸¹. With the exception of the Germans, which in themselves lived in diaspora, they were already segregated into “closed national blocks” (though Szálasi stated that contact, communication and admixture was natural and the peoples could not be separated after 1000 years of coexistence). The peoples, in return for these rights, would be demanded “loyalty” to the Hungarist regime, in the form of a “life-contract”¹⁸². Breaking this contract would be interpreted as treason, and the peoples would have to “bear the consequences” regarding their rights and duties.

The Hungarian fascist leader further underlined the closed unity of the Carpathian basin, in which its peoples formed a cultural synthesis, best harnessed in the future by Szálasi’s ideology, Hungarism. He also highlighted the strategic importance of the geographic entity of the Carpathian basin, stating that it was a central area, and indeed “the most European” out of all countries, since its political borders and economy was wholly European. With this over-exaggeration of the MittelEuropa concept, Szálasi attempted to prove that the stability of the Carpathian basin was of great importance not only to the region, but Europe itself. The basin, of course, could only be stabilized by insuring Hungarian primacy. In his warped vision of unfettered nationalism, the fate of Europe depended on Hungary.

Szálasi further expanded his geopolitical theories after 1936, being influenced both by foreign fascist discourses on these topics, and by the rapid evolution of the international situation. His spatial philosophy was perhaps best expressed in a lecture series given at the Arrow Cross Party Headquarters on the 15 and 16th of June, 1943¹⁸³. His ideas were at complete maturity at this point, and he put forward a number of new concepts: “Nagyter” (the Greater

¹⁸¹*Ibidem*, p. 48

¹⁸²*Ibidem*, p. 51

¹⁸³Szálasi, Nagyter, Élettér, Vezetónép (Sydney, f.e.: 1982)

Space), „Élettér” (Lifespace, a correspondent of the German Nazi concept of *Lebensraum*), and „Vezetőnép” (Leader-people).

The most important spatial concept invented by Szálasi was that of the Life-Space. According to him, each nation possessed a living space, a place of genesis and existence. According to his logic, humanity constructed its existence from three basic elements: the family, the space it inhabited, and the working place. It was natural for families that shared common traits, habits and traditions, he said, to seek each other’s company and flock together¹⁸⁴. In the beginning this did not result in the occupation of a clear living space, as many such formed peoples existed in a nomadic, transient state. They secured their existence and their “working place” in a migratory fashion. This, however, ended with the acquisition of the Life-Space. It is through the occupation of a stable territory that a people or conglomerate of peoples became a nation¹⁸⁵. Territory and space, in a sense, come to define a people and its characteristic, according to the fascist politician. I theorize that the precise form of this spatial definition of the nation is not a coincidence, but derives directly from Szálasi’s ultranationalist credo. It directly mirrors the grand narrative of Hungarian history, in which the people (or indeed, a conglomerate of tribes, sharing common language and customs), united under a strong political and military leadership, occupied the territory of their future state, in the Carpathian basin. The Hungarian name for this , “Honfoglalás”, describes just such a process, and it seems Szálasi saw it as a pivotal element in Hungarian national existence. This was done in order to avoid ethnic mixing at the core of the space, and would insure the spatial marginalization of the other ethnicities; it bears a lot of resemblance with Christaller’s theories of de-territorialization and re-territorialization.

¹⁸⁴ Ibidem, p.11

¹⁸⁵ Ibidem, p.12

The Life-Space was so important, that in his words, a people cannot exist without a fixed space to inhabit. This is why, the speaker concluded, that the Jews cannot be called a people per se, as their defining trait is transitory, therefore their loyalties are nonexistent¹⁸⁶. From Szálasi's musings, we may derive a categorization of peoples living on the territory of Hungary. Firstly, there was the Hungarian people, who possessed both living space, and leadership qualities (to this I shall return later); secondly, the national minorities of Hungary, which, while sharing the same living space, must be relegated to a secondary status. Together, they formed the Hungarian nation, through the practice of "Co-nationalism". The last category belonged to Jews, which were regarded as alien, migratory elements, and could not share in the living space. Indeed, "Co-nationalism" was directed against them, and can be understood as common anti-Semitism.

The second term, that of the Greater Space, referred to the geo-strategic position of the Hungarian state and nation. It was an attempt by Szálasi to theoretically integrate Hungary in a coherent manner among the continental powers. The Greater Space was composed of so-called „national communities". These communities were formed by nations sharing close proximity to each other, which, in Szálasi's view, had a contiguous existence. They were linked by common cultural and civilizational elements, but also by common technical development and economic interests¹⁸⁷. Europe was such a Great Space, according to Szálasi, and the rest of the world could be divided into such elements. He boasted that his Hungarism provided an ideological template for the functioning of this Great-Space, as it was based on the recognition of the existence of it, and of the common traits outlined above. He also stated that resources to maintain the national communities were plentiful in all these Great Spaces. If the theory of his Hungarism was recognized, war and aggressive imperialism would not be necessary in the future to regulate the

¹⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p.12

¹⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p.14

interrelationship between nations. Struggle was of course, a natural trait of existence, but it could be streamlined and unified toward the needs of the national community. His vehement rebuttal of imperialism was, however, only aimed toward anti-Hungarian interests, for he devised a partition of the European “Great Space” in the following passages that suited his own interests. Firstly, he stated Europe may be separated into two major parts: political Europe and political Africa. He included most of Northern Africa into the European lifespace, as it had historically been occupied by Europeans in antiquity and in the present colonial state. Political Europe he divided into five “lifespaces”, arranged according to what he perceived to be ethnic and political congruencies. Thusly, the North-Eastern or Slavic North-Western or German, the south-Western or Latin, the South-Eastern European or Hungarian, and the pre-Asian or Islamic lifespaces were drawn up. In this configuration, he put German Nazism and Italian Fascism on equal footing with his Hungarism, and singled out Hungary as a leader in the South Eastern area (mostly understood as the Balkans)¹⁸⁸. This was backed up with historic evidence by Szálasi, presenting Hungary’s past dominance in the area. The fragmentation of the area into small states meant that they posed a continuous threat to European stability. The capacity of the Hungarian nation to create large and powerful state in the area in the past meant she was the only one who could pacify and lead this quagmire of nations. This lead into the last concept put forward by the leader of the Arrow Cross Party in his 1943 speech: the Leader-People.

The qualities of a people may be ascertained by its ability to lead, according to the speaker. This is proven by its historical record in achieving, what Szálasi referred to as “motion”,

¹⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 37

within the Great Space. A nation of leaders was also defined by its ability to impose rule and authority over its respective lifespace¹⁸⁹.

In the past, the French, English and Americans invented and practiced the system of liberalism, and lead through it, imposing it, and their political will, throughout the world. This system had by now, outlived its usefulness, and managed to survive only in a stunted way in the United States. The new wave was led by another group of peoples that were and had been in the past, leader-peoples as well: Hungary, Italy, and Germany¹⁹⁰. In fact, Szálasi listed the leaders of Europe as always having been the Russians, French, Germans, Italians and Hungarians (he considered the English as being extra-European)¹⁹¹. At present, only the latter three were destined to rule, as they had each created a revolutionary brand of fascist political ideology. However, the fact that Hungary had, at the time, still not adopted his Hungarism, gave Szálasi some pause for thought, resulting in underlining the “leadership potential” of his people, but underlining the fact that leaders can be made and unmade. The positive outcome would, of course, be a result of recognizing the historical significance of the fascist political revolution, and adopting in Hungary it as soon as possible.

Baráth Tibor

Szálasi’s rhetoric and ideological constructs had a significant influence over other fascist thinkers in Hungary. The latecomer historian, turned-fascist theoretician, Baráth Tibor developed his own ideas on the subject, however, his 1943 book, *Az Országépítés filozófiája a Kárpátmedencében* (The Philosophy of State-Building in the Carpathian Basin). The book is one of the few examples of fascist scholarship, mixing scientific and political arguments. The main

¹⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 47

¹⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 48

¹⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 50

topic can easily be gleaned from the title: it is a theory of Hungarian state building within the space of the Carpathian basin. Its main sources of inspiration were the Nazi spatial concepts of Grossraum and territory.

The first chapter of the book begins with a complex geographical description of the topography and hydrology of the area defined by the author as the Carpathian basin, which roughly coincides with the borders of pre –Trianon Hungary. Baráth insists on the geometric perfection and unique nature of this geographic formation; this is a common trait he shares with Szálasi. The historian concludes that the geography of the area forms a perfect unit, which is easily defensible and therefore ideally equipped to form the basis for a strong, centralized state¹⁹². Moreover, the primacy in this area is given to the central Hungarian plain, and within that, the central position of “Greater Budapest”, the locus from which the Carpathian basin may be governed. States that might attempt to govern the area from peripheral sides, or to rule only parts of it from the outside are doomed to failure¹⁹³. The weak end of the basin is also its point of communication with the outside civilized world: its western part. This area must be treated with utmost importance. Interestingly, when referring to the world on the Western border of Hungary, Baráth used Szálasi’s term of Greater Space¹⁹⁴. I theorize that this is due to both of them taking German Nazi concepts as the blueprints for the development of their theories.

The basin is, of course, open on its southern part as well. This, however, is a completely different issue according to Baráth: in this zone, the Carpathian state is the one which exerts influence. It is the area of political activity, in which it can act as a centrifugal force¹⁹⁵. The ambition of Balkan dominance, as we may observe, is something that also appealed to Baráth.

¹⁹² Baráth, *Az országépítés filozófiája*, (Kolozsvár, Egyetemi Nyomda, 1943), p. 26-27

¹⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 28

¹⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 29

¹⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 30

According to him, the geographic fragmentation of the peninsula also necessitated an outside dominance, in the interests of European stability. By extending its authority over the Western Balkans toward the Adriatic, the Carpathian state may ensure its safe communication with its ally, Italy¹⁹⁶.

On its Eastern and northern border, the Carpathian basin was completely isolated by its mountainous implements from the Eastern half of Europe, Baráth wrote. In this quality, he attempted to prove with Hungary's historical role as a Christian and Catholic bulwark, Hungary was the last bastion and fort of the Occident¹⁹⁷. Therefore, its role was pivotal for the sake of European stability. However closed off from the East, and belonging to the occidental world through its western umbilical cord, Baráth argues that the area is geographically a bufferzone between Asia and Europe. The stability of the area is largely dependent on its domination by a powerful people, since it is situated on the pathway toward the west, blocking the advance of Eastern powers toward the heart of Europe. This role means that its existence as a great power is a guarantee for European stability overall. This complicated reasoning is backed up by the Hungarian historian in further chapter with historic arguments, in which he offered examples of the role played by Hungary in thwarting foreign invasions, even at the cost of the existence of the state. The existence of the Carpathian area is especially bound up with that of the Italian, German and to a lesser degree, Bulgarian "Great Spaces" (again, this is the term used by the author, roughly equivalent to Szálasi's Lifespace concept), ensuring their outer stability. The fact that these coincide with Hungary's political allies in both World Wars is of course, intentional inductive reasoning. Thusly, a strong state based in the Carpathian basin is in fact, has the status of an European Great power.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 31

¹⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 33

As he established in the part referring to the geopolitical nature of the Carpathian basin, the area is dominated by the Hungarian Plain. This is the premise Baráth needs to link racial characteristics to geography and meld them with politics: the area is best suited to be ruled by a people of a semi-nomadic character (who can easily dominate the plain), with powerful martial traits, who are on the verge of settling down. The Hungarian people fit this description perfectly. The area, because of its dual nature, on the cusp of Asia, must be ruled by a people originating from the Eastern continent, in order to have a cultural and diplomatic sensitivity toward its *limes*. However, the strong connection with the West, and since the area is formally European, necessitates a people that have lost most of its nomad, Asian characteristics, and can adapt to a largely European state organization and culture. The Hunnic and Avar kingdoms failed since they attempted to establish a state of essentially Asian character in Europe, and were consequently destroyed by the Europeans who were safeguarding their stability¹⁹⁸. The large scale of the area also requires a people that have both strong military and political tradition, as the Hungarian people (Baráth refers to the military might of Early Hungary and its later aristocratic political culture), so that it may be ruled centrally. The constitution of such a state must be centralizing, and follow “the principle of the primacy of authority”, i.e. it must insure the dominance of the people who meet the characteristics described above.

As we can see, there is much congruence between the conceptual world of Szálasi and Baráth. Both display a good deal of theoretical sophistication (and backward logic); the differences arise from the scope of the arguments. The former has an exclusively political focus, while the latter has a more academic approach, seeking not to put forward a political plan, but to theoretically ground the claims of Hungarian ultranationalism. Szálasi, as well as Baráth head off

¹⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 36-37

from the premise of certain accepted national stereotypes referring to Hungarian nationalism and history. Departing from this, they develop a number of common concepts and linkages.

The first is the bond between space and nation. In each case, one cannot exist without the other, and the Carpathian basin is understood as a formative area for Hungarian national character. The Hungarian nation, according to the two fascists, is ordained to assume political domination over the area and its multiple ethnicities, due to its national characteristics which insure a perfect insertion of people into space. Moreover, the strong state created by Hungarians, according to both, is a political player on the continental scale. Their imperialism also has the same target: the western half of the Balkan peninsula, an area in which Hungary was somewhat influential in the High Middle Age. This nationalist megalomania projects an imaginary ideal Hungary, raised to the same level as other great European powers, both into the past and the future “New Europe”.

Ráttkay and the Magyarság authors

Interwar fascist politician Ráttkay Radich Kálmán was also among those who saw a connection between the national and continental spaces. This was closely tied to his understanding of the concept of history (as seen in the previous chapter) and his feeling of *Zeitgeist*. He perhaps expressed his theories most synthetically in his 1941 booklet, *Európa és Magyarország a nemzetiszocializmus útján* (Europe and Hungary on the road of national socialism¹⁹⁹). After giving a historical account of the organic reasons behind the success of National Socialism (the decadence of liberalism and capitalism as a form of civilization), he described the future situation of Europe and the place of his country within it. National Socialism

¹⁹⁹ Kálmán Radich Ráttkay, *Európa és Magyarország a Nemzetiszocializmus útján* (Budapest: Centrum Kiadó, 1941), p. 7-9

(the term which he used for generic fascism), had initially been a movement of national egoism which had developed in order to combat the centripetal forces of liberalism. It had achieved this goal so successfully that it had imposed itself as the dominant force on the European stage. In order to fulfill the goals of the national community, Ráttkay argued, the political movement has to create a system of coexistence with the peoples living within its own Life-Space²⁰⁰. Ráttkay does not describe the exact boundaries of the Life-Space of the fascist states, but we may assume that it means the congruent region along their political borders. Further down, the author also states that all European states belong to the same Life-Space. In this case, he does not differentiate, as Matolcsy, Szálasi, and others, between Greater Spaces and Life-spaces, but uses the same term for both.

The functioning of such a scheme was, however, conditional on the ideological similarity between their political systems; in other words, fascism had to become or be imposed as the dominant political force. This would lead to an organic coexistence of the European states within one community, on the principle of *co-nationalism*. Ráttkay uses the concept of co-nationalism (or connationalism) of Szálasi (in 1941 he belonged to the Arrow Cross Party and the editor of the party daily, *Magyarság*), but gives it a slightly nuanced meaning. In his case, co-nationalism is the “organization of the natural relationship of nations into Life-spaces based on national, cultural and spatial distribution”²⁰¹. We may assume that the “natural” and “proper” order was also one in which Hungary’s territorial and national claims would be satisfied. Co-nationalism was an organic system of cooperation between nationalist states, in which Hungary fitted perfectly, due to its own early contributions to the development of fascist ideology. To this end, Ráttkay asserts the early measures of interwar Hungary, the numerous *clausus* most prominently,

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 13

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 13

to be evidence of early fascism on the European stage. The contributions of political authors, such as Prohaszka Ottokar, and politicians such as Gömbös Gyula and finally, Szálasi Ferenc are also claimed to be proof of Hungary's commitment to the cause of militant nationalism²⁰². The idea of an European mission or calling of Hungary was a common idea in pre- and interwar Hungary, and is also echoed by the author. He argues that Hungary had an important vocation in the past: to seed the fascist revolution in the 1920's. The future mission of Hungary will be that of an experimental area for the policies of co-nationalism, which will be enacted on its multi-ethnic territory.

According to Ráttkay, the spatial position of Hungary, and thus its role, has shifted due to the change in the European power structure, which is slowly moving toward a grand Eurasian union. Hungary, which had found itself for a millennia on the periphery of Europe, was now in a central position: at the borderline of the Life-spaces of the fascist and Russian states. Through its own mixed cultural heritage and multi-ethnic territory, its role would be that of a synthesizer of a New European identity²⁰³. Thus its part as the diffuser Western civilization and mediator between East, South and West would have been reconfirmed.

Matolcsy's New Europe

One of the most interesting developments of European fascist ideology in the latter part of the Second World War was the image of Hitler's New Europe. Emerging from the triumphalism of the first years of the conflict, it envisioned a reconfiguration and unification of Europe under the tenets of fascism²⁰⁴. This alternative construction of an European community based on extreme nationalism was, in fact, one of the first concrete plans for an unified European

²⁰² Ibid.,p. 14

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 16

²⁰⁴ M Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe*, Allen Lane History S (Allen Lane, 2008).

community²⁰⁵. Therefore, it is not surprising that it had a great echo in the political-cultural products of Hungarian fascism, capturing the imagination of their thinkers.

The most significant and concrete result of this political fervor was the journal entitled “Új Európa” (New Europe). It was launched in the February of 1942, under the editorship of Matolcsy Mátyás, one of the few representatives of Fascist intelligentsia in Hungary, and a former veteran of both his own fascist formation and Szálasi’s Arrow Cross Front. The expressed role of the publication was to “research the problems of national socialism...on an European scale...to weigh the Hungarian issues on the scale of New Europe...and serve as the intellectual weapon of its national socialism²⁰⁶”. It served as an intellectual laboratory of Hungarian fascist ideology during its brief existence, between February of 1942 and September of 1944. It may be considered to be the best source of concrete Hungarian definitions of the concept of fascist New Europe and the place of Hungary within it. There is strong evidence that this was part of a series of publications, all bearing the same name, rolled out with German support, as they were envisioning the New European Order, at the zenith of their power²⁰⁷. It was filled with translations of Nazi materials, and also gave a platform for domestic fascism to express its views.

This complex vision of the future is framed by Matolcsy in his inaugural text as follows:

“ In February 1941, New Europe was born....”

Matolcsy defines New Europe as an opposition of everything that “Old Europe” was and represented. “Old Europe”, he states, was a place dominated by the ideology of liberalism and

²⁰⁵ H Case, *Between States: The Transylvanian Question and the European Idea During World War II*, Stanford Studies on Central and Eastern Series (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

²⁰⁶ Mátyás Matolcsy, *Új Európa* in Matolcsy Matyas (ed.), *Új Európa*, February 1942, p. 6

²⁰⁷ I have also found a similar publication in Romania: Europa Noua., editor G.Badea Negulescu, published in Bucharest and Berlin, at the Fremdsprachendienst Verlags-GmbH, Berlin, and took on the name of "Orizontul. Revista pentru Europa Noua" after 1943, published at the Berlin ; Bucuresti ; August Pries GmbH, 1943-1944

democracy, a region in which capital was much more important than “people”. It was a system dominated by money, in which there was little to no regard for people, or for any community idea. It used people as a material resource, subservient to production and profit. Its best exponent and at the same time, most dominant country, is again, in Matolcsy’s analysis, Great Britain. The capitalistic and imperial system gave birth to an international system, governed by economic needs, which dictated political relations. The new model of a system, and indeed, civilization was of course represented by Nazi Germany. The ideological and military clash between the two worlds brought about the birth of New Europe.

One of the most important contributions of this new geographic entity was spatial. Matolcsy insisted that New Europe, while based on the idea of the national community, brought peoples together, creating unity, in a world which was previously based on dissonance. The World War meant that New Europe could finally expand its borders to include Russia as a member, which had previously existed as a borderland of Europe, a partial participant to European civilization at best²⁰⁸. This expansion, Matolcsy insisted, would greatly transform the European landscape, which would add 5 million square kilometers to its existing 6. This would mean a demographic revolution as well, as the population would include the peoples freed from under the yoke of bolshevism. The conquest and European integration of the vast spaces of the East meant that European population development would continue in the future. Matolcsy utilized the concept of *Lebensraum* without the racial component, stating that Europe, at present, was overcrowded and needed territory in order to secure its further economic development. In the past, Europe had relied on America to supply its economy with raw materials. In the projected future, New Europe would form an organic unity with Russia, which would secure its

²⁰⁸ Matolcsy Mátyás, “Új Európa,” *Új Európa*, 1942., p. 3.

economic self-sufficiency, raising it to almost autarkic levels²⁰⁹. This new spatial construct would have been governed along the central-European, Berlin-Rome axis, with the latter having primacy, taking the traditional place of London, according to the Hungarian economist. Membership in this “New Europe” was a necessity for all European states, including Hungary, which had a historic mission, assigned to it by St. Stephen, to integrate into the West, and be its Eastern most bulwark. The role of Eastern guardian appears with Szálasi as well (see above), as it was a trope of nationalistic discourses about territory in the interwar period²¹⁰. Apparently, the inherent contradiction between Hungary’s eastern mission, and the Eastern expansion of Europe, with the integration of Russia was not perceived by the author. Integration could be secured by the adoption of two fundamental requirements: the adoption of national socialism and the removal of Jewry from society.

The concept of Living-Space and Greater Spaces were also among the topics being debated in the columns of Matolcsy’s fledgling intellectual publication. These were the topic of the monthly article-series dedicated to the developments of the front and to those of foreign policy, authored by Csiszár Béla, a correspondent of the Hungarian State Radio, and an author of the *Pesti Újság*, one of the most important Hungarian national-socialist daily newspapers. However, the most concrete definition of these two terms was given by Lovász János, in an article entitled “Élettér” (Living Space). According to him, the two concepts are closely related to one another. Lovász insists on the organic connection between geographical space and national existence. Geographical spaces, the author states, are divided up into potential living-spaces. Each nation attempts to secure such a space in order to insure its survival and external

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 4-5

²¹⁰ Miklós Zeidler, Thomas J DeKornfeld, and Helen D DeKornfeld, *Ideas on Territorial Revision in Hungary, 1920-1945*, CHSP Hungarian Studies Series (Social Science Monographs, 2007), <http://books.google.hu/books?id=q-chAQAIAAJ>.

safety, and seeks to insure them via political domination of the area²¹¹. Each of these areas is divided up into core and peripheral areas. The core, in which the nation lives in majority, is usually safe and undisputed. However, border or peripheral areas are always contested, owing to the fluid nature of space itself. These regions are vital not only for the parties involved in border disputes, but to the dominant powers of Europe as well, as a guarantee of the safe existence of their Living-Spaces and perpetuation of their dominance²¹². Lovász drew a series of conclusions from his exposition. The first was that the “liberal” concept of equality of states in international law was an illusion and hypocrisy. Owing to their positions in the echelon of power, states could not be equal. Secondly, unity was created within a Greater-Space by the relationship between larger and smaller states, the role of organizer being allotted to the former. Unity was created by a combination of common interests, and an outside antagonist. Such was the case of Germany and Central Europe vis-à-vis Russia and the East. Thusly, small states (such as Hungary) enter into agreements with larger states (such as Germany) out of their own free will, in order to secure their own Living-Spaces. The author stated that the internal sovereignty of the states is not broken, due to them entering the agreement freely and to the fact that their own internal institutional structures and their functioning being untouched. In the areas of economy and foreign policy, however, Lovász stated, relationships between the two always have an uneven dynamic, due to the needs of the Larger Space (or *Grossraum*). It creates unity at the economic level, by harmonizing the production modes in an organic fashion. It also creates cultural unity, due to the close contacts between the nations belonging to a certain Large Space²¹³. In this categorization, Hungary belonged to the German Larger Space, and its Life-Space was the larger area defined by the Carpathians and the Danube. This zone had a special strategic importance

²¹¹ Lovász János, “Élettér,” *Új Európa*, no. October (1942), p.525.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p.526

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 529

both for the German *Grossraum* and Europe in general. Dominance over it was coveted both by Soviet Russia and Great Britain, Lovász wrote, due to its organic connection to the stability of Germany, who could not insure its dominance without it. It is important to notice the duality in the author's narrative and discover the intention behind it: Hungary has a twin role, both as a border region and as an area coveted by all. It is, at the same time, both core and periphery, in this ultra-nationalistic interpretation. The author also does not seem to take into account the lack of logic and consistency between his interpretation and other articles in the same publication (even issue). If New Europe, as it was projected by Matolcsy, would have meant an expansion of the European space to include the East, it would obviously deprive Hungary of its (imagined) traditional leading role in the South-East, pushing it toward the center and into a relegated position vis-à-vis the leaders of the *Grossraum*. No longer the Eastern-most bastion of Europe, its role as defender of the European space would have been put into jeopardy. Of course, one can interpret Hungary's part in the developing situation as integral, as the country would have taken on the role of some sort of regional dominant power, in the event of a successful turnout of the war. Nonetheless, the most important aspect is the importance of the linkage between Germany and Hungary, and the secondary position given to Hungary in the relationship between the German Great-Space (which was synonymous with Europe at this point) and the Hungarian Life-Space.

The tight bond between Germany and South-Eastern Europe was highlighted in other articles as well. The logic of the argument was that the new European configuration would be carried out by Germany, but it could not be carried through without the resources of the South

and the East²¹⁴. The importance of these material and human resources was raised by the unavailability of their overseas and colonial counterparts. Hungary was, of course, the most important of the south-east European states, as the natural leader of this territory, and since “its alliance with the Axis powers is the oldest, and is economically the most developed²¹⁵”. Another typical example of the attitude of across-the-board pro-Germanism was another article, penned by Kádár Mihály(?), entitled *Az Európai egyensúlypolitika*²¹⁶. In it, the author strikes down the concept of the European balance of powers as a tool of English imperialism. He combats it through the assertion of European rebirth under the guise of the Axis powers. The author frames a crude binomial: the European continent under German leadership, on the one hand, and on the other, the loosing imperial power of Britain, utilizing extra-European powers such as America and Russia to its own ends. In this way, by the early 1940’s, the concept of Europe and the cause of Hungarian nationalism, were mired together to become almost synonymous with pro-German attitudes in the Hungarian fascist books, discourses and periodicals.

Nation, community and race within Hungarian fascist ideology

Hungarian fascism in the interwar period relied heavily in its discourse on its opposition to the philosophy of liberalism and to the socio-economic system of capitalism. One of the most criticized aspects of the liberal system was its supposed corrosive effect on the national body. Liberalism, through its political system, parliamentarism and democracy, and through its economics of wild capitalism, was working to break up the bond between the members of the

²¹⁴ Tibor Nászay, “Délkelet-Európa Szerepe a Tengelyhatalmak élelmiszer és Nyersanyagellátásában,” *Új Európa* June (1942): 282–86.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Mihály Kádár, “Az Európai Egyensúlypolitika,” *Új Európa*, no. December (1942): 674–80. The exact identity of the author is unclear due to insufficient referencing and lack of signature

Hungarian national society. It emphasized greed instead of solidarity and individualism in the place of community spirit. The answer to the liberal challenge was the creation of the concept of the “Népközösség” (National Community). The concept was highly tributary to the German National Socialist term of *Volksgemeinschaft*, but expanded significantly, in order to adapt it to the Hungarian national context. The glue that bound this national community together was an ideological mix composed mainly of ultranationalism, anti-Semitism and the concept of “co-nationalism”. This term was invented by Arrow Cross Party leader Szálasi Ferenc in order to describe the idealistic sentiment of nationalist solidarity within the future fascist state. It was based largely on a common feeling of belonging to a larger, European racial community and the shared sentiment of repudiation against all things Jewish. The nationalities of the future, re-enlarged Hungarian state were to be organically reintegrated in the structures of the national community, with clear roles (their geographic positioning was already discussed in the previous chapter) and positions within the echelon. Within the community, the situation was rather debated and ambivalent. While most Hungarian interwar fascist thinkers and politicians operated with a racial vocabulary, their exact definitions of what constituted the Hungarian race or nation differed. While they utilized the concept of “race” vis-à-vis the international and indigenous Jewish community (the use became widespread by 1938-40), their understanding of the Hungarian nation within a racial classification was ambivalent and muddy. The definition of Magyars as a “race” was in existence prior to the apparition of fascist ideology in Hungary. It was a legacy of the thinkers gathered around what is loosely referred to in Hungarian historiography as the “Fajvédő Mozgalom” (The movement of Racial Defense). This loose conglomerate of politicians and intellectuals mainly utilized the concept of race in ethnic terms, with a few significant exceptions. The imagining of the Hungarian national character in racial

terms was passed onto the Hungarian fascists, who developed and transformed it, toward a biological understanding of the nation. There was, however, a significant amount of debate and difference of opinions between the Hungarian national socialist political theorists as to what constituted the exact makeup of characteristics of the race and their exact provenience. It is the goal of this chapter to provide a synthetic presentation of the main avenues of thought regarding the national community, its character and its relationship with other nations in Europe.

The harmonious nation: the Hungarian “national community”

The most significant and influential contributions made to the concept of a community based solely on the nation were made by Arrow Cross Party leader Ferenc Szálasi. His 1935 book, *The Way and the Goal (Út és Cél)* was more or less the Hungarian version of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*. In this programmatic booklet, he set down the basic guidelines for what was to become the fascist concept of the national community in Hungary. His vision was highly tributary to a number of sources, being directly influenced by the similar conceptual construction existent in Nazi Germany, but also by domestic writers in the far right camp, who had advocated the inclusion of the peasantry and working classes into the national community. What was different in his, and Hungarian fascists’ vision, was the rigid, ordered, top-down structure they imagined. At the same time, they claimed their construction was organic, and gave purpose to society by animating it with a new spirit. Society was to be reborn in the spiritual totality of the nation, which would control and permeate its every corner.

One of the goals of the political movement he had created, wrote Szálasi in the introduction of his book, was the creation of peace within Hungarian society²¹⁷. He would bring about unity by achieving peace at three main tiers, two of which concern us. Firstly, economic

²¹⁷ Ferenc Szálasi, *Út és Cél* (Budapest, 1935), p. 11

peace would have been brought about by a more fair redistribution and the radical reorganization of production. Szálasi also sought to impose social peace. He declared he knew nothing of privileged social classes, only an unitary socialist community of workers. His regime would do away with feudal, clerical and liberal-capitalist privileges. He declared that Hungarism, was at the same time a political ideology and a moral and spiritual system²¹⁸. Szálasi was among the first who used the term of “popular community” (népi közösség). Interestingly, it was used in connection with exclusion: he spoke of the Jews (whom he defined a race) as not being able to take part in the community.

Szálasi envisioned society being reborn under what he termed “the fourth totality of the nation”, which encompassed the first three: military, religious, economic²¹⁹. In layman’s terms, this meant that the ideal of the nation would bring together moral, spiritual and material values and unify them in a dynamic fashion. The unity of the popular community based on this principles was unbreakable²²⁰. The popular community would possess a new brand of culture, based on the values of the people, which would get rid of any elitist and cast-like fetishes. Its ultimate goal would be the creation of a “new Hungarian spiritual type²²¹”. This new type of man would be grounded in popular and racial values. His spirit would recognize only the principle of national egoism and would be animated by the feeling of responsibility toward the nation. The new man would be strong and healthy both in body and spirit, and possess superior moral standards. He would also act under the principles of self-sacrifice and discipline. He would be ready to die for the nation, fatherland and race, if so called upon. His bravery would gear him toward battle. This type of figure, possessing a whole host of martial traits, was Szálasi’s vision

²¹⁸ Ibid., p.11

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 14

²²⁰ Ibid., p.16

²²¹ Ibid., p. 18

of the ideal political soldier. The new “national (or nationalist – *nemzeti*) society would not occur organically. It would come about as a result of the work of the laboratories of the new man- the teaching institutions of future Hungary. They would be the ones responsible for inspiring the youth with the new nationalist spirit, in Szálasi’s words “to transform, to rebirth, ennoble, Hungarianize, and transform the spirits...in the ideals of a community of fate, racial belonging and brotherly solidarity...”. This would be realized by easing some of the material hardships of lower classes. Material was, however, always not more than a tool, and not a purpose in itself²²², Szálasi reminded. To give it purpose and to endow in with meaning, society must be infused with nationalism. Szálasi also gave it a common enemy: the Jewish community. It is present at every step in his work, in order to act as a counterweight to the lofty ideals and future he projected for his nation.

Szálasi termed the system which he had thus sketched up the blueprint for *szociálnacionálé*. This roughly translates into “social-national” or “social nation”. He dreamed that this system would be based on the socialist thinking of its members, who would in turn be motivated to adopt a socially-minded attitude by the advantages of the triadic community of spirit, morality and material. He rejected historical materialism, which he accused of robbing men of their humanity, and atomizing them²²³. His community would reject instinctual selfishness, and would instead work be based on the “natural selfishness” of community members, who would recognize the advantages of cooperation instead of internecine struggle. The social-national would secure work and welfare for all members of the community, would respect the individual national sentiments of all of its members (Hungarian and otherwise), and work toward a larger (implicitly probably European, although Szálasi does not use this term)

²²² Ibid., p. 23

²²³ Ibid., p. 55

national community of national socialist states. The socialism of this community would not be a class-based socialism, Szálasi wrote, but a cross-social one. It would stand on the principle of private property and wealth, but with a firm limit, the overstepping of which was impossible²²⁴. In this way, the fascist leader sought to equalize and to uniform all members of his community. This was evident in the second part of the work, dedicated to the new social categories of fascist Hungary. They would no longer be based on economy, but on a new type of reasoning, related to Szálasi's own idiosyncratic recognition of value toward the nation. The pillars of his new community would be: the peasant, the worker, and the intellectual. He added a few ancillary categories, such as women, and youth. The categorization may have been inspired by Leninism, as there is evidence that Szálasi read extensively on this subject. The structure was strictly hierarchical: the role of the elite was allocated to the intellectuals, and an active, dynamic role was given to the working class. The peasantry was assigned an almost passive function of production and the safeguarding of national values.

The influence of Szálasi's early work can clearly be seen on political writings and pamphlets in the following period. Fascist thinkers and writers tried to emulate or conform to his scheme, mostly because of political proximity. The idea thus appeared in a 1938 political program as "the support of the party is the Hungarian national popular community, which is reborn in the spirit of Hungarism²²⁵". The program also claimed "all legitimacy comes from the people...and the party shall realize the popular principle" and "we shall respect the economic initiative of the individual inasmuch as it does not clash with the interests of the community". The community would be put on the "Christian" principle of equality. The program also

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 27

²²⁵ Hubay, "Hungarista Program."

proposed the introduction of a corporatist parliament, and the “complete solution to the Jewish question” by robbing the Jews of their citizenship and excluding them from the community.

In 1939, as a push toward the popularization of the party’s ideology and political message, a series of booklets, entitled Arrow Cross Notebooks were published. These are especially valuable due to the fact that they tried to synthesize the ideology of the party and give short definitions of a number of concepts. In the one entitled the Arrow Cross Catechism²²⁶, we may find a suggestive description of what the national community entailed:

“The most important guideline of national socialism is the creation of the internal unity of the people (totality). Its basis is a strong national conscience....it creates its concept of equality on the idea of social justice, and states that the individual, as a member of the community has the right to life....National socialism stands on a firm moral basis, penalizing those who act against racial purity...Liberalism put the highlight on the concept of I, while national socialism puts it on the concept of We. It is the obligation of everyone to cooperate in a subservient and disciplined manner for the sake of the community. Camaraderie is both an order and deep moral law. To act correctly in economy is equal to working in everything toward the community. The goal is...the...rebirth of the people and the strengthening of the eternal race!...The motto is: everyone’s fight for everyone...Unity and discipline!”²²⁷

We may observe the similarity between Szálasi’s construct and this simplified electoral version. The goal was the creation of a national community which would achieve social peace and unity, and gear them toward a nationalist goal. Membership in the community would be based on racial identity. Its main principles were the negation of the individual and his needs

²²⁶ Dr. Kóródy Tibor T.L., *Nemzetiszocialista Káté*, ed. Nyilaskeresztes Párt, (Budapest: Centrum Kiadó, 1939)., pp. 20-24

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-24

over the needs and existence of the nation. The ideals of solidarity, discipline and camaraderie were martial in inspiration, and so were the methods which governed their distribution: penalization against transgressors. The community would be reborn in the spirit of nationalism; the individual, given a goal and meaning for existence.

The Notebooks also provide valuable information toward the methods that were projected to achieve the new national community. A further issue, entitled National Education or Education of the Nation (*Nemzetnevelés*²²⁸), was authored by Bagossy Zoltán. One of the Budapest activists of the Arrow Cross Party in the 1930's, he would go on to become the cabinet chief of Gábor Kemény, the Arrow Cross minister of the exterior. In the short book, he put forward the idea of utilizing large-scale propaganda and institutionalized learning in order to achieve the spiritual rebirth of the nation. In the preamble, fascist journalist and ideologue Fiala Ferenc declared education to be “one of the most important tasks, for the soldiers of the idea know that the goal cannot be achieved by men with no backbone and cowardly “citizens”, but with a national community ready for every hard fight and sacrifice, born of correct educational methods²²⁹”.

After debating the question of nature versus nurture, Bagossy Zoltán concludes that human instincts and behavior may be totally modified by environmental factors such as a strong education. Thus, men are *tabula rasa*, into which content may be injected²³⁰. It is the goal of national education to nurture and teach the kind of morality to people which may serve the nation to reach its ultimate goals. Morality is therefore not a fixed set of principles, but malleable to the needs of the national community. Concerning the fate of the Jews, this unfortunately turned out

²²⁸ Zoltán Bagossy, *Nemzetnevelés* (Budapest: Centrum Kiadó, 1939).

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.4.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10-11

to be the case. The moral principles which were to be drilled into the public were the following: fear of God, discipline, loyalty, patriotism, endurance, a will to win, camaraderie and self-criticism. Patriotism, the author argued, was an organic concept, which existed instinctively in each member of the nation, due to his/her inherent recognition of common traits and interests with his counterparts. The martial moral values must be instilled in society, this in turn leading to the realization of order. The ultimate goal of education was the realization of totality. This was defined by the author as a type of dictatorship in which all aspects of the life of the individual are subservient to the interests of the state. The very notion of individual interest was to be erased, as no one person may exist outside the nation, all of them were obligated to act toward the nation²³¹. This goal would be realized through “total education”, which would pervade family life, school and other institutions of education and education outside schools. Tools such as literature and print media, films, theater and even holiday programs were all viewed as useful propaganda tools. In a total Hungary, there would be no leisure, or entertainment without didactic purpose. The author derided “easy, cheerful films”, favoring heavy historical dramas instead, for their power of example. The meaning of entertainment would be subverted to serve a “higher” purpose. These outlets would all be controlled by the state, under the guise of “enlightening/informative (*felvilágosító*) propaganda”. Other tools included rallying around symbols and visual forms such as flags and uniforms. The theatric nature of Nazi propaganda was obviously a powerful inspiration, and the lessons were not lost on the Hungarian fascists. All of this was done in order to serve the “Holy” ideal of the nation, of the national community. The positing of the end justifying the means meant that the legitimacy of the tools was subverted: propaganda was a good thing, enlightening instead of programming, educating, instead of brainwashing

²³¹ Ibid., p. 19-20

The concept of the Hungarian “national community” as such first appeared in the writings of fascist theorist Málnási Ödön. He synthesized his vision of this idea in his 1938 book, fittingly entitled *The History of the idea of the Hungarian National Community*²³². In the preamble to the book, he anachronically claims that the idea of the national community is as old as the nation itself, and dates from the time of ethno-genesis. He defines the national community as being an idea overall, or a spiritual state. The political state was created and exists in order to ensure the material, moral and spiritual survival and development of this idea. The spirit of the national community is the thing that gives nations their dynamics and gears them toward struggle and conflict, which Málnási stated, is the natural state of life. He identifies six main factors or elements which contribute to the existence of a national community. The first the perceived common ethnic origin, followed by a community of interests, a community of goals, a common history and past, a shared culture and finally, a community of fate.

The community of origins and goals was most apparent in the early history of the Hungarian nation, around the time of the occupation of the Carpathian basin. One nation fought under one leader for a single goal. All men were part of the structure of the military and society was dynamic. Málnási also claimed that Hungarians were well aware of their shared racial heritage, which gave them the motivation to fight. After settling down, the Hungarians adopted a community of fate with each other, a sort of primitive social contract which ensured the survival of the nation and the state. During the time of the early Hungarian statehood, while a good amount of social stratification took place, there were no frictions among social groups because of their shared apprehension of belonging to the national community. Málnási highlights the fact that slaves of foreign origin were excluded from membership in the community. The gradual loss

²³² Ödön Málnási, “A Magyar Népközösségi Eszme Története” (Budapest: Lócsey kiadás, 1938).

and decadence of this conscience, however, led to cracks appearing in the structure of the state, and were interrupted only by brief periods in which popular leaders created a community of interests with their people (for the idea of decay in history, see chapter 1). In the contemporary period, the idea of the national community meant, according to Málnási, a society in which social peace was achieved by grouping together the various social categories around the idea of heroism, nationalism and voluntarism. The idea of a religious devotion to the national cause was to be infused in all of the members of society, which were all to be included in the national community. The individualism of the liberal era was disdained by Málnási, alongside with the class-oriented ideology of communism. The author instead proposed the alternative of membership in this future structure which valued the community spirit in the face of personal or group interests.

Similar ideas often appeared in the Hungarian fascist press of the late 1930's and early 1940's. Typical of this attitude is Bácskay Béla's article in the February 1943 edition of *New Europe*, entitled *The Philosophy of the Community Idea*. It condemned the decadence of the previous period, and hailed the achievements of the new *Weltanschauung*, which substituted individualism for the community ideal. The author stated that the new system of ideas provided a superior framework for the interpretations of reality, and created a ranked list of the importance of new realities:

1. Material realities
2. biological realities
3. psychological and spiritual realities
4. cultural realities

The first in the list, material realities, were those given the least amount of importance. The author railed against the materialism, which he said was “Bolshevik” in nature, and robbed the community of goals due to its undue attachment to physical things. The only material realities important to the national community were those that served the ideal of unity: Home and Homeland. Biological realities, however, were highly significant. Inequality was a biological reality of any society, and the lack of recognition of this would lead to counter-selection, and the production of degenerate elements. This would, in turn, contribute to the decadence of culture and civilization. Therefore, the practicing of racial hygiene was paramount. This would lead to the apparition of a biological aristocracy, which would produce more and more valuable elements, and raise the level of culture in a particular society. The author was obviously influenced by Bosnyák Zoltán, the purveyor of this theory in Hungary; and indirectly by the American eugenicist Lothrop Stoddard, whose work Bosnyák originally derived his ideas from, alongside the homegrown ideas of Hungarian eugenicist Méhely Lajos.

The spiritual values were the most important of all; even a biologically superior individual, was as the author claimed, nothing but raw material. Superior moral and spiritual values could be achieved not through heredity, but education. The individual must be taught from an early age by the community to act for the community, and not toward individual fulfillment. In this logic, Bácskay even projected the creation of a new legal category of crimes against the community; these could include acts such as sabotage, murder, the spreading of hereditary diseases, the spread of malicious rumors, and even cultural crimes such as spreading cynicism. The common good superseded the individual; the concept of the community was understood by the author as not being contrary to the interests of the individual, as it could not harm its own components. The ideas of cooperation and self-sacrifice animated this mechanism. The concept of community

existed in the nexus of the triad of concepts of goal, cooperation and sacrifice, for without a common goal, the community would just become a mass. The concept of national community promoted by Bacskay refused both the mass society promoted by democracy and the collective society of communism, which he accused of robbing man of his humanity. Instead, his national community would be animated by lofty goals, especially in the fields of culture. The products of this cultural revolution would include a just economic and social order, the development of a biological aristocracy and the construction of a community morality. This would lead to the development of a society of *Übermensch* (“emberfeletti emberek”), “hailed by Nietzsche and some utopian socialists”, who would solve “problems our primitive thinking could not even imagine” and turn humanity toward a new era.

The concept of the national community could not function without the existence of a negative point of reference, though. Its description would often be paired by a rendition of the “Jewish problem”. Typical of this logic was the article entitled “The Ideal of the Popular Community in New Europe”²³³. The author declared that all oppositions within a people or a nation, and between nations themselves were the results of Jewish actions. It had been the Jewish capitalists that started the First World War, and it was against Jews that the Second World War was being fought. Only by the elimination of this racial community could internal divides within a community and European divides between nations be resolved. In a sense, the Jews served as a method of coagulation against a common enemy; by engaging in war against them, social tensions between classes could be overcome. Nazi Germany was given as a shining example of this: a place where social peace was achieved between workers and elites. The new community would be based on the concept of selflessness and the recognition of belonging to the same

²³³ “A Népközösség Eszménye Az Új Európában,” *Új Európa*, no. December (1942): 625–27.

spiritual community. Of course, the reverse of the coin was reserved for Jews, who were targeted for exclusion and extermination. The recognition of this reality would mean a “rebirth” of the nations in the “spirit of the national community”. This would, in turn, result in the development of a harmonious set of European national societies. This sort of simplistic and vulgar reasoning equated the physical elimination of a supposed enemy with the achievement of an utopian ideal; we may observe the teleological nature of the statement and its parsimonious logic.

The problem of masses and mass society were also at the forefront of the article of Hertelendy László, entitled “The problem of large masses²³⁴”. The publication does not furnish many details on the writer, outside of his position of assistant professor at a university (*egyetemi tanársegéd*). The piece, inspired by authors such as Gustave Le Bon, recognized the societal shift which occurred during the last century, bringing masses to the forefront of history. He was also under the influence of Werner Sombart, whose definition of class he utilized: according to the German sociologist, a mass only became a class if it made some sort of significant theoretical contribution to the advancement of society and economy, which were of course, idiosyncratic, and favorable to the advancement of the interests of the class itself. The apparition of masses themselves, according to Hertelendy, was the result of social and economic phenomena. Here, we may observe the author’s tendency to insert his argumentation into a historical context; this propensity for historicizing is a constant among fascist thinkers in interwar Hungary, and we may conclude that it is a mainstay of fascist discourse. Thusly, the apparition of capitalism as a form of economy and liberalism as a political ideology led to the formation of mass society. The technological advancements that appeared in this period were a result of the blind belief in progress, science and individual advancement of liberal capitalism. However, capitalism also

²³⁴ László Hertelendy, “A Nagy Tömegek Problémája,” *Új Európa* February, no. 1 (1943): 98–108.

developed a new type of social and economic exploitation of the masses which it created. These masses reacted by creating interest-defense organizations, in the form of trade unions. Hertelendy comes out very strong against the critics of these organizations, who viewed them as a tool of social disaggregation and social strife. He deemed them an important and natural organization, which all classes should have. The utopian projections that surfaced in some of these groups, unfortunately made them highly vulnerable. They were sidetracked by a new political ideology, Marxian social democracy. It never intended to fulfill the promises of the betterment of social status, but led the worker's movement down a cul-de-sac, throwing it into a political battle meant to bring down national economies, and states. Liberalism and capitalism created three sets of problems, said Hertelendy: created new ways of human existence, technologies and classes, while at the same time dehumanizing the people, and creating a sharp differentiation between the social and economic sphere and the state. Liberalism, Marxian social democracy threatened to tear the system apart; even the novel development of Christian socialism did not solve the issues, due to its lack of deep societal penetration. As an alternative, the author urged the reintegration of the working class into society through social measures. Thusly, the division of society into classes would be superseded by communities based on the nation, with the common goal of "building the future of the nation". The creation of rivaling national communities in the European neighborhood elicited this change. Hertelendy therefore projected that the new community would be animated by a new spirit, which would be "planted" into it (it is hard to say what the agent of this change would be). This new spirit would be one of equality among classes, and the reintegration of classes previously excluded from the polity into the national community. This system would bring about both: order and be organic at the same time. The urban-industrial and rural-agricultural proletariat would be organized via the creation

of representative institutions for them; obviously the primary inspiration for such a system came from fascist Italy's corporations. The author warned that if such measures would not be taken soon, it could "lead to the annihilation of European culture", as was evidenced by the events of the First World War and the Russian revolution. This type of historicist construction, leading to open-ended, two-pronged alternative versions of the future was typical of fascist discourse (see chapter 1.).

Demography and paranoia

The national community was threatened by a whole number of phenomena, according to the Hungarian fascist discourse: degeneration, a weakening of the national character from within, due to the action of negative agents, such as Jews; it was also engaged in a complex competition for its very existence on the international stage, as evidenced by World War I. These were recognizable developments to even the lay observer. However, there was a phenomenon which passed by unnoticed, and endangered the very existence of the national community: the demographic menace. The insistence of fascist thinkers that the Hungarian nation had entered a negative demographic trend was statistically true, but the manner in which the question was framed was novel. The main argument was that all nations are engaged in an inherent competition with one another, according to the model of social Darwinism. Therefore, Hungary and the Hungarian people were in direct competition with their neighbors for living space. The key to winning this competition was numbers, and Hungary, with its elitist policies, excluding the masses, had embarked on the wrong path.

The idea was not new, in fact it was a mainstay of Hungarian nationalist discourses stretching back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The call for a positive demographic revolution was linked to the debates about the national character of the Hungarian part of the Monarchy, and the

imperialist ambitions nurtured by some. Most representative of these was the call for a Hungary “of 30 million Hungarians” of Rákosi Jenő²³⁵, which then represented a project of national assimilation of ethnic others into the Hungarian nation.

The most prolific fascist author to highlight this issue was Matolcsy Mátyás. The idea first appears in his 1935 book, *The work-plan for the new land reform*²³⁶. He stated that the greatest social problem that beset the nation was the crisis of the peasantry, which was slowly withering away by the interplay of the great landed estate system, and monetized economy. The peasantry responded by the only defense mechanism available to it: the one-child family²³⁷. This phenomena was the symptom of the crisis of the community in general. At the same time, the post-war neighbors of Hungary, the new states of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia and the newly enlarged Greater Romania all exhibited different characteristics. They all adopted progressive socio-economic policies which recognized the value of the peasant masses, who they gave land to (often at the expense of former Hungarian magnates). Their demographic trends were wholly positive, and thus they presented a threat to Hungary. Their growing national communities threatened to overtake and eliminate Hungary completely. The most efficient way to secure the future of the national community, Matolcsy argued, was to invest the people with a stake in the land they lived upon, or “to tie them to the land” as he wrote.

In 1939, he repeated this idea in his book entitled “My struggle for the land”. Matolcsy now argued that, in spite of the recent successes in the field of revision, the demographic problems remained. The stake was now the Hungarianization and maintenance of the regained lands. The only way to secure the economic betterment and increase the number of Hungarians was to enact

²³⁵ M Turda, *The Idea Of National Superiority In Central Europe, 1880-1918* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2004).

²³⁶ M Matolcsy, *Az új Földreform Munkaterve: Szekfű Gyula Előszavával* (Révai, 1935).

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 31-32

swift reforms²³⁸. Matolcsy also historicized his argument, which was typical for fascist discourses. The author described the development of the phenomena before 1918. The Hungarian nation, especially the peasantry and the urban proletariat also developed a negative birth rate then, due to bad economic conditions. This phenomenon was also compounded by the huge numbers of émigrés leaving Hungary for America. After some careful calculations, Matolcsy reached the conclusion that had the birth rate been positive among Hungarians before 1914, the nation may have had sufficient numbers at its disposal to achieve a positive outcome after the war. The dwindling of the population had therefore, been partly responsible for the tragedy at Trianon²³⁹. This binomial construction was not an accident: Matolcsy wanted to argue that if the problem was not addressed soon, a repetition of the tragedy of 1918 may follow.

Even during the war, the problem did not leave Matolcsy. In two articles in 1942²⁴⁰ and 1943²⁴¹, published in his flagship journal, *New Europe*, he continued his obsession with numbers and statistics. In the first article, he based his calculations on the 1910 census, and concluded that, while the Hungarians represented an absolute majority on the territory of New Hungary, a wise policy concerning ethnic minorities was to be followed. This was especially due to the high birth rates of some nationalities such as the Rusins(Ukrainians) and the Romanians. He also warned of the high percentage of Jews among the Hungarian people. In the second article, Matolcsy revised his previous projections in the light of the data of the 1941 census. His initial calculations were mostly correct, and Hungarians managed to maintain the absolute majority with about 77.5% of the total. Hungarians had managed a 3% increase over three decades. At the same time, the Hungarian economist warned the public that the nationalities had increased their

²³⁸Mátyás Matolcsy, *Harcom a Földért* (Budapest: Magyarország Útja : Centrum, 1939)., p.13

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15

²⁴⁰ M Matolcsy, “A Magyarország Számaránya a Mai Magyarországon,” *Új Európa*, no. November (1942).

²⁴¹M Matolcsy, “A Magyarország Népi Ereje Az 1941 évi Népszámlálás Tükrében,” *Új Európa*, no. October (1943): 577–80.

numbers at much higher rates: Romanians 15%, Ukrainians 48%, Serbs and Croats 20%. This was due to recent historical developments but also to the constant military conflicts Hungary had to endure throughout its history. Hungary was an outpost of the West, charged with spreading its civilization, and had suffered because of its protection of the European borderland²⁴². If it was to fulfill (and reprise) its future role as the organizer and civilizer of South-Eastern Europe, the numbers of its people had to be increased.

The nationalities in the “Hungarian empire”

One of the obsessions of Hungarian fascism, as we have seen above, was to find a formula by which to integrate the fact that they were on the same side of the war with traditional enemies such as the Romanians and the Slovaks, but nevertheless marginalize them. Seen as one of the keys of maintaining a coherent Hungarian domination in the area, the lack of a proper policy toward the “nationalities” was also recognized as one of the greatest faux-pas of the old regime. In the first part of the chapter, we have already seen the theoretical projection of the spatial displacement of the minorities in Szálasi’s and other’s future Hungarian empire. The concrete manifestation of these bemusements was the legislative attempt of the Arrow Cross Party in the Hungarian parliament in 1939 to create a juridical framework for the nationality problem. The debate that arose from this bill revealed the differences between traditional nationalism and fascist Völkisch concepts of nationality.

The bill, created by Hubay and Vágó Pál²⁴³ in June 1940, was a radical shift away from traditional nationalist stances, at least on the surface. It caused a huge scandal, and almost got

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Lóránt Tilkovszky, “A Nyilasok Törvényjavaslata a Nemzetiségi Kérdés Rendezéséről,” *Századok*, no. 6 (1965): 1247–58.

them suspended from the Lower House of the Parliament²⁴⁴. Article 1 of the proposed bill declared that non-Hungarian ethnic groups living on the territory of Hungary must be grouped into people-groups (népcsoportok), and that these groups be given juridical personality²⁴⁵. They would then be given rights of local self-governance: education, welfare and culture²⁴⁶. The groups would also have the right to designate a number of political representatives, according to their proportion to the main population, who would take part in the work of the Hungarian legislative body. The nationalities would be governed by a special ministry called the Ministry of Nationalities. Membership in the groups would be hereditary, and based on blood²⁴⁷. Within their spheres of self-governance, the nationalities could use their own language in administration (art. 19). Article 22 of the proposed law excluded Jews from being members of the system of people-groups, and defined Jews on the basis of blood; any Hungarian citizen who had more than one Jewish grandparent was considered Jewish.

While on the surface remarkably progressive, the law may be considered a tool of singling out all other ethnicities outside of Hungarian, especially if taken together with the spatial theories espoused by the Hungarian fascists. It is plausible to see this as a combination of lip service to then-current Axis allies (Romania and Slovakia), and a sinister plan to group together and discriminate against ethnic others in an essentialist manner.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ MOL, “P 1351 -Nyilaskeresztes Párt 1933-1945.”

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

Nation versus Race. The search for the Hungarian national character

Nationalism was the key element of interwar Hungarian fascist ideology. It developed as a consequence of an intellectual and political atmosphere overwhelmingly dominated by nationalism. In interwar Hungary, outside of the Social-Democratic Party, there was no significant political party or movement which did not define its program and credo within the Trianon framework. To do this meant certain political ostracism and isolation from the avenues leading to political power. This resulted in a great deal of competition between rivaling ideologies and political movements around the definition of the nation itself. What were the Magyars like? What were their characteristics in the past and how should they change in the future? It is these questions that political ideologues of Hungarian national socialism and fascism attempted to answer.

One of the modalities of giving a convincing response to the questions posed above was to provide the audience with a theoretical basis seemingly grounded in academic study and scientific research. In the past, nationalist movements such as the Racial Defense Party, only partly grounded their political discourses on scientific theories, and chose to utilize literature and rhetoric coming from authors such as Szabó Dezső, Milotay István and Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Endre. The people gathered around Szálasi's Arrow Cross movement, however, preferred to build the discourse of the party on pseudo-scientific argumentation. I surmise that this was a conscious demarche, undertaken in order to project a modernistic image of the whole ideology and political movement. As in the case of their use of history and political geography, fascist thinkers liked to insist that their conclusions were firmly grounded in the latest developments of science and political theory. In fact, as we have seen in the chapter dedicated to fascist historical theory, the Hungarian authors tried to present themselves as being part of a larger movement; their

insistence that they were on the vanguard of a great change in history was one of the arguments with which they sought to gain political support. This was, in some ways, true, as they were clearly under the influence of ideas infiltrating partly from Italy, but most of all, Germany. One of these concepts was the racial-biological definition of the nation. A clear definition, however, was never completely adopted by any Hungarian far right political movement, and was open to interpretation from author to author. While it is true that a number of racial theories appeared in the interwar years among Hungarian fascists, we may distinguish between three main categories. The first belonged to authors that assigned racial characteristics to morphological traits: the size of the body and limbs, shape of the skull, color of the skin and the eyes and so forth. The second category of authors defined the race according to spiritual characteristics: their psychology, their behavioral patterns. However, most of the texts actually belonged to the third category, which blended the two, defining the Hungarian race as a result of both. The mechanism of transmission of these morphological and psychological traits was usually identified as heredity, or “blood” as most authors referred to it.

Many of the interwar fascist thinkers and authors also made speculations into the ethnic and racial origin of the Hungarian people. These writings were part calculated politicking and part conjecture. Establishing an appropriate “racial” (to be understood in ethnic terms) origin of the Hungarians was particularly important. This was firstly due to the new political setting, in which the concept of race, racial qualities and belonging were raised to a new importance. Secondly, the established non-Indo-European and non-Aryan linguistic origin of the Magyars as being descended from Finno-Ugric and partially Turkic tribes was also problematic in the new setting. It is for this reason that some authors tried to modify this reality, making references to the racial-morphological traits of their nation. At the same time, others did not shy away from

embracing the traditional narrative, but modified it to suit their own political ends. In the following chapter I shall make sample references to the authors stated in the above categorization, in order to allow the reader to attain a glimpse of the racialist theories of interwar fascists.

The idea of using the term “race” first appeared in the far-right political language of interwar Hungary with the advent of the Party of Racial Defense. This notion was understood mostly (with the exception of zoologist M  hely Lajos) in ethnic terms by thinkers such as Szab   Dezs  , G  mb  s Gyula and Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Endre²⁴⁸. It was also preferentially used in connection with the Jewish minority, which was beginning to be defined as race through a mix of anthropological and traditional ethnicist discourses. M  hely’s theories can be considered to be one of the most important origins of later fascist discourses concerning race.

The first fascist author to engage the concept of race in a theoretical manner was M  ln  si   d  n. His book, entitled the Honest History of the Hungarian People, provided the fascist movement of the Arrow Cross with much of their theoretical backing, and proved also to be useful in this area. M  ln  si’s book was a history of Hungary which attempted to analyze the various developments with the aid of a racial conceptual framework. His theories were influenced by earlier thinkers in the racial defense movement, such as the above-mentioned M  hely Lajos, who, in the 1920’s, made the claim that the Hungarian nation had a dual racial origin²⁴⁹. According to him, the Hungarians had a mongoloid racial heritage, born out of the coming together of the Ural-altaic and Turkic elements. This theory was adopted and further developed by M  ln  si. In his history of the Hungarian people, he claimed that the ethno-genesis

²⁴⁸ J Gyurgy  k, *Magyar fajv  d  k: Eszmet  rt  neti Tanulm  ny* (Osiris, 2012), <http://books.google.hu/books?id=VLFxkgEACAAJ>.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 92

of the nation had brought together two peoples, related to each other by race, which formed the Hungarian political nation. The first was the Finno-Ugric substratum, which represented the vast majority of the Hungarian people. The Turkic canvas came over the latter during the stay of the early Magyar tribes in the Eurasian region. He claimed that some of these early Hungarians turned back and remained in Asia²⁵⁰. The rest came into the Pannonic plain to form the new Hungarian state. The particular characteristic of Málnási's theory is that he attempted to attach a number of morphological characteristics to both groups forming the body of the Hungarian nation. In his rendition, the Ugric Hungarians possessed the qualities of intelligence and perspicacity²⁵¹. While he considered them to be physically somewhat inferior (shorter and smaller build) to their Turkic counterparts, they possessed a higher amount of natural fertility and they had better birth rates. The Turanic (or Turkic) group possessed a superior physical build, but was considered "light-blooded" by Málnási²⁵². This was most apparent in their weak ability to produce a high birth rate, and replenish their own numbers in a sustainable manner. For this reason, they were prone to admixture with foreign elements, which only weakened their racial purity further and brought undue alien elements into the Hungarian racial fold. The author therefore introduces two concepts: the ideas of mixture and assimilation. From his description, we may surmise that Málnási was not keen on the idea of racial mixtures, as he presents the Turkic proclivity for amalgamation as a weakness. However, the idea of racial superiority and inferiority does not appear as such in his text.

The fascist historian characterized the two groups not only in biological, but in spiritual terms. As such, he may be included in both categories stated above. He described the Ugric

²⁵⁰ Ödön Málnási, *A Magyar Nép őszinte Története* (Budapest: Cserépfalvi, 1937)., p 12

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 15

group as being naturally inquisitive, curious and quick to learn and problem-oriented. The Ugric (or Eastern-Baltic, as he also calls them) Hungarians possess a superior and varied imagination. They are also characterized by their open nature, which is quick to befriend and also quick to anger. Most of all, Ugric Magyars are distinguished by their simmering character, which drives them toward voluntarism and action. Their mental characteristics are: political evolutionism and progressivism, a penchant towards great enterprises and a strength of character. According to Málnási, they are by excellence doers and not talkers. The Turkic group gives a very different, almost opposite picture: their main characteristic is their apathy, and inactivity. Politically conservative, they are born masters of law, rhetoric and passive resistance. This is a populist construct, which instrumentalized racialism to transmit the elite-people dichotomy.

The author also set up a socio-political division between the two components of the Hungarian race. The Ugric Hungarians were mostly represented by the lower classes and the great mass of the people, especially the peasantry. On the other hand, the ruling classes were overwhelmingly Turanic-Turkic in origin, heavily mixed with foreign elements. History was thus given a racial dynamic: the oppression of the positive qualities of the Ugric Hungarians by their Turanic brethren. The inactivity and lack of ability of the ruling classes to combat national crises was therefore caused by their inferior racial qualities and their inability to combat infiltration by foreign elements. Further in the book, Málnási condemned the Hungarian aristocracy and landed gentry for its alliance with the Jews, and the adoption of a bastardized capitalism mixed with the worst elements of feudalism. Their worst crime was the oppression of the Ugric group, which could not express its positive qualities; it was from this group that Málnási hoped national regeneration would begin. It is interesting that while Málnási condemns the elite through the use of a racial vocabulary, he does not wholly exclude them from the Hungarian ethnicity as such.

Baráth Tibor also shared some of Málnási's ideas on the racial origin of the Hungarians, but he developed them further and made precise claims about the exact composition. In his two major works, *A Hungarian History* and *The Philosophy of State-Building in the Carpathian Basin*, he too claimed that the Hungarian race contained both Ugric and Turanic elements. As a professional historian, his analysis relied much more on the actual historical facts and produced a much more nuanced end-product than with the above-mentioned Málnási. However, his claims were nevertheless similarly unsubstantiated. In his 1941 book, he described the Hungarian people as being at its base, an Ugric people, which formed its majority. This race acquired several Turkish infusions, such as the Szekler or Khazar peoples²⁵³. It also assimilated the “partially Turkic” and Slavic peoples found in the Carpathian basin at the beginning of the 10th century AD, and the yazig, cumanic and other tribes up to the 13th century²⁵⁴. This resulted in the majority of the population being of Ugric origin, with a strong Turkic component. In its anthropological makeup, Hungarians were originally a Mongol race, with strong mongoloid physical traits. It is important to mention here that Baráth defined the term “Mongoloid” as an equivalent of “mixed”. He argued that the original mixed nature of the Hungarian racial characteristic was also bolstered by the addition of the races living on the territory of Hungary before the establishment of the Hungarian state. This resulted, in Baráth's words, in an “original racial characteristic” of the Hungarian people, which combined European and Asian elements. He put the percentages of at around 75.5% European and 24.5% Asian, although it is difficult to grasp how he got these exact numbers, outside simple guesswork. He defined the European races as being made up of 5 large categories: Nordic, Alpine or Central-European, Dinaric, Mediterranean, and Eastern Baltic. All European peoples were a result of the hybridization of

²⁵³ Tibor Baráth, *Magyar Történet* (Kolozsvár: Kolozsvári Egyetemi Nyomda, 1941)., p.10

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.10

these races, only the percentages differed. We may observe that this author also did not operate with the notions of racial superiority, but only of difference. He concluded that, while the Hungarians were of a mixed origin, and could therefore be perfect for the role of bridge between Europe and the East, the “Asian” nature of Hungarians was purely a myth.

Baráth further refined his theories in his next (and last prominent) major work, *The philosophy of state building in the Carpathian Basin*, which appeared in 1943. In it, he revised his percentages regarding the racial composition of the Hungarian nation. This time, he stated that only the initial substratum of the Hungarians was made up of the two initial elements –Ugric and Turkic, respectively- and that in the present, they only contributed to about half of the racial makeup of the people. The Hungarians, in contemporary times, he calculated, were the end result of the following equation: 25% Ugric, 25% Turanic types, to which other 20% Dinaric and 30% other racial types were added due to the various processes of assimilation and migration which took place over the course of nearly 10 centuries of Hungarian history²⁵⁵. This racial characteristic made the Hungarian people not only the natural leaders in the Carpathian basin (see chapter 2), but also an European race par excellence. It is important to understand this demarche of Baráth in the context of the larger European debates raging on the subject of racial superiority and the future makeup of the new European order, led by Nazi Germany. Baráth was probably attempting to establish the legitimacy of his own nation, by breaking with the tradition of the Finno-Ugric and Turanic narratives, and adding a series of ethnic origins and characteristics to Hungarians which made them more similar to the larger indo-European context, rather than setting them apart. This was a careful balancing act: he still kept in the largely dominant traditional theories concerning the ethno-linguistic origins of the Hungarian

²⁵⁵ Tibor Baráth, *Az Országépítés Filozófiája a Kárpát-Medencében* (Kolozsvár: Kolozsvári Egyetemi Nyomda, 1943), p. 54

people, in order not to be repudiated by scholarly circles and nationalist authors, while on the other hand trying to present his nation as a key player in the new racially-oriented world.

The consequence of such a mixed racial origin also resulted in a series of traits which were biologically engrained in the Hungarians, according to Baráth. The historian belonged to the second category of authors, who preferred to give preeminence to spiritual and mental characteristics over physical ones. He concluded that over half of the Hungarian racial characteristics came from two dominant groups, the Turanic and the Dinaric. He did not distinguish between them in any way qualitatively, surmising that both were actually quite similar in the traits they lent to the Hungarian people. The most important mental characteristic of the Magyars was their almost over bravery, almost on the border of recklessness, their martial nature, which sought out battle, and their desire to rule²⁵⁶. While a smaller influence than the first two, the Ugric (or Eastern Baltic) race also lent the Hungarians a number of traits which were seamlessly integrated to their warrior nature: their extreme resistance and their unwavering, stout character. This national characterology constructed by the author was the main reason, he argued, for their natural position as regional leaders. The military and political talents that the Hungarians possessed were unequalled in the Eastern and Southern part of Europe²⁵⁷, according to Baráth.

Though the two examples we have described above were only partly centered on a biological definition of the nation, Hungarian fascism also flirted with purely anthropological discourses as well. A typical example of this was the article of dr. Mándy György's piece which appeared on the pages of Matolcsy Mátyás' New Europe monthly. The article, entitled The

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 54

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 55

Racial composition of the Hungarian people²⁵⁸, was an attempt to scientifically define the characteristics of the nation. The article started off with a clear definition of the concept of race, and heredity. According to Mándy, racial characteristics were determined by heredity, which was the result of the biotype which emerged after insemination. According to the blood and racial characteristics of the parents, the offspring might emerge pure or mixed in race. A race may be identified and decanted when a large enough sample of individuals share the same physical characteristics. Environment also plays its part in the development of the outward appearance of both the single individual and the race. Firstly, it shapes the phenotype of the individual. Secondly, it contributes to evolution, by ensuring the survival and success of only those race which possess qualities adapted to the realities of their surroundings.

The Hungarian medic set up the following theoretical structure: according to him, certain biological types (or biotypes) are come together to form a population, races are composed of certain subtypes, and races are the building blocks of nations. Within a nation, the dominant race is the one that imposes its main characteristics. The nation is therefore an organic being, not a sum of individuals. Races always transmit all of their characteristics over to their offspring through a hereditary mechanism, the particulars of which were not apparent to Mándy at the time, as medical science had not discovered DNA yet. He stated that they may be ascertained, however, through craniometrics and a study of the physical appearance of individuals. The author divided humanity into four large racial groups: Australian, Negro, Mongoloid and European. Each contained a number of races, and in turn, each nation was made up of the combination of these races. The European racial group was composed of the Nordic, Mediterranean, Dinaric, Alpine, Eastern Baltic and Falic races. They were distinguished among

²⁵⁸ György Mándy, "A Magyar Nép Faji összetétele," *Új Európa*, no. March (1942): 149–53.

each other by the size and shape of their skulls, their height, the shape of the face and the color of the hair and eyes. The Hungarian nation, as all of their European counterparts, was the result of a mix of these races. Mandy claims that even at the moment of entry into Europe, the Hungarians were already of mixed, Mongoloid and European heritage; he backs up this claim by making reference to archeological-anthropological discoveries which he conveniently does not reference. In any case, he draws up a precise chart of the percentages of European races in the Hungarian nation (and compares them to similar findings about the Germans coming from Günther): 4% Nordic, 0.5-1% Mediterranean, 20% Dinaric, 15% Alpine, 20% Eastern Baltic or Ugric, 4-5% Tauridic, 4-5% Mongoloid and 30% Turanic. The author concludes that the Ugric and the Dinaric are important elements in the racial makeup of the Hungarians, and the Turanic (or Alföld type) is the most dominant. The Turanic race is the purest expression of Hungary and the dominant racial type. Mándy describes all of the physical traits of the races in great detail, but for the use of this text, let us only quote the characteristics of the three most significant groups. According to him, the Dinaric race was approximately 174 cm tall in stature, with an elongated but short skull, wide forehead, brown or black hair, green, brown or black eyes and dark skin hue. The Ugric race was over average in height, somewhat elongated skull, with a longer face and proghation (the teeth stick out of the jaw somewhat). They had dark blonde hair and grey eyes, with white, faded skin color. The Turanic race was stocky and average in build, a short skull and chiseled jaw, rounded and fat face, brown eyes and hair, and darker skin hue. I have left out some of the details of his description because of their overt length, but the article even provided illustrations for all of the above-listed racial types. It is difficult to say what exact sources Mandy used for his archetypes, but he was clearly influenced by the racialist theories of Bartucz Lajos (who did not have a hierarchy of race, nor did he give his theories a political

implication) and Méhely Lajos, both of whom he quotes. He continued to state that the various races were bound together by their kindred biological nature, and their spiritual kinship in forming the Hungarian nation. He was, however, against mixing with extra-European races, such as the Jews, which would result in “infection” of the national body. The end result of such a mix was not a hybrid, but another Jew, he claimed. Therefore, while he did not establish a ranking among European races, he did consider extra-European ones to be inferior in quality. Mándy was a member of Doros Gábor’s Hungarian Union for the Defense of the Family, and owing to this, a proponent of eugenics, and championed political measures meant to ensure a positive birth rate and fertility of Hungarians. He was clearly influenced by German *Rassenkunde*, and its chief proponent, Hans F. K. Günther. Günther also divided humanity into a number of races: the Nordic, Phalic, Eastern, Western, Dinaric and East Baltic. The German scientist, a former zoologist, stated that each race “ shows itself in a human group which is marked off from every other human group through its own proper combination of bodily and mental characteristics, and in turn produces only its like²⁵⁹”.

Perhaps the most important contribution made to the proliferation of the concept of race in the late interwar period was made by the man who dedicated his life to the mission of “racial defense” and anti-Semitism. His name was Bosnyák Zoltán, and alongside his teacher, Méhely Lajos, he was one of the most prolific authors and pamphleteers on this subject during the 1930’s and up to 1945. A lowly high school geography and biology teacher²⁶⁰, his name became synonymous with racial anti-Semitism after he started authoring articles in Méhely Lajos’ main newspaper, the Cél (the Goal). The two quickly formed a tight teacher-pupil relationship, which

²⁵⁹ Christopher Hutton, *Race and the Third Reich: Linguistics, Racial Anthropology and Genetics in the Dialectic of Volk* (Wiley, 2005), <https://books.google.ro/books?id=IWDyVPi6pHgC>.

²⁶⁰ Kenyeres, “Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon, 1900-1990.”

led to Bosnyák taking over the direction of the journal after the retirement of the aged zoologist Méhely in 1940. In the meantime, Bosnyák wrote a slew of books, studies and newspaper articles on the topic of “the Jewish problem”, race and racial defense, and the history of Hungarian anti-Semitism. His most important works are: *Két Világ Harca* (The War of Two Worlds), *Az idegen vér. A zsidókérdés fajpolitikai megvilágításban* (The alien blood. The Jewish Question in light of Racial Policy), *A zsidókérdés törvényi rendezése* (The Legal Solutioning of the Jewish Question), and *Istóczy Győző élete és küzdelmei* (The Life and Struggles of Istóczy Győző). While he was not officially a member of any fascist or national socialist party or political movement, he was a close sympathizer to their attitudes due to their staunch anti-Semitic attitudes. Their common ideological stance on these issues meant that Bosnyák would become more than a fellow traveller for the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party; he was a close collaborator of it and other political movements, such as the Hungarian Renewal Party of Imrédy, keeping a certain amount of autonomy. Being an experienced far-right journalist since the early 1930’s, his expertise was called upon frequently when an articulated piece on the “Jewish Question” was needed in the fascist press. His abundance of publications made him known in the Hungarian political circles as somewhat of a connoisseur of the issue, so much so that in 1943, alongside a few of his colleagues, he set up the “Institute for Investigating the Jewish Question in Hungary” (*Magyar Zsidókérdés Kutató Intézet*²⁶¹), and became its director. Since Bosnyák was such a prolific author (see above), it is difficult and out of place to analyze his entire work in the confines of this thesis. Many of his attitudes and ideas, especially concerning race and the Jewish minority, however, are consistent with those expressed by Hungarian fascist political movements. Therefore, my

²⁶¹ Rory Yeomans and A Weiss-Wendt, *Racial Science in Hitler’s New Europe, 1938-1945*, Critical Studies in the History of Anthropology (UNP - Nebraska Paperback, 2013).

analysis shall depart from articles and pieces specifically published by him in national-socialist newspapers and periodicals, as a point of entry into his conception of race and racial hygiene.

Perhaps one of his most evocative pieces was published in Matolcsy Mátyás' New Europe periodical in May 1943. It was entitled "Fajpolitikai Nevelés" (Racial Education), with the subtitle "The best way to prevent the bolshevist danger". This is suggestive to the paranoid attitude of Bosnyák towards the importance of his field of study, and his logic of thought, which operated under the guise of a conspiracy theory. According to the author of this short study, Europe and the world was locked in a pitched battle between two camps: the bolshevist and the "social racial nationalist". Bosnyák exhibits a Manichean worldview, in which the two are avatars of degeneration, disease and decay, and rebirth unto perfection, respectively. His short historical exposé, in the beginning of the article is surprisingly consistent with those espoused by fascist ideologues all throughout the period (see chapter 1.). In it, he states that the liberal democracies, whose period of dominance is coming to an end in Europe, fostered the rise of weakness and degeneracy. This is understood by Bosnyák to be present at all levels, political, social, and also at the tier of population policy, including race. The ultimate symptom of degeneration is manifested by the apparition of bolshevism, which is a representation of the revolt and dictatorship of the degenerate and weak – "*the underman*" (Bosnyák uses this specific English term)- over the "culture and civilization"²⁶². Bolshevism, according to the author, leads to the violent imposition of the norm of degeneracy by the biologically inferior on the rest, and leads to physical extermination. We may see this short introduction as a synthesized version of the fascist historical theorem, translated into racial-biological terminology. For Bosnyák, the

²⁶² Zoltán Bosnyák, "A Fajpolitikai Nevelés. A Bolsevista Veszély Leggyökeresebb Ellenszere," *Új Európa*, no. May (1943): 280–92.

field of reproduction, biology and racial health was also a field on which an ideological battle had to be carried out between two polar opposite worldviews.

Bosnyák's thought is by no means wholly original; his greatest influences include his mentor, Méhely Lajos, but also a host of Western eugenicists and racial theorists, such as Lothrop Stoddard, Werner Sombart (useful as tool of adding prestige to his discourse, due to Sombart's credentials as a famous sociologist, who became a Nazi sympathizer) and Walter Gross. It is from them that the author adopted a number of concepts, such as racial selection, racial hygiene and the underman, which all served to format his concept of race. Firstly, he envisioned fascism – or “social racial nationalism”, as he liked to call it- as a political system which would set up a new social structure, based on the community of a people, united by blood. He stated that the unity of a people, a nation was based on their biological traits, which in turn were to be found within the blood. Due to the fact that at this time, biology was not advanced enough to discover the exact mechanism of heredity, Bosnyák conjectures about cell plasma, and protein matrixes²⁶³. Nevertheless, the similarities with the Nazi concept of Volksgemeinschaft are uncanny; the author attempted to emulate the German concept and inject it in the Hungarian context. He envisioned that the new political order would set up a “biological system of values” (biológiai értékrendszer). In this system, the basic concept would be that of inequality, instead of the equality of bolshevism and liberalism. People would be ordered in society according to their biological acumen, from the most talented and geniuses at one end, followed by the average, ending with the less worthy specimens (Bosnyák eschews this last part). The whole of society, he envisions, would be governed by a set of strict rules that govern marriage and reproduction, and would be geared toward racial improvement. Eugenics is, he states, one of the main priorities of

²⁶³ Ibid.

the nation. The new racial state structure would be led by a new elite; here, Bosnyák borrows Stoddard's concept of a "neo-aristocracy", based not on tradition but on racial quality, genealogy and heredity. According to Stoddard, social progress- which is understood by Bosnyák in racial terms also- would not be possible without the guidance of these strata of leaders²⁶⁴. The "Under Man", who threatened the balance of this system, was also a term which Bosnyák took both from Stoddard directly and through Nazi filters (even Alfred Rosenberg himself attributed the term to Stoddard originally). The role of this new "biological statecraft" would be "the use of all means toward the accretion of the valuable hereditary stock". According to Bosnyák, the novel racial-nationalist worldview required not only the conscious promotion of those deemed of healthy racial stock, but, on the other hand, the "limitation, curtailment to a minimum, or if possible to completely halt the reproduction and affirmation of the degenerate, and inferior (*alacsonyabbrendű*-those of inferior race) biological stock". This short statement (which is italicized in the original text to highlight its importance) is a chilling forewarning of the direction of the events that happened just a year later, when the machinery of the Holocaust was brought to Hungary. The logical conclusion of Bosnyák's train of thought would be the physical elimination of an element thought to be both a biological inferior and a direct threat to the existence and health of the body of the nation.

Another important element that appears in Bosnyák's - and in other authors- writings is the idea of the importance of demography. He states that the quality of the race that would be achieved through eugenic practices and racially-conscious social engineering is only one side of the coin. The other would have been the promotion of birth rates, in order to insure the survival of the race. To this end, the author made a short qualitative classification of political regimes;

²⁶⁴ Lothrop Stoddard, *The Revolt Against Civilization: The Menace of the Under Man* (Kessinger Publishing, 2004), <http://books.google.hu/books?id=z2aOToo4KyQC>.

fascism was deemed to be the paramount *weltanschauung* which combined the promotion of both quality and quantity within the race/people. Liberalism was equated with the championing of mediocrity and democracy at best with the maintaining of the present (disastrous) state of affairs. On the other hand of the spectrum, bolshevism was a worldview which promoted barbarity and the decay of civilization. The new society must be governed by the high importance of racial awareness. This awareness consisted of, according to Bosnyák, of the acceptance of a society based on inequality; Stoddard, quoted by the author, had after all, established the inequality between races. The American anthropologist was also useful for a fascist agenda because he wrote about the inefficacy of democracy in achieving the betterment of race. Bosnyák, relying on the texts of his mentor Méhely Lajos, theorized further: society itself had to be reborn through “racial consciousness”. This, however, could not be achieved without a radical transformation of society and state itself, a palingenesis. The racial revolution, according to the author, went hand in hand with a fascist revolution.

The means with which Bosnyák wanted to achieve the dream of a biologically superior racial community consisted of an eugenic toolkit. Claiming to be a continuer of sir Francis Galton’s (the inventor of the concept of eugenics and the founder of the Eugenics Education Society, and the *Eugenics Review*) thought, he proposed a number of methods. The first of these was the creation of a set of legal measures which would enable the sterilization of those considered to be “substandard elements”. Here, he was clearly influenced by the German “Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring” enacted on July 14th, 1933, but also by similar eugenic practices in USA, especially in California, promoted by eugenicists Gosney and

Popenoe²⁶⁵, which he makes references to. Bosnyák also projected legal provisions for the institution of a set of fixed rules that would govern marriage. The concept of marriage was understood by him as an institutionalization, and through it, central control over sex and reproduction. Therefore, he pushed for mandatory medical inspections of both parties prior to entry into the institution of marriage. This would have meant a direct intervention of the state into the private lives of the individual. The objective was the determination of both the biological fitness of the two parties, but also of their racial background and profile.

These were, however, short-term measures. In the long run, Bosnyák credited education with playing a major role in achieving racial purity. To this end, he proposed the introduction of a number of new topics into the curricula. He envisioned that the new topics, concerned with heredity, and race, would be closely connected with the teaching of biology, geography and history. The most frequent references the author made came from Nazi Germany; there, the most important subjects taught were heredity, methods of racial defense and purity (sterilization, marriage, foundation of families), the most important traits of European races, and the Jewish question. It is striking to notice the importance the author gives to these examples, and to the connection he sees between the concept of race and the “Jewish question”, both at a national and European level. His concept of race cannot function without a counterpart, an outsider, which is personified by the Jew.

He constructed a similar teaching plan for the Hungarian school system. While Hungary was among the first European nations to set up a school of physical anthropology at the turn of the century, Bosnyák decried the lack of activity since then. He understood the importance of

²⁶⁵ Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (University of California Press, 2001), <http://books.google.hu/books?id=vliVy1cCFDkC>.

racial research and education as primordial, as other “modern” countries (mostly the Axis states) had already undertaken important measures in this field; again, as with the adoption of fascism as a form of statehood in the case of the Hungarian fascist’s works about history, it was a question of not being left behind. The logic of modernity and progress were subverted to mean the adoption of fascism and a racial ordering of society. In this logic, Bosnyák argued that the youth of Hungary must imbued with a strong sense of racial consciousness; this would come as a result of education. His plan was composed out of three parts: the subjects, the methodology and lastly, the timeframe (i.e. the grades). He projected a number of topics being taught:

“a.) Heredity. The science of the family. The cell and the cell plasma. Genotype and Phenotype. The heredity of traits....Pure race and mixed races. Dominant and recessive traits. [Gregor-n.a.] Mendel’s laws. Selection....

b.) Racial sciences. The main physical and spiritual traits of European races. Their living territories. The racial origin of the Hungarian people, and its traits. The Turanic-Turkic and Ugric Hungarianness. The Hungarian race/type. Hungarian spiritual traits. Kindred races. The racial connections between Hungarians and other peoples. The races of the Hungarian Empire. The role of race in Hungarian history. Race and culture.

c.) Racial health. Pure races and mixed races. The effect of bad racial mixing on peoples and cultures. The goals, tools and methods of eugenics. Positive and negative racial cultivation. The biological, economic and cultural results of the multiplication of racial encumbrance. Counter-selection. Sterilization.

The Jewish question. Historical recap. The Jewish conquest since emancipation. The role of the Jews in the collapse of World War I and the proletarian dictatorship. The biological,

economic, societal, political and cultural consequences of the Jewish threat. The worldwide conspiracies of Jews, plutocracy and bolshevism. The solution to the Jewish threat.

d.) Demographic politics. The situation of the Hungarian people. Natality, growth spur and morbidity. ...The Slav threat. Quantitative and qualitative demographic policies. Measures to increase birth rates. Tax cuts, marriage loans, the protection of mother and infant, settlement policies. etc.”

The methodology of teaching was tailored to the material. The author stated that the subject matter was firstly a worldview, political in content, and only secondly scientific material; therefore, the subjects must be introduced into other subjects: heredity into biology, racial science and demography into history and geography, racial cultivation into general hygiene. The racial approach was to be applied whenever possible, in each subject, so as to politicize them all. This would have been a method applied at all levels, from primary to higher education, in order to format the thinking of all generations.

The text gives a valuable synthesis and insight into the thought of Bosnyák. Partly an education program, it turns into a manifesto of government policies related to population toward the end, where the author clearly forgot the initial goal of his text (he even repeats certain points), and launched into a programmatic declaration of future measures. When compared to his earlier texts, there is a high amount of consistence between his arguments over time. His prior, most well-known book on this topic was entitled *The Alien Blood*. The Jewish question in the light of Racial politics, which appeared in 1938²⁶⁶.

²⁶⁶ Zoltán Bosnyák, *Az Idegen Vér: A Zsidókérdés Fajpolitikai Megvilágításban* (Budapest: Magyar Kultúrliga, 1938).

Firstly, we may glean Bosnyák's apprehension of race from the texts. He clearly differentiated between the morphology of the race and its "spiritual" characteristics, while it is unclear which he gave more importance to. In any case, a race was defined by both sets of characteristics; he stated a number of times in this and other texts. In his 1938 book, he goes on in length to describe the antagonist Jewish race using morphological traits, craniometrics, serology and on the other hand, psychological and spiritual traits. We have to glean his approach to race from his approach to the Jewish people, for in his obsession with this supposed problem, Bosnyák wrote very little about his own people, whose traits he took for granted to be known. Both in his article and his 1938 work, he stated that through the mechanism of heredity, traits exist at a genetic level in the "cell plasma". Both morphological and psychological traits were therefore biological in origin, and therefore could be manipulated. This manipulation could be positive (eugenic) and negative (racial mixing). He also subscribed to the dual racial nature of Hungarians, an attitude he inherited from Méhely. He wrote about the mixed racial nature of Hungarians (1938), but stated that this was a positive mix with Turkic and Eastern Baltic kindred peoples. The author also tended to historicize the notion of race, as other Hungarian fascist thinkers did (see above). Moreover, history was given a racial dynamic, in which two counterparts faced each other in a teleological struggle. His concept of race existed in an exclusionary logic. Therefore, the Jewish question was always present in any of his discussions on race, providing the dynamic; without the danger of racial counterparts, there was no need to better the community through eugenics. This attitude is a vulgar and indirect tributary of Carl Schmitt's theory of unity of the "political" through the opposition to an "other"; Bosnyák's construction would also collapse without the presence of the Jew (or Slav).

Bosnyák also made clear connections between the notion of the people, and the concept of people's community and the notion of race. The nation was, in essence, a community of blood, bonded together by heredity between ancestors and descendants. The duty of the individual was to serve this greater community by keeping its traits and its blood as pure as possible, thereby securing its biological survival. The mixing of the blood, especially with already inferior races, would lead to degeneration, and the extinction of the race. Bosnyák criticized Hungarian-Jewish mixed marriages not only due to the fact that he considered Jews to be inferior; the inferiority of the Jews was due to their poly-hybrid racial heritage (whom he claimed had Negro blood)²⁶⁷. It is interesting that in the same book, he claimed Hungarians were of mixed heritage as well; he obviously did not notice his own double standard. Blood was also a determinant of racial conscience as well: while Bosnyák considered that this awareness must be raised among Hungarians by education (1943), he had an almost pathological fear of the "racial solidarity of blood" between Jews. He claimed that this was transmitted through heredity even to those of mixed Hungarian-Jewish heritage, and these elements were the most dangerous of them all, being able to camouflage themselves among the general population in order to carry out the nefarious plans of their community (1938). If anything, the author wanted to copy the kind of sense of community of blood he seemed to perceive among the Jews of Europe, for his own community. He warned of the strong blood bonds between the enemy of the people²⁶⁸, all the while claiming it was a degenerate strand.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

Anti-Semitism and Hungarian fascism

In Hungarian and international historiography, anti-Semitism and the rise of fascism in interwar Hungary were linked together as almost synonymous terms. Traditionally, Hungarian fascist political movements and parties were understood mainly as anti-Semitic political formations, the opposition toward Jews forming the bulk of their political message. While it is certainly true that all Hungarian fascist parties were virulently anti-Semitic, the chapter shall aim to show that political anti-Semitism and Hungarian fascism were not identical, but parallel and congruent phenomena.

Anti-Semitism in Hungary pre-dates the apparition of fascism as a political ideology, naturally. While Hungary has a long history of Anti-Judaic pronouncements stretching back into the Middle Ages, but the first concrete manifestation of political anti-Semitism came about in the second half of the 19th century. It was headed by Hungarian politician Győző Istóczy, and appeared as a consequence of a highly publicized affair called the Blood Libel trial of 1882. In it, a group of Jews from a small Hungarian village called Tiszaeszlár were wrongly accused of the murder of a young Christian woman. Istóczy's political movement appeared as a consequence of the trial, as a manifestation of the irrational fears of some of the Hungarian public of the Jewish community. While the party collapsed in 1887, it left an important legacy, which was later claimed by interwar anti-Semites of the Racial Defense Party and fascist movements such as the Arrow Cross.

Anti-Semitism, as a political phenomenon, exploded after 1919, and the instauration of the Horthy regime. Its most important purveyor was the Hungarian National Independence Party, better known as the Party of Racial Defense. Born out of a strange mix of intellectuals, clergymen, politicians and former anti-communist free corps officers, it may be considered the

most important political and intellectual laboratory of Hungarian radical nationalism and anti-Semitism of the interwar period. Its most important leaders were Gyula Gömbös and Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, and among its ideological leaders we can find persons such as Szabó Dezső or Méhely Lajos. While they were responsible for the anti-Semitic drive of the Hungarian far right, their ethnicist definition of the nation and Jewry in the end set them apart from the virulent and programmatic anti-Semitism of Hungarian fascism, one of the goals of which was to find a definitive solution to the imagined „Jewish question”.

The road to Jew-Hatred

The relationship of Hungarian fascist ideology with anti-Semitism was a complicated one. While at a first look, anti-Semitism seems to be a vital component of fascist ideology to such a great extent, that some even equate the two, this was not always the case in Hungary. Fascism in Hungary had a long road that lead to anti-Jewish discourse, in which different parties and persons exhibited varying attitudes vis-à-vis the Hungarian Jewish community, ranging from ignorance to exclusion, based on racial or ethnic/religious terms.

The early theoretical tracts and pronouncements of Hungarian fascists were surprisingly lacking anti-Semitic remarks or any hint of anti-Semitism being used as a theoretical framework to perceive and explain reality. Hungarian proponents of National Socialism, instead, focused on attacking the country’s ailing socio-political structure and the corruption of the whole system. This was true for almost all the early Hungarian fascist political groups, with one notable exception: the Scythe Cross Party. It espoused a violent and vulgar form of anti-Jewish

discourse, which would later become a mainstay of all similar organizations. But we shall come back to the case of Böszörmény Zoltán's political group, as it was a quirk in more ways than one. As stated above, the three most significant fascist political groups of the 1933-1936 era, belonging to Zoltán Meskó, Pálffy Fidél and Festetics Sándor preferred, as a general rule, to steer clear of the "Jewish Question" in their first few writings. They adopted the outside trappings of fascism, especially those of German Nazism, utilizing all the window dressing of theatric politics: the swastika²⁶⁹, uniforms (the brown, later the green shirt), the leader principle. Meskó went even so far as to appear before Parliament with his mustache trimmed to resemble Adolf Hitler²⁷⁰. But this did not mean the full "digestion" of fascist ideology as such, and anti-Semitism was added to the equation of their ideology sometime later. This may be connected to the particular way in which the very concept of fascism, a new and unusual political idea, was understood by these early adopters. They perceived it as being mainly, and before everything else, an ideology based on strong-statism, and the leader principle (Führerprinzip), the core of which was constructed around the idea of Palingenesis of the nation. This was why many of the early fascist texts, by Festetics, for example, had a very tough time distinguishing between "true" fascism and right-wing authoritarianism. In this sense, they included among fascist revolutionaries persons such as Marshall Pilsudski of Poland and Turkey's Kemal Atatürk²⁷¹. A more plausible explanation of the supposed lack of anti-Semitic rhetoric is that anti-Semitism had become so normalized in the public discourses of the Horthy era that it was not a viable element to include into a political discourse which sought to distinguish itself among the plethora of other right-wing projects. Anti-Semitism did not secure attention to a political party, but social demagoguery, as Szálasi discovered, did. This is the reason behind the lack of anti-Semitic banter in

²⁶⁹ Meskó Zoltán, "No Title," *Nemzet Szava*, 1932.

²⁷⁰ Rogger and Weber, *The European Right: A Historical Profile*.

²⁷¹ Sándor Festetics, *Mezőföld*, December 31, 1933.

the early works of Szálasi Ferenc, who did not start out as an outright open anti-Semite. His first work, the “Plan for the Construction of the Hungarian State”²⁷², which was published in 1933, did not feature a clear anti-Jewish platform. Works such as his, and fellow traveler Ráttkay R. Kálmán²⁷³, focused instead on the technical particularities of revolutionizing and rebuilding the Hungarian state on a nationalist and authoritarian basis, with a corporatist social structure.

The notable exception to this general trend was the party of the Scythe Cross, led by the outsider figure of Zoltán Böszörmény, who may be characterized as a political adventurer. In his political credo, he proselytized a nation which could only be composed of *néptárs*, a muddled redefinition of citizenship based on ethnicity. This status could only be granted to Turanic and Aryan peoples; Jews were specifically excluded²⁷⁴. All rights, including the ownership of property, the freedom to engage in economic activity, and intellectual pursuits would all be denied to Jews (point 17)²⁷⁵. The booklet also attacks Jewish newspapers for their destructive activity, and called the Hungarian communists Jews²⁷⁶, promising to crack down on them²⁷⁷. Since the Scythe Cross was notoriously prone to slogans and not much else, his party’s anti-Semitism was never programmatically explained or fleshed out, outside of the simple pronouncement of its existence.

The first theorization of the Jewish question belongs to Matolcsy Mátyás. In his book, *My Struggle for the Land*, he made inferences to the fact that Jews slowly infiltrated Hungary’s decaying aristocratic and later, burgeoning liberal regimes. The end result was a policy of

²⁷² Ferenc Szálasi, *A Magyar Állam Felépítésének Terve* (Budapest: A Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1933).

²⁷³ Kálmán Radich Ráttkay, *Modern Országépítés : átfogó Magyar Terv* (Budapest: Hajdú, 1933).

²⁷⁴ Zoltán, *Böszörmény.*, p. 40

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 70

backwardness in economic and social terms, and the repression of the Hungarian people²⁷⁸ (see chapter I). He would later clasp all of his anti-Semitic theories into a short book, entitled *The Way of the Jews*, which appeared in 1941²⁷⁹. The work represented a synthesis of his vision of Jewry, and is important due to it being one of the few coherent fascist narratives on the subject. It has a historical approach, detailing the manner in which Jews “infiltrated” Hungarian and European society. He defined the Jews as being a nomadic people par excellence. They possessed two important characteristics: they did not have a homeland of their own, but had a strong sense of community, or inner nationalism²⁸⁰. The secret goal of Jewish wandering all over Europe, and later the world, was, according to Matolcsy, to establish Jewish communities in every country. These would exist as distinct communities within their host countries, without the desire to truly integrate, but with the insidious scope of undermining and sabotaging that community. The Jews wanted to establish a worldwide network. Matolcsy demonstrated some skill of historical scholarship, by using (or rather, misusing) credible historical data to trace the history of Jewish wandering from the Roman Empire to the end of the 18th century. He explained the frequent pogroms within the Pale of Settlement as the reaction of the common people of the East to Jewish exploitation²⁸¹. These events and the emancipation of Jews in the West lead their expansionist drive toward the occident and America²⁸². The USA and the Anglo-Saxon world were hopelessly conquered by the Jews, opined Matolcsy, who were behind their entry in the First World War and were in the process of goading them into the Second²⁸³. The author considered the Rotschild family as the prime exponent of the conspiracy of worldwide Jewry,

²⁷⁸ Mátyás, *Harc a Földért*.

²⁷⁹ Mátyás Matolcsy, *A Zsidók Útja* (Budapest: Nyilaskeresztes párt- Magyarország útja/Centrum kiadó, 1941).

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p.4-5

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 5

and gave it as its prime example²⁸⁴. Matolcsy supported his claims with substantial, albeit doctored, statistical data, which showed the rise in Jewish population, supposedly all over the Western world. The Hungarian economist claimed that Jews utilized a number of tools to achieve their overarching plan. Firstly, they used secret cabals and societies such as freemasonry²⁸⁵. It is important to note here the connection between Jewish conspiracy and freemason conspiracies. The two are classic examples of conspiracy theories, and are often bound together. The second tool in the Jewish kit was economy, and demography: Matolcsy exhibited data proving the rise of Jewish population in urban centers, such as Berlin and Budapest, and their gradual takeover of housing and property²⁸⁶. Jews gradually worked to take over positions of power in industry, the banking sector, the intellectual field and politics. The solution to the Jewish question provided by Matolcsy was their expulsion through forced emigration. He opposed sending them to Palestine, concluding that there was not enough room for the entire world Jewish population in the British colony.

Matolcsy had been clamoring for a “solution” to the Jewish question to be enacted into law for quite some time before his 1941 book. In fact, in 1938, in a parliamentary speech, he attacked them with a legislative proposal²⁸⁷. Quoting racial theorists Méhely and Orsos, he stated that Jews constituted a distinct race within Hungary, which was impossible to assimilate, due to its inherent traits. Matolcsy then gave evidence of the Jewish dominance in the financial sector, and their ownership of large landed estates. The solution he proposed then was the dispossessing of the Jews of their properties, which would in turn be nationalized by the state. The state would

²⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 6

²⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 10

²⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 11-12

²⁸⁷ Országgyűlési Könyvtár, “Országgyűlési Napló,” 1938, <http://www3.arcanum.hu/onap/opt/a110616.htm?v=pdf&a=spec:start.>, session of 9th of May 1938

then either act in its redistributive capacity, handing out land to the peasantry, or keep hold of other properties, such as industry, to operate them for the common good²⁸⁸.

Szálasi Ferenc's first foray into politics brought with it the stabilization of anti-Semitism as a basic element of Hungarian fascist ideology in both discourse and practice. It also began the inner ideological search for a binomial definition of: Jewishness, on the one hand, and the Hungarian nation, on the other. This binomial was based on the axiom of basic difference between Jews and Hungarians. Departing from irrational Jew-hatred, people in and around Szálasi's various iterations of the Arrow Cross Party and its fellow travelers, struggled to give coherent and more or less articulate delineations to what the two concepts meant. This included and led to a racial perception of the nation (as we have seen earlier in this chapter) and of Jewishness. The most significant detail worth noting is that Jews were defined as a race much earlier than Hungarians. I posit that there is a causal relationship between the developments of these attitudes. As biological racial definitions of Jewishness were advanced by both Hungarian nationalists like Méhely Lajos, active in the camp of the Racial Defense Party, and on the other hand, apishly copied from Nazi Germany, a necessity for a definition of Hungarian-ness based on blood also came to the fore. The two were bound up in an antinomic relationship.

In order to gauge the attitudes of the Szálasi group toward the Hungarian Jewish community, we must start in its prehistory, and analyze its first iterations in the pages of its first newspaper, *The New Hungarian Worker* (*Új Magyar Munkás*). It was a short-lived publication, but diffused enough social demagoguery, fused with anti-Semitic bile in order to be banned after just one issue. Of course, what bothered the authorities was the former, as anti-Semitism had long been established as a valid form of public expression, since the 1920's.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

The manifesto of the new political movement, The National Will Party (Nemzet Akaratának Pártja, shortened to NAP- an acronym for sun in Hungarian), announced on the first page that there was an ensuing battle about to come between opposing worldviews. On the one hand, the Hungarian *Weltanschauung* (or freedom-fight, as they also entitled it) was struggling for the emancipation of the national body; it was beset on all sides by the Jewish worldview in its three different manifestations: liberalism, bolshevism, and freemasonry²⁸⁹. These three employed the concepts of selfishness, materialism and atheism in order to reach their goals. These goals were part of a larger plan, divided into steps, which entailed: firstly, the destruction of God and the Nation. This was to be achieved by enslaving the three basic elements of the Hungarian nation: binding the peasant to the land (to be understood as a new serfdom), the worker to the factory (the exploitation of the proletariat), and the intellectual to be poisoned with materialism and base instincts²⁹⁰. The Jews spread hate and inhumanity in order to achieve world domination, and put into action their diabolical plan²⁹¹. Therefore, the any government which did not break radically with the Jews and “solve the Jewish question” would be responsible for “digging the grave, into which the Jews will fling the body of the Hungarian nation²⁹²”. Another article announced: “The Jews, with their innate racial consciousness and awareness form a separate nation, with a continuous history. Their goal inside the body of the nation is always conquest and the seizure of power²⁹³”. The piece went on to insist in three separate paragraphs that the Jews constituted a race, and detailed their “strategy”. Jews were broken up into two main categories, according to their preferred political strategy. Evolutionary Jews manifested their politics in liberalism and capitalism, and preferred to insidiously infiltrate the already existing

²⁸⁹ Ferenc Szálasi, “Szabadságharcunk hitvallása,” *Új Magyar Munkás*, March 16, 1937., p.1

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.1

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.1

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p.1

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.3

corridors of power. Revolutionary Jews manipulated progressive forces and the masses, diverting their energies toward a false revolution, which would put the Jews into power²⁹⁴. The two were just the dual faces of Janus, and constituted elements of the Jewish new world order.

These two articles are seminal, in that they synthetically express and lay down the blueprint behind fascist anti-Semitism in Hungary. Firstly, Jews were no longer an ethnic or religious community, but a biological race. Secondly, fascist ideology operated on the basis of anti-Semitic canards (the protocols of the Elders of Zion being the most important); a conspiracy theory was the engine of the dogma. In 1935, Szálasi's Party of National Will was among the first to unequivocally declare that Jews constituted a race, not a religious community in its party program²⁹⁵. It wanted to expunge the "Jewish spirit" from all of the fields in the country, to ban Jewish immigration, and to expel all Jews who immigrated before 1914, who broke the law, or shirked their responsibilities during the Great War. Interestingly, while the program does call for an elimination of Jewish influence, it wants to replace it with "positive Christian" influence, which seems to prove the fluidity of biological and religious definitions of both Jewry and the Hungarian nation. Whether the phrase is lip service to the regime's rhetoric or not is debatable, since a few pages before, the party program called for the removal of all of the political involvement of religions and churches, including Christian political organizations²⁹⁶. But the fact remains that since the NAP, all fascist party programs adopted and contained the slogan of Jews being defined as a race.

A typical work of the fascist conspiratorial thinking is the pamphlet "The Jewish Pursuit of World Domination" (*A zsidók világhatalmi törekvései*). It is probably authored by Literati

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p.3

²⁹⁵ Szálasi, *Cél és Követelések*.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 10

Vágó Pál, and is undated²⁹⁷. The preamble blames the Jews for the loss of the First World War and the crucifixion of the nation, and promises to produce documentary evidence, in the form of a study, of the Jewish conspiracy to take over the world. Jews, the work continues, alongside freemasons, are the forces behind upheavals such as revolts and revolutions, and are the backers of bolshevism²⁹⁸. The work copiously reproduces entire passages from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, including the one in which the Jewish tribes portion up the world among themselves, concluding that what was written in the book has actually come into being in the present. The author concludes the following from his reading of the Protocols:

1. There is a century-old secret organization of Jews in action
2. The organization is filled with hatred toward Christians and is bent on conquering the world
3. The goal of the organization is the destruction of the nation states, in order to replace them with an international Jewish rule
4. The methods used are meant to degenerate and corrupt the political regimes from within, and eventually destroy them

The author sees the hand of Jews everywhere: in the monopolization of industry, in the imposition of laissez-faire liberalism, in the aristocracy of money, in the overtake of the press, in the fooling of the proletariat into working for them, and so forth. The Jews are fueled by a bitter hatred and a desire for power and revenge. The author eventually concluded that the world economic crisis is also caused by Jews, who profited from the anarchy created. The work continues with a historical overview of the Jewish people, cataloging events from the beginning to the interwar period. The Jews, the author writes, are a people of staunch, almost maniacal

²⁹⁷ MOL, “P 1351 -Nyilaskeresztes Párt 1933-1945.”

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

discipline, rigidly sticking to the obscurantism of their Torah. By their very nature, they are incapable of statecraft, and instead are only unified in their opposition toward other cultures and peoples. The author seems to find evidence of this stance in the Talmud as well, which supposedly states that no gentile must be treated medically, and that a Jew is not morally responsible if he/she steals from a gentile. Respect and morality only apply within the race. The pamphlet also states that the Kabbalah gives evidence of the orgies of murder and destruction enacted by Jews over the generations over non-Jews, when they reached political power. In the late Middle Ages, the infiltration of Jews began, and they became bankers of the crowned heads of Europe. Amsterdam became a Jewish center, and the vast hydra of the Rotschild family began to spread, the work tells. The French Revolution was the work of the Illuminati, a secret organization controlled by Jews. In the 19th and 20th century, Jewry continued to spread its influence over the continent and caused all of the revolutions. The tools utilized by the Jews were identified as the following organizations: the Kahal, the Jewish world alliances (the Alliance Israelite Universelle, the B’Nai B’Rith, the Poale Zion), liberalism, and of course, the freemasonry. Jews were behind democracy, and socialism as well, each representing a facet of the Jewish lie, directed at various social classes. Interestingly, the pamphlet claimed that the Jews were a white race, but so different from the Indo-Aryan white race, that they might as well be black, or Asian. Their racial profile even differed from their supposed Semitic relatives, the Arabs. Indeed, the Jews had managed to maintain their community of blood through: nationalism, and the fact that their racial characteristic was that they absorbed other races when they combined with them. Thusly, through their ideology and racial character, they presented a danger of the utmost priority, which the author warned must be solved sooner rather than later²⁹⁹.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

This document proves the adoption of a conspiracy theory of pan-European and pan-Occidental circulation.

The incompatibility of the Hungarian nation with the alien Jewish community was underlined in Rátz Kálmán's pamphlet "Hungarians and Jews" (*Magyarság es zsidóság*)³⁰⁰. He paralleled the rise to power of modern Jewry with the rise of modern capitalism, which he identified as being a Jewish creation³⁰¹. The work follows the usual narrative of a corrupt and venal aristocracy and central leadership of the Habsburg Empire, which is taken in by the conniving Jewry³⁰². The Jews create banking institutions for two reasons: their own enrichment and the gradual takeover of power, and to buy up land. Their corruptive action then split the Hungarian society in two, isolating the elites from the masses, by the interjection of the Jewish bourgeoisie between the two³⁰³. Hungarian society thus became splintered, and began to lose its national consciousness. The Jews, on the other hand, possess a solidarity given to them by their racial consciousness³⁰⁴. The contemporary economic system, of "feudal-capitalism" was a perverse Jewish creation, designed to enslave the Hungarian people, whose public opinion was manipulated by the Jewish press. The highest expression of Jewish culture was the press, Rátz wrote, as their foray into literature was a resounding failure. The Jewish nature, through its perversity and materiality, had no soul or poetry to it, and thus was unable to produce literature or art³⁰⁵. At most, it created frivolous plays or superficial dramas. The Jews, however, were quite skilled, the author opined, in politics, where they insinuated themselves into the corridors of power, and began their demolishing work on two fronts. On the one hand, they grabbed

³⁰⁰ Kálmán Rátz, *Magyarság És Zsidóság (bev. Sértő Kálmán)* (Budapest: Centrum Kiadó, 1940).

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5-6

³⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 7-13

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 14

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19-20

economic power and became Hungarian chauvinists, in order to create a chasm between the Magyars and the other nationalities. On the other hand, they fomented social unrest by their spread of internationalist ideas and socialism³⁰⁶. In the Great War, they were profiteers, selling paper clothes and paper boots to Hungarian soldiers, and then stabbing them in the back when the war ended; Rátz subscribed to the thesis of the Hungarian Dolchstoss, by which the Trianon losses were chalked up to the inept Károlyi democracy and the Soviet Republic. Rátz concluded that the Hungarian spirit, however, averted disaster, being at the moment too strong to be conquered.

It is perhaps an exercise in futility to describe the anti-Semitism diffused by the Hungarian national socialist and Arrow Cross publications, such as *Pesti Újság* and *Magyarság* in the period of 1937 to 1945. It did not show any particular difference or evolution from those espoused by the radical right wing journals in the 1920's, with the notable exception of insisting on the dictum that Jewry was to be defined as a biological race. Even this, they did not follow completely, as during the campaign to boycott Jewish businesses in 1939-40, the authors of the *Magyarság* called upon their readers to buy instead from „Christian” shops³⁰⁷. It is to be noted that the fascist dailies engaged, together with the other radical right wing newspapers, in a day-to-day exercise of assassinating the Hungarian Jewish minority with various slurs³⁰⁸. The most utilized insult related to their supposed money-grubbing, avaricious materialism and traitorous nature, by which they sold paper boots and clothes during the Great War to troops, and were war profiteers. This sort of sustained campaign of abuses eventually led to a normalization of ever more radicalized version of anti-Semitic discourses, which paved the way toward the darkest

³⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 21

³⁰⁷ *Magyarság*, 1940, September 12th, p. 3

³⁰⁸ Pelle, *Sowing the Seeds of Hatred: Anti-Jewish Laws and Hungarian Public Opinion, 1938-1944*.

chapters of Hungarian history: the anti-Semitic laws of 1938-39 and 1941, the deportation and Holocaust of the Hungarian Jewish population in 1944-45.

Other races

The Jewish community was not the only minority targeted by Hungarian fascist ideology. Tentative attempts were made to treat other ethnic minorities with the same racist vocabulary and conceptual framework; the most significant of these (especially regarding its contemporary role) was the Roma or gypsy minority. While anti-gypsy-ism was not a prominent feature of far right or fascist rhetoric in the interwar period, I have come across two seminal, albeit short texts that serve as evidence of the extension of racism outside of the anti-Semitic sphere. They are important not only because of the fact that they document the prehistory of racist anti-Gypsy-ism in Hungary, but also because they show a tentative trajectory of racism, which was moving toward treating all ethnic others within a biological framework.

The first text belongs to Zsolt Hargitay, dubbed an “expert” on racial matters within the Arrow Cross Party. The article entitled “A specialist opinion of the racial nature of Gypsies and the consequences of their mixing with other races”, attempted to trace the general racial traits and genealogy of the Roma “race”³⁰⁹. Hargitay declared that historically, the Roma were an ancient Aryan race, due to their Indian ancestry, but wondered aloud whether their dark complexion was an original trait of all Aryans or whether whiteness was a consequence of the

³⁰⁹ Zsolt Hargitay, “Szakvélemény a Cigányfajiságról és a Más Fajúakkal Való Keveredésének Következményeiről,” n.d., in MOL, “P 1351 -Nyilaskeresztes Párt 1933-1945.”

adaptation of other Aryans to cold climatic conditions. In any case, the author defined the Roma as a nomadic people, bound in racial spirituality to the idea of freedom, and which instinctually refused the practice of racial mixing. The centuries of inner seclusion meant that their genes were very strong, and would become dominant in the case of mixing with outsiders. The Roma only mixed among themselves, avoiding degenerative and declining demographic trends. They possessed a lower racial ethic, bound to spirituality, but also to mysticism, and superstition; their social morality was also very low. Their physical characteristics, along with their psychological, would prove dominant in case of hybridization; therefore Hargitay concluded that they posed a danger to the Hungarian majority³¹⁰. He pictured them as modern savages, strong, but also destructive toward civilized society: they possessed positive qualities (racial purity, strength), and at the same time, were anachronic. Their “racial worldview” meant that they had a propensity toward criminality, and they posed a danger to the lower classes of society³¹¹. The author set up a parallel between racial danger of mixing in the elite via the Jewry, and the populace, via the Roma, both corrupting the social fabric and health of the national body.

Szóllósy Sándor offered a solution to this problem in an article entitled “The Solution to the Gypsy Question³¹²”. The article discusses number of cases and presents statistics pertaining to the “Gypsy Question”. It associates the Roma with poverty, disease and unemployment, as in Rimaszombat, where they are beggars, spreading disease among the rural population, and where they are 90% jobless³¹³. The author claims that they are dependent on soup kitchens and other types of social welfare, and that the criminality among their children is over 50%. The Roma do not wish to work, but instead beg, play music, gamble and drink, spreading corruption. Szóllósy

³¹⁰ Hargitay, “Szakvélemény a Cigányfajiságról és a Más Fajúakkal Való Keveredésének Következményeiről.”

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Sándor Szóllósy, “A Cigánykérdés Megoldása” (Sopron, 1941). in MOL, “P 1351 -Nyilaskeresztes Párt 1933-1945.”

³¹³ Szóllósy, “A Cigánykérdés Megoldása.”

suggested that they be rounded up urgently and put into camps. In these camps, they would then be used as a forced labor force, constructing roads and buildings. The author concluded with the chilling phrase: „the best solution would be to resettle them where they came from, or sentence them to extinction (*kihalás*), for they present an unending danger for Kultur-people, like the Jews³¹⁴”.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

People and society in Hungarian fascist discourses

Populism and the social question: the early years

Populism is an essential component of fascist discourses, and the Hungarian case is a clear illustrator of this fact. To quote Ernesto Laclau, “populist reason³¹⁵” guided the ideology and discourse of fascist politicians and activists from the very outset of the movements in Hungary. Together with a strong concept of charismatic authority, populism was the basis and indeed, the *raison d’être* of Hungarian fascism. The political project came into being - according to the self-made argumentation, which may be gleaned when reading between the lines of the early fascist publications- both as a reaction to the obtuseness of the governing forces toward social issues, and due to a rebirth of political awareness of the disenfranchised categories. The need for strong leadership to galvanize the great mass of the nation was born out of the cold hard realization by some Hungarian politicians that the masses can be effectively utilized for political acumen, following the German model. This is why Hungarian fascism boasted some atypical early exponents, coming from the elites, such as Pállfy Fidel, baron Sándor Festetics, both aristocrats, and Matolcsy Mátyás, the London-educated economist. Conversely, other early propagators of the fascist project in Hungary dabbled in populist politics even before turning toward the extreme right, a large part of the vocabulary of their political language predating that volte-face. Each represent a different tradition of populism, Festetics and Pállfy the agrarian

³¹⁵ Laclau, *On Populist Reason*.

aristocratic radical version, Matolcsy the plebeian radical one. This means that a lot of the lexicon of Hungarian fascism was carried over from populist politicking, and served as a means to an end, channeling certain needs and problems of society.

Nothing serves as a better example of this process than the evolution of the political discourse of one of Hungary's earliest proponents of fascism, Meskó Zoltán. He was originally a member of the Smallholders Party, held several posts in the early interwar governments, most significant of which was state secretary for small holdings and agriculture. He was a founding member of the National Smallholders Union³¹⁶. Meskó was therefore acutely exposed to the realities of rural life in in 1920-30's Hungary, and aware of the difficult fate of the Hungarian peasantry. His whole political platform was based around smallholders, and this category was dwindling by the late 1920's-early 1930's. One of the main goals of his political activity, prior to his fascist turn, was to champion the cause of his constituency; he achieved this through his parliamentary activity, which included the attempt to form smallholders into a voting bloc in the National Front of Smallholders, but also through the foundation of a daily newspaper entitled *Pesti Ujság* (Pest Newspaper or Pest Daily) in 1927, which was to become one of the longest running and notorious publications of the Hungarian far right. The daily became his mouthpiece in the following years, and he utilized it to espouse his ideas regarding the state of affairs in the country, especially regarding issues such as the distribution of wealth, the relationship between social categories and the urban-rural question. Taking a strong populist stance, he championed the cause of the disenfranchised, describing their strife in great detail in article after article. In an editorial in September 1930, he described the difference between the Hungarian situation, and the recent events in Germany, where mass politics were reaping considerable successes,

³¹⁶ Országgyűlés, *Országgyűlési Almanach: Történelmi Sorozat* (Magyar Országgyűlés, 2005), <http://books.google.ro/books?id=O7EVAQAIAAJ>.

transforming the face of electoral politics in that country. He lamented the isolation of the Hungarian ruling elites from the great mass of the people, which brought about not only the success of the Nazi party (which Meskó, at this point, did not accord sufficient attention), but “put 76 deputies of Moscow³¹⁷” in seats in the German Reichstag. Perhaps, he noted, the reaction should not be of fear toward mass politics, but an embracement of it, in his word “we should move closer toward the people”. The reason for this turn of events was “the apathy, disorganization, and lack of unity of the bourgeoisie, together with the weak government, and on the other hand, the poverty of the German people, the unemployment”. In the same issue, articles deplored the state of the peasantry, with drawings that depicted a peasant woman and her child dying of hunger, and “thousands of workers...and the Hungarian Village waiting for the Dawn of a new age”. The peasants and the workers of Hungary did not protest and did not revolt, but cringed and battled through, as they had done during the trials of the World War, Meskó said, waiting for the Hungarian ruling class to ameliorate their state. It is interesting to note two things that may be read between the lines of these articles. The first is a somewhat underhanded warning (especially in we take into account the content of the headline article) to those in power that the masses may revolt, if their grievances are not met in due time. The second is that, while the mass (mostly represented by the peasants) is given the main role in Meskó’s discourse, it is an impotent mass, unable to achieve agency by its own strength. The mass must be rescued by some providential elite or person (“Magyar urak”- Hungarian Sirs/Lords) from its present state of decrepitude.

The abject situation of the peasantry was presented in a number of publications that appeared during the time that Meskó’s *Pesti Újság* was being published. The tragic style of

³¹⁷ Zoltán, “Szószék.”

populism adopted by his journal was inspired by books such as Oláh György's *Three million beggars (Három millió koldus)*. In this novelized sociography, the author (who later turned from peasantry to fascism, and joined the organizations of Imrédy Béla and Rajniss Ferenc, editing the notorious far-right publication *Egyedül Vagyunk – We are alone*³¹⁸) depicts the fates of several peasant families from all over Hungary, rich in details about their daily trials and tribulations, in a sort of narrative thick description³¹⁹. The work was a huge success in Hungary, and had a large impact on the cultural-scientific landscape, and was one of the many catalysts of the so-called *falukutató mozgalom* (The village research movement). Later on, the same author would see a solution out of the crisis in fascism, and authored a book dedicated to Hitler, *Őrvezetőből diktátor: Hitler forradalma : 1920-1932 (From corporal to dictator: Hitler's revolution)*³²⁰, in which he greatly praised the German dictator and his regime, hoping that Hungary would adopt a similar political system in the near future.

Another early populist who had turned to fascism was Roósz József, who, similar to Oláh György, and Meskó Zoltán, started to publish on topics related to the social state of the peasantry in the early 1930's. His first work, entitled *Kapitalizmus vagy kommunizmus: paraszt szemüvegen (Capitalism or Communism: through peasant eyes)*, was an unabashed, self-published first attempt at dealing with the political implications of the socio-economic crisis of his own class³²¹. On 65 pages, Roósz struggled to explain to himself (and his readers) what exactly the concepts of capital, economic and financial crisis, investment, workers movement and so forth mean. The end result looked somewhat like this: Roósz found the institution of capitalism to be, at its very core, an arbitrary and chaotic concept. While not completely rejecting

³¹⁸ “Oláh György,” *Magyar Katolikus Lexikon*, n.d.

³¹⁹ György Oláh, *Három Millió Koldus* (Miskolc: Magyar Jövő Nyomdaüzem és Lapkiadóvállalat Rt., 1928).

³²⁰ Oláh, *Őrvezetőből Diktátor: Hitler Forradalma : 1920-1932*.

³²¹ Roósz József, *Kapitalizmus Vagy Kommunizmus : Paraszt Szemüvegen* (Mezőberény: Author's edition, 1933).

the concept of private property and hereditary transmission of value (capital)³²², which he found to be existent in nature (sic!), he wanted to curtail it, in order to serve higher, national goals. Capital, and money, was the end-result of labor, he wrote, and it was unfair that those that did not do productive work (labor) benefit too much from it³²³. Therefore, the wealthy only cumulated the labor of those that worked for them, and took most of the profit of the labor in an unfair manner³²⁴. The financial institutions of capitalist economy Roósz also saw in a negative light: they made profit by turning money into capital and moving it around, then turning it against the productive laborers³²⁵, profiting from the fact that they did not possess either capital or the instrument of money, in order to defend themselves. The ultimate institution of this chaotic exploitation machine was the stock market, which was an artificial, disordered forum of raising value, which in the end produced only crashes and crises³²⁶. The author castigated international capitalism as a system which had caused the World War and the redrawing of state borders, in an attempt to eliminate capitalist rivals. He saw alternative politico-economic systems, such as Italian fascism (he did not want to pronounce himself about Hitlerism at the time of publication, 1932-33), as an attempt at self-sufficiency and redistribution of goods, a step outside the capitalist system of competition³²⁷. He also attacked the domestic regime of Hungary for not enfranchising the masses, depriving them of the voting right, and spoke in favor of general suffrage.

Turning his attention to the only solid alternative of capitalism existent at the time, he depicted Marxism as an overly materialistic ideology and communism to be an oppressive

³²² Ibid., p.6-7

³²³ Ibid., p. 5

³²⁴ Ibid., p. 14

³²⁵ Ibid., p. 20-21

³²⁶ Ibid., p. 21

³²⁷ Ibid., p. 35

regime. He wrote that it would “make us all a slave to our community³²⁸”, and that it equated men with machines, only looking at their capacity to work. Roósz hated the internationalist ideology of communism³²⁹ and its anti-religious stance³³⁰, as he himself considered nationalism and religiosity to be a *sine qua non*. Instead, he declared the whole concept of communism as feeble modern attempt to recreate an ancient state of being (as communism predated the concept of private property, in his understanding of history)³³¹. Instead of communism or capitalism, he proposed instituting a third alternative road, in which the unionization of small capital would be favored, which would come only as a result of productive work³³². This translated into a community of smallholders and workers, but it is entirely unclear as to other details. The author omits them probably due to his lack of grasp on the finer details of economy and politics. It is important to note Roósz’s first attempt at a political manifesto, for he would later play an important role in the Hungarian fascist movement, becoming one of the main organizers within the Arrow Cross Party. In his early book, we can see the prehistory of his ideas, and trace development of his later conversion to Szálasi’s Hungarism.

Returning to Meskó , two important features emerge very early on in his discourse, which makes it possible to characterize it as populist, in Laclau’s terms. The first is the setup of a dichotomy between elites and the people. The elites are often portrayed as isolated, fragile, even sickly leaders, while the great mass of people (most often than not represented by the peasantry) is healthy, agile, strong and full of creative energies (but importantly, lacking a clear leader). This setup permits the equation of the people with the peasantry itself, by which all national and ethnic characteristics of the nation are originated in, and preserved in their true form by the

³²⁸ Ibid., p. 57

³²⁹ Ibid., p 44-45

³³⁰ Ibid., pp. 47-49

³³¹ Ibid., p. 61

³³² Ibid., p. 62-63

peasantry. An article by an unknown author, who signed himself I.Gy., in the Pesti is the perfect illustration of these principles. In the piece I.Gy. describes the Village (which he capitalizes and personifies) as containing "...not arrogant and fragile great Lords", but strong, brave individuals, "holy Hungarians" as the author dubs them. These were the men who revitalized Hungary after the tragedy of the war, filling in this role since the times of king St. Stephen anonymously, gladly dying for their nation.

Another article picked from the Pesti, entitled "Subsistence, not lipstick" attempts to give a dichotomous presentation of rural and urban life through a gendered perspective. It portrays the urban bourgeois woman as an archetype of debauchery and easy life, who "cares more for her lipstick, hairdo, cigarette..." and does not know the realities of the majority of the Hungarian mothers, whose children "cry out for a piece of bread...". This leads to a dual destruction of the family, both at in the cities, because of loose morals, and in the countryside, due to material reasons. The life and existence of a woman is linked to her role as a mother and a means of childrearing and reproduction. The author derides the efforts of women that attempt to fill a man's role as the bread earner of the family, and concludes that this road leads to a loss of morals of women, and either childless homes or children being left to fend for themselves, in a hive of immorality. The revitalization of Hungarian society is therefore linked to binding women to their motherhood and family life, and turning back the wheels of modernity, which enabled women to escape traditional gender roles.

The rotten elites were soon joined by another player in the mental scheme which would go on to become the model for fascist discourses in the late 1930's. As early as 1932, Meskó identified modern socio-economic structures and capitalism, specifically, as the main cause of the decay of Hungary's populous. "Banks" and "cartels" had entered the scene to become one of

the main antagonists. Already on January 3rd, 1932, Meskó had pitted against one another in his editorial column entitled “The Pulpit”, two categories of foes: “the obsessions of bankers, cartels and job-hoarders” and “...the millions of ragged Hungarians and...our suffering slave brothers”. He had of course, not found upon these enemies by chance: one of the main ailments of interwar Hungary was indeed a faulty form of capitalism, with many financial scandals and dirty deals behind closed doors.

While Meskó’s ideology seems to make him a typical early precursor, or representative of ultranationalist populism, he did not identify himself as such until sometime later. His main objective, in the early 1930’s seemed to be to provide a voice for the lowly classes of Hungary. While the iterations of his public speech (newspaper articles, parliamentary speeches) exhibited many elements of nationalist discourse, he did not feel a part of the Hungarian right wing. For example, in a piece written in January of 1932, criticizing the international situation, he declared that the spirit of post-war idealist pacifism had failed. The reason was the recognition of Aristide Briand that international cooperation was impossible, due to the “exploitative policies of imperialist nationalism³³³”. In his view, the Hungarian economic and political situation mirrored this, not being able to develop and evolve, until “the exploitation of the agriculture (i.e. the peasantry) will be stopped” and the production in agriculture reorganized. His future solution was “an agrarian democracy”.

Not all of Meskó’s peers, even in his own publication, shared his ambiguous attitude towards nationalism, however. Even in the same issue, one of his columnists, Stolte Sós Lénárd, in an article concerning international customs unions, was of the opinion that Hungary may become a viable player in any international economic or political situation only if “the nation’s

³³³ Zoltán, “Szószék.”, 1932, year 6, nr.1, January 3rd, p. 1

economic and spiritual forces enter into cooperation, universally and harmonically³³⁴”. The reorganization of the agriculture, Lenard wrote, must go hand in hand with a “political rebirth”. This rebirth would equal a political activation of the agricultural class (peasants), who would be inspired by and infused with the idea of nationalism. In the author’s word this would have been a “national movement supported by the masses”. Mass politics and nationalism were married in the few short lines of this essay; Lenard was one of the first authors to attempt such a pairing, between extreme nationalism with peasantism in the columns of Meskó’s journal. He would go on to author a book on the topic, entitled “1919-1933 – *The Economic Failure of Usury Policy*”³³⁵. In it, he argued that the Hungarian counter-revolution of 1919 was sidetracked and usurped by liberalism and its exploitative capitalist policies. Banks and cartels featured prominently among the factors which stifled Hungarian political development and oppressed the masses. Lenard developed his argument for a combination between politics geared toward the hoi polloi and the spiritual rebirth of the nation, which would inspire the masses and insert Hungary into the developing nations of Europe.

Alongside his fellow journalists, foreign developments must have inspired Meskó as well, for he started interpreting the domestic situation in a Manichean light. In an editorial dedicated to the measures the government of count Károlyi Gyula to stop the practice of usury, he construed that the entire Hungarian economic system was rotten and out of balance. The policies of large financial enterprises and industrial cartels he equated with the “destruction of the nation”³³⁶. Another facet of the topos of banks and cartels monopolizing resources, he wrote, was that indeed the entire nation faced extinction due to the malevolent actions of these

³³⁴ Ibid., p. 1

³³⁵ Lénárd Stolte Sós, *1919-1933 - Az Űzér Politika Gazdasági Csődje* (Budapest: Politika (ny. Viktória nyomda), 1934).

³³⁶ Zoltán, “Szószék.”, Jan 11th, nr.3. p. 1

cosmopolitan, often foreign elements. Therefore, the nation and the country is under a constant siege, a constant state of emergency, which calls for a total reinterpretation of the basic concepts of statecraft and politics. The answer to the crisis: the rejuvenation of the spirit of the nation, coupled with the union of “the Hungarian workers”, which would sweep away “the traitors of democracy, the profiteers of work”. Two things are to be noted here: firstly, as stated above it is interesting that at this point Meskó is still toying with political platforms and ideologies, and still favors some sort of democracy as a way out of the crisis. Secondly, he underlines the dichotomy between those who work and those who do not, creating a stereotype of the enemy which has no spiritual qualities, or national characteristics he holds dear, and is interested only in profit, in a completely egotistical manner. This construction could still be characterized as left-wing, if taken by itself, out of the context of the rest of the content of the newspaper.

However, Meskó’s newspaper was not left-wing in any sense, and he would make this abundantly clear in his editorial pieces. The politician considered left-wing politics just as dangerous as liberalism and capitalism, and he dedicated a number of articles to this topic, in order to get his point across. In early 1932, the socialists won a seat in the local elections in the county of Szarvas, and Meskó raised the alarm bells. This, he argued, was another piece of evidence in support of his interpretation of the state of affairs in Hungary; the social chaos and political negligence meant that the left wing was gaining more and more support³³⁷. He depicted the social-democrats with a mix of admiration and fear. On the one hand, he admired their conviction and their willingness to engage with the masses; the industrial working class, he stated, was already hopefully lost to them. On the other hand, he viewed the social democrats as a pro-active, well-organized, and seductive foreign element, an enemy to Hungary’s domestic

³³⁷ Ibid., p .1

development due to its internationalist stance. They would profit from the chaos if stern, rapid measures were not taken. Other articles, such as a March 13th one, spoke of roving bands of communist agitators in the countryside³³⁸, making the not-too-veiled suggestion that the rural population was already exposed to this dangerous ideology. In April, the stances toughened even more, communists being called “the agents of Moscow” and “sewer rats”, and were accused of spreading rumors and fears, all the while fomenting the takeover of power³³⁹. Meskó opined that welfare measures would stamp out the success of communist propaganda among the populace.

Meskó started to develop his own political solution to activate the crowds, alternative to the class-based schemes of the socialists. On the front page of the February 20th edition of his *Pesti Újság*, he wrote: “We must turn over a new leaf! All classes should be given the right to organize in order to defend their interests!³⁴⁰”. Behind this bold and lofty statement, he meant something quite different, laying down for the first time the tenets of his ideology. He described the political world as being composed of two large wings: the national “unitary” camp and on the opposing side, the “class-ist” movements, based on the idea of class war. Their origins were historical, brought about by the evolution of society. The class-parties were founded by people who wanted to turn the idea of organized politics in the advantage of their own class. Meskó identified the Smallholder Party of Hungary as such a movement, due to its class-based bias. The failure of this party eventually came about due to its lack of connection to the very mass (and/or class) of people it claimed to represent. It did not attempt to organize, to teach, and its activism was lacking; it betrayed the peasantry and smallholders by selling out to those in power, the banks, the “aristocracy of bureaucracy”. This would be the fate of such parties in the future;

³³⁸ Ibid., March 13th, nr. 11, p. 3

³³⁹ Ibid., April 24th, nr. 17, p.1

³⁴⁰ Ibid., February 20th, nr.9, p.1

Meskó, however, proposed a completely new platform. He called it “A new Unitary Party”, which would have been true to its name, unlike its previous namesake. It would have been based on a totally new social order (as one can glean from Meskó’s sparse words), that would have brought together all of “the working people of Hungary”. By these, the author meant workers, peasants, merchants, small business holders or liberal professions. They were identified as classes, and would have had their interests represented in organizations of their own making. The entire system would be based on “social justice” and universal, secret suffrage. The elimination of cartel policies and financial exploitation would bring about a “new Greater Hungary”. Meskó envisioned a struggle, followed by “a new Hungarian life...in which work would be valued...and Hungarian workers would form an indivisible union...”.

The new society, built on an empowered populace, peace between the social classes and justice represented the horizontal tier. The vertical dimension of society would be embodied by central leadership. Even before his official fascist turn, Meskó’s publication featured numerous calls for dictatorship. It first started as a proposition in particular cases, for example linked to economic hardships. In an early 1932 issue, the *Pesti Újság* launched a movement against the rise in the prices of industrially-manufactured products³⁴¹. This was meant to ease the access of rural population to manufactured goods, which would in turn help in the mechanization of their means of production. While the original goal is meager, the end conclusion is important: the article concluded that the artificial hike in prices due to cartelization and profiteering, the prices must be stabilized with “immediate, dictatorial measures, as the rift caused between supply and demand has created a huge chasm within the economy...Dictatorship can only be fought with

³⁴¹ Ibid., January 11th, nr.3, p. 3

dictatorship³⁴²”. From then on, his publication renewed the call for a strong-armed leader to take the reins of power. At first, there was much talk of an economic dictator³⁴³, but that soon gave way to full political dictatorship. The new leader was likened to historical characters such as Lajos Kossuth, as an article from spring 1932 declared, who is man among men, and who the nation can follow until the end. The author of the piece, Bacsa Zsigmond, described the qualities of the leader: he should be disinterested, hard-working, spiritual and inspiring, noble and utterly dedicated to the stamping out of corruption in Hungary and raising the country to its feet once more. The example of Kossuth is used by the author to provide the archetype of personal, charismatic leadership which would act as a spiritual and material beacon³⁴⁴ for the people. The leader would be “...the Messiah awaited by countless millions, who, if he comes, we shall follow until death...”. It is to be noted that Horthy’s image as a political leader does not classify him, in the eyes of the author to fill the role of national savior.

It is not the goal of this chapter to discuss the role of charismatic leadership (see chapter 2), but to provide the basic tenets of how Meskó’s group envisioned society. It was made up of a mass, categorized into social classes, which would all be equal in relationship to the person of the leader. The people were often called as “*kisemberek*³⁴⁴”, which is equivalent to “the little guy” in contemporary colloquial English language. This populist myth of the small man versus the elites was thoroughly exploited in the passages of Meskó’s journals. He would finally be brought to the fore, but only as much as to give up his power to the person of the leader. This “coming together of national forces³⁴⁵”, as Meskó called it when he officially left the Unitary Party, would come about as a result of radical change, or a period of strife. The Pesti Újság

³⁴² Ibid., p.3

³⁴³ Ibid., July 10th, nr. 28., p. 4

³⁴⁴ Ibid., April 24th, nr 17, p.1; March 6th, nr.10, p.1-2; May 29, nr. 22, p.1.; June 5th, p.6; July 10th, nr.28, p.1

³⁴⁵ Ibid., March 20, p. 3

repeatedly spoke of struggle, fight, radical change and reform, but the words were thrown around without any real content behind them, purely as buzzwords³⁴⁶. At the same time, to maintain the aura of the new order of things, the new leadership as having popular roots, Meskó still pushed for universal, secret voting rights for all in the pages of his publication, and in the parliament³⁴⁷. But Meskó's motivations were anything but democratically inspired. In spring 1932, his newspapers were already filled with laudatory articles dedicated to Hitler and the Nazi movement. On Mayday, the title page of the *Pesti Újság* announced: "The German giant is already pulling loose of his chains³⁴⁸". He identified the nature of Nazism as unwillingness to pay war debts, the control of capitalism and the nationalization of the German masses. The jump from this toward establishing a nascent Hungarian fascist movement was small, and on the 17th of June 1932, the headline of the *Pesti Újság* declared the foundation of the Hungarian National Socialist Party, the "victorious Hungarian Swastika³⁴⁹". The article is quite interesting as a synthesis of the populist legitimation of early Hungarian fascist ideology, and provides valuable evidence as to the place of the concept of people within that ideology, as well as to its interpretation. The announcement of the foundation of the party given by Meskó in front of the Lower House of the Hungarian Parliament, writes the article, was preceded by a filing in of a number of "disciplined" brown shirted party members and is followed by a muted audience. This of course, is a literary method, utilized to give the announcement gravitas, and a solemn character. The brown shirts represent all tiers of society: smallholders, workers, doctors, engineers, "bright eyed Hungarians". Meskó goes on to compare the present state of affairs to the post-Mohacs Hungary, a time for swift decision, for the sake of "millions of our Hungarian

³⁴⁶ Lenard Stolte, *A mi Harcunk, a mi Programunk*, in *Ibid.*, June 5th, p. 6

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, April 24, p. 1.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, May 1st, p.1.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, June 17th, nr. 25, p. 1

brethren”. The historic significance of this moment is great for the mass of the people, for it represents the moment when they become agents of history, by becoming members of the new fascist political party³⁵⁰. The Hungarian National Socialist Party thusly started to act as the sole representative of all the disenfranchised, as evidenced by the articles it started to publish in Meskó’s second journal, the *Nemzet Szava (The Voice of the Nation)*. It opened its doors to the working class as well, and attacked the social-democratic party in an attempt to gain some of its voter base. The main point of contention was the party itself, which was accused of being composed of functionaries. Theirs was not a democratic party, as it refused complete equality (although it is unclear what the exact argument is), and not social because it exploit the workers with its party fees, does not provide them with security against capitalist exploitation, and is anti-Christian and amoral³⁵¹. Henceforth, the new journal (which borrowed the numbering of the Pesti Újság from number 70, to give it seriousness; the Pesti Újság also continued to be published) started to mix ultra-nationalism with arguments for working class rights. It attempted to interpret national socialism as a vehicle for upward mobility for this and other disenfranchised classes. It worked hard to identify ethnic-national interests as analogous to class interests and started to argue, together with the Pesti Újság for wiping away the debt for indebted workers and peasants and for autarky. The working class was given an important role: Meskó argued that during the First World War, the class could have stopped the outbreak of the conflict, if it had truly acted in a unified, international manner³⁵². The vagaries of capitalism affected this class as well, as argued by a fall 1932 article, which put the number of unemployed industrial workers at

³⁵⁰ Ibid., July 17, nr. 29., p.1-3, July 24th, nr.30, p.1, p. 3

³⁵¹ Zoltán Meskó, “Nemzeti Szocializmus vagy nemzetközi szocialdemokracia,” *Nemzet Szava*, 1932., October 22, nr.70, p. 1

³⁵² Ibid., p.1

25 million Europe-wide³⁵³. These people represented a critical mass, available for political mobilization either by the right or left, and were essential for turning the tide in the right direction, argued the author. The new journal continued the pathetic articles describing the fates of the pauperized masses at home and abroad, with titles such as “The 3rd class waiting area” or “Strike of the Hungry broken up in London”, while reporting on the triumphal march of Italian fascism and the coming of Nazism to Germany.

The success of this discourse was not great, due to a number of reasons: the restrictive policies of the authorities, the electoral system which allowed only around 20% of the population to vote (and not all in secret), the failure of the fascist message to get across to voters due to the limited resources Meskó had available to him, and not the least, due to his serious lack of skill as a politician. However, his contribution is highly significant for later years, as he laid down many of the patterns of populist politicking which would be deepened by his offspring: the mass nature of politics, the need for the nationalization of the masses, the central role of the peasantry as the main representative of the nation (and the working class in a secondary role), the repudiation of capitalism and liberalism and the push toward dictatorship.

The Scythe Cross and the urban-rural divide

Böszörmény Zoltán and his Scythe Cross Party was a minor presence in Hungarian politics, but with a major impact on the future development of the social imaginary of Hungarian fascist ideology. His party and his discourse, working alongside Meskó Zoltán’s movement, was the one that cemented the role of the peasantry as the main representative of the nation. Very little is left in print of his ephemeral fascist movement, outside of a small party handbook

³⁵³ Ibid., ”Itt a Hiba! “, nr. 71, p.1

extolling the value of its “great leader” and a collection of poems by Böszörmény, for the leader was also a budding poet.

The self-styled leader of the fascist organization saw himself as nothing less than “God sent³⁵⁴” and Christ-figure, reconfigured in a nationalist sense. In this capacity, he undertook the role of “prophet” for the “people”, who would have lead them out of the crisis in which they found themselves. While the role of charismatic authority has already been the subject of chapter II, we may analyze the depiction of the concept of people within the discourse of this fledgling fascist movement. The two most important characteristics of the concept are: immobility and populism. The latter refers to the people being congruent with the lower classes within the societal pyramid, i.e. peasants and workers. In the short essays and poems of the book, Böszörmény and the other Scythe Cross authors refer to the people with the adjective “dolgozó³⁵⁵” (working), the working people. The other side of this antagonistic structure is taken up by “parasites”, who are inevitably made up of Jews and traitors, who exploit the honest work of the “working people of Hungary”. The main trait of the working people is that they are suffering at the hands of the exploiters. Almost all the essays and poems borrow heavily from Biblical lingo and the New Testament, in showing a suffering people being saved and delivered from evil by a providential figure, in the person of Böszörmény³⁵⁶. This is what brings us to the second main characteristic of the people: they are immobile, impotent to do anything for themselves. The populist character of this discourse states that they must be saved by a proxy, in this case a providential figure. The most seminal characteristic of this savior, for our purposes,

³⁵⁴ Zoltán, *Böszörmény*, p. 11

³⁵⁵ Ibid., “Fogalom es hatalom”, p.9

³⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 9-12

beside all of his positive traits, is that he is also of the people³⁵⁷. This is consistent with what Albertazzi and McDonnell call the traits of leadership within populist “ideology” or discourse³⁵⁸, or we contend with Laclau’s definition, the empty signifier theory³⁵⁹. The main characteristics isolated by Albertazzi and McDonnell can also be found with Böszörmény’s and indeed, all of the above and below Hungarian fascist discourses on the people:

1. (a) the government and democracy, which should reflect the will of the people, have been occupied, distorted and exploited by corrupt elites;
- (b) the elites and ‘others’ (i.e. not of ‘the people’) are to blame for the current undesirable situation in which the people find themselves;
- (c) the people must be given back their voice and power through the populist leader and party. This view is based on a fundamental conception of the people as both homogeneous and virtuous.
2. Populists therefore invoke a sense of crisis and the idea that ‘soon it will be too late’³⁶⁰.
3. (1) The people are one and are inherently ‘good’.
- (2) *The people are sovereign.*
- (3) The people’s culture and way of life are of paramount value.
- (4) The leader and party/movement are one with the people.

Thusly, the people of Hungary were in a terrible state, often characterized with the adjective “rongyos³⁶¹” – ragged and “bilincsel³⁶²” – chained. The state of emergency is well

³⁵⁷ Ibid., „Történelem”, p. 27

³⁵⁸ Albertazzi and McDonnell, *Twenty-First Century Populism*, 2007.

³⁵⁹ Laclau, *On Populist Reason*.

³⁶⁰ F Panizza, *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, Phronesis (London) (Verso, 2005).

described by poems such as “Útött a végóra³⁶³” (The end hour has struck) and others. The new regime of Böszörmény would have imposed a number of concrete measures, in order to impose their special brand of social justice. The 20-point party program included: universal suffrage³⁶⁴ (point 3, in an attempt to legitimize popular support for their power), equal rights for all, including right to public education and equal rights to public jobs (point 4³⁶⁵), a reinterpretation of citizenship to exclude Jews (point 5), a welfare state (point 6), the imposition for all citizens of the obligation of productive labor (point 7), punishment for war profiteers (9), confiscation of illicit fortunes (10), state loans for workers and smallholders (11), all profits not coming out of work to be confiscated, and work opportunity to be provided by the state for all (12), confiscation, nationalization and redistribution of all landed estates over 500 holds (13), heavy punishments for all those who act against the common good (14), small industries and businesses to be promoted, large stores and industrial estates to be nationalized (15-16), social protection for women, mothers and youth, in their demographic role³⁶⁶. We may observe that a great majority of the demands of the Scythe Cross Party were social in nature or were a mixture of populism and ultra-nationalism. The discourse of the party was aimed at robbing the people, which it so espoused, of agency, in favor of charismatic authority and state intervention. It imagined that it could rid society of the perceived crisis in a fail swoop, by getting rid of the “rotten elites” and establishing firm rule, based on a direct rapport between leader and people. The people were almost wholly equal with the rural population³⁶⁷, in a direct opposition to the seat of power,

³⁶¹ Zoltán, *Böszörmény.*, p. 14-15

³⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 14-15

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 16

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, “Elég volt!”, p. 39

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p 40

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-45

³⁶⁷ Böszörmény Zoltán, *Vérem és Oltárom* (Budapest: Fáklya, n.d.), “Temetkezel kicsiny ország”, p. 10, “Márciusi Ének”, p. 33, “Magyar sors”, p.41

usually found in the capital city³⁶⁸. This ultimately failed political project had an important contribution to Hungarian fascist ideology in the interwar period: it pushed the boundaries of populism and nationalism with its wild, exacerbated, anti-Semitic discourse.

The development of a populist discourse

For many years, Hungarian fascism lacked a coherent social program or theory on dealing with the ailments of society, preferring instead to concentrate on a mixture of loud populist slogans, anti-Semitism, anti-capitalism, and charismatic authority (or at least trying to establish it, without much success). This led the parties down a blind alley, as they did not achieve success in the regional, or the national elections. The weak results were partly due to the power structures of the Horthy regime and the ineptitude of the politicians themselves, but the main reason was their disconnectedness to their supposed voter base. Would-be fascist leaders such as Festetics Sándor or Pálffy Fidel wanted to emulate the results of the German National Socialist party without a firm grasp of what lied at the core of fascist ideology. They wanted a mass party without the masses.

Indicative of this situation is Festetics Sándor's Hungarian National Socialist Party and its publicistic activity between 1933 and 1936. Its importance lies in its role as a laboratory of ideas, both adapted and developed internally, in an attempt to connect the ambitions of the party leadership with the needs of the average Hungarian voter. A typical early manifestation of this is an article, written by Pálffy Fidel, who was at that moment an ally of Festetics, entitled "National Socialist Land Policy³⁶⁹". The article attacks what it perceives to be one of the basic inequalities of the capitalist system, which is that the vast majority of the populace do not possess enough capital to invest and improve their lot in life (here he refers especially to the peasantry). This has

³⁶⁸ Rogger and Weber, *The European Right: A Historical Profile*.

³⁶⁹ Pálffy, "Nemzeti Szocialista Földbirtokpolitika."

negative effects not only on the overall fate of the nation and the Hungarian race, Pálffy wrote, but also on the efficiency of production and consumption within society. He identified a huge chasm that existed between the centralization of consumption and development within the few large urban centers and the countryside, which was on the whole, underdeveloped and backward. The goal of national socialist land policy was to raise the quality of life in the rural areas and balance out the urban-rural divide. Pálffy argued, that if this process was not stopped, the dichotomy between the two would increase even further, and, quoting Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg's words, the "laissez-faire" attitude of capitalism would relegate the peasantry to a nigh-medieval state³⁷⁰. The urban-rural antithesis dominates Pálffy's discourse, with the latter having almost absolute positive qualities, while the former being synonymous with artificiality, loose morals and negative cosmopolitanism. He stated that the growth of industry of the cities must be cut back, as it grew inorganically at the cost of the "natural" country, to the benefit of "the urban proletariat and agents of mixed race". He offered the solution of repopulating the downtrodden rural areas with the surplus urban workers, who would then "take roots" in the Hungarian land, being inspired by "faith in God and the Fatherland". This concept was a mainstay of interwar National Socialism in Germany, put forward by men such as Walter Darré, the Artaman League and developed into the concept of *Blut und Boden*³⁷¹. It pushed the idea that the cities were somehow polluted by the taint of modernity and the villages were the source of pure Germanity (or in Pálffy's case, Hungarian-ness). As Pálffy had already quoted Alfred Rosenberg in his article, it is safe to say that the source of inspiration for this idea of a return to the countryside was German Nazi ideology.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Georg L Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich*, George L. Mosse Series (University of Wisconsin Press, 2003)., p. 134

The other solution the author offered for the betterment of the situation of the Hungarian peasant concerned the concept of the large estate. In this, Pálffy was very careful in his choice of words. While stating from the outset that some of the large landowners had become capitalist exploiters of the peasants, chasing material gain, he nevertheless appealed to their Hungarian nationalism. Among other things, he was very careful to introduce new concepts because of two reasons: the publication he was writing in was owned by a large landowner-turned fascist politician, Festetics Sándor; secondly, he too was a scion of aristocracy, born and raised in the countryside estate of Erdőd, a count who had formerly owned 700 holds³⁷² (he was ruined in the Great Depression of 1929). Nonetheless, he stated that the great manors must be ready to make some sacrifice for the common good, for the national interest. Here we see introduced the seed of the interests of the community having primacy before those of the individual. How much sacrifice, Pálffy carefully sidestepped, would be “determined by the needs of the community”. In any case, one had to make the choice between “the dictatorship of national common interest and international gold³⁷³”. In the end, Pálffy was ambivalent, and careful not to be too direct in attacking the privileged. Still, his writings are highly important, as they started to inoculate the concept of a total predominance of the national community in economic and social matters, which would be imposed in a dictatorial manner. In later years, this idea would become more and more manifest and outspoken.

One of its less-than typical publications on the subject is party member Csányi Antal’s 1935 pamphlet, entitled “*The vanquishing of the misery and unemployment born by liberal-capitalism, based on a national socialist program*” (*A liberálkapitalizmus szülte munkanélüliség*

³⁷² The hold is the Hungarian version of a French unit of measure, also called the Arpent. One hold is approximately 58.471 m or 0,5755 hectares

³⁷³ Pálffy, “Nemzeti Szocialista Földbirtokpolitika.”

és nyomor leküzdésének elgondolása a nemzeti szocialista program alapján)³⁷⁴. This convoluted title lead to a very simplistic, even vulgar understanding of even the most basic tenets of economy and social relations. The preamble announced that the starving millions of the people were the true source and legitimate holders of political power. This “great mass of the people” had to come into its own, and have its role reaffirmed³⁷⁵. The booklet starts of in the already established manner, decrying the decrepit state of the people, especially the rural population; it quickly states that class war is not the solution for the country’s economic problems, though, coming to the unsurprising conclusion that only National Socialism may provide the answer. This is of course due to its meta-class attitude, and the unique characteristic of the ideology to represent the interests of all classes and categories within the national community. We may observe the simplistic, albeit indicative understanding of the concept of society within this discourse, which is synonymous and equal to the concept of the nation. Its other trait is that it is basically interpreted as a solid bloc, formed out of individuals who have one single trait, which is important to the author: their ethnicity. It is therefore not hard for Csanyi to arrive at the conclusion (and unsurprising for the reader) that the interests of the individual must be sacrificed for the good of the many (the national community)³⁷⁶.

This primacy of the community even pervades his understanding of the concept of socialism itself. He explains socialism as being the ideology based on the principle of community interests before individual interests. Modern socialism (as opposed to class-based Marxian socialism, for example), such as National Socialism, he states, is dedicated to achieving a larger “material and moral” liberty for the individual, by expanding and reforming the concept

³⁷⁴ MOL, “P 1351 -Nyilaskeresztes Párt 1933-1945.”

³⁷⁵ Ibid., p .1

³⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 4

of ownership. He labels fascist “socialism” as dynamic, and organic. The revolutionary transformation that Festetics’ pamphleteer proposed was closing toward the totalitarian example provided by German Nazis. It proposed to end all inequalities between classes, and annul differences between individuals. Csányi firmly stated that his party was upheld the principle of private property (a necessary demarcation made vis-à-vis social-democracy and communism), but in practice he wanted to control and limit the concept. He wrote that individuals must not be allowed to possess too much, as this would upset the overall interests of the majority, the community³⁷⁷. Interestingly, he also makes the argument that this would be anti-Christian³⁷⁸.

The manifesto continues to some length, detailing the indebtedness and poor contemporary state of the national community and its underprivileged classes (which make up the mass of the people), but interestingly is very aloof about offering answers. This is typical of Hungarian and in general, European fascist ideology, which was not concerned with economy, but with a spiritual rebirth and awakening of the nation. The Festetics party booklet makes no exception, taking a quick leap toward these issues. It identified and isolated the source of the crisis as a problem in the system of values of liberal capitalism; the solution advanced was a shift in the morals of society, away from the material and toward the spiritual³⁷⁹. Also, Csányi fell upon the solution of making work obligatory for all members of society. This was due to an original apprehension of the very concept of work. By work, he understood only productive work, which left something concrete behind it, unequivocally affirming: “only work produces”. This is one of the first iterations of a very important stereotype, which became, in the following years, a mainstay of Hungarian fascist thought: the idea that work equals production, concrete

³⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 5

³⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 5

³⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 9

things such as foodstuff, industrial products, intellectual products such as books and so forth. Bureaucracy and other liberal professions, such as trade and commerce especially, were considered negative and a surplus within society, a refuge of the parasites of society. After all, what need did a harmonious national community have for lawyers? Or businessmen or traders? The state would have taken over trading at the international level (as with Szálasi, later). In this sense, Csányi proposed that the state intervene and act in its redistributive capacity, giving out land to the peasantry. Other measures included the lowering and simplification of taxation (especially toward the peasantry), the nationalization of mines, large industry, imports and exports and even a state monopoly in banking. Private property was to be controlled and restricted, according to his plan. In this way, Csányi hoped to break capitalism in Hungary and introduce a planned economy, which would act in a redistributive manner with the produced goods³⁸⁰. This vulgar scheme for a welfare state was to be taken up and developed further by more able fascist politicians, such as Szálasi Ferenc.

Land reform

We have already seen that one of the main themes of interwar fascist discourses in Hungary was the improvement of the standard of living for who they perceived to be the majority population, the peasantry. Perhaps none were as committed and eloquent in their espousal of this cause than the economist Matolcsy Mátyás. His first major work dedicated to the topic appeared in 1935, entitled *The Plan for the New Land Reform (Az új földreform munkaterve*³⁸¹). Matolcsy's main motivation in his political career is announced in this book: he planned to better the fate of the smallholder peasants in Hungary through a radical economic

³⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 10-11

³⁸¹ Matolcsy, *Az új Földreform Munkaterve: Szekfű Gyula Előszavával.*

reform of the country. In fact, his next work, *Harcom a földért* (My war for land³⁸²), compiled his political and publicistic crusade for land reform which documented his turn toward the far right. Matolcsy's case is probably one of the most fascinating among the careers of Hungarian fascist politicians, as his first work is a curious mix of scientific study and political manifesto. He grounds his arguments quite solidly with a series of charts, graphs, extrapolations, mathematical calculations and statistical survey, which he either undertook himself or extrapolated from existing academic studies. He also utilized up-to-date secondary academic literature in several foreign languages, coming from prestigious sources as the Oxford University Press and The United States Department of Agriculture³⁸³ and German scientist such as A.H. Hollman and J. Aereboe³⁸⁴. Matolcsy starts off the book by presenting a number of statistics concerning the unequal distribution of land vis-à-vis the number of people living in rural areas. He correctly identifies that the number of small holdings was not proportionate to the number of peasants living in the country, and in fact, a large majority of peasants was still beholden to either large landed estates (where they worked as wage earning field workers)³⁸⁵ or on rented estates, which showed even less of an understanding toward the needs of the worker, as they were as for-profit businesses³⁸⁶. This led to a largely negative phenomenon in Hungarian land distribution in Hungary, where two forms of estates became dominant: the dwarf estate and the large landed plantation³⁸⁷. This also meant a huge imbalance in the social makeup in the country, in where the most amount of land (and wealth) was owned by the most wealthy minority, whereas the majority owned the least amount of property. Notwithstanding his later fascist turn, Matolcsy

³⁸² Mátyás Matolcsy, *Harcom a Földért*.

³⁸³ Matolcsy, *Az új Földreform Munkaterve: Szekfű Gyula Előszavával.*, p. 100-101

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18-19

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19

had provided sound evidence and painted a fairly realistic depiction of reality in interwar Hungary. Matolcsy saw the landed aristocracy, the Church (mostly Catholic) and the Jewish renter as the most important bulwarks of Hungarian backwardness. His anti-semitism is prevalent even in this very first major work, as he presents partial statistics on how many renters are Jews. He himself admits that there was not much satisfactory data gathered at the time to base this assumption on, but concluded on the cursory evidence he did have that “the phenomenon is well-known³⁸⁸”. This dire economic situation had severe consequences on the population and its growth spurt (more on this on the sub-chapter dedicated to demography, see below). It was also a phenomenon which negatively affected the economic output of the country; Matolcsy used complicated statistics (based on the works of German economist Hollmann) to prove the point that small holdings and medium-sized farms produce more and more efficiently than large estates, where the resources are basically often wasted³⁸⁹. This meant that less resources could be exported, and less capital generated for a capital-poor country such as Hungary³⁹⁰. While this contradicts the general economic wisdom on the subject, which clearly favors larger estates, it is important to see that even at this early stage, Matolcsy’s political credo influenced his scientific credibility. He concluded that a swift program of reforms was needed to reformat the Hungarian economy and rescue society. These included curtailing the fee tail, which was a form of trust still existing in Hungary at the time, which established by deed or settlement which restricted the sale or inheritance of an estate in real property and prevented the property from being sold, devised by will, or otherwise alienated by the tenant-in-possession, and instead causing it to pass automatically by operation of law to an heir pre-determined by the settlement

³⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 24-25

³⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 46-50

³⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 51

deed³⁹¹. Secondly, he proposed the modification of the size of landed estates, in favor of small- and mid-sized estates, given out through a land reform similar to those enacted in neighboring Romania with the Constitution of 1923³⁹². This would be backed up by a program of inner re-settlement, in order to rearrange and displace the rural unemployed. Modernization (mechanization, the extension of the infrastructure of roads etc.) and co-operatization of the farms were also part of his plan. The Hungarian economist also wanted to secure the financial backing of the farms, asking advantageous government loans to be accorded to them and give them some sort of social security system. At this point, however, Matolcsy was still very careful about the edge of his demands, so he envisioned a progressive adoption of his system, over a few decades, favoring evolution over revolution³⁹³. His attitude would quickly radicalize over the next few years, as his attempts in parliament to get his message across met with stern opposition from the elite³⁹⁴.

Szálasi, between fascist corporatism and “the Work-State”

Perhaps the most influential contribution to the imagining of the future fascist society was made by the leader of the Arrow Cross Party, Ferenc Szálasi. The focus of his few works fell upon the solving of the country’s economic and social problems, with the ultimate goal of achieving a stable internal situation which would ensure that Hungary could become a player on the international scene. To this end, Szálasi set up a rough scheme by which society was to be restructured, which he dubbed “the national socialist/ Hungarist work state”. The blueprint for

³⁹¹ Ibid., p. 70-71

³⁹² Ibid., p. 79-81, p. 100-101

³⁹³ Ibid., p. 223-224

³⁹⁴ Mátyás, *Harc a Földért*.

this future society was dominated by two main themes: military rigor and discipline, on the one hand, and on the other, clear-cut, utilitarian categories for the social classes of Hungary. Deceivingly simple, his outline of Hungarian society was, however fraught with illogical constructions and dominated by a (perhaps willing) lack of detail. I theorize that this was ultimately its main appeal as well, for each social category could perceive that it defended their interests and empowered it. Szálasi's achievement was based on the success by which he transmitted two messages: that he would bring about peace between the classes, binding them into a single, organic unit of "the people", and secondly, that his rule would discipline society, gearing it toward a single national goal. Thereby, society would be "reborn" unto new. Of course, these achievements would come at a price: getting rid of the present economic and social system and the enemies of the nation, the Jews.

The main characteristic that set Szálasi's (and in general, fascist) ideology apart from the rest of his far-right fellow travellers (of which there were many: Imrédy being the most significant) was the revolutionary reimagining of society. It would be radically reconfigured into a system of closed castes, all equal toward one another, albeit fulfilling different roles, and all subservient to the leader. Initially, however, Szálasi attempted to tackle the problems ailing society by fixing the country's broken economic and political system. In his premiere published work, entitled *A Magyar Állam Felépítésének Terve (The Plan for the Rebuilding of the Hungarian State)*, he attempted to set up a series of guidelines to do just that. From the outset, we may observe that he set out from a highly state-centered starting point. This is probably due to his past as a military officer, who was taught to think in terms of states and nations, always in the macro. His goal was to fix the state with the ultimate goal of raising the level of the same state. Therefore it is not surprising that he gave the state all of the agency in achieving these

goals, in a sort of top-down revolution. The first step toward ameliorating the present situation, Szálasi thought, was to drop the domestic and international the country had incurred as a consequence of the war³⁹⁵. Hungary would refuse to pay war reparations and stop the pay for the rates of loans taken out after the First World War. All debts would be taken on by the state, and paid out at a rate calculated by Szálasi. Foreign debts would be reimbursed up to 20% of their value, and Hungary would not pay interest for the last decade of rates. How the country would achieve this feat is not explained by the author, of course. Production would be completely transformed within the country as well through a broad series of nationalizations of private enterprises. Firstly, exports would be expropriated by the state, which would take 50% (minus 2% to be given to intermediaries) of the profits of the enterprise and give the other half to the concerns which supplied the products³⁹⁶. The state would nationalize all strategic assets, such as communications, transport³⁹⁷, agriculture³⁹⁸, the insurance and financial sector³⁹⁹, the stock market would function under strict state supervision⁴⁰⁰. The state would act as the primary of economy, and all aspects of production would be supervised by it; Szálasi had no qualms about identifying his system as planned economy. The planning would be parceled up into three-year plans, the first of which was the most important, as the period of “átállítás” (remaking, retooling). The inspiration for this was probably both Soviet planned economy but also the policies of Fascist Italy. The final goal was the realization of autarky.

Szálasi, as his predecessors before him gave an inordinate amount of value to farming. He identified Hungary as a par excellence agricultural state and a peasant nation, and wished to

³⁹⁵ Szálasi, *A Magyar Állam Felépítésének Terve.*, p. 14-15

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27

devote the energies of the country toward an efficient production in this area. Therefore, in his book he advanced the idea of rationalization and modernization of agricultural production. Also, he wished that it be mechanized and industrialized, somewhat clashing with his idea of land redistribution. He favored an industrial, machine-farmed production of foodstuffs even at cost of the “until now artificially-favored industrial sector⁴⁰¹”. He wished to free the smallholders of crippling debt and declared that the state act to repossess land and redistribute it into holdings up to 50 holds to the unemployed or landless. This would be paired by a vast plan of internal re-colonization of the country, which would repopulate the land and get the agricultural production going. He also planned to loosen the tax rate to 2% for properties under 200 holds and to 3% for farms between 200 and 500 holds⁴⁰².

Concerning the urban working class, his opinions were varied, offering both punishments and concessions. Szálasi posited that work was both a fundamental right, and a basic obligation of any citizen⁴⁰³. Thus, the state was obligated to provide the means of minimal sustainment to all the members of the nation. On the other hand, strikes would be outlawed, under severe penalty, under Szálasi’s plan. However, he bound both the worker and the owners of industry to the state. He proposed the creation of state-run “Work tribunals” in which both the workers and the industrialists would be represented in equal numbers. They would reach compromises through the mediation of the state, and in this way, conflicts would be avoided⁴⁰⁴. Among his other social measures he proposed a fixing of the rate of many salaries, rent rates, social benefits for mothers and others, pensions, raising them (in theory, at least) significantly and unifying their rates. Szálasi also proposed a number of measures, which if enacted, would discourage private

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., p. 18-19

⁴⁰² Ibid., p. 19

⁴⁰³ Ibid., p. 27

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 28

enterprise. He personally disliked capitalism, and the profit-based economy, but was not opposed to the private enterprise and to the concept of private property in principle. He wanted to curtail private economic initiatives and to control them out of a fear that they would lead to profiteering⁴⁰⁵. Therefore, he set the rates for profit for producers between 10-12% and for intermediaries at 2-4%. This, in practice, would probably have ruined private enterprise for all but the largest industrial and commercial concerns. In the case of the last two measures mentioned, at least, Szálasi seemed to fit exactly in the Communist scheme of interpretation, which deemed it a reactionary agent of capitalism.

Nevertheless, Szálasi's social engineering evolved rapidly as he became more and more exposed to the practice of politics. By 1937, he became so aware of the situation of the urban working class that he named his first political newspaper the "*Új Magyar Munkás*" (*The New Hungarian Worker*). The journalistic endeavor did not meet with much success, as the newspaper was promptly banned due to its violent anti-Semitic rhetoric after only one issue, but it made its mark by announcing Szálasi's views on the social question to the public. In a series of articles entitled "Plow" "Hammer" "Sword" and "Pen", he espoused his vision of a Hungarian society, which was exploited by "Jews and taxes"⁴⁰⁶. He saw the workers and peasants of Hungary being subjugated by the elite (represented by the Jews), and decried their current pitiful condition. He promised in the articles to forge the peasantry, working class, the military and the intellectuals into political soldiers (the social-national), who would defeat the Jewish chimera and revolutionize Hungary⁴⁰⁷.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 27

⁴⁰⁶ Ferenc Szálasi, "*Új Magyar Munkás*" (Budapest, 1937), p. 2-3

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

The most concrete expression of Szálasi's views on the structuring of society were expressed in his seminal pamphlet "Út és Cél" (Way and Goal), which appeared in 1936. His opinions had crystallized by this time, and he chose to synthesize them in the form of a few broad directives, which he subsequently repeated in a dogmatic manner until his death. One of the most important aspects of his discourse on the concept of society was that from the outset he connected the socio-economic problems with the Jewish question. This opinion, absent from his previous work, had stabilized Szálasi firmly in the world of the Hungarian far right. He stated that the one could not be separated from the other, the two being intertwined⁴⁰⁸; at this point, he subscribed to the conspiracy theory of Jews being behind the economic, social and political ruin of his country. He proposed ridding the country of the "Jewish influence", by which he understood large-scale capitalism and materialism. Szálasi's understanding of economy was deficient, and he gave the matter little importance in his ideology, declaring that material was a tool, not a goal⁴⁰⁹. He sought a spiritual rebirth of his people in the spirit of nationalism. He declared the totality of the nation to be an organic being, which would have received legal personality in his future plans. The nation and its people were the true owners of the prerogatives, which they willingly gave up, in a solitary act of confidence, to the national-socialist state⁴¹⁰. In this way, fascism was legitimized directly from the people. The Nation (with a capital N) was imagined by Szálasi as a total entity, encompassing all aspects of state and society. In the spirit of this holist approach, he concluded that all propriety derived from the nation itself, and consequently, everything belonged to the nation, the property rights of which were unitary and indivisible. In theory, therefore Szálasi refused the concept of private property. Private citizens or "biological" (*természetes*) members of the nation could become owners of a

⁴⁰⁸ Szálasi, *Út és Cél.*, p. 21

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23

part of the national property. It is also suggested, if one reads between the lines, that they would only be temporary caretakers or holders of these properties, which upon their death would default back to the nation. The right to hold property would be conditioned to certain obligations toward the nation and state (at this point Szálasi is sufficiently vague to which he understands, as he often confuses the two terms), which would be reciprocal: the state also had certain obligations toward the individual.

While the author firmly stated that material concerns were secondary, and were to be viewed as a tool, not the main motivator, he gave them sufficient importance. Szálasi pointed out that the only way to inspire the members of the nation, the people as individuals to become national socialist was through the policies of “socialist nationalism⁴¹¹”. In practice, this meant the raising of the living standards of the majority of the population, and assuring that their materials needs were met. It also meant a great deal of uniformization of social standards and leveling of the differences between social classes. The goal was building a “community of faith... of working Hungarians...which thinks socially in all aspects of life and is filled with socialist content in all its aspects”. Szálasi was opening the door for the masses to enter history, but under his strict fascist supervision. This “social-national” as he called the state of awareness within his fascist state (i.e. the indoctrination of the people with nationalism and his brand of socialism, heavily based on voluntarism, the day-to-day practice of nationalism and awareness toward social issues), was based on “the ethics of work”, which had two major components: the right and the obligation to work for all⁴¹². Szálasi’s nation would be a proletarian one, with little regard for difference or privileges. Nevertheless, he refused the association with social democracy and Marxism, which he called “the materialism of the most base instincts”. He

⁴¹¹ Ibid., p. 23

⁴¹² Ibid., p. 23

repudiated the concept of historical materialism as materialism born out of itself, without any higher purpose or goal. We may observe the idea of “liquid modernity⁴¹³” acting as a motor of Szálasi’s perception of reality. He offered his private solution to the problem of lack of meaning, endowing the mass with the idea of extreme nationalism. His new national community must be renewed on a daily basis by a practice of mutual help, inspired by nationalism and selflessness, opposed to the concept of ego⁴¹⁴. “Healthy” egoism could only exist and be a character trait of one person: the nation, but there it was total and took precedence before all else. Thusly, he hoped to create a nation composed of “new Hungarians”, novel individuals with little sense of self, totally integrated and subservient to the concept of the nation, in the practice of which they participated voluntarily, their base instincts of egoism being suppressed by a program of material well-being. The influence of German Nazism and Italian Fascism is evident, especially if we consider the date at which the Hungarian fascist politician was writing his work.

Szálasi worked out a scheme into which society was to be ordered, if he was ever going to come into power, a blueprint by which the relationship between existing social classes would have been rearranged, new social classes would be created and some of the old ones eliminated completely. He would deviate very little from this outline in the coming years, holding fast to it until his death in 1945, and it formed an important part of his and his party’s discourse. The only notable change is its marked radicalization, which occurred in the years of the war: the value of the concept of work and order became more and more central.

The most important, and one can say, central element of the future social order, according to Szálasi (and as we have seen, generally in Hungarian fascist ideology) is peasantry. The

⁴¹³ Beilharz and Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*.

⁴¹⁴ Szálasi, *Út és Cél*, p. 24

Hungarian fascist leader argued that the peasant was the “buttress (tartó) of the nation”. He stated that the peasantry was the repository of all the positive qualities of the nation, and the social category which held onto national traditions and preserved its ethnic characteristics the most⁴¹⁵. Therefore, the goal of the future national socialist regime was the realization of a “peasant state⁴¹⁶”. By this, he meant that the main goal was the betterment of the quality of life and wealth of the peasantry, and that the state would be based around agricultural production. The dichotomy between the values of the village, i.e. a traditional way of life, mired in customs vis-à-vis the value system of the city, which represented modernity and the breakup of traditions and the loss of ethnic identity is very much present in the author’s passages. Szálasi presents the peasant as fulfilling the role of a historical loser: he is forever doomed to sacrifice and to give, for the sake of the nation. The short fresco he paints of the past role of the peasantry borrows a lot of its themes from Biblical passages: the social class sacrifices itself on the altar of the nation, doomed to be exploited by less-virtuous social categories and ethnic others. This is due to the sobriety and deep moral quality, the pride of peasantry, which does not shrug away its responsibilities. Szálasi identified a deep crisis of the class, which was on the cusp of being destroyed due to the cumulative action of Jews (representing capitalism and exploitation) and the state, which suffocated it with taxes⁴¹⁷. The author wanted to facilitate a rebirth of the peasantry, a reaffirmation of the class which he referred to as “agricultural proletariat”; the palingenetic motif of suffering, sacrifice and renewal is lifted from Christian Gospels. Szálasi proposed a set of solutions for achieving the assertion of the peasantry to primacy. The first was the fusing together of the class into a single, homogenous unit. Secondly, Szálasi wanted to secure its

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., p. 34

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., p.34

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., p.35

economic existence at the cost of the large landed estates, and he stated this outright⁴¹⁸. He imagined his peasantry as a caste of smallholders, producing in family units⁴¹⁹. This meant that the leader of the Arrow Cross did not have any room in his future conception of society for the aristocracy or other large landowners (except for the state), and he wanted to eliminate all hereditary privileges. In this sense, his scheme was quite revolutionary, for he wanted a complete break with Hungary's baroque social system, and he was not shy about engaging the state in social engineering to achieve his goals. He wanted the smallholding system in order to bind (*beleágyazni*) the peasant to the land⁴²⁰; this was the reaffirmation of the mythic bond between the peasant and the earth which has appeared in fascist discourses in Hungary since the early 1930's. Its origins are in 19th century romanticism, which gave the peasantry a bucolic-nationalist interpretation (present in Hungary and throughout Europe; important examples in Russia and Germany). This was later utilized in Germany by National Socialist thinkers such as Walter Darré to form the concept of *Blut und Boden* (*Blood and Soil*), an important mainstay of Nazi ideology⁴²¹. It is safe to assume that Szálasi was well informed of Blut und Boden, and was influenced by it, as well as by the resurgence of interest toward peasantry in his native country. This would form an unbreakable bond between the peasant and the soil he was toiling on, thwarting all attempts of "imperialism" both "internal and external"⁴²².

Further proof toward the revolutionary nature of Szálasi's structure of society is afforded by the role he gave to the working class. He recognized the rapid emergence of this social category, and assigned it a secondary, although it can be argued, in some ways, even more important role in society. The working class and workers, Szálasi stated, were "the builders of

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., p 36

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., p 36

⁴²⁰ Ibid., p. 36

⁴²¹ B M Lane and L J Rupp, *Nazi Ideology Before 1933: A Documentation* (Manchester University Press, 1978).

⁴²² Szálasi, *Út és Cél.*, p. 36

the nation (*nemzetépítő*)”. From the outset, we have to recognize the basic difference between this and the prior role, of the peasantry. While the latter is static, a repository and keeper of national values, the former is dynamic and active. The peasantry is therefore “doomed” to exist, while the working class is given agency. The source of this could be Marxist theory, which deemed the peasantry reactionary and also gave a central role to the proletariat. We certainly know that Szálasi read and had been influenced by Marx, according to his own declaration and journal⁴²³, and this caricature of Marxism is certainly typical for his level of understanding and interpretation. In any case, the difference between the two is striking. Szálasi also assigned different characteristics to the workers, mainly related to their awareness and mentality. While he connected the peasantry to the concept of nature, he associated the working class to the concept of ideology. Ideology was a tool which could be utilized to win over the support and control the workers: it would work to inspire and guide them⁴²⁴. This was due, wrote Szálasi, to the different apprehension of “socialism” that the two classes had: the peasantry was, by its nature, selfish and concerned only with the interests of its own class, while the proletariat was holistic, seeing the interests of its own class as related to the position of other social classes. Its solution had traditionally been the reformatting of the entire social system in its own favor; this is why it was so susceptible to the argument of Marxian socialism and communism⁴²⁵. What is interesting is that Szálasi again gave the proletariat an active role, doubling its importance, and underlining its very nature as a dynamic factor in society, as he perceived it. Not only did the workers possess a keen political awareness, they would, in his words “convert wholesale” to the cause of a political movement, once they had been sufficiently convinced of its value. This could be achieved by the

⁴²³ Sipos Peter,...

⁴²⁴ Ibid., p. 37

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 38

triad of ideology, welfare and belief in God (*Istenhit*⁴²⁶). The working class also had the distinct advantage of forming a coherent unit (it was not cleft in pieces, as the peasantry), available for political mobilization, Szálasi opined. We may conclude from these passages that the Arrow Cross politician perceived the proletariat as a truly revolutionary role, in two important ways. Firstly, it could carry through a political revolution, i.e. serve in the road to power. The lessons of the 1919 Communist Revolution had not been forgotten by the former army major. Secondly, the workers would have an active part in Szálasi's designs of social engineering and in rebuilding the new Hungary (this is what is understood under the term "builders of the nation"). So, while Szálasi talks about a future agrarian state, there is an inherent tension in his writings between it and the active role he assigned to the working class. In his later articles, and in the Arrow Cross press, books and pamphlets, the term "Work-State" (*Munkaállam*) would be coined. This further contributed to the essentially irrational nature of Szálasi's thought and Hungarian fascist ideology in general, which preferred to utilize vagueness, slogans, and charisma in order to garner mass support from varying social categories.

For all his bluster of raising the role of underprivileged social classes and bringing them to the fore of politics, Szálasi's ideology did not escape traditional hegemonic constructions. This can be deduced from the importance he gave to the next social class in his blueprint for a future society: the intelligentsia (or intellectuals, *értelmiség* in Hungarian). He stated that the intellectuals were fated to be the leaders and directors of the nation. They would fill various roles, from providing inspiration and teaching to the other classes, to the most important, as a pool from which the national elite, the political leadership could be recruited. It is interesting to

⁴²⁶ Ibid., p. 40

note the word which Szálasi used for this elite, *nemzetvezérkar*⁴²⁷, which can roughly be translated into national-general staff. This is indicative of the fascist leader's perception of reality, as military lingo still informed his political vocabulary: he understood that organization of society must be modeled on martial models, as if the whole of the nation was a barrack. This sort of "barrack mentality" was also indicative of German Nazism, as the experiences of the World War influenced the development of its ideology⁴²⁸. In any case, the triad of peasants as "agricultural proletariat", the working class as a revolutionary class and the intellectuals as a vanguard of political leaders bears an uncanny similarity to Leninism. Szálasi also worked with a novel conception of intellectuals: he rejected the middle class almost entirely as a concept, and declared that intellectuals come from all strata, that the working class and peasantry also have their own contributions to the intellectual class. If we skip ahead, and see that Szálasi's scheme only included peasants, workers, intellectuals, women and youth, we may surmise that intellectuals, and by extension, leaders could only come from the proletariat and the peasantry, as the fascist leader did not recognize other classes. He continued his text by berating the notion of a bureaucracy, as stale and dry. Instead, he proposed a political class which would be inspired spiritually and in constant nationalist fervor. The ideas of sacrifice inherited from the peasantry and voluntarist revolutionary fervor would replace the value-system of the previous political class, which was rooted in middle-class values. Szálasi characterized the middle class as "spineless, indolent, having a disdain toward the land and recoiling from the soil, uninterested in the...manifestations of national life, soulless and mechanical, non-spiritual and lacking belief, morally decadent and materialistic⁴²⁹", and inherently anti-national. The middle class itself was a

⁴²⁷ Ibid., p. 41

⁴²⁸ Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (OUP Oxford, 2001), <https://books.google.ro/books?id=jCiGWtxyQv0C>.

⁴²⁹ Szálasi, *Út és Cél*, p. 42

reactionary class, which should be purged and eliminated in the future. Szálasi broke the social category down into three main components, according to their value for the cause of fascism. The first was composed of traitors, who were guilty of all the sins of society; they were infected with Jewish blood and Jewish ideas. They formed the upper crust of the middle class, and were the greatest adversaries of Hungarism; Szálasi besmirched them with the term “moral and material parasites of the nation”. The second category were those who were apathetic due to their lack of possibility to act, caught in the web spun by those in power; they formed the lowed middle class, bureaucrats and functionaries, underlings of those in the power structure’s upper tiers. Some of them could be rescued for the movement. The last were the elite of the middle class: those intellectuals with the ability and willingness to act, and open to the fascist message. They would, according to Szálasi, form the vanguard of the party and the future elite of the nation. These intellectuals were organically linked to their peasant roots, were unspoiled by Jewish propaganda, and were utterly dedicated to the national cause⁴³⁰. They also exhibited “racially pure characteristics” (*faji vonások*). In conclusion, Szálasi considered almost all of his contemporary political elite to be unusable for the future, with small exceptions, wanting to scrap not only their social class, but also the entire social structure upon which they had based their power. It is in these details that Szálasi’s ideology differed from other fellow travellers on the Hungarian far right: none of them had such an overarching plan of revolutionizing society. Most of them limited their discussion of social issues to underlining the importance of some sort of land reform, completed by anti-Semitic rants. Szálasi, on the other hand, declared the problem of society to be systemic, and in his simplistic way, wanted to reconfigure it by using revolutionary means of social engineering.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., p. 43

In order to see how his concept of society evolved, we may take a look at three of speeches he gave between the dates of 1942 and 1944 to representatives of workers, peasants and small businesses. In the speech addressed to a gathering of the workers, he historicized the relationship between workers and exploiters in an almost vulgar Marxist manner, saying that it was as old as time itself⁴³¹. The worker's very nature was an active struggle, which was in the present taken up by National Socialism, against the plutocratic capitalist regime. However, the nature of the fight had changed exactly due to the apparition of Hungarism, which gave the working class vital allies, in the peasantry and the intellectuals. This ensured that the fight would be won through a collaboration of the working social classes. Social concord and improved wages and material living standards would therefore be assured to all⁴³².

The speeches he gave to the leaders of peasants reaffirmed his propensity toward an agricultural state, with some industry, and underscored the role of the peasantry as a repository of the nation⁴³³. For him, the peasant was bound to the land and space he inhabited through thick strands of blood and history (here we see the influence of the both the theories of Blut und Boden, Hungarian populism and Nazi geopolitics). Therefore, he accorded a primacy of the peasant in his future state, and declared his movement as a crusade directed at freeing the peasant from his bonds. A free peasant would ensure the peace in the European Great-Space, the Arrow Cross leader claimed (although it is altogether unclear how). The goal was to settle the question of land reform, and realize the Hungarianization and peasant-isation of the national space. He promised to settle their debts, secure high standards of living to them, and give them property.

⁴³¹ Árpád Henney, *Szálasi Ferenc Alapvető Munkája És Három Beszéde* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Hungarista Mozgalom Kiadása, 1959)., p. 65

⁴³² Ibid., p. 66-67

⁴³³ Ibid.,p. 77

The speech given to intellectuals (or rather, party intellectuals) confirmed their role as the directing force of the political revolution. Szálasi highlighted their role as the avant-garde of the political movement, and therefore entered into a sort of redistribution of his own charisma. This speech may be considered as part of the phenomenon of “routinization of charisma” observed by Iordachi in the case of the Romanian Iron Guard. He declared that Hungarism must also create its own elite, to displace the elite of the old regime⁴³⁴. They would be sourced from peasants and workers; basically he repeated his prior arguments. This proves the sparse nature of Szálasi’s theoretical world, which even to himself solidified into a dogmatic repetition of his prior arguments by the latter part of his life.

Women

Women, as a social category, surprisingly received quite a bit of consideration in Hungarian fascist press and publications. However, all of this attention this did not amount to a progressive attitude or any sort of equal perception among sexes. There was no room for women, even within the movements, to receive an equal status to men. Fascism devoted a large amount of effort to convincing women to remain in traditional gender roles, and infuse them with the voluntary spirit of nationalism. Perhaps the best theoretical scheme to characterize this situation is R.W. Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity, which is basically the aggressive domination of masculinity over womanhood (practices that promote the dominant social position of men, and the subordinate social position of women)⁴³⁵. Fascist journal *Magyarság* devoted an entire column to “educating women” entitled “*Magyar asszony*” (*Hungarian woman*), between

⁴³⁴ Ibid., p. 102

⁴³⁵ R W Connell and R Connell, *Masculinities*: (New York: University of California Press, 2005).

1938 and 1944⁴³⁶. Women were seen as a highly important asset of the nation by Hungarian fascist ideology, and therefore afforded an important role within the discourse. The concept of womanhood was equated with that of motherhood and family, and was closely associated with the importance of demography.

Perhaps the first instances in which women appear were in the fascist press of Meskó Zoltán's *Pesti Újság*. In the columns, we have already seen how he and his journalists dedicated a number of articles to tackling modern womanhood, and the early signs of their emancipation, by attacking "the decadence" of bourgeois women⁴³⁷. These kinds of episodic articles were prevalent in the fascist press all throughout the interwar period.

Szálasi dedicated an entire section of his magnum opus, *The Way and the Goal*, to women and youth, whom he considered to be a vital part of society (more important than the other social classes he planned to wipe out). The woman, he stated "is the genius of the immortality of the nation⁴³⁸". He envisioned his future state as one in which the holiness and pureness of the family environment and the sanctity of motherhood would be guiding principles⁴³⁹. He saw women only as a vessel for the survival of the nation, and therefore violently refused any change in traditional gender roles; he wrote that any system which tries to modify the femininity of women, turning them into a hybrid man-woman, was unnatural and therefore brings about its own demise. Womanhood carried with it a number of moral mores, Szálasi thought, which were of course, traditional. He even thought the institution of civil marriage was a step in the wrong direction⁴⁴⁰. The new state would only allow divorces in two

⁴³⁶ Olivér, "Magyar Asszony."

⁴³⁷ Meskó Zoltán, "Szószék," *Pesti Újság* : Politikai Napilap, 1930.

⁴³⁸ Szálasi, *Út és Cél.*, p. 44

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 45

cases, both related to child-rearing: sterility (as the goal of marriage was the production of offspring for the nation) and race-mixing (the goal was to produce pure Hungarian children)⁴⁴¹. The role of women extended from motherhood into basic indoctrination of their children in the national-socialist creed, but the lion's share of the brainwashing would be enacted by the state. The mother's role was to be secondary even in the family, Szálasi opined, subservient to the "leader of the family", the father⁴⁴².

Csonka Kálmánné Balogh Ildikó's book, entitled "*Családvédelem a nemzeti szocialista munkaállamban*" (*Family Protection in the National Socialist Work-State*) was a landmark work, both for its theorization and codification of the fascist concept of femininity, and for the fact that it was the only book ever written by a woman published by any fascist movement in Hungary⁴⁴³. However, this seminal book did not translate into any groundbreaking shift in attitudes toward women within the Arrow Cross Party. It served as a guidebook for women in how to act and think according to national socialist tenets. The short booklet wastes no time and connects directly the concept of "family protection" with the concept of femininity. It is the main role of women within the fascist society to act in the capacity of a protector for the institution of the family, she wrote⁴⁴⁴. Balogh preaches that the protection of the family was in the past and should be in the future the goal of the entire society; family protection is the first step and building block toward the protection of the race and the nation⁴⁴⁵. Here, she is clearly influenced by racist and medical-eugenicist discourses floating around in the fascist publications at the time, such as those belonging to Bosnyák Zoltán, Hargitay and the EPOL group (see chapter III). Therefore,

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., p. 45

⁴⁴² Ibid., p. 46

⁴⁴³ Kálmánné Balogh Ildikó Csonka, *Családvédelem a Nemzeti Szocialista Munkaállamban* (Budapest: Nyilaskeresztes párt, 1941).

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., p.3

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., p.3

she defines the protection of the family as “everything that serves the protection of the family, the race and the body and soul of the nation...”. Furthermore, she breaks it down into three main categories:

1. Pre-marital measures. These included the establishment of a marriage “based on truth” (probably on the disclosure of any disabilities of the spouses, or unclear racial origins), the state intervention in pre-marital affairs, in the form of pre-marital counseling (to ensure that the couple was both indoctrinated as to the role of marriage in producing offspring, and the importance of clean bills of health), the realization of genealogies before marriage, and an obligatory medical examination prior to the commitment.
2. Marital measures. The economic and spiritual well-being of the couple, including health and measures to keep beauty.
3. The family. The blessing of children. The protection of the child and infant. The rearing of children, including the building of character and body. The pedagogy of the heart and patriotism.

The pre-marital measures, besides being based on a spiritual harmony between the spouses, were grounded on concrete measures that set up the structure of the family and concreted the role of women inside it. They included the instruction of women in household duties (as she was deemed the leader of the household⁴⁴⁶), leading the economy of the family, and childrearing capabilities. This reflects the fascist desire to affect social life at all of its stages, including direct state and party interference in family life and planning, its the idea that the goal of marriage is the conception of as many children as possible, and the founding of a family. The scheme

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., p .5

cements gendered roles inside the family, for which the couple needs to be „trained”, being based on the concept of a family as a job within itself, for which study and training is necessary; this is linked with the role of the family as a flying buttress for national and racial defense. Balogh continues by highlighting and praising the role of state intervention in the organic relationship between couples, as she deems obligatory pre-marital medical consultations to being paramount. It may ruin lovers hopes, she penned, but it secures the future of the generations to come; moreover, she wrote, medical permissions for marriages were of the highest consequence as they supported the strengthening and purity of the Hungarian race, from an eugenic standpoint⁴⁴⁷. The author gave the example of Germany, and Italy, two fascist regimes which had already established such legislation, and Japan, which was selecting diplomats based on their racial purity; those with racially pure blood were biologically conditioned to not betray their nation and race, the author wrote⁴⁴⁸. The importance of medical analyses was due to the primacy of the interest of the national community prior to the individual⁴⁴⁹. This was, she continued, the ultimate goal of the married couple as well: to tirelessly work for the common good, for the nation; this gave the couple purpose, and spiritual joy (*gyönyör*), as it gave them selfless drive⁴⁵⁰. Of course, the reverse of this coin meant that it also robbed them of their individuality and personality, but fascism did not care much for these concepts anyway.

Returning to women, they were given responsibilities in upholding their own beauty. Balogh gives detailed guidelines in personal grooming, in order for the reader to accomplish this goal⁴⁵¹. This can be seen as another manifestation of the phenomenon of hegemonic masculinity

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., p 7-8

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., p 7-8

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., p 7-8

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 8-9

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., p. 11

defined by Connell. Women were also in charge of maintaining the hygiene of the family⁴⁵²; this encompassed a number of different domains, the listing of which is not of consequence for this study. What it is to be noted is the importance of this term within fascist discourses; fascism always insisted on words such as purity, cleanliness, hygiene as signifiers for racial unanimity, and ethnic monochromality. This obsession with hygiene also extended and invaded the space of the family. The family (and within it, the woman) was the main bulwark against racial torpidity, the author wrote. She makes a historicist argument that all great races became decadent when they started to neglect their racial purity and started to chase material pleasures⁴⁵³. We may observe here a slight hint at an attempt to highlight the role of womanhood, through its role in family, and consequently racial maintenance. But it is only a slight suggestion, and still ultimately only made within the confines of hegemonic masculinity. The quality of the children raised within the family, she concludes, may only be maintained by a *mens sana in corpore sano* attitude. Health was a consequence, in her opinion, of strenuous physical exercise and mental indoctrination, and both were ultimate tools in combatting racial torpidity⁴⁵⁴.

Balogh Ildikó's treatise on women and families constructed an attitude toward femininity which was mirrored by other publications as well. In a special column entitled Hungarian Woman, the main Arrow Cross journal (beside *Pesti Újság*) *Magyarság* published a number of weekly articles in the same vein. For example, an article from December 1943, written by countess Helena Wesselényi, entitled "A few words on marriage", extolled the role of women within marriage. Beyond individuals goals of happiness and fulfillment, the married couple had

⁴⁵² Ibid., p. 10

⁴⁵³ Ibid., p. 12-13

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 15-18

the duty of moving forward the good of the nation and the fulfillment of the race⁴⁵⁵. The couple must not only think of themselves, but to the “lofty goals” of the nation. The article saw population as material, announcing that the role of women and of marriage was the production of as many quality offspring as possible, in order to further the national cause in the inter-nation competition (in a social Darwinist perception of the interaction between nations). In a January 1944 set of articles, the same column reviewed the historical role of women in the past and projected a new type of woman for the future⁴⁵⁶. It recounts the role of “famous” women of the past, including the spouses of Brutus, Hugo Grotius, Antoine Marie-Lavalette (one of Napoleon’s most trusted men), and others. Their main redeeming characteristic is their loyalty toward their husbands. Thusly, the article only sees women as an extension of men, subservient to their goals, and an accessory of their existence⁴⁵⁷. The second article discusses the future biological development of a new type of woman, which shall cast off the bourgeois trappings of the early 20th century, and become a “natural beauty”, due to her spiritual renewal, her engagement in the acquisition of “knowledge” (although it is unclear as to what this entails) and the regular practice of sport, meant to maintain her health and physical attributes⁴⁵⁸. In April 1944, an article by Kovásznay Erzsébet, entitled “My lord or my husband?” debated the hegemonic role of the man within marriage. She concluded that since the family was an indivisible unit, the modern concept of “husband” was a regress for the entire family. Women had normally taken a secondary role, and a step back for the husband from shouldering the entire responsibility diminished the woman as well. Men did not consequently take the family as seriously as they should have, which had grave costs for the entire community, and the women

⁴⁵⁵ Heléna Grófné Teleki László Wesselényi, "Néhány szó a házasságról"Oliver, “Magyar Asszony.”, 25th December 1943, p .12

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 1st January 1944, p .12

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 1st January 1944, p .12

⁴⁵⁸ “Milyen lesz a jövő asszonya?”, Ibid., 1st January 1944, p .12, 1st January 1944, p .12

themselves, who did not benefit from the security offered. It is amazing that this justification of the hegemony of masculinity came from a woman, but we must not forget the source: fascist press. The same column contained an article chronicling the proceedings of a conference on population growth held by the Catholic Students' Conference, held by Doros Gábor, the notorious eugenicist and doctor specializing in venereology. The article, entitled "Let us secure the healthy development of our people!" called for all women to have more children, and state financial support and awards for families with many offspring, as they served the national cause⁴⁵⁹.

The special attention dedicated to women, as a social category which was on the one hand, highly important for the material development of the nation, and on the other hand, a social category which needed to be controlled and oppressed, is evident in the party's internal documents as well. Two of these are illustrative for the fascist conception of femininity: the speech given at an Arrow Cross party gathering (not dated) during the war, and the party's own internal guidelines for organizing its Female Section⁴⁶⁰. The speech mainly concentrated on the elevated role of women in the war effort. It looked back in history to all of the contributions made by women to Hungarian history in times of crisis and warfare. Interestingly, it added to the importance of women, raising them to a semi-heroic status. The text commented on their role as caretakers, underlining the sacrifices they undertook, and established that, during times of war there were two ideals of heroes established: the soldier and the nurse. The text (whose author is not recorded) also speaks of the heroic qualities of women who had "male souls"⁴⁶¹. There was

⁴⁵⁹ "Biztosítsák az egészséges népszaporodás szociális előfeltételeit!", *Ibid.*, p. 12, 1st January 1944, p. 12

⁴⁶⁰ Magyar Országos Levéltár, "P 1351 -Nyilaskeresztes Párt 1933-1945."

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2-3

therefore some room for women to improve their status, but only via taking on masculine characteristics.

The organization of women within the Arrow Cross Party had two important traits: militarization and voluntarism⁴⁶². The goal of the women's organization of the party was to bring together women of national socialist belief, and solidify them into a coherent bloc. This unit would then serve to educate the women in the various aspects national socialist ideology, including the part of women in society, their role in upholding morals and family life and so forth. The party life included various activities for women, five of which are most important (beside banal organizational activities): the spreading of national socialist ideology, the organization of family life and children into the party, social work, taking over the duties of men in case of need, and cultural work dedicated to women (songs etc.). In all other aspects, the statute read, the women had the same rights and obligations within the party as men did (which is to say, almost no rights⁴⁶³). The women's organization, in spite of what was declared, had a strict co-ordinatory role in the party structure, that is to say it could not act in an executive fashion, could not emit or receive orders to and from other party branches (and under the direct leadership of the party head). It functioned as an appendix of the main body of the party, supporting it in whatever capacity it needed⁴⁶⁴. The party, the text tells, was "a seed fallen to Earth from the heavens. That seed turned into...Szálasi, from whose soul...Hungarism was born...the party was a tree...and the women's organization one of its branches...". This part-biblical, part sexualized rendition hid the fact that the women's group was set up to:

1. Enforce traditional gender roles.

⁴⁶² 9-ik előadás. Hegyesi Kálmánné, *Szervezésszaki ismeretek*, Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., p.3

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 5

2. Oppress women into their role of motherhood, and demographic production
3. Enforce a strict segregation of sexes within the party, and block women's road to political power.

The historical teleology and worldview of Hungarian fascism in the 1930's-1940's

The Hungarian radical right is a historic animal. This statement represents the core of its very being, for it is through a particular understanding of history that the radical right in Hungary perceived the world. History animated the political activity of the Arrow Cross Party: the annual processions, press articles, parliamentary interventions and solemn speeches on special occasions. The biggest party rallies usually took place at anniversaries or commemorations of historical events important for the life of the nation and the community. The speeches of politicians and activists were rife with examples and references to the past; for every occasion or problem, there is certainly an homologue in the past. Therefore the past acts as a constant referential point. The Hungarian radical right needs to look back to the past in order to be able to look to the present or onward to the future. In this sense, one the arguments my paper seeks to make is that the radical right's ultimate goal is to cancel out history, by imposing its optimal *weltanschauung*. This view of the future is also deeply entangled with the past. A mythological past serves as its source. Therefore, an analysis of the historical perception is necessary that if we wish to do a cursory investigation into the ideology of the Hungarian radical right and explore its reasons for success.

But what does this perception entail? Firstly, it means that history serves as a grand ordinator of both identity and perception and interaction with the surrounding world. It is by making use of historical grand events, persons and motifs that the Hungarian radical right forms its core self. Secondly, it means that the radical right uses a certain code of political language to communicate. Many of the elements of the code are historical, as Pierre Nora called them, lieux de memoire, that a particular society shares among its members. The symbolic meaning of an image or a reference to a certain name within a political exposé evokes the desired response only when it is located in the correct socio-political context. As Clifford Geertz tells us in the introduction to his *Interpretation of cultures*, a certain gesture, symbol or concept may only be properly understood within the confines of a certain cultural setting. This is certainly true for political culture as well. These elements are therefore recognized as such by the individuals making up society, but their interpretations may vary highly within the community itself.

The most useful way to conduct a systematic analysis of the anatomy of the Hungarian radical right's historical identity is to analyze its discourses pertaining to history.

I shall depart from one of the most important theoretical tenets of this thesis, the term of generic fascism put forward by such scholars as Roger Griffin and George L. Mosse. Fascism is identified by Roger Griffin as a sub-variant of ultranationalism, populist in style, and bent on regenerating state and society. The idea of palingenesis is tightly packed concept, encapsulating a historical narrative within it. It theorizes that history is made up a dialectical struggle between members of the nation and its enemies. The national body is under attack by a number of "enemies", which threaten its very existence. The response to this perceived crisis is to attempt a regeneration of the community in its entirety, which would ensure a re-vitalization and re-acquirement of all the positive qualities it possessed in the past, but in a new form. This creates a

historical ellipsis, by which the linearity of history may be sidestepped, and society may enter into an a-historical time.

In this chapter, I shall attempt to draw up a synthetic scheme of the worldview of the inter-war radical right through the description of its apprehension of the concept of history. This investigation may lead to the identification of the theoretical narrative of fascist political thinking, by inspecting the relationship between the salient conceptual elements. Secondly, a study of the interwar political scene in which the radical right wing was embedded may provide some explanation for the apparent success of their speech and popularity of their vision (upon certain sectors of society).

The beginnings of historical theory

The academic interpretation of history in interwar period was dominated largely by the school established by Szekfű Gyula. They belonged to the Geistesgeschichte School, which in Hungarian was translated as *szellemtörténet (history of the spirit)*⁴⁶⁵. German historians such as Wilhelm Dilthey and Friedrich Meineke were the main influences for Szekfű's generation⁴⁶⁶. The former provided the theory of history as a sum of the thoughts, feelings, sensations and experiences of humankind. The reactions to these personal experiences could be gleaned from their external manifestations (in politics, culture and so forth) by historians, and interpreted. The key of a proper interpretation was a psychological involvement of the historian with his subject-matter, which was possible because of the „lived-through” nature of history. History was not studied from the outside, but from within, since the historian was also “living history”. The

⁴⁶⁵ Istvan Deak, ” Historiography of the Countries of Eastern Europe: Hungary”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 97, No. 4 (Oct., 1992), pp. 1041

⁴⁶⁶ Irene Raab Epstein, *Gyula Szekfű: a study in the political basis of Hungarian historiography* (Indiana, Indiana University., 1974), p. 56-57

thorough knowledge of the object of the study, as well as “the spirit of the age” assured proper historical interpretation.

The tenets of *szellemtörténet* prescribed a stadial model of history, governed by a linear pattern of development. Development, however, did not equal progress, and nowhere was this more apparent than in the *magnum opus* of the period, the five-volume *History of Hungary* of Szekfű, written together with historian Bálint Hóman (who served as Minister of Education for over a decade in the interwar period). The work further developed the ideas put forward by Szekfű in the previous decade, in his book *Three Generations*. It engendered the idea of decline and decay of the Hungarian state and community in the modern period. The factors of decay were identified as being the cosmopolitan, (pseudo)bourgeois and profiteering elements of society, which began manifesting themselves after the onset of the Reform Period (1825-1848). The social categories which participated the most in the process of slowly destroying the Hungarian state and culture were, according to the historian, the gentry and the Jews. Their liberal culture (political and otherwise) came into direct conflict with “traditional” Hungarian values, based on Christian fate and traditional political institutions⁴⁶⁷. This tendency developed further, until 1918, when it came to its natural conclusion, almost dragging the entire community down into abyss.

Szekfű claimed that each era of history had a specific spirit governing it. The spirit of the 19th century had been one of decadence, while his era was one of restoration of the traditional value-system. The Bethlen regime was interpreted as a renovator of Hungarian spirit and culture. Hungarian culture was defined as superior to all others in the area, a worthy participant to

⁴⁶⁷ Irene Raab Epstein, *Gyula Szekfű: a study in the political basis of Hungarian historiography*, (Indiana, Indiana University., 1974), p. 58

European culture. The concept of culture, in Szekfű's understanding, was quite narrow: it encapsulated high culture and art, statecraft and science. These were all inspired by a strong sense of belonging to the national community and the Christian faith. Consequently, his history was a strongly elitist one, concentrating on the history of high culture, politics, the establishment, legislation and institutions (such as the Church). He also had a proclivity for integrating Hungarian culture into Germanic culture, to the distaste of the Hungarian right-wingers. Szekfű was, due to his philosophy, an apologist of the political regime he was part of. He was influenced by Meinecke's historicist attitude of the individual being justified within history via his relationship to the general historical forces and trends.

The idea of the decay of the preceding period was therefore accredited by Szekfű, bolstered by his followers, and assumed by the authorities as an element of their legitimacy. The political regime presided by István Bethlen had a highly successful and influential cultural policy through the activities of Klebelsberg Kunó, the Minister for Culture in the 1920's. Klebelsberg established the *Geistesgeschichte* historians, providing them with institutional support, and took from them the idea of Hungarian cultural supremacy⁴⁶⁸.

The fascist movement in Hungary also began to coagulate, ideologically, around a new idea of history. We may use the concept of history to illustrate the attempt at breaking away from conventional norms of fascist politicians, and as an attempt to define themselves. In order to legitimize themselves, they put forward a theory of historical evolution that, while dependent on many of the ideas of established historiography, subverted them. The dynamic of fascist historical theory is quite interesting: it proceeded from a single concept to an elaborate, stratified

⁴⁶⁸ Istvan Deak, "Historiography of the Countries of Eastern Europe: Hungary", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 97, No. 4 (Oct., 1992)

theory. The initial concept was what British historian Roger Griffin refers to as *liminoid*: a state of being in which one perceives himself, and society as being at the brink of great change. Early fascist activists shared this belief (sincerely or for self-legitimizing purposes), and announced the dawn of a new era. The present was established as decadent, and they projected an alternative vision of the future. The idea of the future came first, due to the contested nature of the present. They then worked backwards to construct a past in which there were only two possible outcomes: nullification or the confirmation of their vision of their prospects.

The first utterance of the novel idea of the dawning of a new age was made in the pages of the journal entitled *Pesti Ujság* (The Pest Daily). The newspaper belonged to journalist and politician Meskó Zoltán. This small-time political figure was a member of a populist faction of the governing smallholder party, was a deputy in the Lower House of the Hungarian Parliament and personally owned the journal. He became known as the founder of the first openly fascist political party with parliamentary representation (through his own mandate of deputy). Meskó, born in Baja in 1883 (of Slovak descent), graduated from the military academy in Vienna, and became a non-commissioned officer in 1910. Afterwards, he became involved in various welfare schemes for the peasantry, eventually becoming the general secretary for the Peasant's Insurance Union⁴⁶⁹. After serving in the First World war on the Italian front, and being involved in the Szeged counterrevolution, he worked in a number of positions in the interim governments, on matters of agriculture and smallholders. He then became involved in the reorganization of the Smallholder Party in 1921, and its melding into the Unitary Party. Shortly thereafter, he left the party because of its attitude toward land reform and the taxing of wealth by 80%⁴⁷⁰. After 1927, he returned to the fold, holding a parliamentary mandate of the Unitary Party. Another important

⁴⁶⁹ *Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon*, www.mek.oszk.hu, accessed on: 2010.04.05.

⁴⁷⁰ *Magyar Országgyűlési Almanach*, 1935-1944, pp. 257-258

step he undertook was founding a popular newspaper entitled “Pesti Újság” (“The Pest Daily”), which was to become the main means of conveying his ideas, and the base for his political endeavors (the journal became one of the main publications of the Arrow Cross Party long after Meskó’s departure from politics). Within its pages, he constantly pushed for a program of reform for the peasantry, who he identified as Hungary’s main repository of moral and national values, as well as being the most disadvantaged social category.

Even before the official turn to fascism, Meskó’s daily published a high amount of articles describing the atrocious social state of the lower classes, especially the peasantry. He (and his journalists) also identified the huge disparities of living standards between the various social categories and between urban and rural settings. He attributed this state of affairs as a growing trend of decay within society, and identified the causes as being systemic. The liberal and most importantly, capitalist ordering of economy and social affairs were to blame. He understood capitalism solely through its exploitative dimension and its *laissez-faire* attitude which fostered disorder favorable for profiteers:

“...capitalism...maintains the state in order to assure itself unrestricted, free competition. For it, production is an end in itself, its goal is profitability, not the person, but the gain. While millions are starving, this capitalism burns crops, throws coffee and cotton into the sea. This capitalism carries within it the seed of its own demise...it strives for international dominance...while a few thousands of bankers earn billions, millions of poor men are being exploited...”⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷¹ Pesti Újság, nr. 10, march 6, 1932, page 1

The leitmotif of banks and cartels as instruments of national destruction became embedded in the political lexicon in the years of the crisis. The allegory, however, spawned another facet in early fascist writings: its monopoly on resources endangers the existence of the entire nation, and its leaders are cosmopolitan, often foreign elements. Therefore, the nation and the country faces a constant state of emergency, to which only stern measures suffice.

“...we cannot follow a policy of public interest, until the renewal of the spirit of the nation, the union of all honest working Hungarians does not sweep away those who are traitors of democracy..., profitors of work, who in everything see only their fate and their personal gain.⁴⁷²”

The peasantry, the true core of Hungarianness, was understood as being besieged by these factors of decrepitude. Soon, the seeds of a teleologic narrative, posing peasant Hungarians against nefarious cosmopolitan agents, began to appear:

“...they await the dawning of a new age...of a new Hungarian daybreak!...even when everything around collapsed, and the country was getting ready to die, the heart of the countryside was strong...it gave a new life to Magyars. In the villages there are the true characters, brave, god-fearing, holy Hungarians. Our ancestors were not finicky, proud gentlemen. They were anonymous carriers of the Crown of Saint Stephen...and their spirit is conserved in the village...they await renewal.”⁴⁷³

In this passage, we may observe the early appearance of the concept of the alternative, glorious future. Furthermore, we may glean an incipient structure, since the peasants secure victory for themselves in this possible bright future by relying on their ancestral heritage.

⁴⁷² Pesti Újság, nr.3., January 11, 1932, page 1

⁴⁷³ Pesti Újság, nr. 37, September 21, pp. 1-2

Therefore, a rudimentary form of historical evolution was already sketched in these passages. It relied, as I have already mentioned above, on a dialectic structure, composed of the Hungarian masses and their antagonists. These antagonists, however, do not have a fixed quality, rather, they are composed of a changing number of characteristics. In the early years of Meskó's party (the party, together with its official journal, *The Voice of the Nation*, were founded in the June of 1932), modernity itself was the main foe to combat. This was probably due to the general cultural influence of anti-modernism, prevalent in the political culture of interwar Hungary. The enemy was understood as a materially exploitative, rationalist, individualist approach to modernity, that finds expression through the economic structure of capitalism and liberalism. The linkage was made early on between the immediate material aspects of modernity, and the spiritual ones, which were identified as being at the core of the problem.

“...the Titanic is the flagship of modern civilization...what is there to happen now? Modern science has no answers. Answer, rationalizing Pythia, coxer of modern graphology!...What happened to modern man? Materialism has subjugated the world. It has erased the soul from existence....History was identified as the game between material and economic forces, and replaced providence with a coat. It is no longer man, the spirited animal who makes history, but the spiritless material...The soaring Ikarus has been chained to the ground. For the educated, positivist philosophy has put a glass ceiling in the heavens, demarcation lines between it and earth. Man should stop his transcendental dreams, and think only of what he can grasp!...modern hell was built, with golden currency...a new tower of Babel had been erected...the golden calf declaims economic theory. The world economic crisis has been dubbed under different names by these money-grubbing haruspices. Our eyes are slowly

being pried open. Now we see the cultural bacillus beyond the material cancer eating away at us...The world crisis is the crisis of the modern soul! It is the deus ex machina...”⁴⁷⁴

Modernity was portrayed as having run amok, a civilizational model in deep material, cultural and spiritual crisis. The root of the problem was identified as the replacement of core national and moral values with inhuman ones, that kept creativity and the desire to evolve from manifesting themselves. This self-destructive chain of events could even influence human nature itself, dehumanizing man, in a manner of speaking. Therefore, swift action was needed to rescue modernity from itself, in a sense. A fascist projection of the future as grounded in the past was pitted against this type of modernity, the details of which varied with each interpreter. The agents of change were identified as those members of society who exhibited a culturally pure Hungarianness, adhered to a traditional moral code, had the desire to act for the greater good, and were willing to rally around a providential leader-figure. Many of the elements of this model are in accordance with Szekfű’s cultural criticism, and his opposition to the liberal interpretation of modernity. Still, the model was quite hazy, and failed to attract many followers. Its “value” was the position of a problem, and an original (at least novel in the Hungarian context) interpretation of the concepts of past, present, and future.

The first political thinker to attempt a connection between past, present and future and between the Hungarian and European historical contexts was Festetics Sándor. Count Sándor Festetics de Tolna was a wealthy aristocrat and political figure both before and after the First World War. Born in Dég in 1882, he followed a typical track for an aristocrat of the time, studying law and politics at the *École Politique* in France⁴⁷⁵, and served as a diplomat in many

⁴⁷⁴ *Nemzet Szava*, nr. 76, November 3, 1932, pp.2-3

⁴⁷⁵ It is known nowadays as the Paris Institute of Political Studies, and was founded by Albert Sorel, and Ernest Renan, as a liberal school of administration, in the wake of the German occupation and the Paris Commune

countries. During the war he was a cavalry officer, and participated in the democratic Károlyi government as Minister of War, no doubt because of his close ties with the prime minister (he was Károlyi's brother-in-law). After his removal during the 1919 communist takeover, he didn't actively participate in politics until 1931⁴⁷⁶, when he was "offered" a mandate in Enying, an electoral circumscription which he owned. He ran under the banner of the Unitary Party, noting he could not stay away from politics in times of crisis. Shortly thereafter, in 1933, he left the party and founded his own fascist movement, often working closely with Meskó Zoltán.

The sense of being an vanguard force on the cutting edge of historical renewal of society is expressed best in the series of articles published by count Sándor Festetics in 1933, just prior to founding his own national-socialist party. Quoting an article entitled "The Sunset and Twilight of Democracy" by Mussolini, he affirmed the dawning of a new state of historical existence, the fascist one:

"...this dissolving civilization is the social and political system which began in Europe in 1789 (in Hungary in 1848) and lasted until today. This period created the liberal-parliamentary system which took over from feudalism. This system was dubbed the demo-liberal system by Mussolini, and it is this system's, this civilization's ruin we are witnessing today..."⁴⁷⁷

"...On the one hand, we are at the beginning of a new world order, the birth of a new civilization, that is taking Europe's states by storm...Concerning the "new civilization", this new and powerful movement, which we have to contend with and with the spread of it, we cannot extricate ourselves from its path."⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁶ *Magyar Országgyűlési Almanach*, 1931-1936, pp. 97-99

⁴⁷⁷ *Mezőföld*, nr. 35, August 27, 1933, p. 1

⁴⁷⁸ *Mezőföld*, nr. 36, September 3, 1933, p. 1.

Festetics connected the appearance of fascism in Hungary to that of its inception in other states in Europe, most notably Germany and Italy. His “Mezőföld” journal published short biographies of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, and brief syntheses of their movements’ histories and ideologies. Interestingly, he also incorporated into the family of “fascism” Marshall Pilsudski’s Poland, and Kemal Ataturk’s Turkey. This was probably due to a number of reasons. First, and foremost, it was done for added value of legitimacy: more states converting to the fascist creed meant that it was really a pan-European political revolution, not just an isolated local phenomenon. Secondly, there was probably a great deal of confusion to what the concept of fascism actually was, at this moment in Hungary. Fascist activists and politicians were still in the process of definition and concretion of the idea, adapting and crafting foreign ideologies to local necessities.

Political confusions aside, the idea of a pan-European political and civilizational shift, which Hungary could not escape, was projected by Festetics. He envisioned a Hungary reborn from the ashes, with a strong leader at its helm, who would put through a series of economic and social reforms. To bolster his argument, he was the first to begin to develop a stronger civilizational criticism toward the regime which he felt was on its way out. In the series of articles meant to publicize his fascist turn to the Hungarian public, he criticized the lack of adaption of the liberal-capitalist system to the needs of the present. Festetics was the first to chastise the legacy of liberalism, tying it to the French Revolution; since that event, the political ideology and the economic system it had put into place, have worked to dissolve national unity, bringing it to the state of necessity. Two tiers of history were set up: the recent past, and the bad state of present affairs. These were followed up by the fascist age. The basic tenets of Hungarian

fascism's rendition of the concept of history were established. All that was left for further generations of fascists was to burrow further into history and develop the count's rough scheme.

This novel interpretation of history constituted the theoretical backbone for the legitimating of the existence of fascism on Hungarian soil, and justified adherence to it. It was interpreted as a historical necessity, a panacea to cure all ailments of modernity, whether be it spiritual or material. Its adopters were those who sought advancement beyond the current system of thought, while being reluctant of letting go of the core characteristics of their own social and national identities. The great ideological dynamism of fascist thought and the promise of regeneration, or the passing into a new historical stage, proved to be especially attractive to politically active, but jaded individuals. It contained all the critical points toward modernity espoused by them, and promised solutions at a point in time when cultural malaise was at a highpoint. This constituted the main lure of fascist ideology, and what caused many to take the "fascist turn". These early forbearers, while unsuccessful in their own endeavors, managed to introduce a whole new way of speaking and making mass politics in interwar Hungary, with unfortunate consequences.

Radical right histories

As stated above, historicity is a component of the nucleus of radical right wing ideology. The question then follows: what kind of history is this? Is there a certain dynamic, a certain logic to historical interpretation that differentiates the radical right from the rest of the political panorama? And if so, is this interpretation wholly original or does it share a number of common

elements with other members of the political landscape? It is my argument that the answer to this last question is affirmative. The extreme right, while it shares a number of cultural symbols, among it, elements of historical identity, with the traditional right, it appropriates them for its own use. The end result is a historical interpretation made in an original logic, which proves successful through its relation with the interpretation given by the conservative right.

Let me describe the main theoretical model for radical right wing history which I have constructed by comparing examples of theorizing from interwar and contemporary radical right wingers. This is an ideal-type construction, which is not always congruous with reality, or acts as a set of rules, to which all right wingers rigorously conform. It serves as a heuristic device, and shall be nuanced by the case-studies in will cite below. The model follows as such: fascist histories are not linear, but elliptical. They progress through a stadial model, with the important additions of points of rupture. These points of rupture are symbolic and serve as reinforcement of certain factors which influence historical development. The most important factor is *decay*. This factor is mainly destructive in nature, and follows a particular dynamic: it starts off slow and almost invisible in nature, gaining more clout and becoming manifest in the present. Its agents are diverse, but a high amount of congruence exists between the members of this group, as identified by radical right-wing opinions on the subject. It includes ethnic minorities, corruption, and selfish foreign interests, on the one hand, and on the other, weakness of self, and the loss of positive qualities by the members of the community on the other. At this point, it is important to precisely state the stages of history. First and foremost there is the initial stage. It is one of almost absolute positivity, a gilded time of positive qualities and strength overall: the high time of the national community as such. Of course, here the fascist view of history is often based on little fact, situating itself on the borderline of history and national mythology, but this is not

important. What is significant, however, is to what degree the public shares such apprehensions about national history, which, in the Hungarian case, must have been significant, as fascism proved to be popular in the interwar period.

The second stage is characterized by the apparition of the factor of decay. In various episodic forms, this stage of history can stretch from the high middle ages until recent times. Its main characteristic is its dynamic, which is that of gradual decomposition of the framework of the national community. There are two agents of history locked in an ongoing (sometimes perhaps unconscious) conflict: illustrious members of the community (more often than not referred to as heroes), aided by the amorphous mass of the *people*, and various agents of decay. This decline is often synchronized with parallel developments in European and world history (for which the extreme right constructs similar stadial models). The decline of the set of moral and political value-set of the Western community is gradual, innocuous at first, but more and more apparent as we draw closer to the present situation.

The end of the period of gradual decay is marked by an important point of rupture, which acts as a symbol for all the negative effects cumulated in the period which just came to an end. In Hungarian history, this is the 1920 Peace Treaty of Trianon, and the subsequent parting up of territory and population. This event is treated as the blackest chapter of Hungarian history and identity, and the main determinant for political action in the present. It is used a summation for all the negative tendencies of the past and present. Often instrumentalized, it is used in order to identify present categories of enemies, which can be blamed both for Trianon and for their nocent influence in the present.

The present situation is one of liminality. Here I come back to concept invented by British historian Roger Griffin, the concept of the *liminoid* state of society. The liminoid is a mental state of society (or a portion of society), which believes itself to be before a great, transformative change. This change, in the Hungarian case is, however, characterized by a sort of crossroads situation, in which society itself (notwithstanding the impersonal mechanisms of historical progress) must make an active choice, and support it through political action. The choice must be made between a wholly positive (the golden age) and an utterly negative one (further decay and future destruction). The comparison between the rebirth of the national community in a glorious manner and the continuation of decay was sometimes implicit, other times explicit, but was always present, as a vital part of political agitation.

This brings me to our subjects of study. The investigation shall be realized by isolating relevant case-studies from the 1930-1940's; I have identified three main works, which may be utilized for this purpose: Rátkay Radich Kálmán's *Modern Országépítés (Modern State Building)*, Literati Vágó Pál's *Gőzgép, Pénzuralom és nemzetiszocialista reneszánsz (Steampower, Rule of Money and National-Socialist Renaissance)* (also follow-up works such as *Munkaállam-The work state*) and Málnási Ödön's *A magyar nemzet őszinte története (The honest history of the Hungarian Nation)*. These works, alongside other publications and statements made by extremist thinkers such as Szálasi Ferenc and Matolcsy Mátyás, will be studied in order to reveal how they thought about the world around through history. We must see these and other such works (such as Pósta Péter's book, *Ellenfeleink*, which is a wholesale reproduction of Vágó's narrative), as attempts to historicize an inherently a-historical theory. The reason for the anti-historical political message being couched in a historicist cloak is the immense influence of Szekfű's work, and the general historicist nature of the regime's discourses in the interwar

period. To refuse historicism would have invited political failure, as historicism pervaded political language in all of its crevases.

Sacred histories, dark presents, bright futures

The vision of the past, present and the future projected by the interwar movements all contain the same basic inferences about history, its agents and the mechanisms which push history forward. I shall start with a characterization of the historical genesis of the Hungarian people, which might differ in detail, but shares the same thematic among all those extreme right thinkers who have expressed a coherent opinion about them.

Time is broken up into three categories. The first is the immemorial past, in which myth and history fuse together to form an image which is mostly positive. The heroes of the past are all traceable back to the first heroes of the nation, the formers of the national community. The interwar radical right is anachronistic in its approach, equating ethnicity with nationality. Therefore, heroes such as the leader of Hungarian chieftains, the later king Arpad, and king St. Stephen, are hailed as the heroes of the greatest achievements in national history, through their creation of the Hungarian state and forging the national community. The most expressive work on the subject of Hungarian past is Málnási Ödön's "Honest History of the Hungarian Nation". Málnási was an unusual character: a former graduate of the Catholic seminary of Eger, he was also a veteran of the First World War, and later became a historian of Hungary and the Church. In the late 1920's, he joined the Hungarian Social Democratic Party, serving as an activist. His life and beliefs took another u-turn in 1937, sometime after he published his above-quoted book. The book display two important characteristics: ideological hollowness of its populism and a-historical argument couched in the form of a palatable history of Hungary. The pliable nature of

its populist style is proven by the fact that while it was published by known left-leaning publisher Cserépfalvi, it became one of the basic tracts of Hungarian fascism.

Not long after its publication, he joined Szálasi Ferenc's Arrow Cross Party, becoming one of its main ideologues. Málnási draws up the following scheme on Hungarian history: Hungarians, at their origin, are formed by a synthesis of two races (the racial view was increasingly popular in the 1930's). The two races are: Ugric-Hungarians and Turanic-Hungarians. Ugric (sometimes he refers to them as Ugro-Baltic) Hungarians are mainly inquisitive, spiritual, hardworking, progressive and pragmatic; they have mostly positive qualities. Málnási also states that at ethnogenesis, they made up the overwhelming majority of the genetic pool. They were ruled by a thin layer of Turanic Hungarians, whose main characteristics were laziness, a love of grandiose speeches, the love of the law; they are born troublemakers and conservatives, who do not have the ability of forward thinking or composure. The history of Hungary may be characterized as a struggle between these two forces. The historian points toward the great moments in Hungarian history as those when the leaders (king Mathias, prince Rakoczi Ferenc, Kossuth Lajos) were in tune with the needs of the lower strata of population, and did not need intermediaries. However unusual, Málnási's statements about the past have a number of common traits with the rest: they identify an alternative ethno-genetic process, apart from the official one of Finno-Ugric descent. This is a common theme within radical right wing discourses about the ethnic origins of the nation. Among the preferred proxies we may include a Hunnic theory (proved by the glorious deeds of Attila), a Sumerian-Scythic theory, and a Turanic theory. Often we may identify a mish-mash of the elements of the three. The past is characterized, as by Málnási, as a time of glorious deeds and of concord, of purity and warrior-like qualities, which made the nation great.

Matolcsy Mátyás is another author who has a comprehensive view of the past. A celebrated economist, he became an advocate of rationalized agriculture and peasant's rights in the early 1930's. After gaining a mandate to the lower house of the parliament, he began to champion fascism, and started his own Arrow Cross party in the late 1930's. He eventually joined Szálasi's movement as well. His vision of the past is derived from that of the famous interwar Hungarian historian and cultural figure, Szekfű Gyula, whom he often quotes. The same preference for grassroots versus high politics, as in Málnási, can be felt here, as Matolcsy puts forward his thesis of Hungarian history. It may be surmised as following: the peasants represent the core of the nation, and the synthesis of its political qualities (as in Málnási's racial vision of underlings and leaders). He quotes a number of cases in feudalism, as in 1437, when "the social forces" began to be at war with each other. One can surmise that the prior situation was one of concord. The result of the jaqueries of 1437 was the disastrous defeat in 1526 at Mohács at the hand of the Turks.

Other thinkers push the golden age toward the middle ages, ending in the late 18th century, with the French Revolution. It was this event, say both Ráttkay Radich Kálmán and Vágó Pál, that gave to the world a new concept: liberalism and capitalism. The ideological system of liberalism is the mental expression of the economic and social system of capitalism. They introduce a new world system, which did not share in the moral world of the ages which came before it. The fiziocratic liberalism of "laissez-faire" was criticized by both Ráttkay and Vágó (and also by Málnási and Matolcsy) as opening a sort of Pandora's Box.

The radical right's version of Hungarian history in its initial stages did not deviate greatly from that of the official historiography, which, in the interwar years, was dominated by the conservative right wing. The radical right shared many of the historical myths and logic of

historical interpretation with conservative historians. The regime also cultivated historical lieu de memoire, such as the cult of revolutionary and war heroes (1848 and World War I), and publicly commemorated significant events such as the christening of Saint Stephen or the Trianon peace treaty. This is the reason their views on the initial stages of history were tolerated. Many interwar extreme right thinkers used established historians as sources for their own works and transformed their interpretations by using the data they furnished (Szekfű even wrote the foreword to Matolcsy's first book). This was done in order to appear to be working within the same historicist canon, all the while subverting its logic from the inside.

Decay and rebirth

All the authors have identified the same problem areas. Among them, the first is an irresponsible political elite. The irresponsibility lies in the innate weakness of the leadership, which is isolated and not in tune with the needs of the greater majority of the population. A leader, or a leading class which is not privy to what the people desire is a a-national or anti-national one, since the radical right considers the lower classes as the most ideal preservers of the national qualities. This theoretical construction had led the extreme right thinkers to identify the existence of a ruling class as such, to be an anti-national phenomenon. Direct methods of rule, which eliminate intermediaries between leader and people, are favored in radical right rhetoric. This is an ideal situation, and sometimes it is tamed by the introduction of a ruling political class (of extreme right politicians) which is governed by good intentions. The leader and the political class which aid him are governed by good intentions due to their devotement to the cause of the people and the knowledge about their true needs. These needs are guaranteed by the provenience of the leader and his aids: they are *of the people*. Both of them do not share any connections, or

have clearly turned against the former ruling elite. This rendition clearly demonstrates the populist style of radical right wing politics.

Many homologues of such men are revealed by the radical right in their own version of the historical narrative. The loci in which they are usually to be found is extraordinary situations, times of need, historical or otherwise. For example, the revolutionary times of the Rákóczi rebellion or Kossuth's stance and attitude during the 1848 revolution. Let us begin our exploration by looking at extremist thinkers who concentrated on Hungarian history: Málnási Ödön and Matolcsy Mátyás. They both have share similar views and analysis of the period of history when certain problems occurred, which affected the country's present situation. This is because both come from the populist tradition, and had a populist past. Matolcsy's understanding of history is best expressed in his 1939 work, *My struggle for land*. The book collects various essays, interviews and parliamentary speeches made by the economist in the five years preceding the publication of the work. The selection is made by the author himself, so we may suppose that the work is programmatic for his political credo. In a speech made before the Lower House of parliament in 1936, he made a sharp criticism against the aristocracy:

“...In the two decades following the war, huge changes have occurred in the history of the European peoples...The attitude that nation can develop further only with the development of popular forces has found home in all European states, perhaps with the exception of Hungary...The opposite opinion, the one that sought to put down the popular forces, is what dug the grave of Hungary in 1918. However, Hungary, maimed, and deprived of its livelihood, still clings to this apprehension, which favors the landed aristocracy in front of the developing peasantry. A country can progress only by integrating the development of its social categories; a country which lets its social categories fight each other is doomed to stagnation, atrophy and

destruction. This is the case for Hungary, and I believe I am right in this statement when I say that the Mohacs, so often quoted in our history is the result of the struggle against each other of the social classes, which hinder development.⁴⁷⁹,

Matolcsy goes on to explain that many other negative situations (as the defeat at Mohacs at the hand of the Turks) were the result of the same phenomena: the social classes working one against the other. The outcome was stagnation and decay of the country in the long run, and disastrous episodes as the defeat of the Hungarian independence struggles of the 18th and 19th centuries, and ultimately, the country's parting up at Trianon. Matolcsy speaks about "social integration", but what does he mean by it? We may answer this question if we take a closer look at the positive examples which he opposes to the scheme of decay:

"...We may therefore understand then, not two decades after the death of king Mathias, in 1514, why the first bloody rebellion broke out. We may understand the words of the peasant leader Dózsa György, when he spoke to his troops: "they have sucked our blood for ages and do not wish to fight against the Turks. Let us fight against these cold-blooded men!"...Later on, the troops of Rákóczi do not rebel against their leader, but curse their traitorous foreign lords and aristocrats. This is not a new historiography, but the truth. One can read it from Hungarian history...The kuruc call to arms was replaced by the sound of foreign rulers and German and Slavic immigrants...The great struggle carried out by the Hungarian peasantry, the Hungarian race, went on in 1848, but were clouded by the years after the revolution. In all other countries, the 1848 independence fights enlarged the rights of the peasantry, the maintainer of the race,

⁴⁷⁹Mátyás Matolcsy, *Harcom a földért*, p. 35

broke up latifundia and brought the development of a healthy, democratic bourgeoisie; not so in Hungary...the situation has changed little since 1848...⁴⁸⁰»

The leaders who favored the development of the lower classes were therefore judged to be positive and successful. The traitorous and rapacious aristocracy, along with foreign rulers represented the other part of this dichotomy. We may conclude that social coherence, in Matolcsy's understanding, was a term which means the endorsement of those he considers to be the best preservers of ethnic qualities, and represent the national community the most. They were identified as making up the majority, the have-nots, the disenfranchised.

Málnási has a similar understanding of the negative trends of the present, which he also traces back to deep rooted phenomena in Hungarian history. The aristocratic ruling class, which Málnási identifies as having a mixed racial origin (Turanic, Dinaric, Germanic), slowly fell victim to its own nature. It entered into a barter with foreign elements, mainly Jews, who brought with them money but also a new style of economy. This style was nascent capitalism, which both Málnási and Matolcsy identify as "having a Jewish spirit". The new economy transformed the feudal system into something even more evil, transforming serfs into slaves to capital and monetized income. As the 19th century came around, capitalism installed itself more and more as the dominant economic and social system, profiting from the technological developments of the time. Soon it found a political expression: liberalism. This ideology allowed Hungarians to become enslaved by the international system of lending and capitalized income, robbing the ruling classes of the little power and influence they had, and wresting true control of politics from their already feeble hands. The majority of the country became indebted to banks and to

⁴⁸⁰ Mátyás Matolcsy, *Harcom*, p. 36-37

international interests, while a new social class, the industrial worker, became enslaved in the factory.

We may observe a transformation of certain concepts in this narrative account of Hungarian history. No longer were liberalism and capitalism treated as positive or even neutral terms. They took on, in the fascist interpretation, wholly negative connotations, as elements of a system which sought to denationalize Hungarians, and indeed, destroy the community. Certain opinions about the Hungarian ruling elite, which had been previously hailed as the re-founders of Hungarians statehood with their role in the 1867 compromise, had now been subverted. Politics, indeed, as the continuator and enabler of negative trends, were blamed for past and present disasters. The main trait of the ruling class was their obstinate backwardness, and their rapaciousness, on the other hand. But the present situation, in which the interests of the nation became subservient to the needs of the few, was not solely the result of domestic factors. It was a structural problem, in the opinion of interwar radical right wing ideologues, linked to general European historical progress.

The linkage between domestic history and the international situation was rendered most clearly in the works of Literati Vágó Pál and Ráttkay Radich Kálmán. Both relatively unknown characters before 1933, they rose through the ranks to become important members in the Arrow Cross Party of Szálasi Ferenc in its heyday. Ráttkay, a lawyer and a journalist, became an adherent of fascism in early 1933, with the publication of his book, *Modern State Building*. A short treatise about the advantages of the new autocratic styles of rule in Germany and Italy, it also contained a great deal of historical interpretation as the main ingredient in its argumentation. Its views may be surmised by a few short passages from the work:

“The closing liberalist-individualist era’s man was characterized by an individualist ethic, which read: I am responsible only to my own conscience because of my deeds. The ethics of man in the new era must state: I am responsible toward the community for my every action⁴⁸¹”

“...The last century was that of steam power. Mankind adapted its institutions and ways of life to it. The economic, social and political systems were adapted to it. Liberal-individualist spirited production, parliamentary representation of the people in the political system- were perhaps the appropriate forms in the age of steam power...The national society which adapts its economic and political system to better suit the age of electricity, radio and flight first is the one which shall be the most successful. Each age has its own political expression. We are on the threshold of a new era, so we must create new political and economic systems. The 18th century gave birth to liberalism, as an answer to the antiquated and backward ways of the middle ages. The 19th century produced socialism as an answer to the social disorder and disentanglement of liberalism. The 20th century brought corporatism as an answer to the Marxian socialism which sought one-sided class rule, the dictatorship of the proletariat. This great notion counter posed the idea of community, the theory of the communion of life within one society to the program of the sole rule of the proletariat...-over all of them an ethical State shall rule, which decides disputes in accordance to a higher social morality, with strict orders.⁴⁸²”

The scheme envisioned by Ráttkay, as crude as it seems at a first glance, encapsulates and synthesizes very well the conception about the progress of history in the last two centuries, according to the radical right which he was a representative of. The individualist, self-oriented ways found expression through liberalism in the past centuries. They are rendered in a negative

⁴⁸¹ Kálmán Ráttkay R., *Modern Országépítés*, (Budapest: Hajdú Dénes/Centrum, 1933), p. 14

⁴⁸² Kálmán Ráttkay R., *Modern Országépítés*, 1933, p. 18-22

key, as systems of thought and existence. They are also antiquated, for European (perhaps even world) society is at the dawn of a new age. This age is heralded by developments in Germany and Italy, but also in other parts of the world: Ráttkay speculates that “winds of change are blowing even over America, once the safe haven of rampant capitalism and liberalist individualism”. The new age will be a positive one, since it will bring about social peace, justice and order. It will rejuvenate the national community, the interest of which it will put on a pedestal. This interpretation of history is a complete break with conservative right wing conjectures about the past and historical progress in general. While the conservative right followed a revisionist program in the interwar period, the radical right utilized history in order to make projections about the future. These projections did not involve a restoration of the past, but the creation of a new kind of future. While traditionalists sought a reinstatement, the radicals sought regeneration. In this manner, however vulgar, they were analytic, not merely commemorative. A clear, structural vision of the past was created, which increasingly featured a teleological approach toward where society was headed.

The story told by his party colleague, Literati Vágó Pál, appeared in the late 1930's and was a crystallized version of the *vulgata* laid out by Ráttkay. Vágó was a mechanical engineer, and administrator of various public industrial works, turned politician in the late 1930's. By no means a conventionally trained politician, or a political scientist, he nevertheless managed to provide a coherent synthesis of national socialist historical theory in his book, entitled “*Steam power, the rule of money and the national socialist renaissance*”, which appeared in 1940. Vágó worked with the same stadial model of history we saw with Ráttkay, but also Matolcsy and Málnási. The feudal period came first: it was considered to be a mixed baggage, with both good events (such as medieval rulers in tune with the people and a general high moral stance of

society), but also the start of some negative trends. Among the latter he recounts the monetization of economy, and the onset of serfdom:

“The social system of the feudal age, marked by the institutions of slavery and serfdom, was solidified for millennia by the primitive manner of agricultural production. All ages prior to the introduction of mechanization suffered from constant deprivation of goods...The few luxuries enjoyed by the upper classes were supported by the efforts of the rest of 91% of society...However, this separated them very little from the rest, as they suffered along with them in case of strife...The motto of the age was:”Millions for one”. This was the first stage of the so-called Tragedy of Man.⁴⁸³”

The onset of mechanization, monetization and new political ideas are treated as a steady worsening of the progress of humanity. The twin demons of liberalism and capitalism are singled out again, also by Vágó, who criticizes them for their inhumanity and egoism.

“ Steam power broke the Solomonic statement: there is nothing new under the sun, because it created a new form of life for human society, never before paralleled in history, in which physical slavery was no more...but liberalism did not bring about general happiness to mankind. It did not do so, because the freedom it preached was the freedom to exploit. The social meaning of the technological idea. It did not bring about happiness, because the machine age delivered by liberalism was hijacked by all of the incarnations of egoism: the rule of the Almighty Money, who saw in the machine a means of profit, and forgot that the role of the

⁴⁸³ Pál Vágó, *Gőzgép, pénzuralom es nemzeti szocialista reneszánsz*, (Budapest, f.e.:1940), p. 4-6

machine is to lessen man's physical toil...It expropriated the machine, which freed man from physical slavery, and built in its stead a new type of slavery, the slavery to profit.⁴⁸⁴”

“...the destructive effect upon the national community of classical liberalism was soon felt even in its home, in happy England..⁴⁸⁵”

We may observe several conceptual innovations in Vágó's text. These are realized by coupling several established concepts in antithetic pairs. In this way, liberalism is paired with destruction of humanity, slavery and decay of the national community. Capitalism and money are synonyms of profiteering and egoism, and expropriation of the very thing that would have set man free. The two terms, liberalism and capitalism, have negative connotations, and are rendered as perverse, inasmuch as they preach freedom and practice the exact opposite. This reveals another implicit duality of honesty versus dishonesty. Ráttkay states that this attitude of capitalist liberalism produced as one of its first byproducts, class warfare. This was also a negative effect, as the Marxian social democrats harnessing the power of the industrial workers were working against the national community, contributing to the antagonisms within it. The chain of profit and debt has enslaved smaller countries, as it did Hungary, leading to the disastrous socio-political situations it faced at present. Capitalism, Vágó established, had a “Jewish spirit”, and thus was alien to the interests of the nation:

“The main characteristic of the liberal economic system is the control of the rate of interest by a privileged group at the expense of the common good, with the aid of control over the emission of money. The obtaining of profit on money was an exclusively Jewish privilege in the Middle Ages, and the legacy of Jewish spirit inspired the liberal plutocracy...this is the

⁴⁸⁴ Vágó, *Gőzgép*, p. 9

⁴⁸⁵ Vágó, *Gőzgép*, p. 9

reason for historical logic of the outbreak of hate sooner or later against the Jews in every part of the world.⁴⁸⁶”

Against this backdrop, Vágó projected a bright future, to be achieved by “Christian morals” in economic and socio-political planning. The fine points of this plan are less than clear, for the work aims to be an analytic critique of the current situation. It was later expressed in his book, *The work State*. The details are less than important for our demonstration however: suffice to say they are polar opposites to all the negative points the author identified in his book. The dynamic of decay, as opposed to rebirth, of a return to the golden age in history is apparent. It is a mainstay of all four works quoted, but fragments of it can be found in the majority of the public utterances of the radical right in the interwar period. A specific view of history formatted the world-view of interwar thinkers. It is the primary thesis of this essay that a similar understanding of history is also present among the contemporary Hungarian radicals.

Baráth Tibor: the culmination of the fascist thesis of history

As we have seen above, the fascist theorem of historical evolution and its direct political meanings were quite well established by the late 1930's. They attracted and influenced a large amount of voters, who heard abbreviated versions of the theorems in the speeches and press of the fascist activists. All this popular support notwithstanding, the ivory tower of academy still stood untouched by fascist theorizing. This, however, was about to change, due to the scholarly and political activity of Baráth Tibor, a young professor of history at the newly-(re)founded University of Kolozsvár.

Baráth, as I have mentioned, was a rather young academic, in his mid-30's, when he made the fascist turn. Before that, he had a promising career, which would have probably seen

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 33

him integrated into the world of mainstream Hungarian academic historians. As a student, he specialized in history and geography, a detail which is important to mention, in light of his writings of the 1940's. An apprentice of Domanovszky Sándor, he continued his studies with stints at the University of Vienna and in Paris, at the Sorbonne, after his graduation from the University of Budapest. He was appointed as a representative of Hungary in the International Commission of Historians, holding also the position of secretary to this prestigious organization⁴⁸⁷. The time spent in France was a serious influence on Baráth, for two main reasons: firstly, he developed a strong affinity for analytically-based writing of history. This was naturally coupled with a strong aversion toward the mainly narrative tradition of his native Hungary, and induced in Baráth's mind the notion of the backwardness of historical scholarship in Hungary. After 1933, he began to develop an interpretative framework of history based largely on the interplay between geography, space and politics. He underlined the historical role of Hungary, as one of the two (alongside Poland) leaders of Central Europe, and their strong connections with their respective geographical settings. Baráth continued to play the role of intermediary between Hungarian and French culture until 1940. In the fall of that year, due to the evolution of events on the international scale, he was called back to Hungary. Baráth was then appointed as a professor of contemporary Hungarian history at the University of Kolozsvár. This move was probably due to the need for qualified instructors at the reacquired institution, to the support of Domanovszky, and his lengthy experience abroad. The experience of the Transylvanian university proved to be transformative for the historian, as he came face to face with the realities of being in an inhospitable environment, full of hostile elements, in the reconquered Hungarian territory. He probably had first-hand experience of the practices and ideology of a competing fascist movement, the Iron Guard, which was much more successful

⁴⁸⁷ Paksa Rudolf, "A történetírás mint propaganda", *Kommentár*, 2006, nr. 5, p. 1-2

than its Hungarian counterparts. In the context of a looming Hitlerite *Neurordnung Europas*, the Hungarian historian probably saw the development of a national socialist geo-political argument couched in historicism as a necessity for his country. A good amount of opportunism probably also contributed to his fascist turn, especially if we take into account the period when it happened.

The surprise move came a year later, when Baráth published a programmatic article entitled “The historiography of New Hungary”. The piece was a sharp criticism against the antiquated methods of Hungarian academic historians, Baráth launching an attack against their narrow-sightedness and false interpretations. The article also served as a rough “ars poetica” of the young scholar, in which he made a theoretical and methodological outline of Hungarian history. It came as a shock to many, since Baráth, his earlier criticism notwithstanding, was an established academic. Moreover, the article was published in the columns of a fledgling Hungarian fascist scientific publication, the main editor of which was Matolcsy Mátyás, the renowned economist turned Arrow Cross politician. It seemed that the fascist project was gaining a serious intellectual edge.

The article synthetically expressed Baráth’s vision of history and his profession. It starts with a short criticism of the historiography of the era, which the historian saw as being inadequate. The linkage between history and politics he made clear from the outset, stating that “worldview and the writing of history are strongly connected⁴⁸⁸”. This phenomenon he not only saw as natural, shunning the false objectivism of the past generation of historians, but he underlined the political and social function of historiography. All interpretations of history were grounded in a certain political *Weltanschauung*, mirroring its broad ideological outlines, and

⁴⁸⁸ Baráth Tibor, “Az Új Magyarország történetírása”, *Új Európa* nr. 1, 1942, p.7.

supporting the needs of it with scientific work. Consequently, there were liberal, Marxist, and national-socialist interpretations of history. These, however, were not each valid renditions of historical evolution, according to Baráth, but were themselves tied to the epoch of their greatest apex. Therefore, since National Socialism seemed to be dominant in the period when Baráth wrote his text, he naturally attributed pre-eminence to fascist historiography. He made his allegiance to this camp quite clear, and went about constructing the characteristics of the other side. There are certain connections, however, of his philosophy of the role of the historians, to those of Szekfű Gyula, who also saw the need for historians to support dominant political regimes.

Baráth identified two main avenues of historical interpretation dominant before his time. Both of them belonged to the historical school of liberalism, expressing its major facets. The first belonged to the Hungarian *Geistesgeschichte*, with its main icon, Szekfű Gyula. The author faulted the historian for over-emphasizing the weight of the *spirit*, i.e. according too much attention to the “psychic-intellectual” aspects of history, and neglecting other forces. He especially criticized Szekfű and the like for neglecting political history, to such extent that he concluded that Hungary had very little quality scholarship in this field. This was a result of passing over important factors which animated politics, the people (he decried the lack of social history), ethnic-racial characteristics, and geography. This is the reason, Baráth argues, due to which the Hungarian adepts of *Geistesgeschichte* had not managed to explain important questions in the recent history of their societies. The most important of these was the loss at Trianon. Furthermore, since they had a rigid concept of the nation, they placed a sign of equality between it and the state. This meant that in practice, the followers of *Geistesgeschichte* narrated the histories of ruling classes only, leaving out the masses, which in Baráth’s view, furnished the

elites with victories. This narrow view mirrored the elitism and lack of compassion of political liberalism, and its lost connection to large sections of the community which it governed.

The second school was that of “positivist” historians. He criticized them the most, for Baráth stated that they had misinterpreted the basic core of positivism in its Comtean form (his years in France convinced him of this). They were not analysts of history, as Comte was when he put forward his bold thesis of stadial history. The Hungarian positivists received a stilted version of positivism, from German sources. These historians, which were no more than emulators of Leopold von Ranke, had a rigid methodology, but utterly lacked theoretical interpretation or analytic desire. In the end, they amounted to nothing more than antiquarians, gathering facts and data, without any connection to the society that supported them. According to Baráth, this was akin, on the political level, to the chaotic organization which liberalism brought about, lacking vision and drive. Both schools were extremely inflexible when it came to revision of their methods and theories, and exhibited a backward mentality, safeguarding their own positions within academia. This was an overt criticism against not only the academic, but the political establishment. Academia, as politics and society in general, was decrepit and decaying, and faced a great fork in the road: to adapt to the newest developments in scholarship, or persist in its provincialism, and be consumed.

Baráth wanted to combat these lacunae in Hungarian historical scholarship via the introduction of what he perceived were the newest methods and theories in European scholarship. He understood Hungarian historical research as closely connected and embedded in a larger European context. This gave historiography and research a dynamism of its own, further strengthening the need for change; in essence, he introduced the idea of linear development into the vision of historiography. As we have seen above, he also gave to the history of historical

scholarship an individual dialectic. The historiography of “New Hungary” was to be a historiography that was up to date on the latest methods, themes and theory. The new themes he envisioned were the opening up of the field of study, via the inclusion of new objects of study: first and foremost, of the hitherto disenfranchised mass of the people. “The people” as Baráth understood them, were composed of the lower social strata, workers, but mainly the peasantry. The legacy of the populist authors of the 1930’s had certainly left its mark on his work, for he too wanted to bring back the peasantry, as an object of scientific inquiry. The people had an unique set of characteristics, which Baráth gathered under the umbrella-term of race. The racial characteristics of peoples and nations play decisively into historical development, in Baráth’s opinion. These concepts of the people and race he closely linked to another one: space and geography. The two were intertwined, and their combined characteristics assured historical development at the political and cultural level. This geographical determinism, reminiscent of Friedrich Ratzel (who probably served as a great influence for Baráth), stated that the potential of a certain nation was due to its biological traits, but only truly realized when placed in the correct geographical setting. The ability of a certain nation to maximize its racial potential by situating itself in the correct spatial setting was the key to success throughout history. In his later book, *The Philosophy of State Building in the Carpathian Basin*, he put forward a new geopolitical view of history; Hungarians were the best-situated nation in Europe, due to the unique characteristics of the Carpathian Basin. The Basin was the quintessential model of ideal geographic setting. As the title announced it, the correct philosophy of state building within this spatial context would propel the Hungarian nation to the status of leaders of Eastern and Central Europe.

The role of history as expressed by Baráth, was to create efficient scientific argument, which would correctly bolster the political option of the historian (which was already given by his desire to adhere to an “up-to-date” ideology). Gone was the objectivism of positivist historians, or even the illusion of “living through” history: the discipline was an exercise in politics. Its social role was that of an inspirer, teacher, and source for the development of present day politics, and its future development governed by the necessities of the community.

Conclusions

As the study has shown above, the conceptual apparatus, the political language of the Hungarian radical right of yesterday is formatted by a certain understanding of the evolution of time. This is most apparent in the propensity for historically-inspired rhetoric. This is due to the core of their ideology, which is a specific historical understanding of the world and self. The success of such a style of rhetoric, of an understanding of key concepts, such as nation, society, justice, et cetera can only come about under a specific set of circumstances. These circumstances include a conceptual world dominated by the right wing, and an overt historicisation of public speech. This was the situation in the interwar period, when leading Hungarian right wing parties openly pandered to historical fetishism.

As I have stated above, the concept of history in interwar Hungarian fascist thought may be characterized accordingly: firstly, it was governed by an elliptical scheme of development. This framework may also be described as teleological, for it stops at the fascist age, the maximum of historical development. It also sought to make the ancient community, the starting off point of national history, anew, with the means of modernity. It did not reject technology, or

other trappings of the modern age, just certain aspects of its spirit. The scheme traced historical development in both the national, and European contexts (for it tied the two rigorously together, rejecting parochialism), as a long series of episodes of decay. These were occasionally halted or interrupted by providential figures, who through their genius, managed to momentarily affirm the people, and its true necessities. This all lead up to the present state of affairs, which was dire. The initial determinism of the fascist scheme also reveals another duality, when closely scrutinized. The present offered two choices, a sort of a metaphorical bifurcation of fates: continuation of decay, through inactivity, and eventual death of the community, or success and rebirth, brought on by swift action and sacrifice.

This specific construction of the concept of history by fascist thinkers in the third and fourth decade of twentieth-century Hungary lead to an original definition of fascist ideology, and helped the movements gain electoral support. It aided them in defining themselves vis-à-vis the political establishment, and the other elements within Hungarian political life, by furnishing innovative ideological elements, which were easily adoptable by the populace.

Conclusions

Hungarian fascism developed from a very specific set of circumstances social, political and ideological. It was a product of a highly nationalized political scene, which was caught in a vicious inner circle, pushing it further and further to the fringes of the right wing. This tendency was compounded by the international developments, which ushered in the hegemony of Nazi Germany and the Axis powers. On the home front, mounting socio-economic pressures, the lack of proper social welfare and among the rural population, the working class and proper upward mobility overall led to a strong disenchantment with the establishment. The repression of the left wing by the regime due to the fears that the 1919 episode shall repeat itself, meant that nationalism formatted all means of expression and became one of the sine qua non building blocks of the political language. This caused the Hungarian fascist movements and parties to act both in their classical role as elements of the far right, but also filled the role of a mimetic left, due to the revolutionary nature of their discourse. The fascists promised a radical break with the past, and a material and spiritual rebirth of the entire nation, and at the same time, used the old radical right tropes of a strong state, leadership and nationalism. This inner irrationality, fused together with momentous populist slogans promised that to each the result they desired, by the Arrow Cross Party, meant that it became a catch-all political movement. The ideology, reflected in their discourses and practices, contained the basic elements of: social justice, charismatic leadership, integral nationalism and aggressive xenophobia, based on pseudo-scientific racial theories.

In the thesis, I have attempted to separate the main concepts into groups of ideas that are strongly interrelated. Thusly, my first sub-chapter deals with the various facets of the nation and their characterizations. These definitions may be put into two larger categories: the nation in the European and international context, and the nation within the boundaries of the Hungarian state. The first implied the integration of Hungary and the Hungarian nation within Hitler's New European Order, the stake being their future position. Hungarian fascism attempted the realization of two goals in its discursive output: it tried desperately to prove the worth of the Hungarian nation within a racist framework by co-opting some of its vocabulary (but without the rigid Nazi hierarchy of races, that considered Hungarians inferior), and tried to enter into a regional competition with other fascisms, to prove that the Hungarians could be more intensely fascist than them. Secondly, on the domestic landscape, Hungarian fascism utilized a unique blend of geopolitics and nationalism in order to reconstruct, in fascist tenets, the old Hungarian imperial ideology. It argued for Hungarian superiority, based on a mixture between biology and space. Hungarian fascism paid lip service to the nations and ethnic minorities living in the Carpathian basin (the once and future home of the Hungarian nation, in their opinion), supposedly proposing rights for them. In the end, I have shown that this was nothing more than an attempt to brutally and completely "solve" the question of a multi-national empire in a structural manner, through spatial displacement and forcible integration. Hungarian fascism also championed integral nationalism, and set as one of its goals the creation of a harmonious national community, which would bring about social peace by infusing the people with nationalism. This spiritual renewal would bring about transcendence, but there would be a terrible cost: the ejection of Jews and other minorities. Hungarian fascist discourse was steeped in anti-Semitism, which it instrumentalized in a number of issues: the social question, the issue of the changing of

the guard in politics, economic issues and so forth. The ideology operated via a conspiracy theory, which saw connections where there were none, and scapegoated Jews as the ultimate reason for all of Hungary's past and present problems. The crisis caused by the Jews brought the national body, the fascists argued, in an ultimate state of decay, a situation out of which it could emerge only by the action of a charismatic leader. The providential nature of this leader and the composition of his charisma constitutes the second part of my thesis, in which I attempted to show that this idea or narrative of leadership was often times stronger and counted for more than the actual qualities and physical presence of the political leader. One of the most important characteristics of this narrative is that it existed in a constant binomial with the concept of the people. This brings me to my third sub-chapter, in which I have analyzed the manner in which fascists defined society. Hungarian fascism attempted to present itself as a revolutionary ideology and political movement which would break with the past, and bring about social concord, through a radical reshaping of society. It proposed the complete elimination of the old elite and establishment, and wanted to rebuild the nation and society on the building blocks of two social classes: the peasantry and the workers. In order to seduce them, it adopted social demagoguery and a virulent critique of both capitalism and leftist ideologies (socialism and communism). This populist attitude meant that Hungarian fascism identified most strongly with the peasantry, considering it a repository of the most positive qualities of the nation, but at the same time, defined itself a socialist. This was due to the fact that it sourced many of its activists from the ranks of industrial workers and artisans; it presented itself as going back to "the true roots of socialism", before Marx, to Robert Owen and Louis Blanc⁴⁸⁹. The main drive of Hungarian fascism was to create a mass society in which martial order between classes would exist, and difference would be leveled. These concepts and ideas were bound together by a line

⁴⁸⁹ Péter Pósta, *Ellenfeleink* (Budapest: Könyv- és Lapkiadó R.T., n.d.), p. 77-78

of arguing that took on the form of a narrative, masquerading as a historical analysis or theorization. The concept of history and the fascist narrative of a revolt against history was the topic of my final sub-chapter. I endeavored to show the manner in which Hungarian fascist ideologues attempted to frame their politics in a larger, historical framework, insisting that the fascist revolution would be final, the upheaval that would end all of history.

The concepts all flow into one another, and are defined in relation to each other. For example, the fascist idea of social justice cannot be understood without the strong redistributive state, personified by the leader, or without anti-Semitism, which is utilized in economic terms: robbing the Jews of their wealth and redistributing it would have solved all of the economic troubles. The components all form a nexus, a matrix of concepts and ideas, which are put in motion by two important motors. These are two narratives, encapsulated in two myths: the myth of the conspiracy theory and the myth of palingenesis. The conspiracy theory furnishes the idea, the negative agent which puts the entire idea of national and social decay into motion: Jews were conspiring to corrupt national, and indeed all of world civilization by diverting modernity to their own needs, causing spiritual torpidity and so forth. This challenge must be met, fascists thought, by a vigorous rebirth movement, which would renew the nation in a revolutionary manner in all areas: spiritual, social, material and even spatial. I have treated these concepts as pieces of a nexus or matrix of ideas, which came together in a particular narrative to constitute fascist ideology.

The thesis endeavored to connect the Hungarian phenomenon with its international counterparts in two ways. Firstly, I utilized the theories of generic fascism provided by Roger Griffin and Georg Mosse in order to guide the research, and utilize Hungarian fascism as a case-study and a litmus test for these definitions. The idea of generic fascism (unpacked into a

narrative) proved to be highly valuable as a theoretical framework. Secondly, I attempted to trace, where possible, the international provenience of some of the concepts and ideas utilized, adapted and built into Hungarian fascist discourses and political languages. This showed the conscious connection that the fascists themselves had of being part of a larger, European political family of fascist parties, all the while attempting to maintain their own originality. I believe that a transnational, systematized and comparative approach to the study of political ideologies, especially in the modern age, is necessary, in order to avoid the pitfalls of exceptionalism-arguments and *Sonderweg* theories. Comparative studies produce usable analytical results, which go beyond national specificities and contexts, and are useful for social sciences.

This does not mean that fascism in Hungary was not specific to the national context. One of the ways in which Hungarian fascism differed from the other European manifestations is its hard populist edge, which contained a strong idea of a complete social revolution. It never lost the socialist element that German National Socialism lost with the elimination of Gottfried Feder and Gregor Strasser. This was due to its filling a specific niche within the Hungarian political spectrum: if it let go of its mimetic leftism, the party would have lost its mass support, as this was the only field in which it could compete with the government. The Unitary Party, later becoming the Hungarian Life Party, had its own legacy of radical right wing politics, and as the years went on, cannibalized more and more of the fascist parties' anti-Semitic and nationalist rhetoric. The two entered into a deadly competition, egged on by the rapid developments on the international stage, where the Axis was registering victory after victory and seemed to be on the verge of dominating Europe. More pressure than ever was put on the political formations to see which one could adopt the new ideology quicker. This meant that in the years between 1940 and 1943, Hungarian fascist ideology radicalized more and more, as it attempted to adopt and digest

an increasing amount of concepts and theories coming from without. Ultimately, this process of careening toward the right had dire consequences, pushing Hungary toward the darkest chapter of its history, which has to be laid bare before the reader, in order to never forget its consequences.

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Annexes

Annex I.

A short biographical dictionary of fascist politicians in Hungary

1. **Baky László** (Budapest., 1898. September. 13. – Budapest., 1946. March 29.) Was a Hungarian Gendarmerie Officer, and a fascist politician. He was of Calvinist faith. He graduated from the military academy at Pécs, then was trained as an officer in the Royal Gendarmerie Core. He served in the First World War in the 19th Pécs Infantry Division on the Russian front, earning the title of Warrant Officer Second Class, then Second Lieutenant, and ultimately Lieutenant. He was wounded on the Carpathian Front and was afterward decorated. After the war, he took part in the forming of the counter-revolutionary movement in Szeged, and was a member of the ill-famed white militia of Prónay Pál, which was well-known for its violent reprisals against the left.

He was then reinstated in the Gendarmerie, obtaining the title of Major in 1937. In the 1st of September 1938 he retired from service, at his own request. He immediately joined the fledgling Hungarian National Socialist Party-Hungarist Movement lead by Szálasi Ferenc, and quickly became one of its most important members. His work involved organization and Arrow Cross lobby among the gendarmerie and the army core, the party gaining many sympathizers in both departments because of his influence and activism. He was not involved in propagandistic or ideological matters. Within the Arrow Cross party he represented, alongside Ruskay Jenő, the militaristic faction, sympathetic towards government circles. Baky was elected to a seat in the Lower House of the Hungarian Parliament in the elections of 1939, on the Arrow Cross Coalition platform. He quarreled with Szálasi in 1941, and left the party. He went back to the service of the government, becoming State Secretary in the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the 24 of March 1944, in the government headed by germanophile Sztójay Döme. In this position he was instrumental in the deporting of Hungary's Jewish population toward concentration camps in Germany. He was removed from his position because of pressure by regent Horthy Miklos, but after the 1944 Arrow Cross coup he was reinstated. He was given the position of Head of the National Security Office, and given the task of setting up special military police detachments. He escaped from Hungary in 1945, but was captured, and extradited. He was tried by the People's Court on the charges of war crimes, found guilty and executed in 1946.

Selected works: none

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2. **Böszörmény Zoltán** (1893 January 5th, Zsidai -time of death unknown, possibly 1950's Germany) Was a fascist activist and politician, and an amateur poet and journalist. From a lowly social origin, he was a son of a bankrupt landowner. In his youth he worked a number of odd jobs, fought as a recruit in the war, and after 1919 he was close to the counter-revolutionary circles. He then studied at the University of Budapest (Faculty of law and administrative studies), where he formed the beginnings of his political base, in his position of leader of a number of student associations and fraternities. He published a number of volumes of poetry, to a mixed response, while working as a local clerk and journalist (most important of which was *My Blood and Altar*, published in 1930). He supposedly visited Germany in 1931, where he met Hitler and became a Nazi convert, although this information is unverifiable, and probably fictitious. On his return to Hungary he formed the first fascist party of any consequence, the Hungarian National Socialist Workers' Party (Nemzeti Szocialista Magyar Munkaspart). He also founded the party's official journal, the *National Socialist*. Their emblems were the swastika and the brown shirt, copied from the German original. After being indicted by the authorities for using for his political party symbols of a foreign state (in 1933), he changed the name of his political group to the Scythe Cross Popular Movement -Hungarian National Socialist Workers' Party (Kaszáskeresztes Népmozgalom- Nemzeti Szocialista Magyar Munkáspárt). The new

emblem featured four (mimicking a swastika), then two crossed scythes, with a skull at their joining, and a Turul bird grasping a sword (a traditional Hungarian martial symbol) superseding them on the exerga. He published the credo of his new party, entitled *The Ten Commandments of the Storm trooper*, which was a mix of highly ultra-nationalistic and anti-Semitic rhetoric, coupled with complete obedience to the leader himself. In this sense, he cultivated a strong leader cult for himself within the movement (styling himself as a lone genius, prophet and savior-figure), which was highly hierarchical, the inner circles of it could only be entered after ritualistic blood oaths. The party featured regular party members, local leaders of cells, and storm trooper formations modeled after the S.A. He was highly fascinated with real or imagined Turanic magical rituals, which he incorporated into his poetry and political lexicon. Another feature of his ideology was a rampant populism, and anti-urban sentiment, and an idealization of peasantry and rural forms of life. The party also diffused an anti-aristocratic and anti-capitalist rhetoric. He envisioned a bloody revolution, enacted by the disenfranchised and led by his storm trooper elite. After this “cleansing” of Hungarian administration and society, a dictatorship would be set up with himself as leader, which would provide “everyone the right and obligation to work” and “bring about order”. The details of his future plans for the state and society are somewhat hazy. The party motto was: “Long live Böszörmény! We have had enough!”. The actual number of members in his party are unclear, but it is clear that it was significant enough to get him to be noticed by the press and public eye, but not enough to gain him even a single seat in the elections of 1935, despite running in 12 counties. Electoral gerrymandering on the side of the authorities probably

contributed to this result. After this defeat, Böszörmény committed to a revolutionary road to power, and in May 1936 organized a march on Budapest. This was an utter failure, and his few thousand followers were dispersed by the gendarmerie and arrested en masse. After the trial in October 1937 his party was disbanded. He was given a light sentence and escaped to Germany in 1938, where he lived for the remainder of his life.

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3. **Csia Sándor** (Hegybánya, 1894. február 4. – Budapest, 1946. március 19.) Was a Hungarian fascist politician and activist. He was of Calvinist faith. Descended from an old Szekler noble family, he graduated from the Calvinist academy of Kolozsvár, then went on to study political science at the University of Szeged. He received a Ph.D. in political and administrative studies from this institution. He worked for the Hungarian Railroad Company as an administrative clerk. He served in the war on the Italian and Russian fronts, receiving the rank of reserve Second Lieutenant of the 2nd

Brassó Infantry Regiment. He was wounded and captured in 1916 by the Italians. After the war he was awarded medals for bravery and conferred the title of First Lieutenant. In the time of the communist revolution, he worked closely with right-wing officer's circles, and he returned to his job in the railroad company. He met Szalasi Ferenc in 1933, and quickly became one of his closest associates and confidants. He co-founded the Party of National Will with Szalasi in 1935. He served as one of Szalasi's alternates in command throughout the many manifestations of his political party. In 1939, he was elected to a seat in the Lower House of the parliament on an Arrow Cross Coalition platform, a position he held until 1944. He was named as a member of the three-person regency in October 16th 1944 by Szalasi. After the war he was tried by the People's Court and executed.

Selected works: none

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4. **Endre László** (Abony, 1895. January 1. – Budapest., 1946. March. 28.) He was Hungarian fascist politician and activist. Born into an influential family, his grandfather was also a politician in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and his father was a county judge. He earned a degree in legal studies before the war. He served in the First World War, and was decorated a number of times. He became a county

judge in 1918, but had to abandon his position because of the Romanian Army's occupation. He then became involved in the counter-revolutionary movement of Szeged. He took part in a number of secret and semi-secret right-wing militant organizations, such as MOVE (The Hungarian National Defense Association), Ébredő Magyarok Egyesülete (Union of Awakening Hungarians), Kettőskereszt Vérszövetség (The Double-cross Blood Union) and EKSZ (Etelköz Szövetség-Etelköz Society). He also took part in the paramilitary clashes in western Hungary alongside the militia of Prónay Pál. Due to the influence of these political groups and his family's connection, he was elected county judge of Gödöllő in late 1919. Very early in his career he became notorious for his anti-Semitic stance, and when he was promoted to head county judge of Gödöllő in 1924 (a position he held until 1937), he used his position to fill the local state apparatus with like-minded individuals, and frequently judged against Jewish plaintiffs. Endre was a well-known propagator of anti-semitic theory, and is known to have met in the 1920's with Hitler and Henry Ford. He also suggested forceful sterilization for the nomad gypsy population. He entered into political life in 1937, founding the Socialist Party of Racial Defense, and headquartered it in Andrassy ut 60 (later the notorious House of Loyalty). This political group was merged in the August of the same year with Szálasi Ferenc's Party of National Will, through the so-called "Life Pact". In September of 1937, he was elected deputy prefect of Pest county, and left Szalasi's party. From his position, he continued his reprisals against left-wing worker's associations, and Jews. He called for the expulsion of Jews from Hungary in 1943. Endre became Administrative State Secretary in the Ministry for Internal Affairs in April of 1944, within the government

headed by Germanophile Sztójay Döme. He played a crucial role in the deportation of the Hungarian Jews to concentration camps in Germany, and the setting up of ghettos in the major cities. In the 29th of October 1944, Szalasi appointed him as governmental deputy for the evacuation of war zones. After 1945, he escaped to Austria, but was captured and extradited. He was sentenced to death by the People's Court.

Selected works: none

Bibliography: Halász Sándor (ed), Országgyűlési almanach, Budapest : Athenaeum ; 1886-1940, Kenyeres Ágnes, Magyar életrajzi lexicon, Budapest : Arcanum, 2003, Nicolas Nagy-Talavera, The Green shirts and others: a History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972; Lacko Miklos, Arrow cross men, National Socialists, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiado. 1969

5. **Festetics Sándor, gróf** (Dég, 1882. máj. 31. – Balatonrendes, 1956. szept. 12.) Was a Hungarian aristocrat, great landowner, fascist politician and activist. He was of Catholic faith. A scion of an important aristocratic family, he studied law at the University of Budapest, and gained the title of Ph.D. in political science at the same institution. He served in the Austro-Hungarian army and embarked on a military career, that would see him earn the title of Lieutenant in the Austro-Hungarian Cavalry corps. After finishing his military service, he studied at the Ecole Politique in Paris to become a diplomat. He then worked in the foreign office of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Vienna, and was then stationed as a diplomat in the legation at St. Petersburg, where he remained until the outbreak of the war. In this position he earned lifetime membership in the Hungarian Upper House of Parliament (or House

of Magnates). After serving as an officer for the entire duration of the war, he earned the title of major in the cavalry forces. He returned to Hungary at the head of an intact division from Italy, and put his influence behind the new democratic revolution and Karolyi Mihaly's government (who was also his brother-in-law). He was assigned the post of minister of war on the 29th of December 1918. In this position he built up the Hungarian army as an administrator, and also repressed the communists. After the communist seizure of power, he was forced to flee to the countryside, only to emerge when the revolution was put down. He then retired from active political life, to his estates, founding various farmer's associations and banks in western Hungary. The elections of 1931 saw him come out of his prolonged hiatus, and he ran for a spot in the Hungarian Lower House on a Unitary Party (governmental) platform. He motivated his return by the dire economic and social crisis which had gripped the nation. After 1933, he became increasingly convinced that a new political and ideological phenomenon, fascism, would transform European existence, and authored a series of articles on this topic in his journal entitled *Mezőföld*. Shortly thereafter he left the Unitary Party, and founded his own political movement, the Hungarian National Socialist Party. The party was among the first to prominently use the Arrow Cross as its symbol and the green shirt as uniform. In this political party, Palfy Fidel was his onetime underling, then associate. His ideology was a soft version of fascism, especially on economic and social issues, where he strongly underlined the importance of the right of personal property. He was also a less vociferous anti-Semite than his peers, while maintaining the same level of ultranationalist rhetoric. He was a strongly against what he perceived as the decadent elements of Western

modernity, ranging from culture to economics, and instead opting for a strongly statist approach. He also attempted to create for himself within the movement a cult of personality, with mixed results. After 1934, he created a loose association with the formations of Zoltan Mesko and Palffy Fidel, calling themselves the “three Leaders”. Dubbed by some historians the “National Socialist Directorate”, it was an attempt to create some unity within the emerging national-socialist parties, and to consolidate them in the eyes of the electorate. The coalition soon fell to internecine struggles, Festetics officially being ousted on the accusation that he “was not anti-Semitic enough”. Despite this setback, marshalling a strong local support on the large estates he owned in the counties of Western Hungary (Enying), he was reelected to office on a national-socialist platform in the elections of 1935. He was to remain at the head of his party, enjoying some local successes until 1938, when most of his followers joined Szalasi Ferenc’s Arrow Cross Party-Hungarist movement. After the elections of 1939 he retired from politics. After the Second World War, he was sentenced to five years in prison by the People’s Court, afterward being interned until 1953.

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Rogger H. , Eugen Weber, *The European Right. A Historical profile*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965

6. Fiala Ferenc (Kolozsvár, 1904. December 19. – Saarbrücken, 1988. September 14.)
 Was a journalist, sportsman and fascist activist. He graduated from the Budapest Technical University, receiving a diploma as an architect. He then continued his postgraduate studies in Munich and Paris. He was also an active sportsman for athletic club MAC, and a fencing champion. On his return, he ventured into journalism, and became the political news editor for the *Magyarsag* (Hungarianness) daily. He held this position between 1932 and 1934, afterward becoming a journalist for the newspaper *Uj Magyarsag* (New Hungarianness). Fiala was one of the founders of the Arrow Cross movement, being present at its inception, and after 1935 became responsible for matters regarding the press in all of Szalasi Ferenc's organizations. After 1938 he was overshadowed by the activity of Hubay Kalman, but remained a pivotal member within the organization. From 1944, he was again the head of the Arrow Cross press machinery, editor of the journal *Osszetartas* (Solidarity), and chief political columnist for the other two major publications, *Pesti Ujsag* (Pest Daily) and *Magyarsag*. He was sentenced to death in 1946 by the People's Court, but his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. He escaped from prison during the events of October 1956, and emigrated to Western Germany. From there he joined the Arrow Cross émigré network, and frequently published articles in their publications. He also wrote a series of books chronicling the history of the Arrow Cross movement, and criticisms against the communist regime of Hungary.

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Tóth Tibor, A Hungarista mozgalom emigrációtörténete, Debrecen: Multiplex Media-
Debrecen University Press, 2008

7. **Hubay Kálmán** (Jászapáti, 1902. April. 3. – Budapest., 1946. June 26.) Was a journalist, politician and fascist activist. He was of Calvinist faith, and a member of a very old noble family, attested as far back as the High Middle Ages. Graduated from the Calvinist gymnasium in Miskolc, and then went on to study law at the Lutheran Academy in the same town. He was already a budding journalist and publicist in his university years, and quickly made a name for himself as a talented and popular reporter in the Miskolc dailies. In 1932, he was called upon by right-wing politician, the then- prime-minister Gyula Gömbös to aid in the forming of a new newspaper, entitled *Függetlenség* (Independence). It debuted early in the year 1933, and under his editorship quickly became one of the most popular right-wing publications of the interwar period. A few years later, he helped found the *Esti Újság* (Evening Newspaper), another very popular right-wing journal sympathetic to government circles. He was thus one of the most important cogs in the state-run propaganda apparatus by 1936-37. At this time, he was the co-editor of a number of popular journals, and regularly authored articles in a host of others. His stance toward government policy slowly started to shift from supportive to critical, and in 1937 he declared himself a believer in the doctrine of national socialism. Running on a Racial Defense Party platform, he acquired a seat in the Lower House in the elections of 1938. Initially he stayed independent, but soon succumbed to the overtures of Ferenc

Szalasi, and after uniting a few smaller national-socialist groups, lead them into Szalasi's movement. Alongside Rátz Kálmán, he refounded the Arrow Cross Party under the name Hungarian National Socialist Party-Hungarist Movement, but this was too quickly banned. Owing to his recognition and his journalistic skills, he took control of the Arrow Cross party propaganda apparatus, and molded it into a highly efficient tool to convey the message of the party. New elements were introduced, such as the messianic glorification of an incarcerated Szalasi, slogans such as *Kitartás!* (Endurance!) theatrical politics involving marches and welfare work by the activists. He also made heavy use of imagery and symbols, introducing many of the elements which historians consider archetypical of the Arrow Cross movement. Under his able hands, the Arrow Cross Party was transformed from a small political group with some notoriety into a mass party, with almost half a million adherents. He was also instrumental in the negotiations which formed the Arrow Cross Coalition in the elections of 1939, and recorded its greatest success, with 31 mandates becoming the largest opposition party in parliament. After the incarceration of Szalasi on the grounds of treason, he became the de facto leader of the party, reforming it twice under different names until 1940. When Szalasi was released from prison, he became his second in command until 1942, when differences in opinion forced him to leave and join with Pálffy Fidél in founding an new party, the United Hungarian National Socialist Party. This was later swallowed up by Imrédy Béla's political circle. After the October 1944 Arrow Cross coup d'état, he joined in the governing coalition of Szalasi, and was given a supervisory position in the Ministry of Culture. After the war, he was tried by the People's Court and executed.

Selected works: Hubay Kálmán, *Két forradalom*, Budapest: Centrum könyvkiadó, 1941; Hubay Kálmán, *Három interpelláció*, Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Szocialista Párt- Hungarista Mozgalom, 1939

Bibliography: Halász Sándor (ed), *Országgyűlési almanach*, Budapest : Athenaeum ; 1886-1940, Kenyeres Ágnes, *Magyar életrajzi lexicon*, Budapest : Arcanum, 2003; Karsai Elek, *Szalai Naploja. Nyilasmozgalom a II vilaghaboru idejen*, Budapest: Kossuth Konyvkiado. 1978

8. **Málnási Ödön** (born: Brassó, 1898. jún. 28. – died: Vienna, 1970. febr. 17.) Was a Hungarian right wing politician, historian and publicist. He was of Catholic faith. He studied to become a priest in the Catholic Seminary at Eger. Served in the First World War, afterwards joining the communist revolution in 1919, and held a position of first lieutenant in the Hungarian Red Army, and fought in the campaign against Czechoslovakia . After Horthy's rise to power, he was transferred to the newly-formed national army, and conferred the title of vitéz. He then resumed his studies, obtaining a Ph.D. in philosophy in 1924, and one in legal and political sciences. He then returned to Eger, and while employed as gymnasium professor authored a number of works on Church and Hungarian history. He joined the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party, where he worked as an activist. His major work, *An Honest History of the Hungarian Nation*, appeared in 1937 under the guise of a left-wing publishing house, causing a great stir. He was sentenced to one year in prison in Szeged because of the ideas expressed in it. He then joined Szalai Ferenc's Arrow Cross Movement, and quickly rose through the ranks to become its main ideologue. After his release, he quarreled with Szalai on ideological matters, and was cast out

from the party on the grounds of “anarchism”. He then became an open critic of the party, and joined the Volksbund movement, owing to his Saxon roots. After the Arrow Cross coup d’état in oktober 1944 he rejoined the ranks of the Arrow Cross Party. In 1945, he fled to Germany, where he was captured by American troops and extradited to Hungary. The People’s Court sentenced him to ten years at hard labor. After his release, he tried to emigrate to the United States, but was denied a green card, and settled in Vienna, where he became a publicist for the Arrow Cross émigrés. His ideological make-up consisted of a combination of anti-semitism, ultra-nationalism, peasant populism and an unique racial historical dialectic. In his magnum opus, *An honest history of the Hungarian Nation*, he worked out a theorem according to which Hungarian history was a result of the struggle between two opponent forces. These two groups were the component parts of the Hungarian race. The first one belonged to “true” Hungarians, whom Malnasi identified as “Ugric Magyars”, and owing to their rustic, but forceful characteristics, formed the bulk of Hungarian population around the time of the conquest of the Carpathian Basin. Their social position was always that of lower classes. The second element was that of warrior-like, aristocratic “Türkie Magyars”, who became leaders of the Hungarians, and set them on the path of conquest of the plains of Pannonia. The noble characteristics of this group notwithstanding, their craving for wealth and power also lead to a propensity to bargain with alien elements and bring about disasters throughout Hungarian history. Through a complicated maze of reasoning, Malnasi identified the fruitful and successful times in Hungarian history with those in which the country possessed leaders who were either of Ugric descent or respected their

rights. The aristocracy and urbanites, in an alliance with foreign elements, had caused a slow decay of the Hungarian national body and state, stretching back to the late Middle Ages, with brief episodes of Ugric reaffirmation, such as the Hungarian struggles against the Habsburgs. This teleological construct led to the trauma of Trianon, and the contemporary decadence of society. Malnási's analysis was curiously grounded in the material aspect of history, with rich details on relationships between social classes (peasantry, aristocracy, secular priesthood, bureaucracy), but his theoretical superstructure was a moralizing and spiritual one. He identified the material improvement of the peasantry and the disenfranchised (coupled with the expulsion of foreign elements) as the key to solving all of Hungary's current problems. Within the Arrow Cross party he can be identified as one of the prominent members of its left wing.

Selected works: Málnási Ödön, *Feladatok*, Budapest : Könyv- és Lapkiadó, 1942;

Málnási Ödön, *A magyar nemzet őszinte története*, Budapest : Cserépfalvi, 1937

Bibliography: Halász Sándor (ed), *Országgyűlési almanach*, Budapest : Athenaeum ;

1886-1940, Kenyeres Ágnes, *Magyar életrajzi lexicon*, Budapest : Arcanum, 2003,

Nicolas Nagy-Talavera, *The Green shirts and others: a History of Fascism in Hungary*

and Romania, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972; Karsai Elek, *Szalasi Naploja*.

Nyilasmozgalom a II vilaghaboru idejen, Budapest: Kossuth Konyvkiado. 1978

9. **Matolcsy Mátyás** (Budapest., 1905. febr. 24. – Budapest., 1953. jún. 20.) Was an economist, publicist and fascist politician and activist. He was of Calvinist faith. He graduated from a Calvinist high school in Budapest, and then studied to become an industrial engineer. He then also obtained a diploma in economics and was awarded

the title of Ph.D. in the same field. After his doctorate, he studied at the London School of Economics and also received a number of scholarships which saw him work and study in the major universities of the United States, France and Germany. On his return, he was employed as a researcher in the Hungarian Economical Institute. Here he worked on the economics of agriculture and produced a number of well-received scholarly material. His work entitled *The National Income of Hungary* was especially well received abroad and published at Cambridge University Press. In 1935 he embarked on a political career, and was elected to the position of representative in the Lower House of Parliament on an Unitary Party platform. He published a number of books (*The Plan of the New Land Reform-1935*, *New Life on Hungarian Soil-1938*) in which he espoused the cause of small landed farmers and put forward plans to reform the relationships of land ownership by heavy-handed top-down legislation and political action. He brought these plans to debate in parliament as well, and entered into a number of protracted discursive exchanges with major landowners such as count Alfonz Pallavicini. Because of his radical populist stance he was forced to leave the Unitary Party, and remained for a while an independent representative. In 1938 he joined the ranks of the Independent Smallholders' Party of Tibor Eckhardt, but soon left it with five of his colleagues and founded his own political formation. He began publishing his own journal entitled *Magyarság Útja* (*The Hungarians' Road*), and from 1939 he reformed his party for the elections and won a mandate in the lower house on an Arrow Cross Front platform. He then became close to Ferenc Szalasi and fellow luminary Kalman Hubay and joined their formation, as one of the leaders of the technocratic, moderate faction within the

Arrow Cross Party (dubbed by some historians the “salon” fascists). He continued his publishing on various topics concerning rural economics and social reform (*My Struggle for the Land-1939, The Agrarian Policy of the Axis States-1941*) but also anti-Semitic propaganda publications (*The Way of the Jews-1941*). His ideology was one of a strong ultranationalism, with anti-Semitic and populist overtones. He was convinced the peasants constituted the life force in the body of the nation and the material with which the country might improve its military, economic and political condition. Therefore, the improvement of their material condition and social standing was imperative. This was to be achieved, according to Matolcsy, by a revolutionary transformation of the state, through some sort of dictatorship. The state would then act as a political agent, making use of precise measurements and statistics prepared by specialists of the field (such as himself), would transform the exploitation of land, regroup and reorder land ownership, concentrating on small holdings. He associated his concern for the peasantry with a sort of demographic obsession (present in many of his contemporary fascist thinkers), that the country would be depopulated and swallowed up by the more populous neighboring nations. In 1940, he joined Szalasi as he reformed the movement to be called the Arrow Cross Party-Hungarist Movement, and remained a member until 1942. In this year, despite the party ban, he was present in the festivities consecrating Horthy Istvan as Deputy Regent, and left the party to join the right-wing Hungarian Life Party. After 1945, he was sentenced to ten years imprisonment by the People’s Court, and died while incarcerated.

Selected works: Matolcsy Mátyás, *A zsidók útja*, Budapest: Magyarság Útja/ Centrum könyvkiadó, 1941; Matolcsy Mátyás, *Föld,Nép,Élet. A tengelyhatalmak*

agrárpolitikája és a magyar feladatok, Budapest: Centrum könyvkiadó, 1941;
 Matolcsy Mátyás, Az új földreform munkaterve, Budapest: Révai, 1935; Matolcsy
 Mátyás, Harcom a földért, Budapest: Magyarság Útja, 1939

Bibliography: Halász Sándor (ed), Országgyűlési almanach, Budapest : Athenaeum ;
 1886-1940, Kenyeres Ágnes, Magyar életrajzi lexicon, Budapest : Arcanum, 2003;
 Lacko Miklos, Arrow cross men, National Socialists, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiado.
 1969; Levai, Horogkereszt, Kaszaskereszt, Nyilaskereszt, Budapest: Muller Karoly
 Konyvkiado. 1945

10. **Meskó Zoltán** (Baja, 1883. márc. 12. – Nagybaracska, 1959. jún. 10.) He was a politician, journalist, and fascist activist. He was of Catholic faith. He graduated from the military lyceum at Morvafehértemplom, and then studied at the military academy in Vienna. He was awarded the rank of Second Lieutenant of the Austro-Hungarian Army and became a reservist in 1910. He dedicated his time to working in various organizations in the benefit of smallholders, and became the head secretary of the Smallholders' Insurance Cooperative. He then served in the First World War on the Italian front, and was decorated for his performance in the Dolomite mountains. In 1917 he was elected to the Lower House of Parliament on an Independence Party platform. After the dissolution of this party, he served as főispán (prefect) of Baja, and then fled to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to escape the communist revolution of 1919. He was interned there for three months by the south Slav authorities, and after being released made his way to Szeged to join the counter-revolutionary forces of Horthy. He served in the government of Friedrich István as secretary of state for smallholders, and agriculture, respectively. In 1920 he became

political secretary of state in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a position he held until 1921. He was one of the early members of the Smallholders Party, even organizing some the affairs around its founding. He was also a founding member of the National Peasant Society. He was elected to the Lower House on a Smallholder Party platform, and then switched to a Unitary Party platform, after the Smallholders were engulfed by the latter. In the Smallholder Party he held the position of executive staff president. After a number of his proposals, such as the taxing of wartime profiteers wealth by 80 per cent, and the raising of the land tax, he joined the parliamentary opposition. He then came back to the governmental platform in 1927, but continuously agitated for land and welfare reforms, and took a stance against monopolies. In the same year, he founded the popular daily *Pesti Újság* (Journal of Pest) and its supplement, the *Nemzet Szava* (Word of the Nation). Initially an agrarian publication, it transformed into the most popular fascist newspaper of the interwar period, after Mesko's exit from the political scene being owned by the Arrow Cross Party as its version of the *Völkischer Beobachter*. He also founded the National Smallholders Front and the Society for the Hungarianization of Names. He was one of the early adopters of fascism in Hungary, and founded his own Hungarian National Socialist Peasant and Worker's Party in June 16th 1932. This was done on a background of rising national-socialist strength in Germany and the loss of Mesko's faith in the Smallholder's Party and the establishment's willingness to help the lower classes. His articles in his journals at this time are full of lamentations about the dire situation of the country, and most importantly, the peasantry, which Mesko saw as the most important part of society. After the founding of his party, he began styling himself as a fascist-style

leader, attempting to forge a cult of personality between his followers, even appearing in before parliament in Hitler-style mustache and sporting a swastika. The outward style at this point in time of his movement was a mimicry of the various details of German and Italian fascist movements (swastika as a symbol, brown shirt, roman salute). He believed, as many of his fascist contemporaries, that a new fascist revolution will occur, sweeping away the decadent vestiges of what he dubbed “liberal-democracy and capitalism”, and that a new European world order will emerge. Although never before an outspoken anti-Semite, after his fascist turn he quickly adopted an anti-Semitic rhetoric. The peculiarity of his style of fascism was his strong conviction that the material and spiritual improvement of the peasantry was needed in order to enact the fascist revolutionary transformation of society. His brand of populism was exceptionally fervent, as was his anti-urban sentiment. After harassment by the authorities and accusations of mimetism in the press, he adopted the green shirt and the Arrow Cross as symbols (credited by historians as the first to do so). In 1934, he entered into a political pact with Sandor Festetics’ and Palfy Fidel’s fascist groups, the three campaigning together and calling themselves “the three leaders”. This pact would not last long, and Mesko failed to regain his seat in parliament in the elections of 1935, and 1938. After 1945, he was given a lifetime sentence by the People’s Court. He was amnestied in 1956, but died shortly thereafter.

Selected works: ifj. Meskó Zoltán, Nyilaskereszttel a magyar föld népéért , n.e., unknown; Meskó Zoltán, A magyarság hivatása, Budapest : Nemzet Szava, 1940

Bibliography: Halász Sándor (ed), Országgyűlési almanach, Budapest : Athenaeum ; 1886-1940, Kenyeres Ágnes, Magyar életrajzi lexicon, Budapest : Arcanum, 2003,

Nicolas Nagy-Talavera, *The Green shirts and others: a History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972; Macartney C.A. , October 15th. *A History of Modern Hungary part I*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 1956; Istvan Deak, *Hungary in Rogger H. , Eugen Weber, The European Right. A Historical profile*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965

11. **Pálffy Fidél, gróf** (Pozsonyszentgyörgy, 1895. may. 6. – Budapest., 1946. march. 2.)

He was of Hungarian politician, landowner, fascist activist and publicist. He was of Catholic faith. He is one of the few fascist politicians of continuous notoriety from the outset of the movements until their downfall in 1945. The scion of a great landowning family, he followed a traditional pattern of education, graduating from the Ludovika military academy as a career officer. In 1919 he served as a contact between the French Entente Armies stationed in Hungary and the counter-revolutionary army of Horthy. Decommissioned in 1920, he moved to his estate, now found in Czechoslovakia. Soon afterward, he sold his estates there and purchased new ones in Hungary. In the early 1930's, his financial situation had become dire due to the worldwide economic crisis, and he decided to enter politics on a national-socialist platform. In 1932, he joined Mesko Zoltan's fledgling National Socialist Party, but left it within a year to found his own. His new party, called the United National Socialist Party-Arrow Cross Front, had at times allied itself with gróf Festetics' and Mesko Zoltan's formations, and at other times rivaled them for a larger piece of the fascist-leaning electorate. In 1939, his party joined the Arrow Cross coalition and managed to gain 11 seats in the Lower House, however, his mandate was revoked by authorities. In 1940, he unified his party with Szalasi Ferenc's Arrow Cross Party, but

left it a year later in order to re-found his own party. He then joined Imredy Bela's fascistoid Party of Hungarian Renewal with a number of his sympathizers. He was a staunch germanophile, and maintained close ties with the SS. After the Arrow Cross seizure of power in October 1944, he rejoined the Arrow Cross Party and gained a mandate as Minister of Agriculture within the Arrow Cross cabinet, a position he officially held until the end of the war. He was extradited from abroad in 1945. Found guilty of collaborating with the Nazis by the People's Court, he was executed in 1946. The main elements of his political ideology consist of ultranationalism, anti-semitism and populism. He had a very hard stance concerning the reform of the financial market, and authored a number of books and articles concerning the issue of land reform in Hungary. He considered the peasantry (and to a lesser extent, the working class) as the true repository of Hungarian ethnic and national values, contrasted to the "mercantilist", cosmopolitan, individualist, capitalist value-set of liberalism residing in urban centers. In his works, he expressed the view that capitalism and communism were two facets of the same problem, the first causing the second, and both eating away at the body of the nation, erasing the national conscience of the community. Therefore, he favored the amelioration of the material needs of the lower classes under the guise of a strong dictatorship, which would also enact a cultural revolution in Hungary.

Selected works: Pálffy Fidél, Pillanatfelvételek a nagy korok fordulásai küszöbén, Budapest: Egyesült Magyar Nemzetiszocialista Párt, 19(3?)

Bibliography: Halász Sándor (ed), Országgyűlési almanach, Budapest : Athenaeum ; 1886-1940, Kenyeres Ágnes, Magyar életrajzi lexicon, Budapest : Arcanum, 2003,

Nicolas Nagy-Talavera, *The Green shirts and others: a History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972; Macartney C.A. , October 15th. *A History of Modern Hungary part I*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 1956; Istvan Deak, *Hungary in Rogger H. , Eugen Weber, The European Right. A Historical profile*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965

12. **Ráttkay Radich Kálmán** (Záhony, 1894. September 30. – München, 1974. June 28.)

He was a journalist, publicist and fascist activist. After serving in the First World War as an enlisted private, he graduated from the Budapest University, with a degree in law, later receiving a Ph.D. in the same field. He was a member of Horthy's National Army between 1919 and 1921. From 1921 onwards, he embarked on a career in journalism, becoming the director of newspapers such as *Magyar Falu* (Hungarian Village, between 1921-1938), *Nemzeti Élet* (National Life, 1935–38), *Magyarság Útja* (Road of Hungarianness, 1938–39) szerk.-je, and *Magyarság* (1939–44). His initial ideological stance of nationalism mixed with populism gave way to fascist sympathies around 1933, when he authored a number of works praising the Third Reich. His book entitled *Modern Országépítés* (Modern State-Building: a Comprehensive Plan), which appeared in 1933, envisioned a rationalized, ultra-nationalistic, centralized state apparatus, which would control and mediate almost every aspect of life for its citizenry. Even marriage and the health of the couple would fall under strict supervision. Most of his rhetoric was adapted from a German Nazi model, and he expressed his admiration for the German model in his works *Aki megmentette Európát* (The man who saved Europe, 1940) and *Európa és Magyarország a Nemzetiszocializmus útján* (Europe and Hungary on the road to

National Socialism, 1941). He joined the Arrow Cross movement around 1938, and was one of its chief advocates and publicists for the entire period of its existence. He escaped to Austria in 1945, and became one of the major figures among Arrow Cross émigrés, frequently publishing reports and articles in journals such as Új Magyarság (in Sao Paulo, co-editor), Új Hungáriá, Hídfe, Hídverők, Duna , and Magyar Egység. Selected works: Ráttkay R. Kálmán, Európa és Magyarország a nemzetiszocializmus útján, Budapest: Centrum könyvkiadó, 1941; Ráttkay R. Kálmán, Modern országépítés, Budapest: Hajdú Dénes, 1933

Bibliography: Halász Sándor (ed), Országgyűlési almanach, Budapest : Athenaeum ; 1886-1940, Kenyeres Ágnes, Magyar életrajzi lexicon, Budapest : Arcanum, 2003, Nicolas Nagy-Talavera, The Green shirts and others: a History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972

13. **Ráttkay Kálmán** (Komárom, 1888. August 10. – Switzerland, 1951). He was a Hungarian army officer, fascist politician and publicist. He was of Calvinist faith. He graduated from the Ludovica Military Academy, and fought in World War I as First Lieutenant of the First Cavalry Division of the Austro-Hungarian Army. He was decorated for his bravery, and was wounded multiple times during the war. He was captured by the Russians, and fought alongside the Red Army against the Czech Legion (according to his own account-he authored a book on the history of the Czech Legion). After the collapse, he took part in the founding of many patriotic and right-wing associations, the most important of which was MOVE (The Hungarian National Defense Association). He was jailed in February 1919 by the democratic Károlyi government for attempting a military coup. After his release, he was quite active in

the MOVE and other irredentist organizations. After 1930, he entered into an open conflict with the governmental policy and briefly sympathized with left-wing circles. He soon returned to favor Gyula Gömbös once again, after his rise to power, and gained a seat in the Lower House of parliament under the aegis of his party. While serving as a representative, he also gained a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Debrecen. He also authored a number of books on historical and economical topics. In 1938, as the Unitary Party was losing adherents, he joined the Arrow Cross movement, at this time called the Hungarist Party. After its ban in 1939, he joined fellow fascist politician Hubay Kálmán to create the Hungarian National Socialist Party-Hungarist Movement. He gained a mandate in the elections of 1939 under the colors of Szalasi Ferenc and Hubay's Arrow Cross Coalition. He left the Arrow Cross Party-Hungarist Movement in 1941, and with secret government backing, founded a rival political organization, called the Independent Hungarian Socialist Party. Before the outbreak of hostilities with the Soviets, he visited the USSR in a failed attempt to secure commercial and diplomatic ties to Hungary. In 1944 he was arrested by the occupying German forces, and transferred to the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp (as punishment for his anti-german stance as leader of the Independent Hungarian Socialist Party). In September of the same year he was freed, and returned to Hungary. He was forced to emigrate to Switzerland in 1948, where he died.

Selected works: Rátz Kálmán, Imrédy Béla, Jaross B., A magyar megújulás pártja: Program, Budapest: 1944; Rátz Kálmán, Magyarország és zsidóság, Budapest : Centrum Ny., 194?

Bibliography: Halász Sándor (ed), Országgyűlési almanach, Budapest : Athenaeum ; 1886-1940, Kenyeres Ágnes, Magyar életrajzi lexicon, Budapest : Arcanum, 2003

14. **Ruszkay (Ranzerberger) Jenő** (Budapest., 1887. January 1.–Budapest., 1946. June 22.) He was a Hungarian military officer and fascist politician. He was of Catholic faith. A career officer, he fought in World War I and attained the rank of Major General. After 1922 and until 1924, he operated as a diplomat, helping set up the Hungarian embassy in Ankara. Afterwards, he served as military lecturer and attaché to the embassy until October 1924. In late 1924 and until 1925 he served in the same position in Sofia. In the period between 1933 and 1935 he served as the head of the Hungarian Aerial Defense units. He was somewhat forcefully discharged because of his foray into politics in the 1st of May 1940. He joined the Arrow Cross Party-Hungarist movement in the September of the same year. He was tasked by Szalasi to supervise the party's diplomatic affairs and external relationships, as well as use his contacts in the military. He held this position until February the 23rd 1942, during which time he represented the group of government-friendly (suspected by some historians to be double agents) national-socialists within the Arrow Cross Party . Ruszkay made a number of overtures to secure an audience for Szalasi at the prime-minister, with Imredy Bela, in order to merge his fascistoid Hungarian Renewal Party with the Arrow Cross, and with prince Albrecht, in order to secure Nazi ties. All of these attempts to make the Arrow Cross Party adopt a more friendly attitude towards the establishment failed, because of Szalasi's intransigence. He left the party in 1942. After the 1944 coup d'état, he was reinstated as Major General in the Hungarian Army (November 6th), and put in charge of setting up the Hungarian divisions of the

SS. He was made SS-Obergruppenführer of the Waffen SS in February the 1st 1945. After the end of the war, he was captured by American troops, extradited to Hungary, where he was tried and executed by the People's Court.

Selected works: none

Bibliography: Kenyeres Ágnes, Magyar életrajzi lexicon, Budapest : Arcanum, 2003;Ruszkay Jenő at the Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Center Database, <http://hdke.hu/tudastar/enciklopedia/ruszkay-jeno,2010.07.15.>; Karsai Elek, Szalasi Naploja. Nyilasmozgalom a II vilaghaboru idejen, Budapest: Kossuth Konyvkiado. 1978

15. **Szálasi Ferenc** (Kassa, 1897.January 6. – Budapest., 1946. March 12.) He was a Hungarian military officer, fascist politician, ideologue and activist, and head of state. He was of Catholic faith. He was of mixed heritage, German, Hungarian and Armenian (his great-grandfather's name was Számosján). Coming from a military family (his grandfathers had been officers in the Hungarian army since 1848), he graduated from the military academy at Kőszeg, also studying in Marosvásárhely and became an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army. He made Second Lieutenant by 1915, and went on to study further at the Maria Theresia Military Academy at Wiener Neustadt. He fought in the First World War on the Italian and French fronts, and was decorated. He was not involved directly in the events of 1918-19 or the counter-revolution, keeping his job in the military. He was promoted to the rank of captain in 1924. In 1925, he became a staff officer. He spent his time studying political theory, and by the early 1930's, began developing his own brand of political ideology. In

1930, he joined Taby Árpád's (retired major of the Hungarian Army) secret racial defense society called The Hungarian Life Union. He was promoted to the rank of major in 1933, and elaborated various plans, both military and political, for the reorganization of both state and society. These blueprints were concentrated in a short work, the first of his many books, entitled *The Plan for the Rebuilding of the Hungarian State* (*A magyar állam felépítésének terve*, appeared 1933). He was noticed at this time by Gyula Gombos, but dismissed as not posing any serious political threat. In 1935, due to pressures from the General Staff of the Hungarian Army, which did not want its officers engaging in politics, and his own wishes, he was decommissioned. In March 1935 he founds his own political party, called The Party of National Will (*Nemzet Akaratanak Partja*), together with Csia Sandor. Its symbol was a stylized Iotachi cross, somewhat vaguely resembling a swastika, on top of a rising solar symbol. In addition, the initials of the party (N.A.P.), spelled out to mean the Hungarian word for sun. Szalasi published his second programmatic book in 1935, entitled *Cél és követelések* (*Goal and Demands*). He went on to run in the elections of 1936, but did not manage to secure even a single seat in the parliament. In the years between 1935 and 1937 his party was just one among the many national-socialistic parties of the period. In 1937, he started publishing a party newspaper, with the title *Új Magyar Munkás* (*New Hungarian Worker*). The articles in this short-lived publication caught the attention of the Minister of the Interior, Keresztes-Fischer Ferenc, due to the vitriolic nature with which they attacked not only Jews and the Left, but also the establishment. Szalasi was indicted, and the party was dissolved. He reformed his party under the name *Magyar Nemzeti Szocialista Párt* (*Hungarian*

National Socialist Party) in October 24 1937, after a meeting in the Budai Vigado, in which other smaller fractions joined his cause. The notoriety caused by the public trial helped Szalasi unite much of the disunited fascist fringe elements. His party was yet again banned in February 1938, but returned under the name Nemzeti Szocialista Magyar Párt (National Socialist Hungarian Party). At this time, the party symbol became the Arrow Cross, in Hungarian national coloring. Horthy and many others joined his ranks, and the groundwork for talks with other political formations was laid. In August of 1938, Szalasi was found guilty of treason and actions against the Hungarian state, and was sentenced to two years in prison. With the mediation of Horthy however, and owing to his status as a political prisoner, his party, which was again banned in February 1939, was reformed in its final shape, that of the Arrow Cross Party-Hungarist Movement. He was hailed as a martyr by the party propaganda, and referred to as “prisoner 9323”(after his cell number in the Szeged prison). The party formed a coalition with a host of other national-socialist parties, called the Arrow Cross Coalition, and secured 42 seats overall in the Hungarian Parliament. This meant that the Arrow Cross became the single largest opposition party in Hungary at the time. The party members have been estimated by historians to have numbered around 300 to 500,000. By the time of his release in February 1940, however, the actual support for his party subsided, and a number of fractions appeared. This was due not only to the loss of support, but to the composite nature of the party itself, brought together as a grand fascist coalition. The party was purged between 1940 and 1943, losing many of its key members to Imre's party or governmental circles. He was also viewed with great suspicion not only by the

government, but also by the Germans, because of his incessant anti-German stance. However, events came to a head in October 1944, after the German occupation of Hungary. Szalasi and his party were deemed the last stable political organization in Hungary, which still commanded some credibility and mass appeal. Talks began, and in November 4th 1944 Szalasi was sworn in as Nemzetvezető (Leader of the Nation), after a successful coup. He headed a coalition government of present and former Arrow Cross members, and fascistoid Hungarian Renewal Party. The main activity of this government was constricted to helping the German war effort, and organizing the deportation of Hungarian Jews to concentration camps in Germany. Many atrocities against Jews in the major cities still under Hungarian control were committed, especially in Budapest. Szalasi escaped to Austria, in Mattsee, where he was captured by American troops. He was extradited to Hungary, where he was put on trial on the charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes. He was found guilty on both counts, and executed by hanging in the 12th of March 1946. For his ideology, see Hungarism.

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Annex II

Chronology of events

1918 October 31st: the outbreak of the democratic revolution in Hungary, and the constitution of Károlyi Mihály's government.

1919 January 19th: the founding of the Hungarian National Defence Association, with the leadership of Gömbös Gyula and Prónay Pál. Horthy Miklós is elected honorary president of the association.

1919 March 21st: the government of Kun Bela seizes power in Hungary. Hungary becomes a Soviet Republic.

1919 August 6th: the Hungarian Soviet Republic collapses, Romanian troops invade Budapest.

1919 November 16th: Horthy Miklós' triumphal entry into Budapest.

1920 March 1st: The Hungarian National Assembly reestablishes the Hungarian Kingdom. Horthy Miklós is appointed as Regent.

1920 June 4th: The signing of the Trianon Peace Treaty.

1920 September 26th: The passing of the first Numerus Clausus law (law XXV of 1920), which restricted persons of Jewish and other descent from accessing universities and other forms of higher education, outside their proportion to the general population.

1921 April 21st: Bethlen István is appointed prime minister of Hungary by Horthy Miklós.

1922 February 2nd: The founding of the Keresztyén Földműves-, Kisgazda- és Polgári Párt, by the union of Bethlen István's Party of Christian National Union and Nagyatádi-Szabó István Smallholders Party. The party was also known as the "Unitary Party", and it maintained its governance until 1944, under various names.

1923 August: Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Endre and Gömbös Gyula's group leaves the Unitary Party, and joins the opposition.

1924 november 13th : Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Endre and Gömbös Gyula found the Hungarian National Independence Party, also known as "The Party of Racial Defense"

1931 (?): Böszörmény Zoltán founds the Hungarian National Socialist Workers' Party (*Nemzeti Szocialista Magyar Munkaspart*), and starts editing its newspaper, the *National Socialist*. The party was also known as the Scythe Cross Party.

1932 June 16th: Meskó Zoltán founds the Hungarian National Socialist Peasant and Worker's Party, and transforms his popular newspaper, the Pest Daily, into a fascist publication.

1932 October 1st: Gömbös Gyula is appointed prime minister of Hungary, and announces a sweeping program of radical reforms.

1932 December: count Pálffy Fidél joins Meskó Zoltán's party.

1933 November-December: Pálffy Fidél leaves Meskó Zoltán's party, and founds his own party, the Unified National Socialist Party, called also the Arrow Cross Front.

1933 December 24th: count Festetics Sándor founds the Hungarian National Socialist Party, and transforms his newspaper, *Mezőföld* into the official party journal.

1934 February: Festetics Sándor, Pálffy Fidél and Meskó Zoltán enter into a political pact, their parties holding rallies and gatherings. At these occasions and in their respective publications, they begin referring to themselves as "the three leaders". The coalition only lasts a few months.

1935 March 4th: Szálasi Ferenc and Csia Sándor found the Party of National Will.

1935 March 31st- April 4th: national elections held, a failure of most of the existing national socialist parties.

1936 May: the Scythe Cross Party, lead by Böszörmény Zoltán, attempts to organize a march on Budapest. The attempt at coup is foiled by the gendarmerie, the leaders are arrested and put on trial, the party is disbanded.

1936 October 6th: Gömbös Gyula dies in Munich.

1937 April 15-16th: The Party of National Will is disbanded by the authorities, Szálasi Ferenc is put under arrest.

1937 October 24th: Szálasi Ferenc and his followers announce the founding of the Hungarian National Socialist Party from the union of Endre László's Hungarian Socialist Racial Defense Party and five smaller national socialist parties, at a rally held at the Buda Vigadó.

1938 February 21st: the Hungarian National Socialist Party is disbanded by the authorities.

1938 April: Szálasi Ferenc reorganizes his party, under the name of National Socialist Hungarian Party- Arrow Cross Movement.

1938 May: Imrédy Béla's government passes law XV. of 1938 in Parliament, the first anti-Semitic law, which restricted the number of Jews in commercial, industrial and banking enterprises to 20% of the total employees.

1938 July 6th: Szálasi Ferenc is sentenced to two years' incarceration, and jailed in Szeged.

1938 November 2nd: the first Vienna Award, Hungary regains parts of Czechoslovakia.

1939 February 23rd: the National Socialist Hungarian Party- Arrow Cross Movement is banned.

1939 March 15th: Szálasi Ferenc and his followers establish the Arrow Cross Party. Hubay Kálmán starts talks with other existing national socialist parties about a political pact, and establishes the Arrow Cross Coalition.

1939 May 5th: the second anti-Semitic law passed, it defined Jews on a racial basis and restricted their number in liberal professions to 6%, and banned them from state employment.

1939 May 25-26th: Elections held, the Arrow Cross coalitions gains 31 seats. The total number of national socialist deputies was 48 (out of 260).

1940 August 30th: the second Vienna Award, Hungary regains the north-eastern part of Transylvania.

1940 September: Szálasi Ferenc is released from prison, due to Horthy's declaration of amnesty, following the second Vienna Award.

1941 August 8th: the Kallay-government passes the third anti-Semitic law, banning Jews from marrying and having relationships with non-Jews.

1941 September: the Baky László-Pálffy Fidél group leaves the Arrow Cross party, and reorganize the Hungarian National Socialist Party, allying themselves with Imrédy Béla's Hungarian Life Movement.

1944 march 19th: German troops occupy Hungary.

1944 August 24th: the Arrow Cross Party is banned by Sztójay Döme's government.

1944 October 15th: Horthy abdicates, and appoints Szálasi Ferenc as prime minister under German duress. Szálasi forms a government from former and actual Arrow Cross Party members, and Imrédy Béla's Hungarian Life Movement.

1944 October 27th: Szálasi Ferenc is appointed by the parliament as "Leader of the Nation".

1945 March 28th: the Szálasi government is officially replaced, the members of the cabinet flee to Germany.

1946 March 12th: Szálasi is executed by hanging.

Annex II.

Photographic evidence

KITARTÁS



A NEMZETISZOCIALIZMUS TUDOMÁNYA

Nem „vezér-elv” hanem „fő-elv”!

Írta: Machay Károly.

A liberalizmust és ennek szülötteit: a kapitalizmust, szociáldemokráciát, kommunizmust, egyéni szabadságot (individualizmust), parlamentarizmust, korrupciót és egyéb történelmi szennyet a nemzeti államok, elsősorban Olaszország és Németország egy-egy ősi közösségi és tekintélyi elvvel győzték le. Olaszország a „duce” (diktátor), Németország pedig a „führer” (vezető) elvvel.

Mindketten visszatértek történelmük és fajuk ősi, évszázados állam- és társadalomalkotó formáihoz és alapjaitaikhoz. A régi római birodalomban, ha az állam vesztélyben forgott, diktátorra ruházták a teljes hatalmat és a nemzet ügyeinek intézését. A germánokat a népvándorlás korában a fűrérek vezették és nagy harcokban az egyes néptörzsek egy-egy kiváló vezető vezetése alá rendelték magukat, aki aztán egyesítette a germánok összes erőit.

Mindkét állam mai nagyságának és hatalmának ez az alapja. Visszatérés, ha másképp a mai helyzetre szabva is az ősi, saját életformákhoz és tradíciókhoz, amelyekben, — mint a gyakorlat is mutatja, valami megmagyarázhatatlan, leközvetlenül átkos öserő van elrejtve az őrült fajak, nemzetek számára. És itt van a különbség haziság és német nemzeti-szocializmus között is: az egyik speciálisan latin, a másik speciálisan germán. Ezért a német államnak elvághatatlanul és megmagyarázhatatlanul nagyvonalúságos és tekintélyesnek is lennie kell a német nemzetnek és veszélyek idején „fő”, tejedelmet emeltek maguk fölé. Későbbi nagy lériátságaink is az intézmények, közösségek élére „főket” állítottak. A fogalom folytonosságát a magyar életben mutatja a ma is élő „családő” szó.

Mi a „fő”?

A „fő” valamely közösség, testület, intézmény élén álló legfőbb irányító egyéniség. A szellemi és erkölcsi erők legnagyobb mértékének birtokosa, nemcsak a nemzeti erények és becsület megtestesítője, de igazi irányító tekintély, akarat, bölcsesség és tudás, azontul a közbizalom letéteményese, akinél meg lehet érezni, hogy a gondjaira bízott közösséget és értékeit jó úton vezeti. A rendeltetési feltétlen engedelmességgel és hűséggel tartoznak neki.

A hűségviszony azonban mindenkor kölcsönös!

A „fő” az általa vezetett közösségnek nemcsak irányítója, hanem emberi és szociális, kulturális értékek is legfőbb őre és felelős gondozója. Eljárásait mindenkori felelős a köznek és hatalma csak addig terjed, amíg kötelességét hiánytalanul teljesíti. Tehát több a kötelessége, mint a joga!

A „fő” szerepét tehát sem lehet könnyűvel megtagadni, vagy csak akármely okból elhárítani. Erre elsősorban szilárdan kell, mint bármely alkotó pályán! Egyszerre magasló egyének utolsó szerepét egyenlő alkalmuk szerint kell, mint a „fő” alapozni, meg is a „fő” rendeltetését.

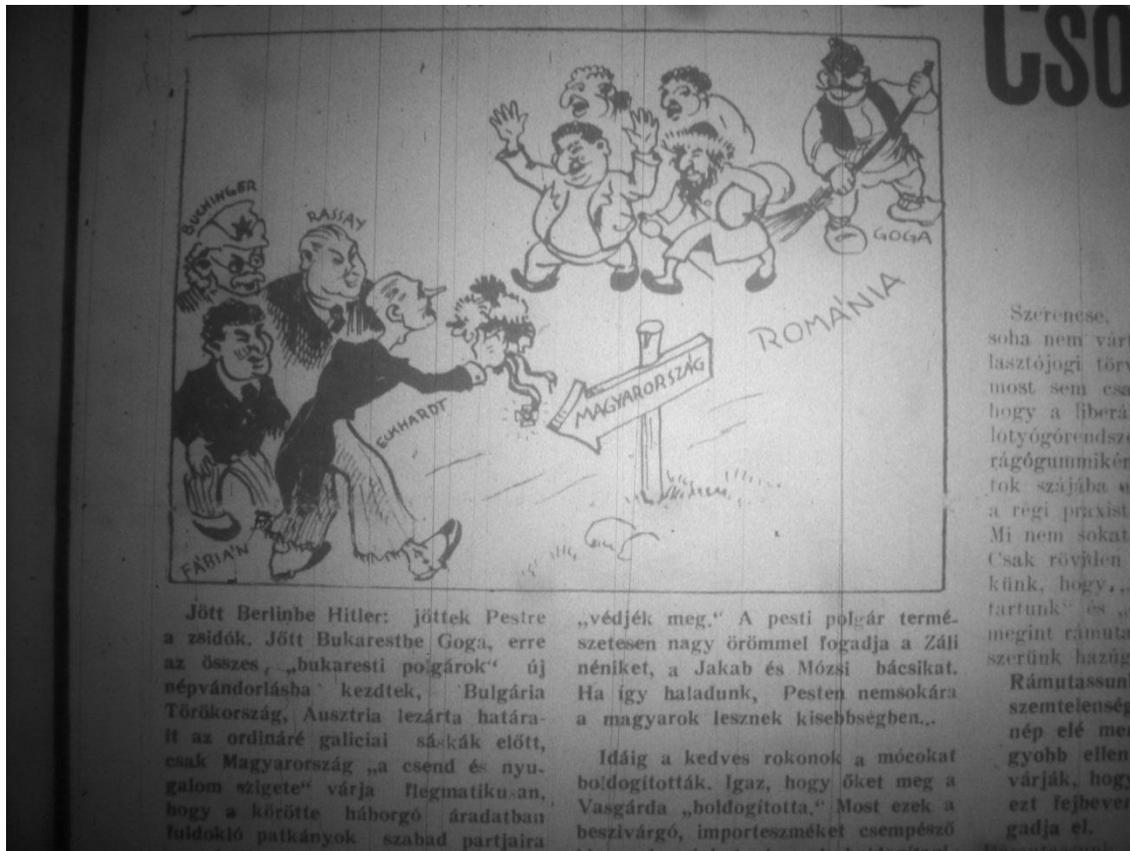
“The Science of National Socialism”

Kitartás, 1937



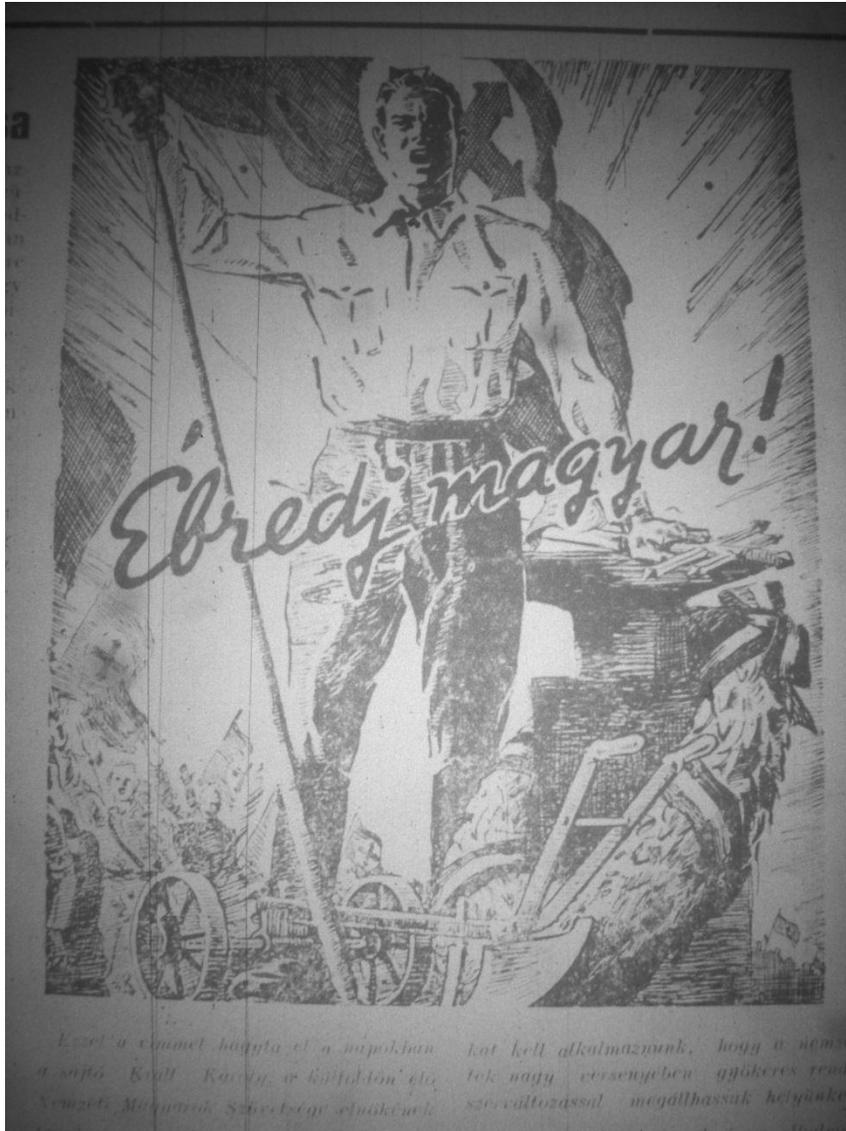
At the crossroads of winds,

Kitartás, 1937



Romania tries to get rid of its Jews, sending them to Hungary,

Charicature, *Kitartás*, 1937



Representation of an Arrow Cross party member as a political soldier,

Kitartás, 1937

MEZŐFÖLD

A MAGYAR JÖVŐ UJ NEMZETI MOZGALMÁNAK VEZÉRORGÁNUMA

ENYING, 1933 DECEMBER 24.
VIII. ÉVFOLYAM + 51. SZÁM.

SZERKESZTŐSÉG ÉS
KIADÓHIVATAL: ENYING

ELŐFIZETÉSI DIJ EGY ÉVRE P 6.—
NEGYEDEVRE P 1.50 Egyes szám 10 fill.

Uj utak felé...

Irta: GRÓF FESTETICS SÁNDOR országgyűlési képviselő

Szeretem a szabad természetet és sokszor járok kint a magyar föld fölött, mikor lenyugszik a Nap és akkor is mikor felkel. Valahányszor feltekintek az égboltra és látom a Napot haladni Keletről Nyugat felé, mindig eszembe jut a magyar nép sorsa. Mert a magyar nép, éppúgy miként a Nap, Keletről jött és halad Nyugat felé és éppúgy tudok élni, ragyogni, mikor a történelem szempontjából váratlanul megjelent. Csak egy különbség van s ez az, hogy míg a nap tovább halad és halad, mi itt maradtunk és mely gyökereket vertünk az anyaföldbe. Teljesítvé lettünk, melynek gallyait terdelte, megtépázta ugyan sokszor a vihar, de emelget ez az alatt egyszer sem tudott kitérteni.

Valóban a világtörténelem egyik legcsodálatosabb, szinte megmagyarázhatatlan jelenségét képezi, a magyar nép első szereplése Európa szívében. Magyar seregek behatoltak egészen az Apenninekig, legyőzték a bajorokat és a svábokat a országon keresztül eljutnak egészen Róma városáig. Legyőzik a még erőteljes morva birodalmat, keresztülterelik rajta és legyőzik többször a szászokat is, melyen benyomulnak a görög császárság területére. Megannyi telepítést, amely még Attika szereplését is elhomályosítja.

Mikor azután kibővítve érik a határt és abbahagyják a sok csatározást, oly hatalmas országot létesítenek, amely később évszázadokon át éppen a nyugati kultúra védőbástyája lesz, Keletről jövő támadások ellen.

Sok más olyan nép is volt, mely Keletről jött, hogy itt a nyugaton megtelepedjék. Ott voltak a hunok, az avarok, a kúnok és a besenyők is. De mind elhunytak egy se tudott közülük itt megmaradni, csak egyedül a magyar nép.

Mi magyarázza még ezt a csodát? Sokat gondolkoztam rajta és végül eljöttem nem egyszer a magyar nép történetét. A vitéség-e? A húnok is vitészek voltak. A szivósság-e? Az avarok is szivósság voltak. Sokat keresem a rejtély kulcsát és végre meg-

találtam ott, ahol legkevésbé hittem volna, hogy reáakadok.

Kilencszázhuszonhatvan történt Krisztus után, még a vezérek korában, mikor egyszer egy vités magyar sereg egészen Svájc határáig eljutott, a st-galleni kolostorig. Erről a kis eseményről régi képrát maradt

Ex megkapó és csodálatos. Csodálatos jelenség, mert ezer év előtt történt, meglehetősen vad viszonyok közt és meglehetősen kevéssé ismert. Kezünkbe adja a magyar rejtély kulcsát: „Azért nagy nemzet a magyar, mert már ezer év előtt is oly nagy

nek védelme alatt csendesen magyrodva bonyolulták le a magyar állampolgárok tetteiket. Egy ilyen aljas világlélelés nem méltó egy nagy nemzetnek, nem méltó különösen a magyar nemzetnek, amelynek történelmi szereplése előtt az összes civilizált nagyhatalmak meghajlítják az elismerés zászlaját!

A világháború és az u. n. világgazdasági válság hatása, párosulva a 19. század demo-liberális és materialista tansival, megrohasztották a magyar közszellemet, megtanították a magyart arra, hogy görbe utakon járjon és spekulatív módon gondolkodjék. Vissza kell térni az egyenes útra: vissza kell térni az idealista világléleléshez!

A világtörténelem azt mutatja, hogy minden nemzet elbukott, mielőtt gondolkodása anyagias lett, mielőtt közszelleme megromlott. Ameddig a régi Rómában az egykori pártortép egyszerű puritán erényei uralkodtak, a római assok diadalmaskörtartat tettek a világon. De mielőtt ez a régi spártai szellem háttérbe szorult és előtérbe lépett az üzleti szellem, az aranyborjú imádása, a római impérium ostromlói korhadni kezdtek és csakhamar összeomlott az egész hatalmas világbirodalom.

Mikor 1918 tavaszán a nyitvánosság előtt óvat emeltem az akkori demo-liberális sajtó egyes orgánumainak üzemelő ellen, amelyekkel magmetelyezték a hosszú küzdelmek következtében kifáradt katonáink lelkesletét, már előre láttam azt, hogy mi is, mint a német szövetségese, a háborút nem a harcra, hanem itthon fogjuk elveszíteni.

Az események teljesen igazolták az én felfogásomat, mert arconalainkat nem az ellenség legyőzve rendítette meg, hanem annak a gonosz, hazátlan nemzetközi szellemnek sántái csapása.

Ami az összeomlás után következett, az októberi forradalom, az ellenforradalom próbálkozásainak sikertelensége a végre mint utolsó felvonás, a kommunista kaland, az már csak mind szükségképi folyamánya volt annak, hogy hazánk...



reánk. Ebben pontosan lá van írva minden, hogy hogyan élcsükdötek, milyen fegyvert viseltek és milyen kérelhetetlenül bátor harcosok voltak a magyarok, kiknek puszta híre már rettegésbe ejtette egész Európát. Le van benne írva, hogy az est beálltával hogyan gyújtottak tábortüzeket, hogyan ülték azt körül, vezérek és közemberek vegyesen, hogyan ittak azután körüladagolva a kupát és énekeltek hozzá, akárcsak mint ma, ezer év után. Ittak, ittak és énekeltek. Már már úgy látszott, hogy ellensédnek és lassanként elnyomja őket az atom.

Idéző az előbeszélés csak nagyon érdekes. De mikor azután elmondja nekünk a kézirát szerzője, hogy váratlanul megjelent egy küldönc és hírül hozta, hogy közelben van az ellenség, akkor a mulatozó magyar vitészek egy szempillantás alatt fegyverben állottak, lóra kaptak és mintha senmi sem történt volna, mintha nem ittak és nem mulattak volna, elvonultak az ellenség felé.

Ez azután már több, mint érdekes.

leki erőfelett rendelkezett, hogy még fáradtan, mulatozás közben sem felfedkezett meg önmagáról és kötelességeiről!

Mert nagy nemzet a magyar, nagy szerepet adott neki a világtörténelem. Ez a szerep abban áll, hogy őre legyen a Keletről eszembem a nagy keresztény nyugati kultúrának!

Évszázadokon át védte életünkkel a nyugati kultúrát a törökök hordái ellen és jövőben is az lesz a világtörténelmi feladatunk, hogy azt a nyugati kultúrát az új ellenség, a keleti bolszevianus ellen védelmezzük meg.

Nyilvánvaló, hogyha a történelmi sora ily nagy szerephez juttatta a magyar nemzetet, hogy akkor azt csak a magyar nép értékes faj tulajdonságainak ápolása és kifejlesztése utján toltheti be.

Vissza kell utasítanunk azt az aljas, materialista világlélelést, mintha a magyar állam célja egyedül a rendfenntartás volna. A magyar állam célja nem üresüthet ki abban, hogy rendőri szolgálatokat teljesít, amely-

Festics Sándor, on the cover of his publication, announcing the advent of the fascist revolution. (1933)

Rendkívüli külön kiadás!

VI. évfolyam, 25. szám. Budapest, 1932. június 17

PESTI ÚJSÁG

POLITIKAI ÉS GAZDASÁGI HETILAP

<p>AZ ELŐFIZETÉS ÁRA:</p> <p>Egyes évre 4 P. Félévre 2 P. Negyedévre 1 P. Amerikában egyszéves évre 20 dollár.</p>	<p>FŐSZERKESZTŐ: MESKÓ ZOLTÁN</p>	<p>SZERKESZTŐSÉG ÉS KIADÓHIVATAL: BUDAPEST, IV. KER., KECSERÉNYI UJCA 6. SZÁM. - A SZERKESZTŐSÉG TELEFON- SZÁMA: AUTOMATA 838-22</p>
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MEGALAKULT A NEMZETI SZOCIALISTA PÁRT

**Meskó Zoltán a Házban ünnepélyes
deklarációban bejelentette
a mozgalom megindulását**

Diadalmas útjára elindult a magyar horogkereszt

Evtizedek szenvedési dűbörgön tarták fel világszerte a népek lelkeit. Azoknak mélyéből új nemzeti öntudatok hatalmas energiái törtek elő. Hogy előbb országok, majd a világ képet formálják át a maguk hasonlatosságára. Mussolini, Kemal, Hitler neve innár diadalokban meghordozott lobogót jelent hatalmas országokban. Győzelmeik mindenütt az áldékosok helyett új emberi igazságok erkölcsös megújítását hozta meg.

Lealkák és lealkontak nemzetközi országpiacain népeket, határokat cserélték, rajzoltak. Dolgozó milliók verejtékét kufarkodták el a szenvedő nemzetek megkérdezése nélkül. Nem számoltak azzal, hogy zold tanácsszatalaik posztóját elfakítja a termőföldek millió és millió hektárján kiszőlülő új élet eleven szine és az aprkon kiszendülő új vetések nem a feleltenség paragrafusainak hornak újabb termésáldozatot.

Dolgozó milliók felébredő öntudata követeli az életet. A magyar nemzeti szocialista mozgalom a történelmi elkövetkezés legátlhatatlan ereje fesztette hatalmas programmá. Jelentkezésünk, sorbállításunk, öntudatos soraink céljainak, fejelettségű megnevelése kemény léptekkel halad el a lebecsülés és bizonytalanság tévoya bámszékodásai mellett. Tudjuk, mit akarunk! Célunk: nemzetünk boldogulása. Erőnk: gyengébbetünk, tisztességünk udata és milliónyi magyar testvérünk belérik vetett hite.

szólását az alábbiakban azó szerint közöljük:

— Tisztelt Ház!

— Napirend előtti felzárólatára kérem engedélyt. Az engedélyt azon a címen kérem, hogy szövetségem az egész országban tapasztalható nemzetellenes igazságok tüneteit. Európa-szerte öntudatosan védekeznek a nemzetek ezek ellen a lélekförtőző jelenések ellen. Nemzeti létünkért külső erőszakos intézkedések tragikusán csontkává gyengítették, kétségbeesett lett a magyar sors, újabb belső konkolyhintés, meghasonlat nemzetünk szervezete el nem bír. Önmagára ismert az olasz, török, német, Neme-

Meskó Zoltán beszéde

A magyar országgyűlés képviselő-házának ülésén csütörtökön, jún. 16-án d. e. általános érdeklődés közeben emelkedett szólamra fekete, ünnepélyes ruhája alatt először viselve a barna inget Meskó Zoltán országgyűlési képviselő, ny. államtitkár, a nemzeti szocialista magyar földműves és munkáspárt vezetője, hogy előki engedélyvel napirend előtti felzárólatában Jelentse be hivatalosan a magyar közélet első fórumában, az új párt megalakulását és célkitűzéseit:

Az ülést tíz órakor nyitotta meg

Álmsay László elnök, majd a következőket monotta:

— Jelentem a tisztelt háznak, hogy Meskó Zoltán képviselő úr tőlem a mai napra napirend előtti felzárólatára kért engedélyt. Az engedélyt a felzárólatára megadtam. A képviselő urat illeti a szó.

A Ház ülésstermében elcsendesedtek a képviselők, az újságírói páholyokban előbbre hajoltak a fejeik, megindultak a ceruzák, hogy lejegyzék az új történelmi eseményt: a nemzeti szocializmus programjának elhangzó első

öntudatos szavait. A karjaiton tömör sorokban, fejelettségben sorított a nemzeti szocialista párt felvonult harangozó tagjainak serege. Csodák munkások, orvosok, mérnökök, világos tekintetű magyarok jöttek el fejelettségű demonstrációra, hogy tanuljanak a pártmozgalom parlamenti bejelentésének. Ünnepélyesen emelkedett szólamra Meskó Zoltán, hogy felolvassa azt a deklarációt, melyet előzetesen alapos megfontolás útján tett magává minden szavában a mozgalom vezetősége. Fel-

Ára 10 fillér.

PESTI UJSÁG

POLITIKAI ÉS GAZDASÁGI HETILAP

AZ ELŐFIZETÉS ÁRA:
Egyszeri ár: 100
Féléves: 450
Éves: 800
Amerikába egész évre 10 dollár.

FŐSZERKESZTŐ: MESKÓ ZOLTÁN

SZERKESZTŐSÉG ÉS KIADÓHIVATAL:
BUDAPEST, II. RÁDAY-UTCA 5. SZÁM
SZERKESZTŐSÉGI TELEFON: AUT. 89-6-70

Szószerk Rendszerváltozást!

Amikor hallom ezt a szót: rendszerváltozást! és mikor látom, a parlamenti különböző pártoknál a békekés, vagy más néven a rendszerváltozást követők, mindig érzem sokszor ember felelősségét a szavak hamis juttatásának hátrahagyó hatásait. Mert valahányszor rendszerváltozást hirdet a magyar politika, valahányszor megcserelődnek a főszereplők a porondon, minden alkalommal el lehet mondani, hogy változott a külső ruhák, de a szociális értelmében sokszor változott meg a rendszer. A lárvák esetében csak az arcok előtt, de hátról is marad mindig ugyanaz a szörlem, melyet nem lehet mindig ugyanaz a jelölés, lemondóan legyintve drék magyar testvérem, valahányszor kiderül, hogy időtát ismét a régi magyarság dallamaira huzaljuk el a veled.

Rendszerváltozást: hányszor hangzott el már ez a szó beszédekben, képviselőházi támadásokban, hányszor olvastam én is, olvastad te is hasábszoros hírekben, vagy pártprogramok között, de vajon egyetlen ügyben is érvényesült-e a magyar népéletében ennek a gondolatnak a megvalósulása? Csak egy jótámasra is? Most is a különböző ellenzék, vagy kormányok között álló pártok ajkán játszódnak megint e jelölés. Legyen elég az álmok és remények meghamisításából, a végük kijáratából és a hiúságy emberförmégek szelvényének újabb lejáratásából. Igen is rendszerváltozást hirdetünk, de a szó legmagyarosabb értelmében. Rendszerváltozást akarunk, mint ahogy gyakorlatilag akarja megérteni az örökös választópolgárok rendszert minden hibájával együtt a nemzeti szocializmus. Rendszerváltozást akarunk nemzeti és szociális értelemben, szerencsés értelemben úgy, hogy lelkesmerrellel halandókat és lelketlen nemzetközi kátozók uralkodó, hatalmi, bírói és ha kell bíróival, bírósági és az országunk elhatároló testvérei és szociális értelemben úgy, hogy leányt jussan a városok magyar munkások és csevevény magyar gyermekek aszájába. És tej és zsír a ruha és étel. Tejkarból és székereit és hushatártól és ruhakartól aratnak helyett.

A mi rendszerváltozásunk nem azonos az önkéntes és ha ök még mindig ezt a szót fogják hátrahagyó hamis juttatásuk leplezésére, mi még azóban is másat fogunk kijelteni.

Az ő rendszerváltozásuk csak a hatalmon levők helyecéjét jelentené. En nem vagyok barátja az egyébként is évtizedes múlt ilyen francia négyes figuráknak.



Jöjjön el a te országod...

Mélyszégyen ünnepi hangulat borul a főváros egész területére, a poros pesti utca mezejevenedzőtömegek hömpölyögnek. Ünnepi körmenetben ezer és ezer ember ajkán száll a dicsőítő himnusz.

Hol vagy, István király. Téged magyar kirádn. Aki dicsőítva minden ellenséggel kereszténnyé tett nemzetet és a boldogságos Szent Szt. kegyelme ajánlott utolsó óráiban. Tehozád zsidóink ezer év után gyászos helyzetünkben és nyomorúságunkban. Hozzad fohászokd ezer és ezer nyomorban sínylődd és hozzád fordul, mint végső mentőszélhez végző óráiban az elnyomott magyar. Tekints ránk István király.

Tekints a te nyomorban sínylődd fiádra, akik szenvedve és

reménykedve várják a Te országod eljövetelet.

Nézd le ránk szentséges hajlékából ránk, akiket elszakított magyar testvéreinktől.

Mivé lett ez a nép és mivé lett ez az ország ezer év után.

Egy nép, egy nemzet, aki évszázadok hosszú során át a pusztító árhárak közepette is megállta a helyét, aki szembeszállt jogáért és az igazságért a zsarukok minden elsőpró hatalmával, aki a keresztény kultúra védőbástyája volt, most idegen és betolakodott maratók székényárává lett. Te bírod nyomán új élet és hit szíryaljon át a Kárpátoktól le az

Adriáig. Dobogtasson meg minden magyar szív és adjon erőt és kitarást a nemzetnek, aki új hárakra készült, mert nem nyugodhatik bele, hogy a Te országod földarabolás és szejteltépvé idegenek birtoka legyen.

A Te csodálatos és csallhatatlan hited vezérelje nemzeted további útján és ne engedje, hogy jogtalanság és igazságtalanság révén szétdarabolt hazánk sorsát bele nyugodjon. Bizunk tebened István király. Legyen a néped újra régi szilistusa magyar nép, legyen országod újbold a régi határokkal bíró virágos kert. Segíts meg népedet, mert ha minket is elfúj a sors divatarja, az Istennek nem lesz soha több magyarja.

Nemzeti Szocialista Párthelyiség: Budapest, IX. ker., Ráday-utca 6.

Saint Stephen and the Hungarian people. Populist propaganda. The right hand side editorial is entitled: Regime change! (Pesti Újság, 1932)

TÁMADÁS



Szendy Károly az Americana élén

Nem személyek, kivétező útat kereső derék magyar bajtársak ellen, hanem a hamis, megfélemlésre alkalmas elvek ellen harcolunk. Magyar Testvérünk! Nyisd ki a szemed! Nézz körül! Gondolkozz!

„Ne engedd, hogy hazug ámitók szája — jobb- és baloldali megjelöléssel — frázisokkal laposítsa Széchenyi szellemét!” Ezzel a kiáltvánnyal fordul a Szent István Bajtársi Szövetség a magyar ifjúsághoz.

A közelmúltban és különösen az idei tanév megindulásakor több ifjúsági egyesület — szabadkőműves, liberális, zsidó, vagy éppen székely — sem keresztkellett zsidó kézen lévő vezetősége — ropóedulák tiszteivel igyekeznek téveszméknél és idegen ér-

dekeknek megnyerni a magyar ifjúságot.

A művelt és tájékozott magyar ifjúnak rögtön szemébe tűnik, hogy az a harcmodor, amellyel különösen a Szent István Bajtársi Szövetség és az Americana legfelsőbb vezetősége, a hátuk mögött álló, ismeretlen érdekekért küzdők irányítása alatt dolgozik, a régi szabadkőműves-zsidó kor maradványa.

Igy például az embervásár. Nyílt titok, bár mi fenntartással fogadjuk, hogy a Szent István B. Sz. tetemes összeget kapott — több zsidó érdekeltségtől (Weiss Manfréd, Budai Goldberger, Aschner Lipót stb.), sőt, hogy a Weiss házába fog költözni novemberben.

Idegen érdekek szolgálatában az Egyetemi Ifjúság

Érthető, hogy ha ez az állítólagos zsidó pénzzel működő ál-ifjúsági szervezet nyíltan zsebjáró irán legitimista jelszavait, jóakarattal és művelt tagjai otthagynák az idegen pénzzel Habsburg-propagandát folytató, politikai Ottó-bérenceket.

A habsburg vezetőség (és a hátamögött állók!) tehát egyelőre hallgatnak. Azonban, hogy táboruknak súlya legyen,

beiratásai, tanulmányi segítyeket nyújtanak tagjaiknak, hogy 20–30 pengőért az izzó magyar ifjakat, menekült erdélyi családok székely sarjait, néhány pengőért labancokká tegyék.

Ugyanannyira ismeretes az a tény

PEIDL BÉLÁNÉ

testvérünk alapos

nyelvtanítást ad
kaszáknak és hallgatóknak

V., Vilmos cs. ut 48. II. 4.

is, hogy az Americana főembere, Szendy Károly székesfehérvári polgármester, a szabadkőműves listán szerepel; továbbá, hogy az Americana képviselői szintén nagy Habsburgbarátok.

Sokan kifogásolják azt is, hogy a nevezett két „bajtársi egyesület” nemcsak idegen érdekek szószólója, hanem tagjai sorában, vezetőségében igen sok a kikeresztkellett zsidó, akik most jó „keresztényként” téltéglávjá döngetik a mellüket, míg lajrokonak 1919-ben itt, most a szovjetunióban és Spanyolországban százzámra végeztette ki a papokat, apácákat és a hazához hí ifjúságot.

Azután arról nyilatkoznak, hogy nem politizálnak, hanem tanulnak, míg a valóság egész másképpen fejt.

Komoly nemzetvédő, szociális munka helyett „ismerkedési tevékenység” rendeznek, házasságközvetítéssel foglalkoznak,

például az Americana szeptember 20-án rendezett sétahajózása. Az ilyen „if-

júságot nevelő intézmények”, amelyek egri szüretet, táncos összejöveteleket rendeznek, színház, mozi, orfeumjegyeket osztogatnak, egyáltalában nem felelnek meg a mai kor követelményeinek, szociális nemzetnevelésnek, országpátriosnak, elszakított részeink visszafoglalására indított harcnak.

Zsúrokkal, felekezeti kérdések kihangsúlyozásával, szüretekkel, séta-

hajózással, zsidó nagytökövel és trónmiskolccal „királyokkal”, idegen bérencekkel; a háttérben, más lehet a bolszevismus ellen, a jobb jövőért harcolni.

Ez a feladat a magyar fillérekkel, a magyar fejért küzdő, megemlekművő, egyenes gerinű magyar ifjakból álló bátor kiállású harcosokra vár és a

Nyilaskeresztes Ifjúság.

Ki ajánlotta Ságvári-Spitzert? A NEP!

A NEP-pel szemben Pártunk mindig a legnagyobb ellenszennel viseltetett. Felfogásunk indokolt, mert az egész NEP. rendszert olyan förtelmes ghettozsgal töl meg, amely jobb-érzésű emberek körében csak unort kért. Az egész Párt már a megszületés pillanatában magán viselte a halál, a megsemmisítés bélyegét. Az ország vámszedőjének mondható a NEP. Sok helyen izzó és terror nyomai láthatók a párt működésében.

Ez a párt nagy előzettel igyekszik magát Mussolini és Hitler mozgalmához hasonlítani. Sok jobb-érzésű embert szédítettek meg hosszú években Kerszfűl, tartalom nélküli külsőségekkel.

A józan gondolkodók és a tisztánlátók hamar rájöttek a pártnak egész összetételére. A párt ma már az enyészet és a megsemmisülés útján van. Baráti vascorokkal, agyonszubvenionált kormányssal igyekeznek a korhadat kereteket összetartani.

Kérdezzük, van-e olyan földi hatalom, amely a történelmi folyamat útjába tud állni és egy korrallem kibontakozását megakadályozni?

A pártnak meg kell semmisülni, mert hazugságokra épült egész rendszere. Tisztultabb szellemet hirdetett és a választásokon zsidó Kenyeres-

Kaufmannok, nagykapitalista zsidó Szurdaj Róbertek, Lédermann Mórok, Fenyő Miksa tudtak hatósági asszisztencia mellett bekerülni a törvényhozsába. A diszkreszterények között is találunk olyat, aki református létebe a katolikus templomba ment a keresztet hányni magára, hogy a többnyire katolikusokból álló választókat ezáltal maga mellé állítsa. Ez Zalában történt, ahol a mi derék és becsületes nyilaskeresztes testvéreinket megvasalva, csendőrszuronyok között vitték be az ügyesség fogházába.

Nem szükséges ezt a korhadat pártkeretet nekünk megsemmisíteni, mert megsemmisült az magától is. Meg kell semmisülni, mert a NEP. protezsztá többek között Ságvári-Spitzer kommunista agitátor a város házára, ugyanakkor, amikor vitézek, hadirokkantak és frontvencosok állásfoglalást hiába kérvényeztek ugyanazért az állásért.

Ságvári-Spitzer apja a NEP. VIII. kerületi választmányának tagja; a választások alkalmával, mint bizottsági tagot jelölték.

Ezekből az egyszerű tényekből mindenki láthatja, hogy az egész kormányzati rendszerünk kikre támaszkodik.

Jóslhatunk-e ennek a rendszernek hosszú életét?

Legyen az egyház magyarabb

Az Eszme elvetése és kikélese hasonló a nővényai mag érvetéséhez és kikéleséhez. Mint a nővényai mag — ha elvetés után megkapja a talajban a szükséges életteltételeket (melegség, nedvesség), csúrába, majd szárbaszökken, — úgy az elvetett eszme is kikéltelke melegétől és az emberi lélekbe begyazódva, szárbaszökken, terebélyes fává vá. Egy ideig — mint az étrekésztülő mag, — érzelhetetlenül fejt ki, — hogy úgy mondják — életmüködését; begyazódik a telkekbe, majd megmosodva, úrrá less azokon: szárbaszökken, mint a kikélt mag.

Minden nagy gondolat, eszme szikrájának kipattanásától hosszú, kiteljes idő telik el a megvalósulásig, amelyet az eszme fejlődése szerint több szakaszra lehet osztani. Ugyanez elmondható a nemzetiszocializmusról is, amely lényegében nem más, mint megtisztult nemzetvédő, nemzetakaró. Ez is átesett már fejlődésének és rendeltetésének első, küzdelmes időszakában. Ma már mondhatjuk, begyazódott, gyökeret vert a nemeseen érő telkekben. Fáragszó, begyazódott, vált foszlánnyá és sok-jutottunk. Sok magyar család nyugalma, békecsége vált foszlánnyá és sok-jutottunk. Sok magyar család nyugalma, békecsége vált foszlánnyá és sok-jutottunk. Sok magyar család nyugalma, békecsége vált foszlánnyá és sok-jutottunk. Sok magyar család nyugalma, békecsége vált foszlánnyá és sok-jutottunk.

Az első fáradtságos munkát tehát elvégeztük. Az első csatát megnyertük: eszménk úrrá lett a magyar lelkekben. Ki meri állítani, hogy nem így van? Van-e olyan magyar, aki nem lelkesedik célkitűzéseinkért. Aki nem nemzetiszocialista hittel hisz és érzi? Csak azok, akiknek lelke meg van fertőzve a liberális, szabadkő-



Kiadja: a Nyilaskeresztes Ifjúság, Egyetemi Túrás, Budapest, IV., Szerb-u. 9. I. 19.

Ismerje el Magyarországot a spanyol nemzeti kormányt!

Kévs híján másfél éve annak, hogy 1936. július 18-ról 19-re virradó éjjelen, Franco tábornok hős csapatával az azokhoz eszalakozott fallángisták az 1936 februárjában Spanyolországban uralomra jutott Népfront (szabadkőművesek, liberálisok, demokraták, szocialisták, kommunisták, anarchisták stb) terrorja ellen felléptek.

E nemzeti forradalom Spanyolországot két részre szakította. A világ előtt most már nem kétséges, hogy ebből a világtörténelemben páratlanul álló polgárháborúból melyik fél fog győztesen kikérülni.

Ha a mérleget nézzük, úgy azt látjuk, hogy az egyik oldalon — a körülményekhez képest, amennyire az háború esetén lehetséges — jól, megelégedtettség és fegyelem uralkodik. A másik oldalon viszont terror, éhínség, fejtelenség és gyűlölet.

E város terror eredménye több mint egymillió ártatlan embernek a legkegyetlenebb módon való legyilkolása a tépőfonók és minkészek epusztítása, rablások, gyilkosságok, gyújtogatások és szarozások végzetlen bosszú sorozata. A gyilkosságok elkövetésénél a marxista hordák nem vettek tekintetbe a nemzetközi jog legelőbb

szabályát sem, számtalan, a spanyol belpolitikáját nem foglalkozó külföldi alattvalót bebörtönöztek és kivégeztek. Birtos tulajdonúknak szerint az áldozatok között volt magyar is.

Mind Ezek után a magyar királyi kormány még mindig a valenciai kormányt nevezett marxista hordákat ismeri el, mint a hivatalos Spanyolországot. Ugyanakkor, minden több nemzeti alapon álló európai állam már rég elismerte Franco kormányát.

Talavera de la Reina, Toledo, Irun, San Sebastian, Malaga, Bilbao, Santander és Gijón voltak mostanáig azok az állomások, amelyek bizonyítják Franco hősi nemzeti forradalmának erejét és nem fog már sokáig várni magára a végleges teljes győzelem, mely föl fogja szabadítani a most még vörös járom alatt szenvedő spanyol népet.

Magyarország lakosságának legalább 85 százaléka rokonszenvez a spanyol nemzeti forradalommal és forró óhaját a Franco-kormány elismerését.

Mi, magyar nemzetiszocialisták, követeljük a Franco-kormány elismerését, ami is inkább, mert az ő harca ugyanaz, ami volt a mi magyar nemzeti forradalmunk 1919 és 1920-ban, Horthy Miklós vezérlete alatt.

Saludo a Franco! Arriba Espana!
Üdv Franconak! Eljen a nemzeti Spanyolország!
M. E.

BANKI EMIL
okl. órák
Mindenemő órák szakaszeri javítása, sok évi külföldi gyakorlatlall. E hirdetés felmondással 10.000.-kedvezményben részesül.
Budapest, IV., Váci u. 36
Draraktár
Duna balai oldal

Magyar Nemzetiszocialista a Gazdák Biztosítóját, a Futurát és a Győri Első Takarékpénztárt támogatja!

Kidöglésre ítélt magyar fiatatság

Csak vénkorukban nőstülhetnek a fiatal tisztviselői!

Míg a magyar közélet összes felelős és felelőtlen tényezői családfelelősérről, erkölcséről, egykéről, ifjúságról és egyébéről papolnak, bankjaink és más intézményeink körében felháborító pimasz és a jogi visszéléssén is túlmenő rendelkezések vannak érvényben.

Az egyik legelőkelőbb magyar intézményben, a Pénzügyi Központban pl. a tisztviselők egy rendelet értelmében csak 300 pengő fizetés elérése esetén nőstülhetnek.

Est a fizetést azonban a fiatalok sok esetben csak 40-50 éves korukra érhetik el. A kezdőfizetés 90 pengő, amely sokszor csak 6 év után emelkedik 100-110 pengőre. Aki a rendelkezést megszegi, állásából elbocsátják!

Hasonló rendelkezések vannak érvényben a Magyar-Olasz, a Hazánk, a Lezámtól és a bankoknál a többi fellegvárban, azaz a csodagyűlölettel, hogy itt csak 60 pengő a kezdőfizetés!

Az embernek megáll az esze, meddig mernek elmenni egyes vezetők hatalomátta szemtelenségükben és vakmerőségükben!
Mit merészelnek ezek csinálni a mi fiainkkal és lányainkkal? Hogy csak

teljesen tehetetlen, leromló állapotban köthessenek házasságot, már utójuk sem lehet? Lámpások ott állják, hogy a fiatalok az ország törvényeink engedelmeskedve, szereztek és fíngyökké legyenek kénytelenek leszállni? Mi ez? Mesterseges, tervszerű és átgondolt nemzetdöglés? Talán a fiatal tisztviselőket is sajnálják a fiatal tisztviselői?

Hát csak várjanak ezek a pénzürekek gazdasági szabadságot! Kaphatnak könnyen rábeszélésről helyszínel. Ezeknek az intézkedéseknek a nemtelenségét, jogtalanságát és szemtelenségét nem enyhíti az október alkalmával kiadott 20 P-ös fizetésemelé, vagy a gyermek után járó hasonló összegű pótlék!

A bankvezér urak beállítják a szentes alkalmazottaktól a család élet és a tiszta szellem, a gyermekáldás boldogságát! Saját magukat nem a drága pénzért, a tiszta szívvel, ésszel, mértő, méltóságot, megérdemelt mértő fejleket és kurtizánok! Kiszármazni kell az ilyen nemzetellenes, hitetlen, hímjelt, nőstüljelt gyarmat, hogy magvakadjon egy jobb és boldogabb Magyarország!

A bolsevizmus!

Europa Engbaborulni készül. A világméretű harcok kifejedése egy szép napon meggyújtja a kanadát és felrobbantja a puskaporos hordót, mely Europa négy sarkában mérszetesen nem nézhetjük öbített meggyújtott kanó vörös sisertergét, hanem minden igyekezetünket oda kell irányítani, hogy azt a puskaporos hordót, mely e hazában van robbanásra készen felállítva, megsemmisítsük. Tehát harcolnunk kell ama világághoz ellen, amelynek az a szándéka, hogy zúrtavart keltsen s a zúrtavarból kivége az 6 100%-os hasznát.

Minden eszközt felhasznál a baloldal, hogy hamis politikával megtevesse az embereket; ármánnyal, fondorlattal betelakodik hazánkban embereket kékbe, megterzi, megmetyezel a jellemes hazait és mikor e gonosz munkáját befejezte, mesterkél felháborodással egyes vezetőket rágalmoz, egy bizonyos néposztályt tesz feletlenség, rendszerváltozást követel, alkotmányért ívöltöz, a szűkebb és a szűkebb következik a legutolsó, de egy-

ben a legszörnyűbb fejedelm: testvér-testvér ellen harcol, miközben a bírjogatók bírjog vírgyással személik a munkájuk gyümölcsét.

Nemzetország és Olaszország rálépett a kigyó nyakára; hosszú idázt küzdelem után meggyőztek azt a léghart, melyben világzásnak indulhattak. Nemzetország és Olaszország oly hatalomra fejlődött az elmúlt évek alatt, hogy ilyen fejlődést a történelem nem ismer. Loraiza magáról a vörösítő tarantellát; megszűntette a munkanélküliséget, kigyta magának az egyenjogúságot, Európában vezető tényezővé alakult.

Ellenben Magyarország? „Egyesek” szeretik hangalyoztatni, hogy a magyar nép számításba sem jöhet a német és olasz mellett. En természetesen csak számszerint érem azt; mert mi történt volna a magyarral ezer éven keresztül, ha erkölcsileg, jellemleg nem érte volna el azt a színvonalat, mellyel a németet fölénk emelik.

Természetesen, hogy van benne nekünk is. Ez azt a hitet használja ki a zsidó tőrök. Nem tudunk felháborodni, tuncák vagyunk, egy szepet sem hasonlítunk a honigató magyarokhoz; megalkuvók vagyunk; csupán ebben különbözünk a némettel.



TÁMADÁS

MEGJELENIK ÉVENTE TIZSZER
Szociálistársulat és kiadóhivatal
VII., Bercsanyi-u. 4. Tel. 1-9333

Az Egyesült Magyar Nemzetiszocialista (Nyilaskeresztes) Párt
Hivatalos Közlönye

500 diplomás

jut állítólag a közeljövőben kenyérből a Győrszék és a Tébénék, vagyis a túlnyomórészt zsidó nagyipar és bankokrácia érdekképviseleteinek igérete érbrint 500 diplomás! Mi ez a diplomások ez oltár képe? Nyugodtan mondhatjuk, hogy a keményvel egyenlő vagy ennél valójával több.

Pedig letagadhatatlan, hogy az állás és kereset nélküli diplomás magyar ifjúság során lehetne aránylag a legkönnyebben segíteni. Nem kellene ehhez más, mint a magyar nép érdekeinek intézményes biztosítása a kartellokrácia keretén belül is vagyis törvényhozás által történő kiadás annak, hogy ipari, kereskedelmi és bankvállalatok stb. kötelesek legyenek magyar embereket alkalmazni tisztviselői karukban és egyéb alkalmazottak között is. Tudjuk jól, hogy csak az országos vállalatokról a magyar államalkotó nép 80%-os országszerte arányában szintén térpe kihasználtsága sajnálhatóan nem a pénzért teszi, hanem szellemi, adminisztratív természetű munkáról van szó.

A magyar diplomás ifjúság sorsproblémáját a magyar milliók leterhelteitől elkülönítve megoldani nem lehet. Nem megoldás az, ha az állam növeli a közvetlenül nem termelő, csupán adminisztratív bürokrácia mögé tett fiatal diplomások fokozott alkalmazásával és nem megoldás az sem, ha a túlnyomórészt zsidó jellegű bankokrácia és kartellokrácia netalan nem 500, hanem 5000 magyar diplomát alkalmazna a már meglevő jórészt szintén zsidó munkakerékön felül! Minder csak a dolgozó magyarországi szellemi rétegnek újabb megterhelését jelentene, hiszen az állam az adó, az iparvállalat pedig az iparcikk magas áran kereszttel újabb terheket rakna a magyarországi vállaira.

A gyökeres, alapos és egyedi célra vezető, a magyar nép érdekeit szemmel tartó megoldás csak a zsidóság gazdasági egyoldaltársának megterése és a magyarországi gazdasági egyenjogúsítása révén képzelhető. Ha a zsidóság részvétele a bankok, az ipar és a kereskedelemben és a saját stb. alkalmazottak között 50%-ra szorították vissza az országos gazdaságszervezők megterelését, úgy helyekedhet talán minden diplomás, állás nélküli magyar ifjú és még az állami, tulajdonos adminisztráció fölött öröknek álló gazdasági életbe is leleltetővé válnak.

A magyar nép sorsát a ráerakott reneszánsz adóterhek, kamattörlesztés és magvas iparcikk felváltán, ezt a sorsváltást és problémát csak a gazdasági szociális-reformok révén lehet megoldani! A magyar nép és a magyar diplomás ifjúság érdekeit egyaránt követelik a gyors, törvényhozás megindítását.
n. l. l.

A szerkesztőség és a kiadóhivatal a lap olvasóitörőrnök boldog üzeneteket küldnek!



A szovjet ura imígyen szól: — Most from alád Európa népeinek halálos féltetét. A kérdés csak az, 'hagylák-e magukat békésen a másvilágra küldeni?'

Bensőséges karácsonyi ünnepség az északi főkerületben

Az Északi Főkerület folyó hó 21-én este, Csángó-utca 4. szám alatti főkerületi központjában bensőséges karácsonyi ünnepséget rendezett. Az ünnepélyen 1000 körülbelül jelentek meg Testvérek, hogy együtt ünnepeljenek Budapest legmódszább és legszegényebb kerületével.

Csodán Mihály bevezető szavaival rámutatott arra, hogy ez a karácsonyi ünnepség különösen nem hasonlít a fényes paloták gazdag karácsonyára, de sokkal bensőségebb és szeretetteljesebb, mert a testvér összefogás eredményeképpen jött létre és a szerény, de jó szívet összehozott ajándékok lemondást is kívántak. Végül Csodán Testvér Timár főkerületvezető testvér nevében — aki elfoglaltsága miatt nem tudott az ünnepségen megjelenni — mondott köszönetet az adakozó testvéreknek és jókívánatait fejezte ki mindenkinek az ünnep alkalmából. Utóljára Berényiné és Rózsa Pál Testvérek beszétek a szomorú magyar karácsonyról és szervezkedésre hívták fel a magyar anyákat, hogy a jövőben magyarább és boldogabb karácsonyt tudjanak nyújtani gyermekeik részére.

Rögzített műsorral is gondolkodott az Északi Főkerület vezetője. Vallások és hazafias stavalatok és énekek hangját töltötték be a szerény berendezés helyiségét, s a közel százfőnyi hallgatóság sorában sokan könnyeztek a megható ünnepségtől. Budáról Kárpáthy Testvér jött át, aki a

Makó és környéke

Szabó Ferenc, a makói szervezet vezetője, az egyesülés óta minden erejét arra irányította, hogy Makó és környékének szervezetit az Egyesült Magyar Nemzeti Szociálista Párthoz csatlója. Fátadagos munkájának meg is lett az eredménye, mert a csatlakozás gondolatát Makó és környékén mindenki magárára vette és az egyesületet gyakorlatilag is keresztülvitték. Szabó Ferenc testvérünk Makóról 100 tagnak küldte be régi igazolványát kiegészítve végeit országos központunk részére. A csatlakozásnak tényét az országos központunk tudomásul vette és országos központunk szilveszteri ünnepségeken látni el a csatlakozó szervezeteket.

Vas megye

Vas vármegye egyik köznevelője, aki eddig a Festsich-féle pártos tartozott, bejelentette tisznhát község nevében az Egyesült Magyar Nemzeti Szociálista Párthoz való csatlakozását.

Ebből a tényből mindenki láthatja, hogy az egyesülés milyen nagy mértékben ólajja a nemzetiszocialista ömögöknök. A sorozatos csatlakozások eredményeképpen az a helyzet fog előállni, hogy a nagy pártvezetőség jászokat mindenki öltöztetése összefogását diktálja.

Köszönjük a magyaróvári Testvérünk a sajtótámogatására beküldött 20 pengőt.



MAGYARSAĞ

1938

Nincs más út!

!

ott
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Özent-
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oros ál-
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annak

— Háromhavi fogháza ítéltek a sikkasztó
ujpesti városi tisztviselőt. A pestvidéki
ügyészség hónapokkal ezelőtt vádat emelt
Rókos-Reichmann Béla negyvennégy éves
ujpesti volt városi tisztviselő ellen hivatali

— Országjáró-avatók a Felvidéken. A
felszabadult Bars-vármegyei Verébty község és
környékének népe lelkesedéssel fogadta a köz-
ség elszakadt véréi által juttatott Országjárót,
amelyet nagyszabású ünnepség keretében ava-
tott fel Vitéz Haróth Béla mondott avató-

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